

Some Thoughts on Ferguson
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From the beginning of this terrible incident, I saw a few other things not really mentioned in the journalistic frenzy that was heading for a lynching of a cop; this is very popular at the moment---that every time a cop shoots someone, particularly if the cop is white and the victim a Black "youth," the verdict comes in even before the investigation. The police are always guilty.

Are there some racist cops? Absolutely. But does anyone consider how much police forces have been integrated? Would a Black officer really behave differently under the same circumstances?

Let's look at inner cities, or suburbs such as Ferguson. Black communities live there, but most of the educated Black community (professionals, pastors, doctors, lawyers) have been integrated into the White communities. What does this leave behind: unemployed and unemployable young men who are unhappy, resentful, and with energy to burn. Michael Brown was one of these. And despite all the claims of sainthood, he was a big kid who felt entitled to walk into a store, push aside the little clerk, and walk out with a box of cigars.

Is this an offense deserving of a police shooting, of course not. But saying that his actions did not matter is also not deserved. He was victimizing his own community because he could. And there is plenty of evidence that he took on the cop.

Now to the incident that resulted in his death: we have heard much about Black parents giving their adolescent sons "the talk." They are giving them the painful truth that they will be profiled, stopped by police, and if they want to live, how to behave. Michael Brown does not seem to have heard that talk.

When the police tell someone to stop, they must do so! When they say show your hands, they must do so (because when they do not, police get killed---an event not much publicized in today's press).

From the standpoint of the police, which it is not popular to discuss, they work in some terrible neighborhoods and risk their necks every day. Good people live in those terrible neighborhood and they are preyed upon by young men with a sense of entitlement and the values of gansta rap. Police are summoned on calls and find instead ambushes and death. Criminals grapple with police and grab their guns (two police in my town were murdered this way when they answered a domestic violence call). An enormous prisoner while in court managed to grab an officer's gun and left with a hostage.

I want to see unemployed, unemployable young men have other options than gangs. Police in inner cities (New York, elsewhere) are trying to address this in boys' clubs, athletic activities, and after school classes. It can be done. They are working on community policing, as has worked in Los Angeles.

But I also want to see parents teaching their young people to dress decently, clean up their foul-mouthed language, and not to think they can take on a cop. They are being profiled because that is where the crime is. When the crime is no longer there, the police will not be either.

Last note: wait to get all the information and don't be swayed by academics, Black Power groups, or the rest of the group-think on Facebook. It is chic to be anti-American because of "how badly Blacks are treated," but smarter to recognize the complexity of this problem.

The Europeans have addressed their criminal inner cities a different way: there are no-go-zones, in which criminal Muslim gangs terrorize the residents. That is not an answer.

614 words

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