

'Urban terrorism' blamed in cafe killing

Wanted: These men caught on video



Urban Confections

by M. Nourbese Philip

Between a rock and a hard place. It's a position all too familiar to Blacks, and the aftermath of the recent robbery and shooting at the Just Desserts restaurant poignantly, at times starkly, positions them there yet again.

Shock and consternation are my cliched responses when I first hear of the robbery. Black or white I wonder anxiously, but at 7.30 in the morning the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) is being coy and giving but the barest of details. A few hours later, upon reading the newspapers, my worst fears are confirmed. The police are looking for four people—all young, all male and all Black. The repercussions to this particular crime are going to be severe—I feel it instinctively.

During the days that follow I listen avidly, obsessively even, to the radio. The air literally crackles with venom and vituperation as callers vent their rage over the airwaves. Lax immigration rules, being soft on criminals, Black crime, and the easy availability of guns: these are but some of the reasons given for the crime. Deportation, the keeping of crime statistics, the lifting of citizenship, gun control: some of the solutions. It becomes difficult at times to tell the difference between the audience of the CBC and

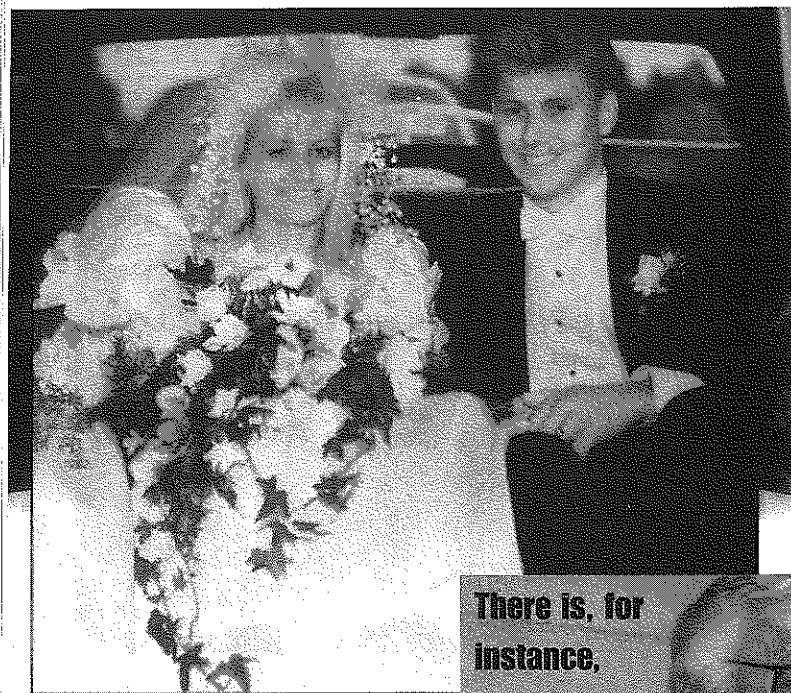
that of other radio stations. Wherever you turn the dial, the anger and hostility towards Blacks are the same. (The only variation is that some people preface their statements with disclaimers such as "I'm not racist but..." before going on to expound their racism.) Interspersed among these comments can be heard the voices of Blacks passionately disavowing any responsibility for the crime.

Barely able to control her hysteria or conceal her hatred, one vituperative caller to the CBC's Metro Morning demands to know where the Blacks are now. She is one among many who assign a group responsibility to all Blacks for this crime. As if we carry a collective burden—a shared guilt for all actions of all Black people. *Where are the Blacks now? Where we always were—going about life the way most Canadians do—working, studying, playing, trying hard to remain employed, raising children—generally doing the myriad things people do from day to day. Where are the Blacks now? Where we often are - between a rock and a hard place. Trying to*

make sense of a killing which, like most killing, is senseless. And grieving for that young woman and her suddenly abbreviated life.

What is this collective burden we are being asked to carry; what the source of the responsibility that is being foisted on Blacks? Is it because the victim is white and the robbers Black? Not hearing the same kinds of demands made when both victim and perpetrator belong to the same race, it is difficult, if not impossible, to avoid the conclusion that the groundswell of antipathy and revulsion against the crime appears to have more to do with *who* committed it - Blacks - and against whom it was committed - a white woman, and less to do with the fact that a senseless killing had taken place. It is difficult, if not impossible, to avoid the conclusion that the, at times palpable, desire on the part of white society to hold Blacks accountable and responsible arises because the killing is a cross-race killing. Because a Black man killed a white woman.

Why doesn't white on white crime create the same consternation



and the same calls for collective guilt? There is, for instance, no attempt to paint white society as a silent colluder in some of the most heinous of crimes committed by white Canadian criminals such as Clifford Olsen or Karla Homolka whose names reveal Northern and Eastern European ancestry respectively. There is no link made between the deviance of these and many other white criminals and their ethnic origin.

Why are African-Canadian communities held accountable for the criminal actions of African-Canadians, while European-Canadians bear no responsibility for the crimes of people who belong to the various ethnic tribes of Europe? The answer to this question leads unwaveringly to issues of race and racism.

How exactly Blacks should have demonstrated the responsibility that was being demanded of them was never made clear. Should they have marched in condemnation of the crime? Written articles and letters to the newspapers condemning the crime? Some Blacks did do that. Perhaps they should have put up a reward for the capture of the suspects, or offered their services to the police to help find these young men. Should Black leaders have made public statements? But which Black leaders and of which communities? The Caribbean community in general? Or should it only be the Jamaican community?

Canada is no stranger to the imposition of collective guilt. Being Japanese in Canada during World War II meant that you carried genes that defined you as a traitor; it meant that Japanese property could be stolen with impunity, and Japanese interned in concentration camps. Collective guilt, however, appears to apply

only to Others — Africans, Asians and Natives. Never to whites.

The challenge for Blacks in the aftermath of the robbery was how to respond to the upsurge and outpouring of racism in Toronto, challenge it as it so rightly should have been challenged, without appearing to condone a brutal act. As always, between a rock and a hard place.

How many times can a newspaper article tell its readers the suspects are Black? Too many times. Hypersensitivity on my part? Perhaps—perhaps not. I reread the article and notice that it is the combination of the description of the suspects' clothing—"dark"—and the suspects themselves—"black"—that succeeds in conveying the impression of overwhelming blackness. Why doesn't an initial eyewitness account describing the shooting as accidental ever appear again?

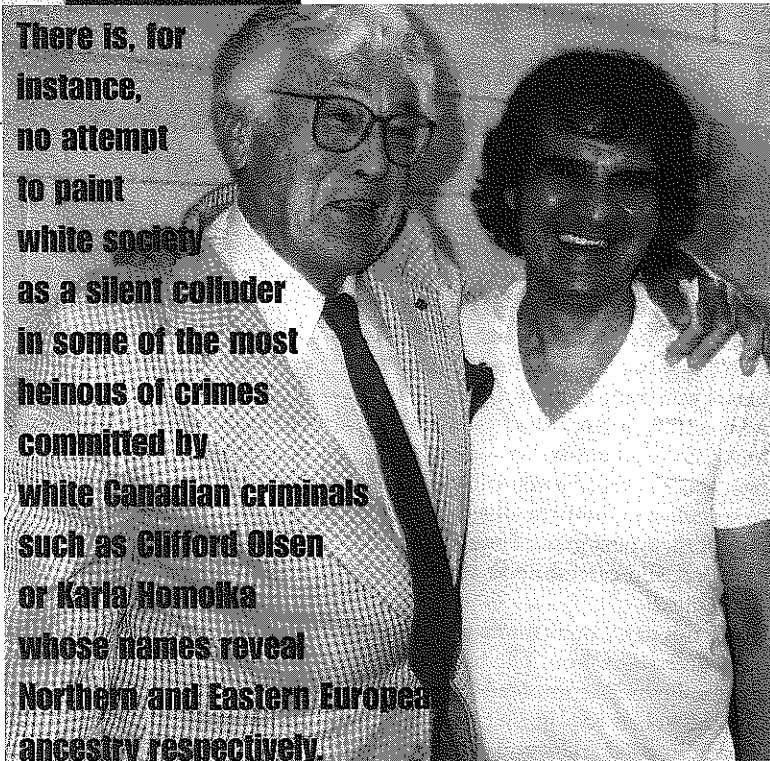
I listen to news reports and talk shows, hear the demands for crime statistics based on race, for a more effective immigration system, for better deportation practices and, never having witnessed a lynching, I recognize the makings of a lynch mob all the same. I see the strange fruit, the dark fruit of Billie Holiday swinging in the wind—black flesh purpling at the end of a rope. Sons, brothers, fathers all with look-alike faces of the blown-up video photographs which the media have published. That these images are vague, blurred and indeterminate does not prevent the police from urging us to use them for identification purposes. Too bad there has to be a trial. And

always the fear—of standing alone, being isolated—gnawing at the pit of the stomach.

Where are all the Blacks now? All over. I see them—brave young men and boys in groups of two or three—and know the media have succeeded because I do notice them, suddenly aware of their presence—their Blackness, their maleness. And if I notice them, how many others do and will not go beyond their Blackness or maleness? I also worry for them, aware of their heightened visibility.

I look more carefully at people's faces—assessing every nuance of behaviour and gesture towards me. Are they being more reserved, cool or distant? Is that anger I see? Conversations with Blacks quickly turn to the crime and its after-effects. A Black taxi driver, in Canada for 20 years, talks to me about his white fares making disparaging remarks about Blacks. He has been told he can't speak English, accused of bringing crime to Canada and told to go home.

There is, for instance, no attempt to paint white society as a silent colluder in some of the most heinous of crimes committed by white Canadian criminals such as Clifford Olsen or Karla Homolka whose names reveal Northern and Eastern European ancestry respectively.



Signs of normalcy are welcome—a trip out to Bruce's Mill to see the sap flow—so clear—almost tasteless and yet, under the pressure of intense heat, yielding the rich distinctive taste of Canadian maple syrup. So, too, under tremendous pressure we Blacks have produced great sweetness, but at what cost? But this is Canada eh, and spring is here and kids are out playing street hockey—any kid—all kids—Black kids in the Jungle (as an Ontario Housing project is called).

Did he play hockey?—the young man on the wanted poster on every street corner. Armed and dangerous with a bounty on his head—because he killed. A white woman. It could have been anyone who had been shot at the *Just Desserts* cafe. Anyone. But that is no consolation to her, her parents or her fiancé. It was her the bullet found. A 500-year-old bullet that had been speeding through the centuries to lodge and bury itself in her flesh—white flesh.

Nothing, however, that I have read about the killing of Georgina Leimonis indicates that her killing was racially motivated. It could just as easily have been an African, Asian or Native person who was killed—they all frequent *Just Desserts*. Nothing about the reporting of the crime overtly emphasizes its cross-race aspect, yet the crime quickly becomes racialized with the race and ethnicity of the suspects and the victims playing a significant role in its presentation by the media and its reception by the public. Not to mention issues of class and gender which were also at work.

The facts as I know them are:

1. In the early morning hours of April 6, 1994, three people hold up a trendy neighbourhood cafe, *Just Desserts*, on Davenport Road in Toronto.
2. In the course of the robbery at least one person is pistol-whipped; another is shot and eventually dies.
3. Video camera recordings reveal those committing the robbery to be young, Black and male.
4. The person who is killed is young, white and female and of Greek-Canadian background.

In these "politically correct" times even crime takes on a text book quality, neatly conflating race, class and gender—even sexuality.

Fact is a Black man shot a white woman.

What if that Black man had shot a Black woman? Given the representation and portrayal of Black women as either asexual, all-nurturing Aunt Jemimas, or over-sexed vamps, the media would have had some difficulty portraying the image of sexual purity and innocence it was able to with the victim, Ms. Leimonis.

What if that Black man had shot another Black man? It would probably have been seen as Black on Black crime, possibly even a 'dick' thing.

What if that Black man had shot a white man? While race would still have been an element, the image of Black men preying on white women—on the sanctity of white womanhood—would have been absent. As a British judge once opined, for a white woman to be raped by a Black man did make the act more heinous.

Fact is a Black man shot a young white woman in a trendy, upscale establishment.

What if a Black man had shot a Black woman at Eglinton and Oakwood, Jane and Finch, or in the Jungle, all Black neighbourhoods, and not at Davenport and Avenue, a stone's throw away from the wealthy areas of Forest Hill and Yorkville? Seldom, if ever, have shootings in the former neighbourhoods—and they have happened all too frequently—or in ethnically defined neigh-

bourhoods such as Chinatown attracted such intense media attention. Editorial and opinion pieces stress the class aspect of this particular crime, some arguing strongly that it is class rather than race that explains the difference in media coverage.

Fact is a Black man killed a young white woman who was about to be married to a man.

What if that same Black man had killed a white woman who was lesbian? Could or would the media have portrayed images of her grieving fiancée and their aborted marriage in the way they did? Marriage is, after all, the culmination, if not the consummation, of heterosexuality in our society. An abbreviated life is always to be mourned. But not every abbreviated life can bear the same gloss, or is mourned in the same way.

Fact is a Black man killed a white woman and there is a bounty on his head.

Blackarmedanddangerous—earrings in one ear—small dreads. His face stares out at all of us from the wanted posters on *Sun* newsboxes—armedanddangerous—wanted dead or alive. Strange fruit, dark fruit—blowing in the chilly winds of Toronto and as in some classic Greek tragedy the choruses take their positions, the one, shrill in condemnation, raising its voice:

- : it's always those Blacks committing crimes!
- : it's because Immigration is letting those people into our country!
- : it's because there are too many guns!
- : it's because of a lack of jobs!
- : it's because of drugs!
- : it's because the police have been hampered in their jobs!
- : it's because of Jamaican posses!
- : it's because we aren't allowed to keep racial statistics on crime
- : it's because—it's because ...

The hunt for meaning is on—trying to make sense of phenomena in a nonsensical world. What meaning can one give to Georgina Leimonis' parents who have lost a daughter; to a lover who has lost a loved one? What makes sense except a roar of anger against fate, against those who did it?

Call and response—in a threnody that mourns the death of one young woman and of hope for belonging of a people who have been here for over 200 years, the tragedy unfolds as does all tragedy—inevitably: the other chorus responds:

- : we didn't do it! we didn't do it!
- : we are not responsible!
- : we are good Blacks!
- : we are hard-working Blacks!
- : we are not Jamaicans!
- : we are Jamaicans but different!
- : it's the fault of those Jamaicans!
- : it's the education system!
- : it's racism!
- : we Blacks must take responsibility for this crime—for all crime!

The hunt for meaning: The strains of "Ol Man River" grow stronger and I recall how for 18 months prior to the opening of *Show Boat*, the media reported on how ill-advised and wrong-headed African Canadians were in their opposition to the show's production. Politically correct, censorship, Nazism, witch burners, too American, not American enough, a waste of time, a power grab: these were some of the media's responses. With few exceptions, opposition to the production was not understood and self-

dom sympathetically presented. How much did this unsympathetic coverage lay the groundwork of resentment against Blacks?—needing only the right set of circumstances to leap into flame like some tinder-dry forest touched by a match.

It is because we understood how fragile and precious our public image is—how little control we have over it; how little the positive acts of our best affect us as a group, and how much the negative acts of the few shape public opinion about us—that we opposed the mounting of *Show Boat*. It is unfortunate that the validity of the opposition to the show had to be proved in this way.

Further, the successful conviction of Black activist, Dudley Laws, in a classic sting operation the week prior to the robbery, offered more proof, to those who were looking for it, of the intrinsic criminality of Blacks.

The revelation that Oneil Grant, one of the suspects in this robbery, was a landed immigrant who, as a result of criminal convictions, had been ordered deported but on appeal allowed to remain in Canada, introduced the third element—immigration—into what passed for a debate on race and crime. Crime, it appears, is a foreign invention: it all happens out there, over there somewhere, carried out by others. Immigrant others. Not by Canadians. Crime, like employment, now has to have the requisite Canadian content; failing that, its perpetrators should be returned to their country of origin, regardless of how long they have been here. This Canadian content is defined by the Canadian nationality of the criminal, which begs the question who is Canadian. If after being in this country for three years as a landed immigrant and taking out citizenship, your Canadian status cannot be overtly questioned. However, this is not the case for someone like Oneil Grant who came here as a child—he was twelve—or someone who may have spent most of his/her life here, but through an oversight failed to take out citizenship. That Oneil Grant and many like him—young Black men and women—may have been shaped indelibly by their experiences in Canada and within Canadian institutions is conveniently erased in this debate.

That the public perceives crime to be on the increase is indisputable, although Statistics Canada reveals that there has been no appreciable increase in recent years. That more guns than anyone is comfortable with now circulate in our societies is equally indisputable. That the immigration bureaucracy, like most bureaucracies, is clumsy and needs to be overhauled also appears to be undeniable. But focussing the debate on the mistakes of the immigration department has provided a mechanism whereby a discourse that is essentially racist can take place. Within this tri-partite discourse of race, crime and immigration very little progress is possible since race = Blacks, crime = Blacks, and immigration = Blacks. And Blacks = race, crime and immigration (unwanted).

If faulty immigration procedures had not been implicated in this and other recent crimes, the debate would have undoubtedly focussed more emphatically on issues such as the keeping of crime statistics, and even the possibility of lifting the citizenship of individuals (as one talk-show host recommended). *Pseudo-debates like the one generated by the Just Desserts shooting serve to allow whites to believe that they are purging their country, their territory, their psyches even of the threat and danger that Blacks represent for them, while at the same time attempting to reinforce in Blacks the belief that being the owners of black skin, they are in Canada only on sufferance.*

How long does it take to belong? Never. If you're Black. Not in Africa where Europeans continue to own disproportionately large tracts of lands in countries such as Kenya, Zimbabwe and

South Africa. Not in the Caribbean where Europeans are fast reestablishing themselves as landowners. And most certainly *not* in Canada. Where we have been for at least 200 years. And while the debate rages as to the merits of sending us back to where we don't belong—Europeans and white Westerners exercise the privilege of fleeing whenever the going gets rough, the only passport needed—a white skin. Shortly before the recent elections in South Africa news reports revealed contingency plans by Israel, Portugal and England to fly their subjects out if the election proved to be violent. So too in Rwanda where

“...a heavily armed column of Belgian troops rescued 18 foreigners (my emphasis)...As the convoy arrived, 500 Tutsi refugees...rushed out with their hands up, pleading for help. But they were left behind...the Belgians had room only for 18 foreigners...” (5)

Many of those “foreigners” had lived the better part of their lives in Rwanda and are the latter day remnants of the earlier occupying colonial forces.

But the fact is. A Black man shot a white woman and Toronto is baying for Black blood.

Fact is a white man killed a Sri Lankan Tamil man, Gunalan Muthalingam (How many of us remember his name, or even knew it when he was killed?) in Toronto in June 1993.

Fact is a white man killed Muthalingam and the media gave it the barest of coverage.

Fact is a white man, after attending a neo-Nazi concert, attacked another Tamil man, Sivarajah Vinasitnamby, late one night also in June 1993.

Fact is this white man so badly hurt Sivarajah Vinasitnamby the latter is now physically handicapped and brain damaged.

Fact is this white man attacked Vinasitnamby because he was South Asian, had a dark skin and, therefore, according to the white man, didn't belong in Canada.

Fact is these crimes, at least one of which was motivated solely by racial hatred, did not garner the attention from the media the shooting of Georgina Leimonis did.

Fact is 3,500 whites did not attend the funeral of Gunalan Muthalingam or express outrage at Sivarajah Vinasitnamby's injuries.

Fact is the Police Commission did not meet, as it did after the *Just Desserts* robbery and shooting, to discuss the increase in hate and racially-based crimes after the killing of Gunalan Muthalingam, or beating of Sivarajah Vinasitnamby.

Fact is no elected official at either the municipal, provincial or federal level has made a statement deploring the increase in racism and racist acts against Blacks or Asians.

Fact is a Black man shot a white woman.

Fact is the race is gonna pay.

White Western governments have always used racism, if not openly to gain votes and political success, as a means of social control to keep Africans, Asians and Natives in their place. Is this why no member of government in Canada—municipal, provincial or federal—has publicly condemned these viciously executed racial attacks such as the one against Sivarajah Vinasitnamby? (The Minister of Justice, Alan Rock, has, however, introduced legislation to increase sentences where racial hatred is a motivation). How then do we explain the fact that the beating of Vinasitnamby—a clearly racially motivated attack—was not raised in the Ontario Parliament, yet the *Just Desserts* shooting was? How do we explain that shortly after the latter robbery, the City of

Toronto attempted—unsuccessfully—to introduce a municipal by-law (sponsored by two right-wing politicians) that would have forbidden groups of more than three people to gather in public places. The proposed legislation was designed to fight crime, but if, as argued above, we understand that “crime” is the code word for Blacks, it becomes clear who the intended target of this legislation was.

The abdication of responsibility by elected politicians has been ably assisted by the media. It's difficult to know whether the fire-storm response to the *Just Desserts* robbery was whipped up by media, or whether the latter was merely responding to public sentiment. I suspect both aspects played a part in the coverage. What is more certain, however, is that, in a capitalist society where the media's role is to sell advertising, there is no incentive to dampen any inflammatory issues. The O.J. Simpson case is an overdetermined case in point. If, however, we accept Chomsky's argument that, along with entertainment, one of the media's roles is to inculcate certain values in the larger society, the coverage of the *Just Desserts* shooting, particularly in areas of race, crime and immigration, is entirely valid. These value-laden messages are at times writ large, at times sub-textual, but always present. Too much Black immigration to Canada; the immigration department is allowing Black criminals into the country and failing to deport them; Blacks are a source of crime; Blacks are not Canadian, but immigrants to this country; the police are hampered in their jobs—the list is endless, infinitely malleable and always derogatory of Blacks and often of other peoples of colour.

In the aftermath of the *Just Desserts* robbery, Blacks have been presented with what appears to be an impossible choice: reject the accused suspects or take responsibility for them and their crimes. That rock and hard place yet again. To say, as many did, that we are not responsible is, in many ways, to attempt to close the stable door after the damage has been done. In the eyes of white society we have already been tried, found guilty and held accountable. But in our rush to distance ourselves from this crime, we engage in something like the children's game, “Who stole the cookie from the cookie jar,” with every-

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one pointing a finger at someone else as having the responsibility.

A third way lies between these two apparently mutually exclusive positions of extreme distance from the perpetrators and the embrace of complete responsibility for the crime. Black communities in the New World have been indelibly shaped and affected by racism. Racist practices have been carefully nurtured and honed around our communities, and these communities have been hurt and continue to be hurt by these practices. The Stephen Lewis report, the most recent of many such reports, prepared after the Yonge Street riots, documents the evidence of anti-Black racism in Ontario.

At one end of the spectrum of our collective life, Blacks have defied the odds and produced exceptional individuals of brilliant minds, committed lives and astonishing creativity. At the other end are those who, in dysfunctional ways, have acted out the rage and anger present in all oppressed groups. The numbers of this latter group are disproportionately high. And in between these two groups are the large majority—the middle classes, if you will—who do what people generally do when given half a chance—form relationships, work and try to enjoy life. It is unfortunate and racist that Black people and their communities have always been judged, not by their best, but by their worst.

As a people Africans have successfully mounted moral challenges against brutally racist and right-wing regimes such as the now formally defunct apartheid system of South Africa. Long before that in 1804, the Haitian people, led by a former slave, Toussaint L'Ouverture, fought and gained their independence from France to become the second independent country in the New World. Canada was a mere colony at that time. The civil rights movement in the United States spearheaded by African-Americans provided a model and the impetus for subsequent movements such as the second wave of feminism, the gay movement, and the American native movement. These challenges by African peoples to essentially anti-human practices which would reduce the scope and potential of the human spirit have made an inestimable contribution to the world of progressive ideas and ideals which we now take for granted in the area of human rights. Africans are given little credit for this. We are still seen as an ideologically backward people prone to violence.

The young men who carried out the *Just Desserts* robbery belong to us—the Black communities. They belong because they represent the broken and wounded aspects of our communities described above. *Every Black young man or woman lost to crime or drugs or mere despair represents a tremendous loss for our communities engaged in the massive undertaking of wresting our history from the shadows, rebuilding ourselves and our cultures and leading lives of dignity.* Every Black person who fails to fulfill his or her potential represents an irreparable loss. For us, for our communities and society as a whole.

It is in this respect that these young men are ours—fully as much as Bigger Thomas was a part of the Black community in Richard Wright's novel *Native Son*. They represent a loss—a deficit in more ways than one. To view them in this way is to find a third way out of the conundrum of rejection or embrace. In the latitude of our compassion—a compassion which we have often had to extend to our erstwhile masters, as we see happening presently in South Africa—we must claim them as ours—as symbols, if you will, of the failure of community through the relentless workings of racism. To claim them is to express compassion for those parts of our communities that are wounded. It does *not* mean that we are responsible for what they have done, or that they should not have to take responsibility for their actions.

To say that these young men are beyond the pale and have nothing to do with us is to engage in the same practice that white society engages in—pretending that crime is somehow out there, over there, having nothing to do with us. But while being a part of us, they are also a product of white society—created by the policies which continue to wreak havoc on Black communities. Would that we could take them into our communities, hold them responsible for their actions and heal them eventually.

Failure like success is seldom sudden. Young, disaffected Black youth, which the accused suspects represent, reflect the failure of many systems, the oldest of which began as long as 500 years ago, when the workings of capital and the profit motive, through the slave trade, destroyed the resources of Africans—their family structures, their spirituality, their languages, their ways of life. These failures are further nurtured by immigration practices that encourage the piecemeal settlement of families from the Caribbean. Often the mother comes first, followed eventually over the years by her children. This results in great pressures on families and early involvement of social agencies. An education system which has not shown itself responsive to the needs of Black students, often streaming them into dead-end programs, secures these failures. A shaky economic system, weakened by the processes of free trade, per-

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meated by racism, sexism and classism, which demands that where they do exist two parents must work, and where they don't that women must work long hours to support their children, imposes further stresses on families. The criminalization of Black youth by a policing and (in)justice system creates a sense of disenfranchisement which in turn creates a sense of not belonging. And this most recent knee-jerk response that questions the right of Blacks to remain here exacerbates this sense of alienation. Further, increased criminalization, as has happened in the wake of this most recent robbery, will only serve to justify those instances where abusive exercises of police power occur.

To those who ask what Black communities are doing about crime, I answer—what they have always been doing—dedicating an enormous number of volunteer hours in remedial programs and organizations in an effort to stave off these very types of acts. Volunteer hours and social work, however, cannot and will not do it all. When an economy is in recession, while education fails to educate Black youth, when racism continues to affect the hiring of African Canadians, and when the policing of African Canadians becomes synonymous with harassment, dysfunctional and criminal activity will continue to flourish.

Eradicating the more deeply-held racist attitudes towards Blacks will be impossible without genuine commitment on the part of all levels of government. In the hardening of attitudes on both sides in the aftermath of the *Just Desserts* killing, that commitment will be harder to execute. Among politicians if has been noticeably absent: if anything, knowingly or unknowingly they have been fuelling anti-Black sentiments.

All of this, however, is not to lose sight of the tragic loss of a young woman. It is to mourn that loss. It is also to mourn the loss begun a long time ago—of young lives—young Black lives—young African-Canadian lives.

But then again—fact is a Black man killed a white woman. And Blacks have always been between a rock and a hard place.

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black bodies, Carnivalised bodies

Carol Boyce Davies writes about Black women and carnival, expressing concern that current gender dynamics do not allow women the free space simply to dance at carnival.

Intellectualizing about carnival runs contrary to its meaning. Still, since one of the most obvious representations and commodifications of the Black female body takes place within the context of carnivals, there is for me a need to raise questions about representation and to try to arrive at some tentative conclusions about the carnivalised female body. A series of Caribbean carnivals, held in a variety of cities, highlights my concerns. Some of these festivals grew out of student/migrant desires to re-create some of the joy and space commensurate with Caribbean Carnival in the otherwise alienating landscapes of North American culture.

One occurred at my university during the annual carnival sponsored by the Caribbean students there. A young woman from one of the NYC community colleges entered the performance arena and executed a "wine" that took her from seductive vertical wining to a movement on the floor which then drew a huge crowd which witnessed her gyrations which increasingly became sexual/orgasmic mimings. This motif became increasingly popular and culminated with a presentation from one school last year with the following scenario:

The act begins with about ten young women in "pum pum shorts" on the stage, dancing vertically. A young man enters with a large water gun and shoots them all down onto the stage floor. The now prone young women, with their shoulders on the floor and their legs raised towards the audience, begin a version of the butterfly that was so risqué that two other students functioning as mistresses of ceremonies signalled to the DJ, in prearranged signal, that the music had to be cut. This of course triggered boos from many of the men (and women) in the audience who in the spirit of true carnival would want to see the routine taken to the conclusion.

As we know, the logic of carnival dictates that it is equivalent to a crime against the people for anyone in authority to stop the carnival. (As an aside, there were also subsequent rumours that it was my presence in the audience that precipitated the cut, since there were other groups, similarly gyrating before I arrived, which were not cut.)

