



## **VIOLENCE IN OUR CITY:**

*Research and  
Recommendations to  
Empower Our  
Community*

**Report from the San Francisco Human Rights Commission**



## *Special Thanks...*

To the many people who have  
contributed to the preparation of this  
report

Thornton & Associates

*Dr. Shirley Thornton*

*Okezie Merije*

*Brenda Harris*

*Dr. James Lance Taylor*

*Julie Zidek*

HRC Staff

*Lome Aseron*

*Toni A. Delgado*

*Zula Jones*



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## **PART ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **Introduction**

San Francisco welcomed the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with a wave of unprecedented violence. From November 2000 through March 2001, San Francisco's African American neighborhoods witnessed more than fifty murders. The overwhelming majority of the victims were young African American males. The succession of killings deprived the African American community of one of its greatest resources, causing psychological and economic harm to already impoverished neighborhoods.

Despite its palpable impact on an important segment of San Francisco, the proliferation of violence received little to no media coverage. Information regarding the attacks was spread almost solely by word-of-mouth. Traditional methods were not able to stem the tide. Frustrated with the tragic killings, community leaders appealed to the Human Rights Commission (HRC or the Commission) for assistance.

### **The Commission's Efforts**

This report reflects the Commission's commitment to solving the problem of violence as opposed to examining its root causes.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, the Commission focused on the role of city government in alleviating violence. Realizing that communities of color share the same problem of intra-community violence, the Commission broadened the scope of its efforts to include all of San Francisco's communities of color.

December 14, 2000 marked the beginning of the Commission's formal efforts to address the issue of the increasing level of violence in San Francisco's communities of color. Over the course of several meetings, the Commission held public hearings to explore ways of arresting the epidemic proliferation of the violence plaguing the affected communities.



The hearings had a dual purpose. First, they were designed to give members of the affected communities and the general public an opportunity to share their experiences and concerns about violence and its impact on them and their communities. As those closest to the escalating violence, community members were most likely to give accurate accounts of its impact. Second, the public hearings offered heads of key departments the opportunity to present information regarding programs specifically tailored to addressing violence.

In addition to the public hearings, the Commission also hosted several community focus groups in the affected communities: Bayview/Hunter's Point, Visitacion Valley, Western Addition and the Mission District. A youth focus group was held at San Francisco City Hall to get the input of the youth and solicit plausible solutions. The results of the focus groups were presented at the Mayor's Crime Summit, which was held on March 7, 2001.

It should be noted that, although San Francisco's communities where high concentrations of African Americans reside (Bayview/Hunter's Point, Western Addition, and Visitacion Valley) are the primary foci of data represented in this report, there was no intent by the Commission to minimize violence and the adverse effect it has on other segments of the San Francisco community. To be sure, violence affects everyone to varying degrees. The Human Rights Commission's concern about the escalation of drive by shootings and Black on Black killings involving guns compelled them to address violence in predominantly African American communities.

### **Immediate Commission Action**

The Commission took several immediate steps to address the issue of escalating violence in communities of color. First, the Commission sent a letter to Mayor Willie L. Brown, Jr. and the Board of Supervisors requesting action to stem the tide of violence. Second, the Commission directed HRC staff to

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<sup>1</sup> For a comprehensive historical analysis of violence in African American communities, see Appendix A of this report.



prepare a comprehensive catalogue of City services. A final version of the *Youth & Families Resource Guide* was approved by the Commission on July 12, 2001.

Third, the Commission formed a task force to oversee the allocation of city resources to the affected communities. The task force was asked to 1) assess the needs of the affected communities, 2) identify already existing programs and services, 3) identify gaps in services, 4) make recommendations to the HRC commissioners and forward them to the Mayor and Board of Supervisors regarding the funding for programs, and 5) advocate for funding of programs that are having a positive community impact in deterring violence in the community.

The twenty-one member Task Force was made up of community representatives with expertise in implementing programs within the Bayview/Hunter's Point, Potrero Hill, Mission District, Western Addition and Visitacion Valley communities. Relevant city department heads were invited to provide an overview of their department and its budget, with a focus on how programs are funded. The purpose of the Task Force members was to serve as the voice of these communities in the city's budget preparation for the fiscal year 2001-2002. In particular, the Task Force addressed funding allocation for after-school programs and the need for continued funding of programs that address the needs of high-risk youth and families. A full list of the Task Force's recommendations can be found in the Recommendation section below.

### **Organization of the Report**

This report is organized in the following manner: Part Two contains recommendations for addressing the escalating violence obtained from the community focus groups and hearings, as well as recommendations from the Task Force. Part Three contains summaries of input from members of the public and department heads during the public hearings held by the Commission. Part Four contains focus group discussions and summaries of input from community hearings conducted by HRC Staff. Part Five concludes this report. Appendix A



is an article that gives a more comprehensive historical perspective to the problems of violence in the United States and San Francisco.

Please note that this report refers to the Unfinished Agenda, a report on the state of the African American community in San Francisco published by HRC in 1994. This report and the Unfinished Agenda share many of the same concerns and recommendations. By implementing the recommendations found in this report, the Commission can follow-up on the suggestions made in the Unfinished Agenda.



## **PART TWO: COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The participants at the public hearings and focus groups examined the various causes of violence in San Francisco's communities of color. Although they approached the issue from a variety of perspectives, and with varying emphases, the following represents recurring recommendations.

These recommendations fall into the following major categories: education, recreation, youth mentoring, economic development, media, city services, public health, law enforcement, and Task Force recommendations. Although all of the recommendations do not fall within the Commission's authority, it is important that the recommendations be integrated and implemented collectively.

### **I. Education**

- Institute youth achievement awards to reward high achieving students who live in the affected communities.
- Introduce youth leadership and civic lessons in public schools.
- Offer courses in mediation and anger management in order to equip the youth with the skills necessary to resolve disputes without recourse to violence.
- Improve youth educational experience through improvements in school curricula, such as the addition of creative arts programs tailored to the youth.
- Reduce class size, particularly for students with learning disabilities.
- Modernize learning facilities.
- Implement measures to ensure that teachers in inner city schools are well trained and have access to adequate resources.

### **II. Recreation**

- Provide improved after-school programs for young people, such as midnight basketball, creative writing classes, drama, theatre, photography, and music classes.
- Ensure that public parks are clean, well-maintained, and safe.





### **III. Youth Mentoring**

- Implement a city-wide mentorship program that will provide access to positive authority figures, particularly for at-risk young people. Mentors should be sensitive to the cultural and economic backgrounds of the participants. The program should also include mentors in the business and government sectors who can guide participants in the search for employment and integration into working life.
- Provide mentorship programs for young parents to assist them in raising their children.
- Institute a process for community recognition of high achieving and civic-minded young people.
- Increase community involvement in the lives of young people by providing a forum for dialogue between youth and adults.

### **IV. Economic Development**

- Increase apprenticeship and job training programs for young people as a means of preparing them for gainful employment in the formal economy.
- Establish a youth entrepreneurship program to assist young people in developing critical business skills and to prepare them for entry into the business community.
- Coordinate city government's efforts to address the economic instability in the affected communities. Of particular concern to participants was the lack of economic opportunity. Job creation was suggested as the primary means of creating a stable economic climate in the affected communities.
- Devote more resources to youth employment in the affected communities.

### **V. Media**

- Create a public forum for dialogue between the media and communities of color as a means of airing and addressing concerns on media coverage of communities of color.
- Provide logistic and technical assistance to communities of color to assist them in their interaction with members of the media.



- Commission a content audit of media coverage of the escalating violence.
- Provide cultural and sensitivity training to members of the media.
- Implement a program to increase diversity in newsroom personnel in order to properly reflect a cross-section of opinions and views.

## **VI. City Services**

- Publish a catalogue of programs (city and non-governmental) designed to address the issue of violence in the affected communities.
- Create one-stop community outreach centers where community members can go to access a wide array of government services.
- Provide adequate assistance to non-English speakers to ensure that they have access to the same range of services as English speakers.
- Increase bilingual staff in government agencies to improve access for non-English speakers.
- Establish criteria for judging effectiveness of publicly funded community programs.
- Require greater accountability on the part of agencies and organizations that receive public funds.
- Increase coordination between publicly funded organizations to avoid duplication of services and attendant waste.

## **VII. Public Health**

- Increase access to therapy and other mental health services to deal with the effects of violence in the affected communities.
- Evaluate the possibility of subsidizing these services with State and Federal funds.

## **VIII. Law Enforcement**

- Focus law enforcement efforts on gun dealers who contribute to the influx of guns in the affected communities.
- Increase the penalties for gun possession.
- Aggressively target street-level drug dealers in the affected communities.



- Focus on the drug barons who supply drugs to street level dealers.
- Target and prosecute “professional criminals” who continue to make life unbearable to members of the affected communities.
- Increase treatment programs available to drug users.
- Adopt a systematic and long-term approach to rehabilitation by providing offenders with carefully targeted services during incarceration, such as educational programs that would equip them for re-entry into society and programs to ensure that the stigma of incarceration does not prevent them from completely reintegrating into society.
- Create a program that addresses policies and programs that deprive ex-offenders of benefits needed to reintegrate into society.
- Adopt an effective witness protection program tailored to the affected communities.
- Increase police/community trust by having police visit middle and high schools to educate students on the issues of drugs and violence.
- Re-establish beat police officers on the streets.
- Improve the process for formal/informal dialogue and communication between the police and the community.
- Ensure diversity in the membership of the police force as a means of promoting cultural diversity and accessibility to non-English speakers.
- Continue to process youth in Juvenile Courts, with sanctions and services designed to punish them and quickly reintegrate them into society.

## **IX. Task Force Recommendations**

- Allocate city funds for a program that addresses the needs of high-risk single fathers.
- Implement an information campaign aimed at restoring voting rights for those convicted of a criminal offense.
- Publish a brochure for youth on what to do when stop by the police.



## **PART THREE: SUMMARY OF PUBLIC HEARINGS**

### **The First Hearing**

#### **January 11, 2001 – Meeting of the Human Rights Commission**

**Lena Miller**

**Founder and President, Girls 2000 and Safe Haven Director  
Resident of Bayview/Hunter's Point**

Ms. Miller is a native and resident of the Bayview/Hunter's point community. She began by saying that the issue of violence is a very emotional subject for her, and that the most difficult part of what is happening in her neighborhood is that young people are murdering each other. She believes that many black children are in so much pain that many of them have given up hope, and the most distressing thing about the violence and hopelessness is that it is entirely preventable. Children are very impressionable and open to change, and most of them reach toward the light.

She believes that a confluence of factors account for the high level of violence in the Bayview/Hunter's Point area. Bayview/Hunter's Point is the area that has the highest percentage of children in San Francisco, while also having the highest rate of environmental and social problems. She lamented the fact that amid the boom of the Internet economy, such a community would be deprived of resources and attention by the government and computer industry.

She spoke about her experience with Bayview's Safe Haven, which was in a high state of disrepair when she became involved with it. With a bit of effort, the Haven was able to procure a computer lab, refurbish its office, and make the environment more welcoming to those who use the facility. The refurbishment of the facility, in her view, has led to a significant change in the life of the immediate community because most of the young people that would usually hang around the streets and risk being attracted to deviant behavior are now drawn into the



Haven where they have access to educational and other activities conducted in a beautiful and welcoming environment.

Ms. Miller concluded by stating that what is needed is for institutions like the Commission to help visualize a solution to the problem, and to have a range of resourceful, dedicated and committed people to help address the root causes of the problem of violence in these communities. "I would like to ask the HRC to please take the leadership in beginning that process so we can begin to heal, and that our children can grow up and be proud of themselves, and feel good about what they have to contribute to society at large."

**Dr. Amos Brown**  
**Senior Pastor, 3rd Baptist Church**

Dr. Brown began by suggesting that the problem of violence in communities of color in San Francisco has reached pandemic proportions, especially in the Bayview/Hunter's Point and Western Addition areas of the city. He stated that during his days as a youth in Mississippi "we went to funerals to say goodbye to grandma and grandpa, aunts and uncles. But these days in San Francisco we are going to funerals where grandparents, aunts and uncles and parents are saying goodbye to their children, between the ages of 15-30."

In regard to the causes of violence in these communities, he cited economic deprivation, lack of education, and lack of recreational activities, but added that a major problem is the fact that the African American community has not received "equal protection under the law." The law enforcement agencies have not been as diligent and committed in fighting crime in the African American community as they are in other communities.

In articulating his theory of the lack of equal protection under the law for African American communities, he expressed the view that most of the young men who commit acts of violence and murder are "full fledged professional thugs and criminals" who are not in the least interested in using the facilities available



to them for self-improvement and recreation. Some of these people are not keen on taking up the educational opportunities available to them in places like community colleges and other institutions that provide skills training. "They have made it their lifestyle to hang out on the corners, selling drugs, controlling the turf, and making some quick and fast money."

He decried the fact that law enforcement agencies are not vigilant in policing and cracking down on the activities of this element of the community. He illustrated this fact by giving the example of a recent Board of Supervisor's initiative creating a well-needed shelter for gay and lesbian teenagers. Under the conditional use plan for the shelter, it was specifically provided that there would be no drunkenness, no drug dealing and loitering around the shelter. He commended the initiative and the actions of the supervisors in attempting to ensure that the affected teenagers live in a healthy environment, free from unhealthy criminal and anti-social activities. He wondered, however, why the same attempt is not made to adequately police activities in African American communities. "The suggestion is that as long as it happens over there, as long as it doesn't come to my door or up to my street corner, fine."

He went on to affirm the ripple effect the activities of the criminal elements have on the community at large by highlighting the "environmental" stress under which members of the affected communities, in particular senior citizens, have to live. Most of these people are afraid to go out at night. During the day, they do not feel the same level of safety that people in other communities take for granted.

In terms of the solution to the problem, he re-emphasized the need for more active policing of the communities. He suggested that a state of emergency should be declared in these communities, and well-trained and culturally sensitive police and gang task force members be sent into the communities to deal with those undermining peaceful existence. "We don't want any brutality. We don't want anybody going crazy and being unprofessional. What this police



department needs to do after declaring the state of emergency is make sure there are officers in these hot spots who will take care of business.”

He further suggested the need to review the prison and detention system to ensure that young men are not just locked up (“warehoused”) without being provided adequate opportunity for retraining and education. A significant percentage of African American males (those most directly affected by the ongoing violence in the city) pass through the criminal justice system. Rehabilitation of those who come in contact with the system is important because they would otherwise return to their communities more hardened and more prone to re-engage in criminal and anti-social activities. He suggested the importance of conducting a study to determine whether the system is “treating prisoners and detainees in such a way that they come out meaner after they have been through there.” To him, rehabilitation should be a central part of our criminal justice system.

Continuing on the theme of rehabilitation, Dr. Brown spoke of the need for those who have turned their lives around and paid their duties to society to be fully accepted into civil society and not be denied any of the benefits of citizenship. He condemned the hardship that many reformed citizens face in trying to reorganize their lives and participate in our democratic process. He gave the example of a young man in his church who went through the criminal justice system, is now reformed and a minister in the church, a home owner, worker and family man, but who continues to find it difficult to completely integrate into civil society due to his previous problems with the law. Dr. Brown characterized this as a human rights issue and argued that the government should find a way to make it easier for reformed citizens to be completely and painlessly reintegrated into civil society.



**Robert Hector**  
**Ella Hill Hutch Community Center**

Ella Hill Hutch Community Center (the Center) is located in Western Addition. Mr. Hector, who has been with the Center since 1981, began by stating that the crisis of violence currently being experienced in the community is similar to that experienced between 1982 and 1984. In his view, a comprehensive approach to solving the problem of violence in the affected communities is needed. He drew on his experience in the administration of the Ella Hill Hutch Community Center in identifying a variety of measures that would help reduce the current level of violence.

First, he decried the ease with which guns are available to those who engage in these violent activities. Due to the ready availability of guns, disputes that would ordinarily be resolved by peaceful means are settled, in the heat of the moment, by recourse to gun violence. Reduced availability of guns would go a long way in curtailing the level of violence in these communities.

Second, he stressed the need to inculcate the value of education in the youth. Most of those involved in the violence have very little education, and by implication have decreased opportunities of being gainfully employed in the formal economy. Formal education would be helpful both in terms of broadening their perspectives on life, and in opening up to them new doors of opportunities which would lead them away from criminal and anti-social behaviors.

Third, Mr. Hector acknowledged that there are several programs designed to assist at-risk youth, but suggested that the creation of these programs is not enough. Equally important is the need to devise effective means of attracting the target group to these programs and encouraging them to avail themselves of the services and facilities designed to cater to them. One way of doing this is to design programs that are based on an appreciation of the kinds of activities and subjects that are appealing to the target group. He gave the example of midnight basketball, which he set up at a time of increasing violence due to the gang wars





between groups in Western Addition, Hunter's Point, Sunnydale and Ocean-Merced-Ingleside (OMI). The program was successful in attracting a wide range of youth and was a contributing factor in reducing the level of violence that then plagued the communities. He lamented the fact that successful and well-targeted programs, such as midnight basketball, usually suffer fatal budget cuts at the first sign of a perceptible decrease in violence.

Fourth, he emphasized the importance of an effective witness protection program. He spoke about a young man who lost his life because he had agreed to testify against one of those who engaged in violence in his community. Many people remain reluctant to come to the assistance of the police and law enforcement agencies unless they are afforded adequate protection and given guarantees about their safety.

Fifth, he spoke of the need for more aggressive police action against those who choose to engage in criminal activities. "The police have to take them off the streets and incarcerate them because they otherwise will not abide by the law."

In conclusion, Mr. Hector argued that the community as a whole has a moral and ethical responsibility to set high standards of conduct for the youth. "I don't like to point fingers but I think the community as a whole has to come back and set standards for the young people."



## **The Second Hearing**

### **January 25, 2001 – Meeting of the Human Rights Commission**

#### **Enola Maxwell Community Activist**

Ms. Maxwell commented on the role of drug abuse and drug dealing on the escalating rate of youth violence in the city. She believes that much of the violence plaguing the city has to do with drug abuse. She commended the efforts of the law enforcement agencies to eradicate drugs in the affected communities, but complained that there is a disproportionate focus by the law officers on small time drug dealers. Many of the young people who are involved in drugs are usually apprehended, tried, and incarcerated, but little is done about the major players in the drug economy: those in the upper channels of distribution who import the drugs into the country. She believes that the selective targeting of street dealers tends to give the erroneous impression that street dealers, who mostly live in housing projects, are the sole cause of the drug epidemic. If we are to successfully battle the problem of drugs and the attendant violence, the battle should be waged against “all the people who are involved with drug use and distribution, not just the small time kids who get the drugs from the people who drive up in their big beautiful cars and say, here’s your package, see that it’s sold.”

She next commented on the strategies used in the fight against drug dealing and drug abuse in properties owned by housing authorities. She spoke against the policy of ejecting families whose children are involved with drugs. In her view, this policy creates homelessness and is particularly unfair on the families, who oftentimes are unaware of the activities of their children, and who should not be expected to “go around searching the rooms of their kids, time and again.” A better policy in her view would be to eject adult children in housing projects who are involved with drugs.



**Jonathan Holtzman  
Mayor's Office**

Mr. Holtzman expressed the Mayor's deep concern about the escalating level of violence in the city, and explained the purpose of the Crime Summit, initiated by the Mayor's Office. The objectives of the summit are to get a sense of community perception of the problem and to have a serious and robust discussion on the solutions to the problem. He expressed the view that drug dealing and drug abuse are at the center of the current epidemic of violence in the city. The drug problem is compounded by the ready availability of guns, usually high-powered guns, bought with drug money. "What everybody has told us is that the drug sales are feeding the gun frenzy."

He concluded with the caution that the fight against violence in the city should be done in such a way that people do not feel harassed by law enforcement agencies, and racial profiling does not become a tool of selectively targeting members of the community. There is a need to balance the need for a robust police response to gun violence with respect and civility to members of the community.

**Commander Rick Bruce  
San Francisco Police Department**

Mr. Bruce discussed the police effort in addressing the issue of violence. He began by noting that the series of shootings and homicides have been primarily located in Bayview/Hunter's Point and the Western Addition neighborhoods of the city. Most of the homicides are inter-related and are usually a case of one group retaliating against another for the killing of one of their members. He claimed that this "tit for tat" leads to a continuous escalation in the violence. In response, the police have set up a task force of police officers, probation officers, parole officers and representatives from the DA and the Sheriff's department. He noted that the task force has been successful in reducing the level of violence by investigating and prosecuting those involved in



the violence. One drawback to the effectiveness of the task force and the efforts to curb the violence has been the reluctance of witnesses to assist the police in apprehending and trying those involved in violent activities. Most cases are not “prosecutable” because “people are scared of retribution and scared to come into the court.”

Cmdr. Bruce noted that the police response has been very traditional, in that it has been primarily focused on attempting to make arrests, confiscate guns and ensure the prosecution of culprits. In doing so, he noted that the police have been vigilant to ensure that there is no racial profiling of community members. The President of the Police Commission is particularly interested in this issue and has made efforts to use software to track all police investigative detentions, traffic stops, and arrests.

He concluded by noting that the police routinely hold community meetings to address not only the issue of violence in the communities, but also other policing issues that concern the community. He gave the example of a community forum held in the Western Addition where the increased level of violence in the district was addressed.

**Chief Jesse Williams  
San Francisco Juvenile Department**

According to Chief Williams, the Juvenile Department has adopted a balanced-justice philosophy, under which the department operates as a primary and effective resource for positive change in the lives of youth and their families, ensures accountability to victims, and assures the protection of the public. Thus, the department involves offenders and their families, the community, and victims of crime in the process of creating opportunities for positive youth development, “which is the best and the most time honored, and most effective deterrent for delinquency in general, and youth delinquency in particular.”



Chief Williams approached the discussion from a preventive perspective. He began by noting that the problem of youth violence is no longer primarily a male problem; large numbers of young women are now involved in delinquency in general, and violence in particular. He noted that the department has made concerted attempts to address the issue of violence among young women by expanding the range of services available to female offenders.

In terms of the causes of youth violence, he argued that “violence is a learned behavior” and that the environment plays a crucial role in molding youth behavior. “Most kids don’t wake up in the morning and decide, OK, I think I’ll go out and be violent today because that is what’s on my agenda. It’s part of the environment, it’s a part of what they learn, and it’s a part of what they live with everyday.” He suggested that a variety of factors are useful in providing a good projection of where young people are likely to be involved in delinquent behavior and when such behavior could become violent.

These factors relate to community, family, school, and peer influences. In particular, he mentioned factors such as substance abuse, the prevalence of violence in particular communities, the ready availability of guns and drugs, peer group involvement in delinquent behavior, poor school attendance, and poor academic achievement. These are some of the different facets of environmental and social issues that influence youth behavior. He suggested that any strategy designed to address these issues must focus on the creation of “healthy communities:” “Bottom line, what we know is where there are healthy communities, and where young people grow up in healthy communities where they feel they have options and opportunities for success, the incidents of delinquency and the likelihood of violence is significantly reduced or even eliminated.”

The services and activities of the Juvenile Department are targeted to respond specifically to these kinds of risk factors and potential delinquency indicators in communities. Chief Williams gave three examples of such targeted



programs. He began with the Robeson and Rivera Academy located in the Bayview/Hunter's Point district of the city. The academy, a joint effort with other government agencies, is targeted at young people who are likely to become repeat offenders. The academy is committed to early intervention in addressing the concerns of both the youth involved and their families. In addition, the curriculum of the academy has a significant arts component, designed to get young people interested in creative and stimulating endeavors like writing, drama, dancing, and other cultural activities that are typically considered unappealing to young people who create difficulties in their communities. The next example was Writers' Core program, under which a writer or poet in residence goes to the Cabin Ranch on a regular basis each week to work with young men and teach them how to explore their feelings and how to express those feelings through writing. Finally, he spoke about the eight Beacon Centers, located throughout the city, which provide essential services to young people.

In conclusion, he stated that the department is very concerned about ensuring the effectiveness of its programs. To this end, it is putting in place a process for systematic and continuous evaluation of the success of all its programs. According to Chief Williams, the bulk of the programs evaluated so far indicate reasonably good levels of success when compared with their counterparts across the country.

### **James Threat Park and Recreation**

Mr. Threat's presentation focused on the midnight basketball program and its role in reducing the level of violence in the city. He stated that, contrary to popular belief, the program has not been cancelled. It is organized once a year, sometimes twice, and usually from February through April. The program is targeted at those young people who hang out on the streets and are thereby attracted to anti-social activities. It is a way of getting them off the streets and keeping them engaged in useful activities. He noted that the basketball



component is not the major focus of the program; it is merely the “hook” to get young people into the community centers, where they will be exposed to educational and informative activities.

One of the key components of the program is that participants are required to take part in workshops as a condition for involvement in the league. These workshops are designed to teach useful skills and provide valuable information to young people. The workshops cover issues such as resume writing, job search skills, interview skills, and how to obtain GED and other educational certificates. The workshops also provide a forum for young people to discuss and be informed about health issues that directly affect their communities, such as AIDS. Mr. Threat acknowledged the need to extend the program to the summer period when young people are out of school, have lots of time, and are tempted to loiter around. However, he noted that financial and staffing pressures currently prevent the department from extending the program. “We need additional funding to make sure we have the people that can put the league together.”

**Pastor George Lee  
Shiloh Men’s Home**

Pastor Lee stated that Shiloh is a men’s resident home on Third Street in San Francisco. Pastor Lee fought for a police station in the Bayview/Hunter’s Point Area, but criticized the officers of that station for not being more compassionate and respectful toward the young African American men in the area. He further asked that the news media be more realistic, respectful, and honest when reporting incidents of violence in communities of color. Additionally, he requested equality of coverage and more media recognition of positive programs and people who are making a difference every day within the community. Pastor Lee asked for the support of the HRC and requested a commitment to action with respect to addressing the escalating violence. He stressed the importance of involving as many interested parties as possible and



stated that the outcome should allow everyone to have a part. He stated that when a child or anyone in the community dies, it should affect the community at large.

**Reverend Timothy Dupre  
Member, San Francisco Juvenile Probation Commission  
Assistant Pastor, Community Baptist Church, Western Addition**

Reverend Dupre cautioned that the problem of violence could not be solved by incarceration, policing, summits, or churches. Any solution to the problem of violence must address the issue of “disenfranchisement that many young people have and feel, to make them a part of the mainstream.” This could be done in part by creating educational and job opportunities that would help young people integrate into mainstream society. The alternative is for these young people to resort to gangs and the informal economy. He suggested that the creation of a healthy living and social environment for young people should involve collaborative efforts by government agencies, churches, and the communities involved.

**Peter Strauss  
Service Planning Division, MUNI**

Mr. Strauss, who is the Manager of the Service Planning Division of MUNI, stated that the services provided to the Southeast quadrant of the city mirror the services to the city as a whole. Mr. Strauss stated that MUNI runs for 20 hours a day, starting at 5:00 A.M. through 12:00 midnight. During regular hours, MUNI generally runs every 15-20 minutes. During non-regular hours, an owl line is implemented, which runs every half hour. He highlighted the fact that MUNI is available in all parts of the city, including Third Street, Bayshore Boulevard, San Bruno Avenue, and Mission Street. He also affirmed MUNI’s commitment to providing quality transportation services to all San Francisco communities.





In response to Chair Saliba-Malouf's question regarding whether there were any vanpool programs designed for youth, Mr. Strauss responded that on-call services were generally inefficient because their response time was slow. He stated that current routes could service the community at shorter intervals than an on-call vanpool service.

**Michael Slade**  
**Lieutenant, Security Department of MUNI**

Lieutenant Slade discussed the composition of his department, which is in charge of patrolling MUNI. His department is currently made up of one lieutenant, four sergeants, and four squads comprised of thirty-seven officers. Two day-time squads work from 7 A.M. through 4 P.M. They concentrate on critical bus stops around Balboa High School, McAteer High School, Luther Burbank, and Phillip Burton High School, where they patrol before school hours. Lieutenant Slade stated that many students from these schools live in public housing in the Sunnydale and Bayview/Hunter's Point areas. In talking with these children, Lieutenant Slade found that many of the students are afraid, noting that it is tough to concentrate in school when they know they have to get on a bus where there is a possibility that they might fight or be jumped by other kids from other areas of town or other schools.

Two evening squads, scheduled from 1 P.M. through 11 P.M., are in charge of patrolling after-school hours to ensure that there is no violence while students are waiting for or getting on busses. Lieutenant Slade stated that special enforcement projects have affected officer attrition with MUNI, but he is retooling MUNI squads to ensure that the maximum amount of officers will be working on all days. Lieutenant Slade anticipates working with special units of the Police Departments (i.e. Narcotics) to help eradicate drug dealing in or around bus areas.

Additionally, Lieutenant Slade is the Executive Director of a non-profit program called Operation Dream, which was created by police officers and the



Housing Task Force. Operation Dream targets youth and community issues such as drug dealing, gangs, and dog fighting, and implements positive community programs with respect to employment, training and self-esteem. This, which Lieutenant Slade hopes to bring to MUNI, program illustrates the need for community involvement by police.

**Barbara Garcia**  
**Deputy Director, Department of Public Health**

Ms. Garcia acknowledged that communities have been traumatized by the recent violence. Ms. Garcia stated that we, as a community, should be in charge of our communities. She emphasized a holistic approach and stressed the importance of family and community involvement in overcoming the epidemic of violence. Ms. Garcia also made a commitment to work with as many city agencies as possible in an effort to coordinate services to improve response to all community needs.

**Keith Hutchinson**  
**Director, Child Crisis Center of the Department of Public Health**

Mr. Hutchinson stated that the Child Crisis Center operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and services the entire City and County of San Francisco. The objective of Child Crisis is intervention for children and adolescents who are experiencing a mental health crisis, as well as their families. The Child Crisis Center responds to suicidal and homicidal youths within a timely 30-minute window. Children are referred by the San Francisco Police Department, emergency rooms, the San Francisco Unified School District, and family members. When helping the child, the Crisis Center also looks for strength and support from parents, the living environment, and the community. Mr. Hutchinson stated that, along with Project Impact, the Child Crisis Center has provided the community with a mobile support team to help children integrate back into the community in a positive way once they are discharged from YGC.



Additionally, the mobile support team works with at-risk youth. Mr. Hutchinson also stressed the importance of working with other city agencies and other community programs to ensure that all community needs are addressed.

**LaDonnis Elston**  
**Mental Health Services, Department of Public Health**

Ms. Elston requested the support of the HRC in making all organizations work cohesively to resolve the epidemic of violence. Ms. Elston stated that the Critical Incidents Response Team and the Bayview Mental Health Center provide crisis counseling when youth and families call. The goal of these agencies is to try to alleviate community problems before they start. One of the concerns of the community was that they do not receive information in a timely manner. The Department of Public Health is working with the Neighborhood Jobs Initiative, the San Francisco Unified School District, and the Police Department to ensure that communities, churches, and the residents of San Francisco receive updated information as quickly as possible.

**Emily Barrera**  
**Columbia Park Boys and Girls Club**

Ms. Barrera testified that the Boys and Girls Club helped her through troubling times. She expressed that drug treatment programs, counseling, and job opportunities should be made readily available for youth. Such programs help children get off the streets and do positive things with their free time.

**Susana Rojas**  
**Columbia Park Boys and Girls Club**

Ms. Rojas spoke about measures that can be taken by our community at large. She stated that youth, police, adults and the community should be involved in targeted outreach programs to address youth violence in our community. She said that Columbia Park Boys and Girls Club has many



programs, such as arts and crafts, technology, and sports, that can be emulated throughout the City. The Columbia Park Boys and Girls Club cannot positively affect the community alone, but can make a difference with the help of other city agencies, the community, teachers, and business owners.

**Ethel Newlin**  
**St. John's Educational Threshold Center**

Ms. Newlin works with youth and families at St. John's Educational Threshold Center, located in the Mission District. Ms. Newlin expressed the need for a more pro-active community, and stated that it should never get to the point where we only step in when there is a crisis. She also stated that intervention is the key and that it is never too early to start with our children. For her, the greatest disservice to our youth is to allow youth violence to go unchecked. She expressed disappointment that our youth are not being adequately prepared for the future.

**Roberto Hernandez**  
**Community Activist, Mission District**

Mr. Hernandez spoke about the violence in the Mission District. He stated that youth are being heavily recruited to join gangs and deal drugs. According to Mr. Hernandez, there are over 500 gang members in the Mission. Additionally, the business community has been seriously impacted by the violence. For instance, store owners have been forced to close their shops early. He further stated that the Mission District has had a revolving door of police captains, with a new captain being appointed every other year. Each new captain then makes new policies, leaving the Mission District with no law enforcement continuity. Mr. Hernandez also stated that the SFPD was known to drop off gang members in rival territory. He asked for HRC's support in developing a holistic and comprehensive approach to violence in the Mission.



**Lynn Westry**  
**Resident, Bayview/Hunter's Point Community**

Ms. Westry stated that she lost her daughter in the recent violence. Her home was shot at and her daughter's car burned in front of their home. She lamented the amount of suffering that she and other mothers have suffered due to violence in the community. Although it was difficult to lose a child, she felt the need to console other mothers who had also lost their children. She expressed hope that help does exist. Ms. Westry asked that there be an organized effort to make her community a safer, happier place.



## **The Third Hearing**

### **February 8, 2001 – Meeting of the Human Rights Commission**

**Dr. Joe Marshall**  
**Founding Director, The Omega Boys Club**

Dr. Marshall began by suggesting that the key to preventing serious violence is understanding the causes of violence, predicting when and where violent activities will occur, and implementing effective strategies for prevention and intervention. He commended the Surgeon General's Report on Youth Violence (he served on the Planning Committee) as a source of latest research and important findings in the area of violence. He said the report is useful in terms of suggesting solutions that work and in debunking myths that obscure the need for informed policy and intervention.

He spoke about four such myths. The first is the myth that the violence that marked the early 1990's is over and that young people are safer today. On the contrary, he stated that youth violence remains at the peak levels reached in 1993. Second is the myth that minority youth are more likely to be involved in serious violence. Ethnicity has little bearing on violent behavior. Third, he suggested that there is a myth that getting tough with juvenile offenders by treating them as adults in criminal courts would reduce youth involvement in criminal activities. Contrary to this assumption, facts indicate that youth who go through the adult criminal courts have a higher rate of recidivism than those who go through the juvenile justice system. Finally, he argued that, contrary to the myth that nothing works with respect to treating and preventing violence, there are effective intervention programs that meet high scientific standards. In conclusion, he suggested that the commission should, like the Omega Boys Club, adopt a systemic, long-term approach to rehabilitation, based on the application of public health principles and strategies. He directed the commission to seriously consider the recommendations of the Surgeon General's Report.



**Gregory Slocum  
San Francisco Resident**

Mr. Slocum spoke about the need to build understanding and trust between the community and law enforcement organizations and personnel. Fear and distrust characterize the existing relationship between law enforcement and segments of the community. In his view, trust between the two groups could be fostered by law enforcement officers taking time to go into the communities to interact with the people one on one, instead of a engaging in more formal interactions that promote fear and distrust. Members of the community should be made to understand and accept that not all city and law enforcement officials are enemies. He noted that it would take time to build a relationship of trust between the two groups, but suggested that it is important to admit the existence of the problem and to begin to establish informal channels of contact and communication.

**Paul Cummins  
Chief Assistant District Attorney**

Mr. Cummins remarked that one of the major problems in San Francisco is that people are afraid to come forward and provide information to the police when crimes have been committed. He spoke about an incident where a person was brave enough to come forward and testify against an accused criminal, but was killed three days before he was to testify. He lamented the pervasiveness of retaliation and violence, and said that in his 54 years of living in San Francisco he had never seen this level of violence. On the role of the District Attorney's office, he stated that by the time the matter gets to the DA's office, the violence has already taken place and all the DA can do is to vigorously investigate and prosecute the case, and to ensure that the perpetrators face the full force of the law. In discussing the suggestions for the use of community District Attorneys



who will be assigned to certain neighborhoods, like a storefront-DA in the Bayview, he stated that such a program would need monetary and material resources, as well as Board approval.

**Sharon Wu**  
**Gang Division, District Attorney's Office**

Ms. Wu reaffirmed Mr. Cummins' statement that there is an urgent need to find a way of encouraging witnesses of a crime to come forward and assist the law enforcement agencies. She added that a big challenge to the San Francisco Police Department is the reluctance of witnesses to come forward and testify due to concerns for their safety. To this end, Ms. Wu said that her department is in the process of setting up a witness relocation program, but cautioned that the process is going to be difficult. In her view, gang violence is a major problem and not localized in one community. Community cooperation with law enforcement in terms of coming forward with material evidence would be of great help in fighting gang violence.

**Liz Aguilar-Tarchi**  
**Narcotics Division, District Attorney's Office**

Ms. Aguilar-Tarchi began by stating that central to most cases of violence and gun use is the issue of narcotics abuse or sale of narcotics. She mentioned that street level drug dealing has been a major community concern in San Francisco and expressed concern at the staggering number of narcotics-related arrests made in San Francisco: 600 to 650 arrests every month. While this number of arrests places a strain on the resources of her department, the department nonetheless maintains a policy of aggressively investigating and prosecuting all narcotics cases. As part of its comprehensive strategy of fighting the problem of narcotics, her department channels eligible users of narcotics to drug treatment programs designed to assist users in their recovery. In her view,





all communities share the same law enforcement concern of reducing street violence and stopping street-level drug dealing. She concluded by indicating that it is the goal of her department to work with other law enforcement agencies to eliminate or minimize drug dealing and the violence it promotes.

**Mu-Lin Lai and Marlene Tran  
San Francisco Residents**

Ms. Mu-Lin, who has been in the United States for less than a year, spoke about the frightening experience of her sons who, on November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2000, were accosted by two people on their way back from school and violently attacked. She stated that it was the intervention of a good Samaritan that prevented her younger son from being stomped to death by his attackers. Her son suffered serious injuries as a result of the attack, and when the police arrived at the scene they were not able to provide much assistance. She had to take her son to the hospital by taxi, as she could not afford the cost of ambulance (which she was told would cost between \$400 and \$600). She said she has been so traumatized by the experience that she felt the need to relate it to the Commission. Ms. Mu-Lin expressed the difficulty in communicating with the police and emergency services during her son's ordeal, and deplored the lack of facilities to help those who have language problems, like her.

Ms. Tran, a teacher of English as a Second Language, assisted Ms. Mu-Lin through her ordeal. She complained about the lack of resources for people with language difficulties, and stated that non-English speakers find it difficult to access government services without the help of translators. For example, in an informal survey she did in 1995, 60% of her students had been victims of crimes, but most had difficulty with accessing or were reluctant to contact law enforcement agencies due to their language difficulties. She noted that while there are all sorts of assistance for people with disabilities, services for those with language difficulties are insufficient. In her view, government statistics on hate



and other crimes may be inaccurate because people with language difficulties are often hesitant in filing formal complaints.

**Fred Persily**  
**California Association of Human Relations Organizations**

Mr. Persily spoke about two successful youth violence prevention programs with which he has been involved, and suggested that the Commission would benefit by drawing from the positive aspects of those programs.

He began with the Santa Fe Springs program. A few years ago the community of Santa Fe Springs was plagued by youth violence and gang activities. There had been several homicides and there was a lot of hostility between law enforcement and the community. The city established channels of communication with the youth and sought their input in fighting street violence. In conjunction with the youth, the city devised a strategy for reducing the level of violence and curbing the degree of suspicion and hostility between the youth and the law enforcement agencies. The measures taken by the city included providing more youth recreation facilities, offering counseling services to those in need, and changing the role of law enforcement personnel. Mr. Persily emphasized the change in the role of law enforcement officials, who were required to spend more time building informal relationships with the young people. For example, officers participated in sports activities with local youth. He noted that, as a consequence of these measures, the rate of violence was substantially reduced.

Mr. Persily also related his experience in North Richmond, where he was involved in devising a strategy for addressing the increased level of violence in the city. Working with at-risk young people in the affected areas, the city created a community justice council made up of young people from different groups and people from neighborhood communities. These young people were linked with seniors from their communities in order to sensitize them to each other's perspective and to provide channels of communication between them.



He ended by lamenting the distrust and distance between law enforcement and the community. In particular, he mentioned that some young people feel disrespected by the police because they feel they are over-policed. He emphasized the importance of bridging the divide between the two groups, but noted that the strategy for accomplishing this should include focusing on the real needs of young people and on ways of demonstrating to them that they too have a vested interest in reducing violent incidents in their communities. What is needed is “going in and really talking about what are some of the needs in the community and how we can work with the youth to begin to address some of the problems they are facing.” In his view, it is only in addressing the needs of the youth that they can be made to see that they have a stake in maintaining law and order.

**Myron Howard Johnson**  
**Chairman, Youth Commission**

Mr. Johnson made several suggestions on how to address the problem of violence in the community. First, he suggested that police officers be made to visit public high and middle schools to talk with students as a means of both educating the students and creating better relationships between young people and the police. Second, he suggested that police officers should undergo training on how to interact with, and relate to, young people. Third, he was of the view that centers of criminal activities in the city should be cleaned up so that young people could have a more pleasant social environment. Fourth, he deplored the lack of youth participation in the activities of the commission and other public agencies engaged in addressing the issue of violence, as this prevents these bodies from getting the perspective of those directly involved in the matter at issue. He emphasized the need for involving young people in the deliberative activities of the Commission and other public agencies.



**Lieutenant Kitt Crenshaw  
SFPD Gang Unit**

Mr. Crenshaw grew up in Bayview/Hunter's Point and has been a member of the Police department for approximately twenty-four years. He spoke about the increased level of violence in Western Addition and Bayview/Hunter's Point. In response to complaints that the police are not doing enough to address the problem, he asserted, "this is not a police vs. community problem. This is a community vs. community problem." He noted that the root causes of the problem of violence in these communities do not lie with the police, but are social or "societal." In his view, "the situation in Bayview/Hunter's Point is primarily about respect and about disrespect, not against police or anyone else." He added that most of the people involved in these violent activities are in fact grown men, not the youth. They are mostly in their early to late twenties, even thirties. He suggested that the problems posed by this class of people are different from those concerning youth of about 13 or 14 years.

He identified the proliferation of guns as one of the major reasons for the increased level of violence, and criticized the liberal attitude towards gun possession. Lieutenant Krenshaw noted that the problem of violence is cyclic and stated that there should be a concerted plan of action to fight the problem. This long-term strategy would involve a complete program that includes school education, community awareness training, anti-drug and anti-gang campaigns, and a program to foster self-esteem among youth people. He criticized what he termed the short-term perspective of the society in addressing the problem, in particular the de-funding of effective programs, such as the midnight basketball program.

**Susan London  
Executive Director, San Francisco Safe**

San Francisco Safe is a non-profit organization involved in crime prevention, education, and public safety. The organization runs the Neighborhood Safety



Partnership program, funded by the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice. This program provides a crime prevention worker for each police district. Ms. London said the neighborhood watch groups have succeeded in significantly reducing the level of crime in the city.

One of the roles of the organization is to act a liaison between the police and the community. In this regard, Ms. London stated that there is not much trust between the police and segments of the community. Her organization is trying to work with the police, especially those officers that work at the street level, to motivate them to become part of the communities in which they work. She lamented the fact that over the years, informal police interaction with the community, such as police involvement in drug education in neighborhood schools, has largely been abandoned. She stressed the importance of building a trusting relationship between the police and the community. In her view, community policing got off to a bad start in San Francisco and there is a need to devise a model of community policing that will get the police actively involved in the life of the communities they police. She also condemned the lack of communication between the city departments and non-profits engaged in community activities, and between communities and city departments.

**James Head**

**Executive Director, National Economic Development and Law Center**

Mr. Head began with the suggestion that in attempting to understand the problem of violence in communities in San Francisco, the Commission should focus on the "economic instability in these communities." In his view, there is ample data to support the notion that the more economically stable a community or neighborhood is, the less likely it is to suffer significant violence or violent conditions. He argued that the same principle applies to individuals: the more economically stable they are, the less likely they are to engage in violent or anti-social activities. The most effective strategy for combating violence therefore is the maintenance of economic stability in these communities, coupled with the



creation of strong community neighborhood institutions and support systems. In his view, the Commission would be remiss if it does not seriously look at the causes of economic destabilization in these communities as one of the primary, if not the sole, cause of the continuing and increasing violence. The work of the Law Center indicates that lack of employment opportunities and the lack of stable economic home life significantly contribute to the level of violent activities in these communities. In this regard, he recommended that the Commission explore ways the city and other agencies could affirmatively create a more stable economic climate in these communities. In conclusion, he reaffirmed that there is a clear connection between economic betterment in these communities and a decrease in violence, and stated that if this connection is energetically addressed through remedial measures, “we will begin to see the kinds of decrease in violence that we are all looking for.”

**James E. Hooker**  
**Job Developer, Mayor’s Youth Employment Education Program**

Mr. Hooker stated that most of the young people involved in violent activities and drug dealing are, like other members of society, struggling with the problems of daily existence: “They want a decent life. They want a decent place to live. They want an opportunity to exist like regular human beings.” Most of these young people feel left out in the prosperity of the nation. Some of them consider selling drugs and engaging in other forms of criminal activities as a means of survival. Nonetheless, Mr. Hooker questioned why the police are not even-handed and strident in enforcing anti-narcotics law in some communities. “ So you tell me how they can sell dope right in front of the police station on Market Street and in our neighborhoods, but I bet you they can’t sell any drugs in Pacific Heights or St. Francis Circle.” Mr. Hooker recommended more communication between young people and government agencies such as the Commission. In conclusion, he advocated more accountability from agencies that are funded by the government as part of the battle against street violence.



## **Mayor's Youth Focus Groups**

### **March 5, 2001 – City Hall, San Francisco**

On March 5, 2001, high school age youth from different schools in San Francisco were invited to discuss gun violence and strategies for crime prevention. The participants were split into three groups and came up with a variety of ways in which the city could help prevent neighborhood crime. One of the major areas of agreement among the participants was that the easy availability of guns and environmental variables are major factors in the increasing level of violence in the city. The following is a summary of the recommendations made by the various youth focus groups.

#### **Group One**

The group emphasized the importance of mentorship as a means of guidance and leadership for youth. The group felt that peer and adult mentorship is particularly crucial to those youth that do not have good role models at home. Participants stressed the usefulness of mentoring by people from the environment of the mentee. Mentors who share a similar background and experiences with their mentee can motivate their mentees to rise above the immediate difficulties and limitations of their situation.

Group One participants further stressed the importance of inculcating the value of education in the youth and in improving the educational experience of students. Smaller class sizes, better learning facilities, better training for teachers, and a more flexible school system were suggested as a means of improving the educational system. Youth leadership classes were mentioned as means by which the youth could be taught civic lessons on how to be valuable participants in civil society. The value of after-school programs was also highlighted. Participants suggested that after-school programs, such as music, theatre, dance, sports, writing, photography, art, and pottery are all ways of



teaching the youth useful skills, and of keeping them actively engaged in valuable activities.

Participants spoke about the importance of job and apprenticeship training that would help provide valuable skills to at-risk youth. This is particularly necessary in view of the evidence that most of the youth that engage in acts of violence lack the requisite skills that would help them find gainful employment in the formal economy. It was suggested that there should be more specialized internships and that youth in training should have the opportunity to shadow people in the jobs they want. The group lamented what they considered the negativity and stereotyping in the news media's reporting of the issue of violence, and the excessive focus on negative events.

### **Group Two**

Group Two stressed the importance of mentorship programs. Participants spoke about the need to provide mentoring not only for the youth but also for young parents. Access to positive authority figures, such as police and counselors, was mentioned as an important means of lessening the distrust between some youth and public officials. Peer and adult counseling, coupled with anger management classes, were suggested as ways of teaching the youth more functional ways of resolving conflicts.

### **Group Three**

Group Three affirmed the importance of education in broadening the thinking of the youth and in equipping them with the skills necessary for participation in adult society. The group stressed the need for improving the school system by making school schedules and requirements more flexible, by providing more after-school programs, and by making facilities more affordable. The group highlighted the need for employment development activities. Participants requested more employment opportunities for youth, and spoke





about the importance of exposing kids to honest work environments at an early age. On the issue of crime, some participants expressed the desire for less visible policing of the communities, and for an improvement in police attitude and techniques of policing.



## **PART FOUR: COMMUNITY MEETINGS**

In preparation for the Mayor's Crime Summit, HRC sponsored community meetings in the communities of color affected by the proliferation of violence. The communities involved were Visitacion Valley, Bayview/Hunter's Point, Western Addition and the Mission District. The proceedings are summarized below.

### **Visitacion Valley February 24, 2001**

The community meeting explored the issue of gun violence in the city and suggested ways of reducing the present level of violence. The focus was on law enforcement techniques, improvement in city services, improvement in educational services, and changes in media attitude to reporting issues involving communities of color.

With respect to law enforcement, the consensus was that the ready availability of guns to the youth was a major factor in the increasing level of violence in the city. Participants criticized the availability of guns on the streets in the Visitacion Valley Community. They also spoke about ways of improving the policing in their neighborhood. Suggestions included making police stations more accessible to the neighborhood, hiring more bilingual and culturally diverse police officers, providing sensitivity and diversity training to the police, and initiating a system of community policing. Putting more police on the beat was viewed as a way of making the police more accessible to the community and familiarizing the police with the life and culture of the communities in which they work. It was suggested that the accessibility of the police in the neighborhood could be increased by opening a police station at the MUNI site in Visitacion Valley and by providing some police presence in the 7-11 store at Bayshore.



Participants also argued for more presence in the neighborhood by City officials and access to bilingual civil servants. They deplored the lack of government resources in the neighborhood and expressed a desire for cleaner streets and parks, as well as better city planning in conjunction with the community. They also stressed the need for increased access to therapy and mental health services in the neighborhood.

Various participants wanted improvements in the school and education system, such as the provision of more ESL courses and the initiation of youth academic achievement awards. On fighting crime, some participants expressed the view that there should be more emphasis on prevention programs rather than incarceration, and that there should be increased funding for community initiatives designed to battle crime.



## **Bayview/Hunter's Point**

### **February 27, 2001**

The discussion focused on ways of reducing the level of gun violence in the community. Contributors spoke about how crime prevention policies, education, and employment development could be used to reduce incidents of violence in the community.

On crime prevention and law enforcement, participants suggested that the police and Housing Authority should not use public housing as crime containment centers. To this end, the authority should adopt and enforce a one-strike eviction law in public housing and eliminate selective eviction from public housing projects. Some participants were of the view that the police should be more rigorous in enforcing quality of life laws against loitering so as to retard open-air drug dealing and prostitution in the community. Improved local police responsiveness and accountability were also considered important factors in reducing crime in the community.

Various participants expressed the view that faith based organizations should be used in providing support to needy families. There was some complaint that the level of deductions made from the checks of single fathers might act as a disincentive for some of these men to remain gainfully employment in the formal economy. It was felt that the city should be more proactive in funding services for single fathers.

Education was another major focus of the discussion. Participants stressed the importance of sponsoring community activities that validate youth successes as they progress through the school system. Smaller class sizes for special needs students and increased after-school programs were also viewed as effective ways of increasing retention rates and improving the overall educational experience of students.



Furthermore, participants advocated for increased employment development activities in the affected communities. The city should become more actively involved in creating jobs for youth in these communities. Apprenticeship training and youth mentorship in corporate offices were two of the ways recommended for stimulating youth employment in both blue and white-collar jobs. It was also recommend that the city should reopen, fund and replicate successful vocational programs like the SLUG and Safe Heaven programs. In regard to offenders, participants noted that emphasis should be placed more on rehabilitation than punishment. To this end, the state should ensure that incarcerated offenders have access to educational programs that would equip them with the skills necessary to gain entry into the new economy.

In conclusion, there was a call for improved city services and greater accountability on the part of organizations that provide services on behalf of the city or receive funds from the city. Decentralization of city services in the neighborhoods and the provision of one-stop city service shops were also suggested as ways of making the government more accessible to the community.



## **Western Addition**

### **February 28, 2001**

Participants focused on the role of law enforcement, economic development, and community initiatives in battling the escalating problem of violence in the community. In discussing the role of law enforcement, several participants expressed the need for more community centered policing. It was felt that a system of community policing would make the police more effective in fighting criminal activities in the community and also contribute to reducing the distrust between the police and segments of the community. Community policing would involve more police walking the streets and interacting with the residents. Residents should also play a greater role in ensuring police accountability by attending community police meetings. Sensitivity and diversity training for the police were also suggested as means of helping the police work more effectively with the community. Diversity in the membership of the police force was considered crucial in this regard. Participants also spoke about the need for the police to be more aggressive in arresting and prosecuting “professional criminals” who refuse to use the services available to them for self-improvement. Some contributors wanted to see more exit programs for youth who are leaving the juvenile justice system. Such programs should be geared toward helping offenders to fully reintegrate into the community, without the stigma attached to their status as ex-convicts.

Regarding economic development, participants argued for a strategy of combining educational and employment activities so as to help youth acquire the skills needed to find gainful employment in the new economy. Some participants suggested that the city should initiate an entrepreneurial program that would assist the youth in developing critical skills and prepare them to go into the business community. Additionally, the city should work to cultivate a pool of private and public employers that would hire and sponsor youth from distressed



communities, and assist them in cultivating the networks needed for working in the adult world.

Another issue addressed was the provision of educational and youth services to the affected communities. It was suggested that public schools should offer anger management classes and also teach mediation and reconciliation skills to their students. Small class sizes were recommended for individuals who are at risk of falling through the cracks in the public school system. Many at-risk students are intimidated by large class sizes and are inclined to drop out. Smaller class sizes would help encourage them to participate more actively in class activities. Several contributors advocated for more after-school programs to keep the youth engaged and to discourage them from loitering around in street corners. Programs like Midnight Basketball were suggested as effective models.

With regard to community development, many participants were of the view that the community and the city should establish criteria for judging the effectiveness of publicly-funded community programs. Community based organizations must learn to work together and to maximize outreach and accessibility. Community programs should also be made more accountable and ineffective programs de-funded. Given the role of faith-based organizations in the affected communities, it was argued that these organizations should be encouraged to play a more active role in addressing the issue of violence in the community. Participants also spoke of the importance of improving the condition of subsidized housing projects in the city and ensuring that only genuinely needy people are accepted into such housing.

Additional issues raised included the creation of a public forum for the media and the community to address the issue of media coverage of communities of color. Participants voiced their demands for more counseling services and mental health programs in the affected communities. They also stressed the need for city agencies to better coordinate their resources and



requested the creation of a centralized database of programs available to the communities. Most importantly, they asked that city officials be more responsive to the questions and concerns of the community.





## **Mission District**

### **March 2, 2001**

Participants at the community focus group highlighted the important role that education, the media, and law enforcement agencies could play in curbing the gun violence plaguing the city. Much of the discussion focused on changes in the law enforcement system that would make the system better equipped to address the problem of violence in the community.

Many participants spoke about the necessity of building a better relationship between the community and the police. The distrust between segments of the community and the police was portrayed as one of the main factors preventing full community cooperation with the police in the battle against violence. Suggestions on how to improve the relationship between the two groups include taking officers out of cars and into the streets, re-establishing the Police Athletic League, stabilizing the tenure of district police captains, and reducing racial and gang profiling by the police. It was also suggested that the re-institution of the Police-Community Relations Unit would go a long way in improving relationship between the police and community members, as it provides a forum for communicative interaction between the two, and allows concerned citizens to publicly express their concerns without allowing them to fester. Another important issue suggested as vital to community cooperation with the police was effective protection of witnesses of violence, who often become targets for victimization and retaliation. Other suggestions made in regard to law enforcement include making guns less available to youth, and providing positive rehabilitation for both offenders and ex-offenders.

Participants also expressed the need for city services and departments to be made more accessible to the community. Of particular concern to many speakers was the difficulty experienced by many non-English speakers in trying to access city services. Greater availability of bilingual city officials and



translators would go a long way in redressing this situation. Additionally, speakers were interested in seeing the city issue a comprehensive catalogue of programs available to the community, and opening one-stop community outreach centers where those in need could go to obtain city services.

With respect to education, participants stressed the need for increased and improved after-school/evening programs for youth, as these would offer them a welcome alternative to loitering around the streets. It was also suggested that schools should teach skills courses, like dispute resolution, anger management, and first aid as a means of equipping youth with the skills they need to contend with the problems they face on the streets.

Finally, the meeting addressed the issue of the role of the media in the escalating problem of violence. Many speakers felt that the media has played a negative role in the matter, by frequently concentrating on negative images of youth, and resorting to stereotypes and stock images in their reporting of community issues. It was felt that the media should be more responsive to the problems facing the communities on which they report, and should be made more accountable for the quality and content of their reporting.



## **City-Wide Forum on the Role of the Media**

**June 6, 2001**

### **Hunter Cutting Executive Director, We Interrupt This Message**

We Interrupt This Message is a national non-profit media strategy and training center “dedicated to building capacity in grassroots and public interest organizations to conduct traditional media work, as well as to monitor public debate and interrupt media stereotypes.” The organization is particularly committed to working with communities of color around issues of bias in the media.

Mr. Cutting framed his testimony by characterizing the media coverage of violence in communities of color as extremely problematic. This has in turn led to problems in the development of public policy to address issues of violence and inhibited efforts to support communities of color. He highlighted several ways in which media reporting of violence in communities of color is problematic.

Media coverage of violence in communities of color is different from the way it covers violence in white communities. According to Mr. Cutting, the media rarely quotes people of color and alleged perpetrators are usually not given any biographical profiles by the media. Where such profiles are given, they are usually negative and rarely touch upon their successes and their role as family people or as workers in the community. In addition, he pointed out that pictures and photographs of alleged perpetrators who are black or Latino are very different from pictures of alleged white perpetrators: the latter are invariably photographed in coats and ties, whereas the former are usually photographed in shackles and in prison clothes.

Mr. Cutting also spoke about the way the media frames issues relating to people of color and indicated that there is a tendency to dehumanize people of color and to trivialize matters relating to them. He gave the example of media



reports arising from an incident where an unarmed African American man was killed by a police officer. According to Mr. Cutting, in trying to explain why men (mostly African Americans) were dying in police custody, the San Francisco Chronicle suggested the reason as “Sudden Custody Death Syndrome.” He felt that this type of reporting tended to trivialize the problems facing people of color. In contrast, he suggested that the media are often more measured in their reporting of matters relating to the white community. He gave the example of an article that ran in the Los Angeles Times about a gang called “The Slick Fifties,” some of whose members were tried and found guilty of serious crimes by a jury. In reporting the issue, Mr. Cutting pointed out that the newspaper did not use the word “gang” to describe the white juveniles involved in the case. In contrast, in cases involving African Americans and Latinos, the word gang becomes a readily available adjective used by the media to dehumanize the youth involved by painting a one-dimensional portrait.

He further argued that media coverage of violence in communities of color is often episodic and decontextualized, with little regard to the larger themes that affect the issue. He gave the examples of reporting on gun violence that rarely focus on the sources of the guns used by those involved in the crime, and that infrequently explore the role of poverty and other social factors that influence the actions of the perpetrators. In most instances, the media gives emphasis to the race of the perpetrator, a tendency that reinforces the wrong impression that race is what is behind the violence in communities of color.

He further suggested that there is perhaps too much emphasis on race in reporting incidents of violence, especially when the alleged perpetrator is a person of color. “When violence is covered in communities of color, race is front and center. When violence is committed in white communities, race is not a part of the picture.” He gave the example of school shootings, where the perpetrators are usually white and where the issue is rarely reported in terms of problems within white families that might be leading these young men to commit such



crimes. In contrast, reporting of incidents of violence involving African Americans often focus on problems in African American families that might be contributing to such incidents.

He next spoke about the lack of integration in most newsrooms, particularly in San Francisco. This problem has been much analyzed by the Center for the Integration and Improvement of Journalism at San Francisco State University. He argued that the lack of integration in newsroom is a serious problem in view of the fact that “the whole process of working with the media is often about relationships.” Those with access to and established relationships with media contacts are better able to place their stories in the papers and to ensure that their perspectives are properly reflected in news reporting. Because “most newsrooms are white,” it is much harder for peoples of color, who are poorly represented in newsrooms, to get stories reported from their perspectives.

Additionally, he spoke about the issue of the sourcing of media reports involving violence in communities of color. He indicated that in most instances the people interviewed are police officers and attorneys. Rarely are community advocates and civil rights advocates interviewed to make the reporting more balanced in terms of the contending perspectives. The consequence of this type of reporting is that the voice of the community is silenced and outsiders begin to see the community in the light of the picture painted by law enforcement personnel.

Mr. Cutting went on to suggest ways in which the problem of media coverage of violence involving peoples of color could be addressed. He emphasized the importance of helping communities of color to do a better job in getting their voices across to the news media and to challenge the media biases they see. On challenging media bias, he gave the example of a group of youth from the South Bronx in New York that analyzed how the New York Times covers youth violence. Their findings were grim, especially in regard to how the newspaper covered youth of color. They initiated a meeting/dialogue with the



editors of the newspaper where they communicated their findings and made suggestions on how the reporting might be improved. Mr. Cutting felt that this kind of direct intervention by the community is important because it carries a “mandate of moral authority,” as the community is a powerful voice which can help illustrate to the media the consequences of dehumanizing and decontextual reporting of incidents involving people of color.

Mr. Cutting was of the view that the communities concerned could work to help journalists do a better job of covering violence in communities of color. This task is currently being undertaken by organizations like the Maynard Institute, and the affected communities could draw from the experience of organizations like Maynard in learning how to relay their messages and stories through the media. He added that the Commission and other government agencies could assist communities of color in their interaction with the news media by providing training and technical assistance to these communities because they often lack the resources to effectively work with and challenge biases in the media.

Finally, he emphasized the importance of documenting media bias and holding it up to the light for everyone to see. This is a particularly powerful tool because news organizations, as business units, are conscious of their public image and have a self-interest in reforming their coverage when they are shown to be biased or otherwise negative in their reporting of segments of the community.

**Dori Maynard**  
**President, Robert C. Maynard Institute for Journalism Education**

Ms. Maynard spoke about the fault lines framework, which was developed by her father, the former owner and publisher of the Oakland tribune. Her father intended the framework as a tool that journalists and community members could use to examine and to reframe the issue of media coverage. It was also intended to provide a vehicle for people to talk across the difficult issues that face



the society with the goal of understanding each others' viewpoints, without necessarily agreeing with them.

This framework is premised on the idea that we as a nation are divided along five fault lines: the fault lines of race, class, gender, generation and geography. These fault lines affect our worldviews, and it is time to admit the differences that flow from the influences of these fault lines and to begin to think about them in a more sophisticated manner. In her view, these fault lines shape our perceptions of news events, each other and ourselves. She gave the example of a clip shown at a conference of Ted Koppel interviewing some white people in Philadelphia on why they did not want black people to move into their neighborhoods, because when black people move in crime skyrockets and property prices plummet. She said she felt there was no context to the presentation and pointed this out to her discussion group. Subsequently, another speaker, a white participant, expressed the view that there was no context to the presentation and that without context the piece made all white people look as if they were racists. She said this illustrated how fault lines affect worldviews because while her issue of lack of context was based on the fact that the presentation did not explore the root causes of the negative perception of black people, the other participant's concern was with the perception of white people as racists.

She suggested that, similar to the above example, the problem associated with media coverage of violence in communities of color is a problem of fault lines. According to her, it is a problem of perspective, one that is heightened by the fact that the media by virtue of its role in society has earned a right to have its point of view widely propagated. The fault lines she outlined above influence the point of view of journalists. Thus, race, class, geography, gender and geography all play a role in determining how the media cover issues. Consequently, in analyzing the nature of media coverage of communities of color, and solutions to



the problems that arise from it, one has to take into account how the fault lines influence the perspectives of those in the news media.

The fault lines framework puts in sharp perspective the diversity of views in society and the need for journalists to safeguard their credibility by ensuring accuracy in their reporting and by giving room for the articulation of the diversity of voices in the community. She suggested that, given the ethnic diversity of the community and the proliferation of ways of accessing information, it is in the interest of the news media to ensure that they do not marginalize certain voices in the community. Otherwise those who feel marginalized will migrate to other news sources, thereby depriving the traditional news media of circulation and advertising.

She concluded by making suggestions on how the problem of media coverage of minority communities could be addressed. First, she advocated for a content audit of the news media, as this would give both the communities and the news media empirical and scientific proof of biases in news reporting. Members of some communities often complain about what they characterize as usually negative coverage of their communities, whereas the news organizations would typically try to refute the accusations by pointing to one or two positive news items involving the concerned community. Ms. Maynard declared that properly conducted content audits would yield scientific evidence of bias or lack of it, and would provide communities and news agencies with a basis for conversation. Secondly, she suggested that, in order to change the nature of media coverage, it is vital to provide both journalists and community members with a way of talking across the fault line. Finally, she recommended giving community members some fault line training so that they could have another vehicle with which to communicate with journalists.





### **Commissioner Charles Ward**

In response to Ms. Maynard's presentation, Commissioner Ward indicated that the problem of bias in the media is not limited to print media but also extends to advertising. He gave the example of an advertisement commissioned by the San Francisco Jazz Festival, of which he is a director. An advertising agency was commissioned to develop a TV spot on a concept he originally considered refreshing. The concept involved a group of young men driving around in a car, listening to jazz. As they approach a stoplight, there is a pedestrian waiting to cross the road. Not wanting to be thought "uncool" for their age group, they change the music to some popular form of music for their age bracket. When the light changes, they switch back to the jazz as they drive off. Commissioner Ward felt that this was an interesting concept. When the agency turned in the finished product for approval, however, it was radically different from what he had envisioned. "They put the guys in a low rider car. They put bandanas on their heads. They gave them the appearance of gang members. The pedestrian at the corner was a white guy who became frightened when they stopped because they glared at him, and when the light changed and they went on, he relaxed."

The festival committee refused to air the commercial due to the stereotypes it reinforced and the negative images it promoted. Nonetheless, the agency entered the commercial in competitions in England and France where it won two grand prizes. He lamented the fact that negative images such as those portrayed in the commercial have a direct and substantial impact on the lives of members of the community, who have to suffer the consequences of being treated poorly and evaluated in light of such images.

### **Commissioner Martha Knutzen**

In response to Commissioner Ward's example, Commissioner Knutzen suggested that one solution to negative stereotyping by the media is to cut off their income stream by boycotting media organizations that engage in such



negative activities. She commended the festival committee for not airing the commercial, because the committee eliminated a part of the agency's income stream. She suggested that communities of color should begin to use the resources they have in fighting negative media images, rather than fighting "year 2001 problems with 1960 tactics."

**Eva Martinez**  
**Director, Center for Integration and Improvement of Journalism**

Ms. Martinez was unable to attend the forum. However, she sent the following statement, which was read into the record.

I am sorry that I could not appear before you today in person. However, I would like to make some comments about news coverage of crime in African American communities.

On one hand, the news media are often criticized, and rightfully so, for only printing negative news about the community. In this case the news is significantly skewed. Countless articles about gang violence are never balanced with stories about youth doing anti-gang work. The African American church, which is often the cornerstone of the community, only appears in print when there is a scandal. The portrayals of young females seldom go beyond that of the "pregnant teen on welfare" paradigm. This narrow vision of a complex community is just one example of bad journalism.

On the other hand, and perhaps even more sinister in its consequence, is when the news media ignore events occurring in the community. This seems to be the case before us now.

From all outward appearances, a gang-related crime spree occurred earlier this year in the Hunter's Point/Visitacion Valley community. People were murdered and terrorized. Yet there was very little coverage of these events in the San Francisco news media.

When I hear about this journalistic attention-deficit, I can't help but wonder if some how someone at the newspaper or station has decided that the lives of



people in this community are not as important as those in, say, Pacific Heights. Do we, the public, put up with this imbalance in coverage because “those people” over there aren’t the same as us good, law abiding people?

There is a cynical side to journalism that seeks out the extreme, exotic and atypical because it is sexier than reporting on the normal and mundane. In some strange tweak of events, murder in the Hunter’s Point has apparently become too normal and mundane to cover.

In her study entitled “What Color is the News?,” San Francisco State Journalism Professor Erna Smith suggested some important remedies. One is called “mainstreaming,” in which people of color are featured in articles about every day topics. Covering the daily goings-on and concerns of people in the African American community would help the general public think more in terms of “we” instead of “them.” It would make a clear statement that a human life ended by violence is a tragedy no matter where or how it happened.

We cannot allow a situation where murder and mayhem in the African American community is considered a part of normal life. It’s not and, just like in other communities, it is a major tragedy when it happens. If reporters spend some time there they would not only realize this but would, no doubt, uncover some truly wonderful stories about the spirit and heart of the community. And readers in other communities would discover that “those people over there” are more like us than not.



## **PART FIVE: CONCLUSION**

The results of this report represent a significant expression of community desire to deal with the problem of violence. Communities of color and youth in San Francisco clearly recognize that violence is not merely a law enforcement issue; it must be dealt with in a comprehensive, programmatic fashion. A strong, healthy community will be free from the ravages of violence.

Without a commitment to enacting the community will, the spate of violence that gave rise to this report will occur again. The only thing worse than a life lost is a life lost that could have been saved. Communities of color and the youth have told us what it will take to prevent another person from falling to violence. The care put into this report by the affected communities should serve as inspiration. Community resolve, coupled with political determination, will overcome violence.



## **APPENDIX A: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

The public hearings and community meetings hosted by the Human Rights Commission addressed the issues emanating from violence in communities of color throughout San Francisco and identified plausible solutions. This section of the report affirms that past and present concerns relating to violence in communities of color are not new phenomena. One only needs to review this and other research to understand that violence continues to confront communities of color, and even when solutions are presented to address the problems, little is done in a comprehensive manner with the necessary safe guards to assure success. Thus the system continues to spend money and attempts continue to fail, even though this failure indirectly negatively affects the larger community. It is said that those who do not know history are doomed to repeat it. Before rushing to judgment regarding the causes of violence in communities of color, it is important to give a historical perspective of violence in the United States in general, and San Francisco in particular.

**James Lance Taylor, PHD**  
University of San Francisco  
Department of Politics

### **I. Introduction**

Tragically, violence--particularly gun-related violence--has become commonplace in most poorer and working-class African-American and Hispanic/Latino communities across the United States over the past two decades; communities of color in the city of San Francisco have not been spared. The characteristics of this violence are so varied and complex that they have contributed to a vast and often conflicted literature on the subject. Some research points to individual behavioral factors while competing theories locate



the problem of violence in terms of systematic or institutionalized racial and economic discrimination inherent in the structures of society and the economy.

Since the early 1980s the death tolls of young African Americans and Hispanic/Latinos have been so high that they have fostered a veritable "death industry" which includes life insurance agencies, federal medical "war zone" bullet impact studies,<sup>1</sup> mortuary-related services, and a morbid genre of "rap" "hip-hop" music that thrives in these communities. The causes of violence in communities of color are more complex than its many depressing effects; they range from intrapsychic motivations to sociological factors related to the pursuit or maintenance of class, race, and gender or market hierarchies. Several observers point to the proliferation of illicit drug markets in urban settings such as New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Miami, Detroit, Philadelphia, Oakland, and San Francisco that import from foreign soil.<sup>2</sup> In these and many other cities, census tracts that have predominate or significant African American and/or Hispanic/Latino populations have become synonymous with inner-city "bad neighborhoods," the chief producers of "America's criminal classes."<sup>3</sup> One study linked the stress of violence in poor inner-city neighborhoods to increases in heart attacks among African American men.<sup>4</sup> While this study is interested in surveying the effects of violence on communities of color in general, its emphasis is primarily on violence in the San Francisco's African American communities. This is so mainly because the most immediate crisis of violence has been located in the city's predominately Black communities. Violence in African American communities has had the tripartite effect of exacerbating tenuous community ties, trivializing homicide and death, and buttressing the overrepresentation of men of color in prisons across the state of California and the nation.

This essay attempts to provide some history and context to the issue of urban violence in communities of color generally and the city of San Francisco more specifically using the available official documents, newspaper reports, advocacy reports, public testimony, agency reports, statistical data, and extant



literature on the subject as they inform the Human Rights Commission City and County of San Francisco's (HRC) interest and jurisdiction in the matter. This analysis begins with an overview of the major factors that contribute to urban violence in communities of color nationally. Theories concerning the causes and effects of violence are followed by a comparative analysis of statistical data on Part I violent crimes<sup>5</sup> between the city of San Francisco, and major cities nationally, state, and county-wide, and among its specific communities.

An important challenge emanating from these data is understanding the total effect that violence has, not only in its immediate environs, but also on every community in the city of San Francisco. Similar to cities across the nation, the problems that affect communities of color in San Francisco are often quarantined and presented in mass media and law enforcement circles as the pathologies of Blacks and Hispanic/Latinos that are best remedied through retributive laws and law enforcement practices. Violence creates distrust and fear within communities and it is also integral to breaches between communities. The unique topographical outline and steady demographic alterations which have grayed formerly segregated sections of the city undermine the isolationism that characterizes suburbia and affluent sections of cities elsewhere, iterating the point that the problems of one section of San Francisco are the problems of each section. The poor and working-class Western Addition, for instance, borders the affluence of Pacific Heights, and like Bayview/Hunter's Point and Oceanside, Merced and Ingleside (OMI), migration patterns and housing scarcity have made it increasingly less racially homogenous over the past decade.<sup>6</sup>

## **II. Factors Contributing to Violence in American Cities**

### *A. Violence and Intelligence*

Conservative and progressive commentators alike have sought to explain violence in urban settings as the manifestation of "cultural defects" or "psychological longings" in communities of color. A major proponent of the



former is Harvard University's Charles Murray, co-author of the racially dismissive *Bell Curve* (1994) and author of *Losing Ground* (1984) who advocated a policy disposition that encouraged the rescission of welfare-state programs.<sup>7</sup> The authors argued that the poor performance of African Americans relative to Asians and Whites on Intelligence Quota (IQ) tests precluded corporate social remedies designed to aid and abet racial populations vis-a-vis affirmative action or job and skills training programs. These have been tried and produced little in the way of progress for this population; only criminality and dependency have followed. They argue, "success and failure in the American economy, and all that goes with it, are increasingly a matter of genes that people inherit," and "programs to expand opportunities for the disadvantaged are not going to make much difference."<sup>8</sup> While claiming scientific (and thus racial) "neutrality", the authors find that African Americans are more or less equivalent to Australia's "doomed race" Aborigine.<sup>9</sup> The major shortcomings in *The Bell Curve* thesis are captured in Steven Fraser's *The Bell Curve Wars: Race, Intelligence, and the Future of America* (1995). Among the shortcomings are its empirically suspect and undue faith in measuring cognitive intelligence as a predictor of individual or aggregate achievement. Contrary research has demonstrated that there are multiple intelligences which are traceable to achievement.<sup>10</sup> Like other conservative behaviorists, the authors neglect the question of environment, material resources, and the extent to which systemic poverty and institutional deficiencies vis-a-vis failing urban educational structures affect performance and degrade quality of life in general. For example, the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), and Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) (as well as large school districts nationally), have been found lacking in test performances, dropout rates, and graduation rates of students of color. African American students in SFUSD who composed sixteen percent (16%) of the district's 60,000 students in the 1999-2000 school year, represented twenty-six percent (26%) of total dropouts.<sup>11</sup> Similar to the "scientific





racists" of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Murray collateralizes what the U.S. Supreme Court found, as fact, in the harm done to the individual and aggregate Black psyches when they experience or develop, for instance, consciousness of the nation's brutal racial history.<sup>12</sup> The extent or nature in which the nation's racial past shapes the contemporary conditions of subaltern groups continues to inform debates in the social science literature.<sup>13</sup>

*The Bell Curve's* attempt to link criminal behavior to low levels of intelligence is misleading and counterintuitive according to political scientist Andrew Hacker (1995). Poor (usually unemployable) people commit street-level drug and property crimes that are most accessible to their social class which in turn leads to their social stigma as criminally inclined; embezzlement for example, is rarely a crime of poor or indigent individuals. At best linkages can be made between years of schooling and criminality. Individuals with less education, measured by years of schooling, tend to be more inclined toward criminal behavior than those with higher levels of education. But intelligence and education are not synonymous. To suggest that the less "intelligent" commit more crimes than the more intelligent trivializes "white-collar" crimes that actually dwarf the occurrence and economic costs of all street level crimes combined.<sup>14</sup> Though urban "drive-by" shootings are clearly more threatening than "hostile corporate takeovers," they operate on the same parasitic values. Thus low intelligence alone does not explain criminal behavior whether violent or not.

### *B. Violence in African American Communities: A Legacy of Civil Rights?*

Stephan and Abigail Thernstrom (1997) compile impressive data that assess the problem of violence in African American communities. With poll after poll these researchers present criminal violence as "a problem that is inextricably bound up with race [it is significant that they do not say racism]. Disproportionately, blacks are the perpetrators and victims. Nothing has been more harmful to the black community, and nothing has done more to poison race



relations, than the explosion of black violent crime since the 1960s," (281). They conclude, "if the African American crime rate suddenly dropped to the current level of the white crime rate, we would eliminate a major force that is driving blacks and whites apart and is destroying the fabric of black urban life," (285). It is clear that the nature of the violence itself has contributed significantly to communal disintegration among Black Americans and probably between Blacks and others. Intra-racial violence is a by-product of residential proximity, however. Seldom are Black Americans the victims of *interclass crime*. Poor Blacks are the victims of poor Black criminality in poor Black neighborhoods. For example, in the city of San Francisco, fifty percent (50%) of perpetrators of firearm related violence and forty-eight (48%) of victims shared the same zip codes in 1999.<sup>15</sup>

Perhaps the best contribution of the Thernstroms' research is its demonstration that Black Americans are the primary victims of violent crime and live in fear; they view crime as a more serious problem than do even Whites.<sup>16</sup> But the Thernstroms' research highlights Black crime victimization in a manner that is common in academic and law enforcement circles; that is, with a view of reinforcing Black criminality as a policy staple and forgone conclusion. A major oversight in their research is not the assumption that Black crime wedges contemporary interracial relations, but that interracial relations were soured by Black crime; as if the reduction of overt racial animus in national attitudinal data among Whites--in which the authors express great faith--indicated the presence of a racial harmony that preceded increases in Black criminality. They suggest that urban blight is the cause of corporate non-investment in inner-city communities and redlining practices, not an effect. The authors note, "where there's violent crime, there's also disorder--vandalism, graffiti, litter, stripped and abandoned cars, boarded-up buildings, public drinking, the sale and use of drugs, loitering youths, prostitution and panhandling. The civic order breaks down on several fronts at once. And that breakdown leaves little in a community untouched. The impact is evident in the absence of stores, jobs, well functioning



of schools, and middle-class residents in many predominately black sections of our cities," (281). They add, "crime is *the* urban problem," (emphasis in original) (283). The Thernstroms' valuation of the impact of crime in Black communities does not move us any closer to an understanding of the direction of the problem. How does "litter," "boarded-up buildings," or "panhandling," result in violence in "predominately black sections of *our* cities"? Are we to believe that poor communities had been devoid of these elements only since the advent of 1980s urban violence? Did Black ghettos and Hispanic/Latino *Barrios* not have poverty prior to the 1980's? Moreover, the Thernstroms offer no statistical data that show whether crime *preceded* urban blight, whether neglect by city managers gave way to blight, or whether they were concomitant. Beyond anecdote we are offered no proof that crime is *causally the* urban problem; it is certainly *an* urban problem that cannot be isolated from structural alterations, market relocations, and *laissez-faire* policy dispositions of city governments toward poor communities.

The Thernstroms join the ranks of journalistic and academic reactionaries--Black and White--who blame a reified "underclass," or "ghetto subculture," which is devoid of nuclear family values, a mainstream work ethic, and weakened by educational/academic laxity. Political scientist Adolph Reed, Jr., (1999) argues that constructions such as these "all zero on inner-city blacks and Hispanics; all focus on behavior, values, and 'culture'; and all in fact converge on an overlapping list of behavioral indicators." This inevitably leaves us in a tautological quagmire: poor people of color are violent because they are pathological and pathological because they are violent (184). Reed concludes, "in the end, underclass assumptions serve to take the focus away from (costly) demands for responsible government policies, blaming poor people, not societal choices, for another pat phrase, "persistent poverty," (179).



### C. "Hip-Hop": A Culture of Violence?

While the Thernstroms do not explicitly attribute blame to the Civil Rights Movement, their contention that "crime on a scale unknown to previous generations is a continuing legacy of the 1960s," (263) more than insinuates that Black crime is traceable to the Civil Rights epoch. In all of their coverage of race and crime and the exponential increase in violent crimes since the 1960s, the authors completely neglect a thoroughgoing discussion of the convergence of "law and order" appeals initiated during the same period. The Thernstrom's also fail to note that during the 1970s crime in general leveled off and serious violent crime rates for the United States at the time of their writing was sixteen percent (16%) below its mid-1970s peak.<sup>17</sup>

Accompanying the "law and order" sentiments of the late 1960s and 1970s was the largely unconstitutional usurpation of power that typified and eventually brought scandalous disgrace to the J. Edgar Hoover FBI and second Nixon administration. Through the coordination of the Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) the state-sponsored reactionary movement that opposed the Civil Rights Movement declared and carried out nothing short of civil war against its more militant children. Young activists such as Stokely Carmichael, Angela Davis, Huey P. Newton, Assata Shakur, Fred Hampton, Eldridge Cleaver, and Geronimo Pratt were labeled "Key Black Extremists" (or KBEs) and sentenced to unprecedented and exceedingly harsh prison terms for their *political activities*.<sup>18</sup>

A major casualty of the more militant (and occasionally violent) Black Power student movement that exported from the Bay Area cities of Oakland and San Francisco was the White-liberal and Black coalition that drove the earlier phase of the movement. Civil unrest in major cities across the country during the mid to late 1960's discouraged White-liberal involvement and led to a racial perfidy that has been confirmed in their identification with ranks of contemporary "neo-liberals" and "neo-conservatives," who tend to be the harshest critics of Black American policy preferences (vis-à-vis David Horowitz and Nathan Glazer).



"Black Power" was a rallying cry for reactionary forces in the political and military establishment as much as it was for nationalists, revolutionaries, and Black activists. Whether the incidence of violence among Black American youth is an extension of this rebellion or a reflection of defeatist hopelessness is worth some consideration. The leap from anti-White or anti-establishment urban "riots" to "Black-on-Black" drive-by shootings in those same urban locations is too often underestimated.

Rod Bush (2000) has noted, "once the radical wing of the Black Power movement had been militarily defeated, and the moderate and conservative sections safely co-opted, the question remained of what to do about the massive lower stratum of the Black population, which had not benefited from the civil rights revolution and whose militancy the radicals attempted to articulate," (13). This "massive lower stratum," which expanded more extensively and rapidly than the Black middle class stratum in the 1990s, engages in behavior that makes it susceptible to mainstream disdain. The poverty of the lower stratum is attributed, not to systemic or institutional factors, but to culture deficits. Bush adds, "most of the young revolutionary-minded people of today are dramatically impacted by cultural practices. In fact what is most significant about this generation of young Blacks is precisely the extent to which their cultural practices and preferences are *overtly* oppositional, and pose a direct challenge to the system of racial and social subordination that Black people have suffered in the United States," (37). Citing the research of Ray Franklin's *Shadows of Race and Class* (1991), Bush concludes that despite the popular conceptions of crime, disorder, and underclass "tangles of pathology," most researchers "totally ignore the political economy of crime. Moreover, sociological treatments tend to greatly minimize the extent to which so-called deviants are actually willful actors who are involved in their own personal rebellion. This should not be underestimated because there is the appearance of individualism. This rebellion reflects the values and actions of an entire social stratum" (43). Black life "in the inner cities has led to



the widespread adoption of a culture of opposition among Black youth as a means of dealing with the white supremacist beliefs that daily attack Black intelligence, Black ability, Black beauty, and Black character in subtle and not so subtle ways; and as a means of dealing with the harshness of street life (in part a by-product of the drug economy and in part a by-product of the pervasive powerlessness of the inner-city poor)" (45).

While Bush's analysis tends toward romanticism, it does raise a very plausible description of a Black "double consciousness" that balances the realities of ghetto-life with a reflexive retort to majority cultural norms. Here a word about "hip-hop" cultural might be informative. Most evident in the cultural expressions of urban youth is a preoccupation with anti-establishment rhetoric that was clearly borne of the ghettos of New York City before it was exported to urban centers nationally. The "rap" music component of hip-hop culture has gone through several evolutions since its introduction in the middle 1970s. At its outset, rap music was characteristically devoid of overt political messages. The likes of New York's Kurtis Blow and the "Sugar Hill Gang" presented renditions that focused mostly on the pleasures of ghetto existence prior to the advent of "crack" cocaine in popular songs such as "Christmas Rap", "These Are the Breaks" and "Rapper's Delight". Not unlike Marvin Gaye's classic "What's Goin' On," "Flying High," "Inner City Blues," and "The Ghetto," upon the advent of crack cocaine New York's "Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five Emcees" described the harsh conditions of urban living in renditions such as "New York, New York" and "White Lines," directly referencing the effects of drugs in American cities. As the mid-1980s ended and crack cocaine had taken full effect in mainly Black communities, a litany of politically charged "positive" or "conscious" rap music (vis-à-vis Public Enemy and Boogie Down Production's KRS-1) urged Black Americans to "Fight the Power" and avoid "Self-destruction". Motion pictures by African American filmmakers Mario and Melvin Van Peebles (*New Jack City*, *Panther*), Spike Lee



(*Jungle Fever*) and John Singleton's (*Boyz in the Hood*) chronicled the same development.

When the venue of rap expanded westward to California cities such as Compton, Oakland, Richmond and Los Angeles the tenor of the genre became clearly confrontational as groups such as "Bitches with Attitudes" (BWA), and "Niggas With Attitude" (NWA) took center stage. Popular songs such as "187" (the California Penal Code for homicide), and "F\*^ the Police," "100 Miles and Runnin'," and "Niggas with Attitude," reflected the nadir of the drug epidemic as West Coast "gangs" (e.g., "Crips" and "Bloods") and the attendant violence epitomized the plight of ghetto bound Americans. The 1990s reflected more of the same with the addition of prison-inspired "urban wear" baggy clothes, academic failure, the ubiquity of drugs and material self-aggrandizement, intimidating Pit Bull Terrier and Rottweiler dogs, and misogynous lyrics and television videos. When West Coast and East Coast rap icons Tupac Shakur and Christopher "Biggie Smalls/Notorious B.I.G. Wallace were murdered during the middle 1990s in "drive-by" shootings they joined the garrisons of young Black and Hispanic/Latino men who succumbed to the same--mostly at the hands of other Black and Hispanic/Latino men.

The routinization of violence among poor African Americans prompted then president of the United States Bill Clinton to declare that "Black on Black crime" should have been the Civil Rights issue of the 1990s decade.<sup>19</sup> Homicide and death were major themes in the 1990s version of rap music. Both empirical and anecdotal accounts indicate that many, if not most, young African American men and youth expressed doubt at the prospect of reaching twenty-five years of age.<sup>20</sup> This is not to suggest that rap music can be regarded as *the* culprit behind urban violence. An unsettled question concerns the direction of the problem of violence in entertainment renditions akin to the "chicken versus egg" debate. Did rap music prompt or contribute to an escalation of violence among African Americans during this period or did it simply voice extant conditions of poor urban



bound Black Americans? It is most plausible that both are true. The major consumers of rap music since the mid-1990s have been after all White youth who, while fascinated by "ghetto thug life" have not yielded noticeable increases in violence of the sort in question.

Bush's study directly challenges Harvard University professor Cornel West's *Race Matters* (1993) which characterized the condition of poor communities of color as one of "nihilism" or "clinical depression" in the aggregate. Both liberals who attribute the problems of inner-city communities to structural deficiencies and conservatives who attribute them to the behavior of individuals are viewed as myopic. According to West, the Black communities of the nation have been overwhelmed by a sense of "soullessness" and "lovelessness" that leads to homicidal and fratricidal conduct.<sup>21</sup> Recent government and academic studies indeed confirm that communities of color are "overrepresented among those most vulnerable and in need of mental health treatment, including the poor, the homeless, the institutionalized, the incarcerated and the survivors of traumatic experiences."<sup>22</sup> Harvard University professor Alvin Poussaint and researcher Amy Alexander's *Lay My Burden Down: Suicide and the Mental Health Crisis Among African Americans* (2000) also points to the 114 percent increase in incidence of young Black male suicide between 1980 and 1995. The authors contend that there are psychological linkages between Black male suicide, homicide, and fratricide. Thus West's analysis points to the psychological dimensions of Black male homicide. The difficulty with West's perspective is found not in its consideration of the social marginality that impairs racially homogenous communities toward violence, but in its assumption of a monolithic Black community.<sup>23</sup>

Even in the most abject ghetto dwellings in the nation, there is a considerable diversity of perspective that is the stuff of "shop talk" at local parlors (for men and women), sports bars, coffee shops, churches, and fraternity houses. Political debates concerning community leadership traditions vis-a-vis





Martin Luther King, Jr. versus Malcolm X, Jesse Jackson versus Louis Farrakhan, Christianity versus Islam, integrationism versus nationalism, liberalism versus conservatism, and political advocacy versus economic empowerment signal the varied coping alternatives that range from illicit activity to religiosity and artistic expression. Not only do individuals within Black communities span entire social, political, and economic spectrums, but most--across all categories--do not engage in nihilistic or anomic conduct or yield any more markers of "depression" than do individuals from rural, suburban, or affluent White communities where divorce rates, illicit drug sales and usage, and domestic violence are highest.

*D. From Crack House to Jail House*

The U.S. prison population, which has been disproportionately Black since the declaration of the "War on Drugs" in light of the introduction of crack cocaine in poor Black communities, more than doubled from 750,000 in 1985 to 2 million in the year 2000. Non-violent property crime and drug sales and consumption--not violence emanating from "gang" drug rivalries--however, were mainly responsible for the incarceration increases.<sup>24</sup> During 1995 alone 150 new U.S. prisons were built and filled to capacity; young Black men would make up the largest cohort in this increase. That same year Black male offenders accounted for nearly two thirds of all prison admissions (64.1%), and two thirds of the total year end prison population (65.3%). The largest jail populations were in Los Angeles (21,000 inmates) and New York City (18,000), two cities that figured prominently in the racial politics of the 1990s.

The proliferation of illicit drug markets in urban settings--which import from foreign soil--is clearly the most plausible explanation for the periodic increases in the murder rate among young African American men and the general deterioration of poor and working-class Black communities that we witnessed since the early 1980s. At the very least, the proliferation of drugs raises national



security questions vis-à-vis the international drug trade. Nationally, the FBI's annual Uniform Crime Reports show the period between 1991 and 1994 as the apex of the crack cocaine market turf wars that drove the murder rate per 100,000 from 6.4 in 1980 to 14.2 in 1994. During this period, the average murder rates of San Francisco--like in most cities nationally--were highest. Between 1985 to 1991, annual rates of homicide for all males ages 15 to 19 years increased 154 percent. For African American male youths, the homicide rate reached eight times that of White male youths. If one lived in the inner city and was young--particularly Black and young--the chance of being the victim of a violent crime increased.<sup>25</sup> Many young men consequently armed themselves for protection, retaliation, or anticipated violence. Serious violent crimes reported to police, however, dropped during the same period, bottoming at 4.7 youths per 100,000.<sup>26</sup> Referrals to juvenile court rose between 1993 and 1997 (from 1.4 million cases to 1.76 million cases) during the overall decline in violent crimes.<sup>27</sup>

Media reporting and sensationalizing of the crack drug crisis in cities has been the subject of important studies.<sup>28</sup> Media framing of the "epidemic" use and related violence among African Americans was captured by a federal judge in *U.S. v. Clary* (1994):

Despite statistical data that whites were prevalent among crack users, rare was the interview with a young black person who had avoided drugs and the drug culture, and even rarer was any media association with whites and crack. Images of young black men daily saturated the screens of our televisions. These distorted images branded onto the public mind and the minds of legislators that young black men were solely responsible for the drug crisis in America. The media created a stereotype of a crack dealer as a young black male, unemployed, gang affiliated, gun toting, and a menace to society.... The broad brush of uninformed public opinion paints them all as the same. These stereotypical images



undoubtedly served as the touchstone that influenced racial perception held by legislators and the public as related to the 'crack epidemic.' The fear of increased crime as a result of crack cocaine fed white society's fear of the black male as a crack user and the source of social disruption.... Practically every newspaper account featured a black male either using crack, selling crack, involved in police contact due to crack, or behind bars because of crack."<sup>29</sup>

One recent report found that the term "young black males" has become synonymous with "criminal" in American media coverage of crime.<sup>30</sup> That same report found that while young people make up less than fifteen percent (15%) of all violent crime arrests, seventy percent (70%) of news coverage centered on juvenile crime. And while homicide arrests declined nearly thirty-three percent (33%) during the period 1990 through 1998, media reporting of homicide increased nearly five hundred percent over the decade. The various misrepresentations of African Americans as criminal perpetrators (not victims) in media coverage contributed significantly to the criminalization of African American men etched in the consciousness of the nation.

If poverty and social and political marginality are inherently linked to violence in communities of color, then it should be expected that *all or at a minimum, most* of the 11 million Black Americans who struggle below the poverty index in the United States engage in violence. It should also be expected that "drive-bys" and other forms of violence would be high among other racially marginalized groups such as Native Americans, Puerto Ricans, or Lesbian Gay Transgender and Bi-sexual communities. The histories of Irish, Jewish, and Italian immigrants in New York, Atlantic City, New Jersey, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, and Las Vegas reflect much of the same intragroup animus that comported with the desire for illicit market dominance. The violent and parasitic



exploits of organized crime figures like Al Capone, Myer Lanski, Lucky Luciano, and "Bugsy" Segal, for instance, have become the stuff of lore in mainstream culture. This intragroup animus may emanate from the manner in which individuals interpret and process majority societal disdain; a phenomenon which W.E. B. Du Bois called "double consciousness."<sup>31</sup> Interpersonal violence among Black Americans trumps all other forms of intragroup violence particularly because Black Americans, despite nearly four centuries on the American continent, have been less assimilable than Irish, Italian, Jewish, or even Slavic immigrant groups. Each of these groups (and others), experienced similar ghettoization and the attendant fraternal violence that Black Americans have, but White ethnics enjoyed the advantage of phenotypic assimilability and outward movement from ghettos to suburban enclaves. For instance, Harlem, New York, Compton, California, as well as San Francisco's Western Addition and Bayview/Hunter's Point which had been home to various ethnic groups prior to both Black migrations and 1960s political rebellions, today are land-locks for Black Americans.

The availability of guns--especially handguns--has expedited the violence that emanates from the illicit drug markets across the country in many African American and Hispanic/Latino communities. Gun violence in 1998 was cited as the number one preventable cause of death for age groups between 0 and 24 years. More than 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s of the 2,171 murders that year which occurred statewide in California were the result of guns; nearly ninety percent (90%) of those were handguns.<sup>32</sup> In both Los Angeles and San Francisco Counties, for instance, death by firearm was the leading cause of death with Hispanic/Latino and African Americans disproportionately the perpetrators and victims. Nationally, Black Americans were shooting victims in fifty-four percent (54%) (5,779) of the 10,711 gun related homicides in 1997; in comparison, Whites represented forty-two percent (42.6%) or 4,565.<sup>33</sup> Just two years later, the national office of the NAACP threatened a federal product liability suit for an injunction against over 100 gun



manufacturers, distributors, and importers, in the interest of reducing the incidence of gun violence in communities of color.<sup>34</sup> The Department of Treasury's Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) bureau reports that in 1999 roughly eighty-six percent (86%) of guns used in crimes by youth and young adults were obtained illegally from intermediaries of licensed gun shop owners. Several cities and counties including Chicago, Detroit, Boston, New Orleans, Bridgeport, Connecticut, Miami-Dade (county). California cities have not followed suit.

No doubt, drugs, gun violence, and incarceration have had a catastrophic effect on poor communities and communities of color throughout the United States. The numbers which highlight the deleterious impact of these vices on communities of color in terms of death, neighborhood dissolution, the loss of hope among youth, and incarceration are no longer shocking to many Americans. In large part, it has become routine and commonplace in these communities to have associates, friends, or family members who have been effected. Jail and prison are to many urban youth of color today what the Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts of America are to suburban youth--an organized rite of passage. Reports have variously shown the ratio of young Black men who are penal wards of the state's jails, prisons, probation, home detention, and parole systems to be higher than any other population in the country; roughly twenty five to thirty percent (25-30%).

Black people across the nation are now afraid of their brothers, sons, fathers, uncles, cousins; indeed Black people are now more afraid of Black men than is the society that distorted their images through "pop" culture, welfare policies, joblessness, media, and failed educational systems. Black institutions such as faith communities, fraternal and sororal organizations, and mentoring programs have sought to stem the tide.

Research has pointed to the destabilizing effects of the "prison industrial complex" on communities of color, particularly as the criminal justice system



shifted its treatment goals from rehabilitation to retribution in the 1977 Penal Code.<sup>35</sup> General findings include the dissolution of family structures<sup>36</sup>, the distortion of gender/parenting roles, high rates of unemployable individuals, the importation of prison subcultures such as gangs and un-rehabilitated individuals in neighborhoods, and stigmatization that has fueled the construction of more prisons that in turn disproportionately house African American and Hispanic/Latino individuals. This body of research suggests that racial discrimination is at the center of the criminal justice system from selective drug enforcement practices in communities of color (though Blacks only consume 14% of drugs in the United States), to detention, prosecution, sentencing, and parole board release and revocations.

**TABLE 1**

**Number of Sentenced Prisoners Under State or Federal Jurisdiction by Gender, Race, and Hispanic Origin, and Age, 1999**

Age	Number of Sentenced Prisoners per 100,000 Residents					
	Males			Females		
	White	Black	Hisp/Lati	White	Black	Hisp/Lati
Total	417	3408	1335	27	212	87
18-19	280	2627	1197	18	85	29
20-24	832	7362	2824	44	227	127
25-29	990	9392	3126	66	492	215
30-34	1106	8406	2927	96	731	248
35-39	896	7316	2315	74	587	214
40-44	652	4947	2266	39	347	131
45-54	411	2761	1265	22	153	97
55+	106	534	403	4	21	11



*Source:* Allen J. Beck, *Prisoners in 1999* (Washington, United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, August 2000), Table 13.

The reality that a majority of Black men--who constitute less than six percent (6%) of the nation's population--are likely to fuel a potential population of 7 million imprisoned Americans<sup>37</sup> suggests too little, too late; the die is cast and it is young, Black and imprisoned. In the state of California for instance, voters passed a "juvenile justice" anti-crime initiative (Proposition 21) in 1999 that reflected the excesses of media reporting on violent crime, youth, and African American men. And though suburban and rural high school and youth related incidence of violence among Whites gained national attention, it has been disproportionately young men of color who have been most adversely affected by public and political fallout over the reified youth "crime wave."

As illustrated in Table 1, being Black, younger and male increased the likelihood of imprisonment in 1999 when compared to all other major groups. But the commission of violence and consequent increases in incarceration should not be misunderstood as the by-product of "youth violence." Among Whites males for instance, the 40-44 age cohort more than doubled the incarceration rates of 18-19 year olds. Similarly, among Black males, the incarceration rate for the age cohort 45-54 years of age was higher than it was for the 18-19 age cohort. Both Black males and females experienced higher imprisonment per 100,000 residents than all relative categories, while White men and women experienced the lowest.

#### *E. Crime, Violence, and Employment*

Whether or not higher incarceration rates comport with a decline in crime is unclear and unlikely. Rosenblatt (1996) reports that "those states that have the highest budget for law enforcement--including courts, prisons, probation, and parole--also have the highest levels of crime. If there is any empirically



established relationship between crime and punishment, it is that prisons foster crime." For example, in 1994, California (\$160,244,802,000 to 6,173.8), New York (\$123,946,002,000 to 5,872.4) and Texas (\$64,926,359,000 to 5,070.6) had the nation's highest criminal justice system budget expenditures and crime rates.<sup>38</sup> A better explanation can be found in economic conditions and employment rates. Rosenblatt shows, for instance, that both violent and property crime rates increase exponentially with the local unemployment rates. Between 1991 and 1999 the United States experienced the longest year to year decline in serious crime. Many experts attribute the unprecedented decline to good economic times "because it has meant jobs and income for people who might otherwise be out on the streets and in trouble." Of the four major regions in the country, the western United States experienced the sharpest regional decline in serious crimes with a ten percent (10%) drop. While individuals who typically commit violent or other serious crimes are not likely to have made up the West's booming information technology economy, it no doubt had residual effects that might help explain why crime declines there outpaced all other regions in the nation.

If incarceration rates reflect criminality then it was young adults--in their marriageable years--not "youth" that were the most inclined toward drug-related and violent crime perpetration in 1999; among all men, the age categories 20-39 were the highest in the nation. Indeed the Los Angeles civil disturbances exposed the undercurrent of high unemployment and social distance that was extant among those who were the primary participants--young men of color. Cornel West's (1993) characterization of the 1992 upheaval allows for a closer linkage between urban violence and employment. He concludes, "what happened in Los Angeles [and across the nation] in April of 1992 was neither a race riot nor a class rebellion. Rather, this monumental upheaval was a multiracial, trans-class, and largely male display of justified social rage.... What we witnessed in Los Angeles was the consequence of a lethal linkage of





economic decline, cultural decay, and political lethargy in American life. Race was the visible catalyst, not the underlying cause,” (1). In fact, the largest number of arrests were among Hispanic/Latino males who had not been associated with widespread involvement in civil disturbance (see Table 2).

**TABLE 2**

**Los Angeles Riot/Unrest Arrests/Cases by Race Ethnicity**

Race/Ethnicity	Cases/Arrests	Percentage
Latinos	2,852	50%
Blacks	2037	36%
White/Anglos	601	10%
Others	147	4%

Other researchers have paralleled the economic and racial corollary that was exacerbated in the events ranging from the 1991 Rodney King beating and verdicts to the 1992 Los Angeles civil unrest as an explanation for urban violence (Marable 1995; Pohlmann 1998; Walton 1997 [especially chapter six]; McClain and Stewart 1998).<sup>39</sup> While the unrest/riot response was in West's view mostly male-specific justifiable "social rage," Pohlmann shows more specifically a pattern of increased police brutality directed mostly at young Hispanic/Latino and Black men that neither began nor ended with the Rodney King videotaped beating.<sup>40</sup> Columbia University professor Manning Marable argues that the “Battle of Los Angeles” highlighted the general condition of despair in urban America that followed an increased class and racial stratification:

....By contrast, since the late 1970s general conditions for most of the African-American community have become worse.... Standards in health care for millions within the African-American community have fallen, with the black male life expectancy declining to only 64.7 years in 1993. By 1990 about 12 percent of



all Black families now live below the federal government's poverty level, and 46 percent of all black families are headed by single women.... By 1992 23 percent of all young African-American men between the ages of twenty and twenty-nine were in prison, on probation, parole, or awaiting trial.... (1995: 204).

Andrew Sum and Neal Fogg (1990)<sup>41</sup> chronicle the real inflation-adjusted annual earnings and employment of American men (ages 20-64 years old) between 1973 and 1987. They conclude that while young men (20-29 years old) from *all* major sub-groups suffered declines in their annual earnings due to a lack of education and manufacturing-based job markets during this period, Black men have fared the worst. Even the rapid market and employment expansion that occurred during the "new American economy" between 1983 and 1987 could not offset these earning deficiencies. The intensification of economic hardship has been particularly devastating for the promotion of family life and cohesion for these young men.

### *G. How Black Ghettos were Born*

One often neglected aspect of poor and working-class "inner-city" Black communities and ghettos across the nation is that they were fostered and even created by federal, state, and city-level policymakers in deference to White fears as a result of the pre and post WWII Black migrations.<sup>42</sup> The Black ghettos of the United States--which today yield high levels of interpersonal and intraracial violence--developed as part of racist/segregationist "push" and the economic opportunity "pull" to Western, Midwestern, and Northeastern urban centers where they encountered housing schemes and urban planning collusions between city officials and real estate interests. These urban planning schemes had the double effect of ghettoizing Black Americans who migrated to these regions on one hand, and inflating suburban markets sought by Whites in flight of them, on the other. For this reason, the 1968 Report of the National Advisory Commission on



Civil Disorders (Kerner Commission Report to President Lyndon Johnson) stated the following:

- *Segregation and poverty have created in the racial ghetto a destructive environment* totally unknown to most white Americans (italics added);
- What white Americans have never fully understood--but what the Negro can never forget--is that *white society is deeply implicated in the [existence of] the ghetto*. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it"(italics added);
- White racism is essentially responsible for the **explosive mixture, which has been accumulating in our cities since the end of World War II.**

Among the ingredients of this mixture are:

"pervasive discrimination and segregation in employment, education and housing, which have resulted in the continuing exclusion of great numbers of Negroes from the benefits of economic progress."

"Black in-migration and white exodus, which have produced the massive and growing concentration of impoverished Negroes in our major cities, creating a growing crisis of deteriorating facilities and services and unmet needs. "

"The black ghettos where segregation and poverty converge on the young to destroy opportunity and enforce failure. Crime, drug addiction, dependency on welfare, and bitterness and resentment against society in general and white society in particular are the result. At the same time, most whites and some Negroes outside the ghetto have prospered to a degree unparalleled in the history of civilization. Through television and other media, this affluence has been flaunted before the eyes of the Negro poor and the jobless ghetto youth," (underlines in original).<sup>43</sup>



The Kerner Report argued further that Black disappointment (which came with integration) coupled with the pre and post *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) political climate that tended "toward approval and encouragement of [White] violence," forecast the post 1960s epoch of Black violence in urban settings. What has become apparent in cities across the nation--particularly in the cities that were the subject of the Kerner Report--is that the study's findings and observations have been categorically neglected at the national, state, and local levels. In a 1998 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary study entitled "The Millenium Breach," the Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation concluded that the Kerner Report's most dire pronouncement that "our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white--separate and unequal," has come to fruition.<sup>44</sup> Certainly the major demographic shifts which now include large segments of Asians and Latinos challenge the more dated biracial aspect of both studies, but the underlying message is the same: America's cities are teeming with marginality and hopelessness. The Eisenhower Foundation's major findings include:

- Unemployment rates for young African American men in cities such as Los Angeles is six times the rate of unemployment across the nation.
- The United States currently incarcerates Black men at a rate of four times that of Apartheid-ruled South Africa.
- U.S. child poverty rate is four times the average of western European countries.
- Of the 43 percent of children of color attending public schools, more than half are poor and more than 2/3<sup>rds</sup> fail to reach minimum levels of national tests.



### III. San Francisco in the Context of Violence

#### A. Comparing San Francisco with Major Cities

Throughout the decade of the 1990s, the city of San Francisco ranked high among comparable cities across the nation and within the state of California in the reduction of violent and overall crime rates. Some research suggests that San Francisco achieved these reduction rates while employing progressive punishment policies that have resulted in reduced adult and juvenile arrests and commitments, prosecutions and incarcerations. An evaluation of interpersonal violence (homicide/murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) in Part I crimes between 1990 and 1998 highlights San Francisco's performance. For example, between 1990 and 1998 San Francisco experienced a thirty-eight percent (38%) decrease in overall reported crime rates, while the average for ten comparable cities was thirty percent (30%). Excluding property crimes such as burglary and motor vehicle theft, San Francisco's fifty-percent (50%) reduction in its murder rates between 1992 and 1998 exceeded the average reduction in the ten comparable cities by fifteen percent (15%). New York City's seventy-two percent (72%) reduction in murder rates between 1990 and 1998 catapulted it to the fore of national media coverage. However, the New York City model-with its forty-six percent (46%) reduction in reported violent crimes-depended upon strict "law and order", "get tough on crime", enforcement policies, an eighty-seven (87%) increase in its police forces, and increased felony and misdemeanor arrests and prosecutions. That San Francisco experienced a higher reduction in reported violent crime rates than New York City during the same period was neglected in popular media and law enforcement circles.

#### B. Comparing San Francisco with California's Major Counties and Cities

Taqi-Eddin and Macallair's (1999)<sup>45</sup> comparison of California's nine largest counties suggests that San Francisco county's thirty-five percent (35%) reduction in reported violent crime rates equaled Los Angeles's and was bettered only by



Orange County thirty-six percent (36%) reduction rate. Orange County has historically maintained some of the state's lowest reported crime rates. Where Los Angeles County experienced the most significant rate change among California's largest counties in 1998, San Francisco County's absolute number of reported violent crimes (7,409) was dwarfed by Los Angeles's (94,164) and ranks lower in this regard than only Fresno (6,894) and San Mateo (2,361) Counties. When compared to California's largest cities, "San Francisco's violent crimes reductions matched or exceeded (Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Jose) jurisdictions", according to Taqui-Eddin and Macallair. Assessing these effects with regard to Part I violent crimes between 1990-98, the city of San Francisco reduced its overall reported violent crime rate by forty-three percent (43%). Where Los Angeles's forty-five percent (45%) decline exceeded that of San Francisco for that time period, between 1992 and 1998 San Francisco experienced the greatest reduction of California's four largest cities. Standing alone, between 1990 and 1998 San Francisco experienced its most significant declines in the Part I categories of forcible rape and aggravated assault. As well, between 1992 and 1998 San Francisco experienced a fifty percent (50%) decline in its homicide/murder rate and a fifty-three percent (53%) decline in reported robberies. Yet no single factor can be identified with San Francisco's violent crime reductions. Testimony presented before the Human Rights Commission of the city and county of San Francisco (HRC) suggests that redundant and uncoordinated (but no less complimentary) efforts by community groups, youth oriented programs, faith communities, government (including law enforcement agencies) and city agencies, have made significant contributions.



TABLE 3

Reported Violent Crime in San Francisco 1993-2000

Year	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Homicide	123	92	99	82	59	58	64	69
Forcible Rape	364	295	305	299	236	246	193	229
Robbery	8,544	6,677	6,522	5,565	4,618	3,957	3,475	3,456
Agg. Assault	4,499	3,873	4,072	4,000	3,695	3,148	2,823	2,755
Total	13,530	10,937	10,998	9,946	8,608	7,409	6,555	6,499

Sources: California Department of Justice Criminal Justice Statistics

When compared to incidents of reported homicides between 1993 -1995 and 1996-1998 in the San Francisco current period (1999-2001) is somewhat positive.<sup>46</sup> The two-year total homicide/murder rate between 1993 through 1995 was 320 people, for 1996-1998 it was 199 people, and the current (1999-2001) period is an estimated 176.<sup>47</sup> As noted above, the economic vitality of the decade had a positive effect on crime reduction. While poor communities of color are normally bypassed during periods of prosperity, market cycle downturns tend to have an effect on serious crime in poor communities. Multi-level crime rate comparisons notwithstanding, the patterns of progress and causes for optimism in San Francisco were shattered by city-wide incidents of gun-related violence in its poorest communities, particularly in its communities of color, such as Bayview/Hunter’s Point, the Western Addition, and OMI.

C. Recent Escalations of Violence in San Francisco

A brief summary of Part I violence within San Francisco highlights where remedial efforts might best be directed. Between 1999 and 2001<sup>48</sup> the Bayview/Hunter's Point has yielded the highest two year average and absolute



number of homicides, followed respectively by the Southern, Mission, and Northern Districts (see Table 4).

**TABLE 4**

**Part I Violence in San Francisco Communities 1999-2001**

District	Homicide	Rape	Robbery	Agg. Assault
Bayview/HP	23	78	988	931
Central	3	38	721	449
Ingleside	13	53	994	547
Mission	17	86	1,432	1,198
Northern	15	41	1,095	666
Park	7	33	416	287
Richmond	3	14	344	235
Southern	17	24	1,246	1,016
Taraval	13	34	615	346
Tenderloin	7	30	921	780
Unknown	--	85	136	108

Source: San Francisco Police Department Monthly Crime Statistics by District

News media, police reports, and community testimony attach much of the violence in the Bayview to drug and gang-related activities. Incidents in the Bayview, Western Addition, and OMI districts accounted for eighty-nine percent (89%) of the gun violence in the city. These districts yield the highest number of rapes as well. Much of this activity has occurred among young men with guns ages of 20 and 29 in the evenings between 9:00pm and 3:00am especially in the late summer months (though most incidents have occurred between July and November). Seventy-four percent (74%) of those injured have had prior contact with law enforcement officials. This is clearly not a "youth violence" problem, but a problem of young adults killing and otherwise victimizing other young adults and the community at large. Recent arrests by a federal task force in the Bayview<sup>49</sup> area will likely have a positive immediate impact on quelling the recent





violence, but law enforcement cannot by itself address the long term, holistic needs of the city's African American communities. Violence is best prevented through communal efforts that bring together the energies of community groups, city agencies, mentoring programs, faith communities, educational resources, and so forth.

#### *D. The Unfinished Agenda*

The city's failure to implement, as policy issues, the goals and recommendations of the HRC's comprehensive 1993 Unfinished Agenda report on the African American community of San Francisco highlights the neglect that has contributed to a deterioration in quality of life categories such as improved educational performance for its students, employment and job training (especially) for young African American males, public health and safety issues such as AIDS and gun violence, and economic empowerment of its paltry middle class through entrepreneurial participation in its economy.<sup>50</sup> The Unfinished Agenda remains unfinished (in 2001) as a result of developments both within and external to the city's Black communities.

The four decades old decline in the city's Black population was confirmed in the 2000 U.S. Census which reported that San Francisco's African American percentage of the total population declined by nearly five percent since 1990. Moreover, the Black population of San Francisco declined faster and by a higher percentage (between -15.1 percent and -24 percent)<sup>51</sup> than all other cities nationally, losing 1 of every 7 of its African American residents. It is unclear precisely where or why nearly 12,000<sup>52</sup> of the city's residents have moved or what centrifugal influences were at work. During the 1990s San Francisco became an important center for the information technology related industries that replaced the formerly dominant manufacturing industry. Like major cities nationally (e.g., Newark, New Jersey; Detroit; Cleveland; and Oakland and Richmond, California), San Francisco's Black residents were integral to post-



World War II manufacturing economies which accommodated semi and unskilled laborers (among whom they were abundant). Since the 1970s, however, the city's Black residents have increasingly found it less accommodating; even those who had access to inherited property ownership preferred East Bay and Southern state relocations. Consequently Black San Franciscans' position as potential governing or electoral coalition partners with the city's major ethnic populations has been severely weakened as it was demoted to the city's fourth largest population during the decade.<sup>53</sup> It is apparent that Black San Franciscans' political capital has diminished exponentially with their declining population numbers.

San Francisco's international reputation as the bastion of progressivism in the United States has been greatly exaggerated in matters that affect, somewhat uniquely, its African American communities and neighborhoods. The city's various progressive subcultures (environmentalism, populism, and liberalism) have not coalesced sufficiently around the cause and interests of its racial populations to eradicate the steady and protracted deterioration in population, economic revitalization, housing, education, job training, and episodic community violence.<sup>54</sup> This development has led Richard DeLeon to argue that "...many of these 'white progressives' see themselves as the vanguard of a new politics for the twenty-first century. In matters of race, however, they have put first things last in their efforts to build a progressive urban regime."<sup>55</sup> He adds, "the politics of race must compete for public attention with gender politics, gay and lesbian politics, neighborhood politics, environmental politics, labor politics, and the politics of land use and development. Citizens find it hard to respond coherently to so many simultaneous appeals to racial, gender, turf, and class solidarities."<sup>56</sup> As early as the 1960s, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency's Western Addition redevelopment (which displaced 4,000 African American residents), its 1990 pledge to revitalize the Fillmore Center, the 1991 Planning Department's aborted South Bayshore rezoning and redevelopment plan, and the



Redevelopment Agency's \$5 million commitment to the Bayview—15 percent of which went to a white-owned Hunter's Point store--were interpreted by residents and local leaders as elaborate gentrification schemes that had only collateral benefits to the community.<sup>57</sup> The degree to which long-term preventive and remedial efforts can replace the short-term "band-aid on bullet wound" mentality that describes how San Francisco's political elites, agencies, and funding sources treat problems of crime, violence, unemployment, skills and educational institution deficiencies reflects the city's commitment to the effected communities. Violence in San Francisco's communities of color mirror national patterns and national issues and is likely to fluctuate with improved or declining opportunity structures. Officials and interested individuals who seek to improve the condition of the city's African American communities; to remedy on a long-term basis, the problems that exacerbate into violence should do so with a view of reconciling the city's legacy as political and social trailblazer with programs and resources that might bring especially its young people of color to par with its reputation.

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<sup>1</sup> At the height of the drug turf wars between Los Angeles' rivaling "Crips" and "Bloods" street gangs, the federal government conducted these studies at the Los Angeles/Watts Area King-Drew hospital. It is unknown how widespread this study was or if similar studies were done in other cities.

<sup>2</sup> James Austin, Marino Bruce, Leo Carroll, Patricia L. McCall, and Stephen C. Richards. 2000. "The Use of Incarceration in the United States" *National Policy White Paper*, American Society of Criminology (draft).

<sup>3</sup> Elihu Rosenblatt, (ed). 1996. *Criminal Injustice: Confronting the Prison Crisis* (Boston, Massachusetts: South End Press), p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> "Poor Neighborhoods Add Risk to Heart Attacks, Study Finds." 2001. *San Francisco Chronicle*. July, 12, A2.

<sup>5</sup> San Francisco Police Department Monthly Crime Statistics Report categorizes eight Part I crimes. This study focuses on Part I violent crimes which are homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Part I non-violent crimes are burglary, other larceny, auto boostings, motor vehicle theft.

<sup>6</sup> Noel A. Day and Zenophon A. Abraham. 1993. *The Unfinished Agenda: The Economic Status of African Americans in San Francisco, 1964-1990*, February. p. 14-16.

<sup>7</sup> Charles Murray and Richard J. Herrnstein,. 1994. *The Bell Curve*. (New York: The Free Press).

<sup>8</sup> Stephen Jay Gould in Steven Fraser (ed). 1995. *The Bell Curve Wars: Race, Intelligence, and the Future of America*, (New York: Basic Books), p. 14.



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- <sup>9</sup> This was an official designation by the Australian government as it initiated a 70 year long practice of extracting Aborigine children from their homes.
- <sup>10</sup> Andrew Hacker, "Caste, Crime, and Precocity." 1995. In Steven Fraser, (ed). *The Bell Curve Wars*. New York: Basic Books, 97-108.
- <sup>11</sup> "Relevant Statistical Data of African American Students in San Francisco Unified School District." 2001. Information Technology Department, July.
- <sup>12</sup> *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483, 98 L. Ed. 873, 74 S. Ct 686 (1954).
- <sup>13</sup> See for instance, Ronald Takaki (ed). 1994. *From Different Shores: Perspectives on Race and Ethnicity in America*. See the debate between Nathan Glazer and Ronald Takaki, "The Emergence of An Ethnic Pattern" by Glazer and "Reflections on Racial Patterns in America," p. 9-37.
- <sup>14</sup> Steven R. Donzinger (ed). 1996. *The Real War on Crime: The Report of the National Criminal Justice Commission*. (New York: Harper Perennial).
- <sup>15</sup> San Francisco Human Rights Commission. 2001. "Minutes of the Commission Meeting December 14, 2000" (approved unanimously) January 11.
- <sup>16</sup> Stephan Thernstrom and Abigail Thernstrom. 1997. *America in Black and White: One Nation Indivisible*. (New York: Touchstone Books), p. 260.
- <sup>17</sup> Donzinger. 1996. 3.
- <sup>18</sup> James Lance Taylor. 2001. "Benjamin Chavis Muhammad: From Wilmington to Washington, From Chavis to Muhammad," in Jo Renee Formicola and Hubert Morken (eds), *Religious Leaders and Faith-Based Politics*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield.
- <sup>19</sup> Rod Bush. 1999. *We Are Not What We Seem: Black Nationalism and Class Struggle in the American Century*. (New York: New York University Press), p. 25.
- <sup>20</sup> For a full account of the politics of rap music, see Rod Bush, 1999. See also Michael Eric Dyson. 1996. *Between God and Gangsta Rap: Bearing Witness to Black Culture*. (New York: Oxford University Press).
- <sup>21</sup> Cornel West. 1993. *Race Matters*. (Boston: Beacon Press).
- <sup>22</sup> "Minorities Psychiatric Needs Unmet." 2001. *Oakland Tribune*, August 27. A4.
- <sup>23</sup> The twin increases in the expansion of the Black middle and poverty classes in the nation--though the poor cohort is expanding wider and faster--has spawned a number of studies that explore the idea of Black (class-based) "interest differentiation" and ideological bifurcation. See for instance, Katherine Tate. 1993. *From Protest To Politics: The New Black Voters in American Elections*, (New York: Russell Sage Foundation); Michael C. Dawson. 1993. *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African American Politics*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press). Stephan and Abigail Thernstrom. 1997.
- <sup>24</sup> See for instance, *Social Justice: A Journal of Crime and Conflict and World Order*. 2000. Critical Resistance to the Prison-Industrial Complex. Vol. 27, No. 3. and Elihu Rosenblatt. 1996.
- <sup>25</sup> Donzinger. 1996. p. 9.
- <sup>26</sup> Donzinger. 1996. p. 3.
- <sup>27</sup> *The Final Call*, "Why Are We Charging Youths AS Adults?" p. 3,29.
- <sup>28</sup> See for instance Jimmie L. Reeves and Richard Campbell. 1994. *Cracked Coverage: Television News, The Anti-Cocaine Crusade, and the Reagan Legacy*. (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press).



<sup>29</sup> *United States v. Clary*, 846 F. Supp. 768, 783 (1994)

<sup>30</sup> Kevin Fagan. 2001. "Report Faults Coverage of Crime: Youth , Minorities Overplayed, Group Says." *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 10, A2.

<sup>31</sup>W.E.B. Du Bois. 1903. *The Souls of Black Folk*. (Reprint) New York: Fawcett Premier Book, 1968.

<sup>32</sup> 1,469 or sixty-eight percent (68%) involved guns; 1,316 involved handguns. (Crime in the United States 1998: Uniform Crime Reports, Washington, DC: United States Department of Justice, 1999) as reported by the Human Rights Commission City and County of San Francisco.

<sup>33</sup> Percentages may not add to 100 percent because of rounding. Hispanics are included in all race categories. FBI Supplemental Homicide report.

<sup>34</sup> Patricia Montemurri and Heather Newman. 1999. "Blacks in State Paying Deadliest Price for Guns," *Detroit Free Press*. July 14, A2.

<sup>35</sup> See Rosenblatt, 1996.

<sup>36</sup> The National Policy White Paper American Society of Criminology suggests that 1.5 million children have at least one parent incarcerated. Between 1980 and 1999, the total number of women incarcerated increased 576 percent (nearly doubling the 303 percent increase of male inmates during the same period); most of these women are mothers.

<sup>37</sup> Rosenblatt, 1996. p. 36.

<sup>38</sup> Rosenblatt, 1996. p. 17.

<sup>39</sup> Manning Marable, 1985. *Black American Politics: From the Washington Marches to Jesse Jackson*. (London: Verso); Marcus D. Pohlman, 1990. *Black Politics in Conservative America*. (New York: Longman); Haynes Walton, Jr. 1997. *African American Power and Politics: The Political Context Variable*. (New York: Columbia University Press); Paula D. McClain and Joseph Stewart. 1998. *Can We All Get Along: Racial and Ethnic Minorities in American Politics*, (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) (New York: Westview Press). McClain and Stewart place the events of April 1992 within a larger racial/ethnic narrative reflecting a two-headed "dilemma" having to do with racial/ethnic "political inequality" and "voting rights" in the American political system.

<sup>40</sup> For instance, just months after the Rodney King beating, a Detroit man—Malice Green—accused of refusing to surrender "crack" cocaine to arresting officers, was beaten to death.

<sup>41</sup> Andrew Sum and Neal Fogg. 1990. "The Changing Economic Fortunes of Young Black Men in America." *The Black Scholar: Journal of Black Studies and Research*. January-February-March, 1990. Volume 21, No. 1. p. 47-56.

<sup>42</sup> See Thernstrom and Thernstrom, 1997. p. 59-61; 86-88.

<sup>43</sup>*Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*. 1968. New York: Bantam Books.

<sup>44</sup> This is not to discount the emergent Black middle class that doubled between 1970 and 1990 (this we have noted above) but the more rapidly expanding number of Black families hovering the poverty line tempers this "progress".

<sup>45</sup> Khaled Taqi-Eddin and Dan Macallair. 1999. Shattering "Broken Windows": An Analysis of San Francisco's Alternative Crime Policies. (San Francisco, California: The Justice Policy Institute), p. 1-11.

<sup>46</sup> What can be discerned with the available data is that San Francisco has not returned to its 1993-95 total of 326 homicides.



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<sup>47</sup> Assuming that the remaining six months of 2001 equal or approximate (June to December rates which were 21 and 17 respectively), we can estimate the 2001 reported homicide rates to range between 51 and 56. Thus bringing the two year total between 1999-2001 to about 153. The current reported homicide rate (June 2001) of 24 exceeds both 1999 and 2000 reports for the same period. Thus overall Part 1 violent crime rates in San Francisco for the current period (19,591) remain significantly lower than the periods 1993-1995 (35,471) and 1996-1998 (25,963).

<sup>48</sup> This data is based on SFPD crime reports through June 2001.

<sup>49</sup> Rick DeVecchio, Bob Egelko, and Jaxon Van Derbeken. 2001. "Task Force Cracks Down on Alleged S.F. Drug Gang," *San Francisco Chronicle*. September 1. A1, 9.

<sup>50</sup> For some discussion of the city's attitude toward encouraging Black petty-bourgeois markets, see n53 citation in *San Francisco Bay Guardian* "Black Leaders Push for Role in Redevelopment." July 1991 p. 213 and *San Francisco Bay Guardian* 22 May 1991 "They Just Don't Get It."

<sup>51</sup> The higher percentage excludes the new multiracial category that was created by the 2000 Census.

<sup>52</sup> Erin McCormick. 2001. "Black Population Plummeting in S.F." *San Francisco Chronicle*. July 17, A1, 17.

<sup>53</sup> Rufus P. Browning, Dale Rogers Marshall, and David H. Tabb (eds). 1997. *Racial Politics in American Cities*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc).

<sup>54</sup> Richard A. DeLeon. 1997. "Progressive Politics in the Left Coast City: San Francisco," in Browning, Marshall, and Tabb (eds), p. 35.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 45 and 143-144.