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JUSTICE?



UPHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

Abdul Kebbeh, 6, holds a sign at a rally at Seattle's Westlake Park on Sunday, July 14, to protest the acquittal of George Zimmerman for the murder of Trayvon Martin. Over 500 people showed up at the rally and march. Find a whole page of photos from Portland and Seattle marches online at www.theskanner.com

Murder, Race, Teens

How do I explain the Trayvon Martin verdict to my kids?

By David Muhammad
New America Media

After the verdicts were read, my eight year old son had seen my anger and asked "why did Zimmerman kill Trayvon?" Thinking of all that I heard, read and saw through the three weeks of trial, I said to him "I don't know for sure, but I think because he is racist."

The facts that are undisputed are that George Zimmerman profiled, followed and tracked down, shot and killed, 17-year old Trayvon Martin. As the slew of texts, tweets and Facebook messages streamed in from fellow angry friends and colleagues, I sat there furious, disappointed and frustrated. The feeling was also strange. I've spent most of my career trying to help people and change systems so that there is less incarceration. But here I was wanting nothing more than for Zimmerman to be convicted and locked up. Although I've spent several years of my career as a law enforcement official, the sole reason I got into government was to reform the system that is broken. And now the country, and indeed the world, is again seeing how broke America's criminal justice system really is. Even though the prosecution was thoroughly out lawyered by the defense, there appeared to be more than enough evidence to convict. A teenage boy was murdered and the shooter was not held responsible.

This summer, I have been having my children watch the ground breaking PBS "Eyes on the Prize" series. The night before the Zimmerman verdicts, we watched the last episode which featured the story of Arthur McDuffie. McDuffie was a military veteran and successful black businessman who was stopped by the Miami police, beaten and kicked to death for no reason. Although clear and convincing evidence was presented to an all-white male jury of the murder of McDuffie, including the testimony of other officers at the scene, the three white officers

Post-Prison Issues for Ex-Offenders, Allies

Conference examines solutions and services needed in re-entry

The Staff
Of The Skanner News

People who have been in prison are less likely to end up there again if they can just find meaningful work with a decent wage once they go home. Yet survey results suggest that up to three-quarters of U.S. ex-offenders are still jobless up to a year after their release.

How can we ensure that more ex-detainees get that chance to start again in a new job? This

will be one of many topics addressed at the 2013 Regional Re-entry Conference, running Tuesday, July 30, and Wednesday, July 31, on the campus of University of Puget Sound.

The conference will be opened by Dexter Gordon, director of the Race and Pedagogy Initiative at University of Puget Sound. It will include panel discussions and more than 20 presentation sessions and workshops, including: "Removing Barriers to Successful Community Re-entry," "Federal

Grants and Other Resources for Re-entry Programs," "He who opens a school door, closes a prison—Victor Hugo," and "Corrections: A New Way to Do Business."

The conference is co-hosted by the Community Partnership for Transitional Services of Pierce, King, and Snohomish counties; New Connections, a community service supporting former inmates; and the Race and Pedagogy Initiative of University of Puget Sound.

This year's conference theme

is "Engaging Communities, Bridging Connections." The programs are designed to initiate and refine best practices for supporting those in transition and for helping them prepare for productive and successful re-entry to their communities.

The conference offers an opportunity for service providers, educators, faith-based organizations, and community organizations to network, share expertise, learn about best practices, and foster

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Social Justice in Octavia Butler Project

Sparkling imaginations and creating a model for supporting artists

Bruce Poinsette
Of The Skanner News

When one thinks of science fiction, images of spaceships, aliens and zombies might come to mind. However, Walidah Imarisha looks to her enslaved ancestors as visionary science fiction writers.

"They dreamed us up," she says. "They

couldn't imagine us. They couldn't imagine Black folks without chains and yet because they could envision it they were able to work to bend reality to create it—to create us."

Imarisha and her co-editor Adrienne Maree Brown are partnering to publish Octavia's Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements. The project seeks to demonstrate how community

organizing and social justice work are a form of science and speculative fiction.

"Science fiction has long been a space to process the struggles of being human on this planet, in dystopic settings, in utopic settings," says Brown. "It is our right and responsibility to envision the next world and write ourselves into it. We see this as

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