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"I can see that you are down. I can see that you have a mad heart. The question is, what are you going to do with it?"

HEWITT JOINER, STREET WORKER (BELOW)



GLOBE STAFF PHOTO / JONATHAN WIGGS

# City mobilizes to stem gangs' lure

By Charles A. Radin and Daniel Vasquez  
GLOBE STAFF

**B**illy Stewart, chief probation officer at Dorchester District Court, is standing in the library of the Grover Cleveland Middle School in Fields Corner, rocking and rolling.

"Don't front me, I won't front you," Stewart says, telling 31 fifth and sixth graders in their own street language that this is no time for bravado. "What we are going to say to you today, this is not a threat. This is part of your education."

The kids, selected for known or suspected association with the Crips and the Bloods, the infamous gangs from Los Angeles, shift uneasily in their too-small chairs.

Stewart is in their face. At their back stands a ring of ministers from black churches, uniformed police officers, "suits" from the departments of youth services and probation. The heavies have come to the Grover to warn the youngsters that a massive law-enforcement assault is being mounted against the gangs, and to offer them help staying out of the crossfire.

"We're starting to hear things we don't

like. We're starting to hear Crips. We're starting to hear Bloods," Stewart says.

"Believe me! *Believe me!* BELIEVE ME!" His voice starts at drill sergeant volume and rises to a shout. "This is not going to happen."

The surprise summons to the library was the first fruit of an effort quietly and intensively planned over the last three weeks to destroy the notorious West Coast gangs' footholds in the city, and to counter a resurgence of interest in local gangs.

Leaders of the Boston Ten Point Coalition, the Archdiocese of Boston, the School Department

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# City mobilizes to stem gangs' lure

## ■ GANGS

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ment, the gang squad, and numerous other police units are participating in the drive to intervene in the lives of youth who are not yet confirmed gang members, but who are believed to be on the road to membership in the Crips or the Bloods. The Thomas A. Edison and William Howard Taft middle schools in Brighton also have been visited by the police-ministerial alliance, and visits to Dorchester, Brighton, and East Boston high schools are planned.

"Lately, as seems to be happening everywhere, there is an increase in gang activity [in the neighborhood] around the school," says Grover Cleveland principal Jose Duarte. "We are taking preventive steps, rather than waiting for things to happen."

That attitude is in sharp contrast to Boston's response to the rise of gangs in the late 1980s, when a prolonged period of official denial contributed to an explosion of murder and violence which took years to suppress. This time denial has been short-lived, and the response includes sympathy for would-be gang members and constructive approaches to their families, as well as a tough line toward committed gang members.

In recent weeks, 18 gang-involved high school youths have been pulled in and imprisoned for parole violations in an effort to send out the coalition's message of zero tolerance for renewed gang activity.

Over the same period, police developed a list of more than 200 at-risk youths who were not yet deeply involved. Last night, teams of ministers and law-enforcement officers began visiting their homes, talking with them and their parents in an effort to steer them away from gang involvement. The message is similar to what the kids heard in the Grover Cleveland library and at the Taft Middle School. There, street worker Hewitt Joiner said to one boy with a man-sized body — a candidate for "gang enforcer" — to avoid the lure of the street. "I can see that you are down. I can see that you have a mad heart. The question is, what are you going to do with it? Don't let it lead to gangs. That will lead you nowhere."

"We love you, we care about you... Otherwise we wouldn't be here," says the Rev. Prince Woodbury, pastor of the Church of All Nations, who takes the floor from Stewart. A giant of a man, he has a voice and manner as gentle as Stewart's are tough. The children squirm even more, expressions of cockiness, worry, embarrassment, and amusement playing across their faces.

Then it's back to tough stuff.

"You have been identified as gang members or wannabes," gang squad officer Mark Buchanan tells the youngsters. "Something goes down, you are who they're gonna sweat..."

"As God is my witness, Boston is not going back where it was. If we have to put you under the jail, so be it."

Six months ago, Boston was basking in the national spotlight as a result of its anti-gang and community policing efforts. The city, which had reeled in horror at the slaughter of children in its streets in the early 1990s, had not recorded a juvenile homicide in two years.

There were straws in the wind: LA gangs were known to be expanding their influence eastward, making major inroads in the Midwest, the central South, New York. A Boston police report obtained by the Globe last spring attributed half the violent incidents in the schools the previous year to youth claiming Crip or Blood colors. MBTA and school officials were seeing disturbing signs in new graffiti, hand signs, and taste in bandanas.

But most veterans of the battle to suppress the local gangs a few years earlier did not take these indicators very seriously. The nascent Crips and Bloods were dismissed as play-actors, without organization or leadership.

"We laid back a little, thinking we'd broken up all the gangs," says Milton Britten Sr., supervisor of field services in the state probation department. "Until they killed that kid [Eric Paulding, who was shot in December], I think a lot of people felt the gang problem had been solved. While people were enjoying the success, the Crips and Bloods and others were organizing."

If the Paulding slaying was a wake-up call, the murder of Juan Perello Corporan in mid-February, and a brutal early March attack in Brighton, in which Crips allegedly

has been recorded in books, movies and television; their colors are recognized by other gang affiliates in the same way, they say, that ordinary city residents recognize McDonald's golden arches or Boston Celtic green.

Crips and Blood recruitment in Boston was first noticed in 1995 – not coincidentally, the year a determined effort to smash the strongest, most violent local gangs scored a series of major victories. The humbling of the local powers, according to some law enforcement and school sources, created an opening for gangs from outside the area.

In October of that year, several young Bloods ran up to Hennessy of the school police. "I remember turning around and seeing about 20 [Crips], all dressed in blue," chasing the Bloods, Hennessy says. "That's when I knew we had something here."

"They want to belong to something different than their brothers' gangs. Something bigger and badder," said Boston gang unit officer David Singletary, one of the leaders in the initiative against the LA gangs.

Police say Boston and other East Coast street gangs have no formal links to Los Angeles, although they do wear the same street colors and uniforms: Baggy clothes, old-style Nike tennis shoes, Adidas jackets, and a single bandana.

Unlike LA, where most Crips and Bloods keep to separate camps, in Boston the gangs often intermingle. Unlike California gangs, they are not bound to specific neighborhoods.

Gang-unit officer Kenneth Israel says the loose lines are evidence of disorganization and poor imitation. But he also acknowledges the looser structures are harder for police to track. "Before, if you wanted to find a Castlegate member, you would just go to Castlegate Street. But these kids are different. They're not just from one place."

Another difference between Boston and other cities is that the new groupings of Crips and Bloods here can include white, black, Hispanic and Asian youths. In Los Angeles, most of the members are black.

"They are dealing with the issues of race and ethnicity, but for a negative purpose," says the Ten Point Coalition's Brown.

The multicultural character of the local Crips and Bloods, and their relative freedom from geographic boundaries, were among Brown's reasons for seeking the help of the Archdiocese of Boston, which has influence in outlying cities, and in relatively new immigrant groups, such as the Vietnamese, which include many Catholics whose children were at risk.

Despite the community and official concern over their growth, the new gangs have yet to impress the majority of kids on the streets.

"Nah, man, the Crips and Bloods ain't [expletive] out here. They stick to themselves," is a typical street-corner comment. "But if they want something, then bring 'em on. We got something for them."

That's what police fear – that Crips and Bloods will mature and begin to compete with known Boston street gangs for territory, firepower, and the drug trade that invariably attracts older gang members. That competition could lead to a renewal of serious street warfare here.

"Right now these are babies, these are kids playing cowboys and Indians," Hennessy says. "That's where we want to keep it."

...

Outside the Ella J. Baker House, patrol cars flash through the Four Corners section of Dorchester, sirens wailing. Across Washington Street in Corbet Park, freshly painted graffiti on the basketball court announce the presence of Crips in the neighborhood.

Inside, Woodbury and Brown are talking to the volunteers who began visiting the families of at-risk youth last night. The meeting is short and to the point. Woodbury runs through the recommended operating procedure; Brown sums up.

"We have our act together," he says. "Now is the time to move, to show what the people of God can do."

Finally he tells them to remind the kids they visit: "If there's peace, there's going to be jobs. No peace, no jobs. That's essential."

The message plays both ways, Brown stresses afterward: "Without jobs, there's no peace. We have to get the message to businesses and the rest of society. We have to own up to our responsibilities and bring resources to these kids, or else this thing is going to blow up in our faces."



GLOBE STAFF PHOTOS / JONATHAN WIGGS

Zina Jacque (above), an associate pastor at Union Baptist Church, getting a young man's attention as she appealed to him yesterday at the Taft Middle School in Brighton to avoid gang activity. At right, the Rev. Prince Woodberry praying with boys after speaking to them about the dangers of gang involvement.



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# The Boston Globe

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## Early intervention against gangs

Boston police officers who specialize in youth gang violence are seeing a growing obsession with the clothing styles, hand signals, and feuding customs of national gangs, including the infamous Bloods and Crips. The attraction, particularly in Boston's middle schools, where the problem is most acute, stems largely from adolescent fantasies. But the violent outcomes will be real and gruesome if the trend goes unchecked.

Rather than just preach about respect and responsibility, clergy and lay workers from the Boston Ten Point Coalition have joined with members of the Boston Police Department's youth violence strike force to identify "wannabe" gang members and school them in the consequences of gang involvement. Teams of police officers and clergy are already visiting the homes and classrooms of students, some as young as 11, who fancy themselves urban outlaws. Catholic clergy, school principals, probation officials, and Department of Youth Services workers reinforce the effort.

The home visit component in particular is in-

genious. Pastoral workers provide the youths with a sense of a true brotherhood that emphasizes peaceful resolution of conflicts and self-awareness. The presence of police officers, who try to remain in the background, still speaks plainly to the potential for prosecution and imprisonment. Even parents prone to distraction or denial will have difficulty ignoring the significance of these visits.

Police estimate that as many as 300 local youths are mimicking the national gangs. At least two serious assaults in Brighton have been linked to a gang feud of Bloods-Crips imitators. Asian youngsters, according to police, gravitate to the Bloods. Black youths incline toward the Crips. They are all leaning into an abyss. About half of the 35 gang members first identified by police about two years ago are already in jail.

"We have to walk out there boldly," says the Rev. Jeffrey L. Brown, a board member of the Ten Point Coalition. More foundation and corporate support for such innovative urban ministries will ensure that they walk with strength in numbers.

# The Boston Globe

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FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 1998

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**NATIONAL**  
**TenPointLeadershipFoundation**

ELLA J. BAKER HOUSE ■ 411 WASHINGTON ST ■ BOSTON, MA 02124 ■ TEL: (617) 282-6704 ■ FAX: (617) 822-1832

**The Reverend Eugene F. Rivers, 3d**

Ex-gang member, the Reverend Eugene F. Rivers, 3d was born in Boston, Massachusetts, raised in South Chicago and Northwest Philadelphia, and educated at Harvard University. The husband of Jacqueline C. Rivers and father of Kaia, Malcolm, and Sojourner, the Reverend Mr. Rivers is pastor of the Azusa Christian Community in Four Corners, an inner-city section of Boston where he also lives with his family.

He is the author of the The TenPoint Plan for a National Church Mobilization to Combat Black-on-Black Violence and a co-founder of the internationally recognized Boston TenPoint Coalition. As co-chair of the National TenPoint Leadership Foundation he is currently working to cultivate new grassroots church leadership in forty of the most violent inner city neighborhoods in the country by the year 2006, replicating the Boston faith-community, law enforcement partnership success. He is also working with the World Council of Churches Program to Overcome Violence to adapt the U.S. violence prevention model to local conditions in various cities internationally.

Reverend Rivers is a contributing editor to Sojourners magazine and a frequent contributor to a variety of national periodicals. He is also the author of the two forthcoming collection of essays entitled On the Responsibility of Intellectuals in the Age of Crack and Beyond the Nationalism of Fools: A Manifesto for a New Black Movement.

# National TenPointLeadershipFoundation

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**NATIONAL TEN-POINT LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION**  
*Mobilizing Black Churches to Save At-Risk Inner-City Youth*  
1,000 Churches,  
40 Cities,  
Saving Children in America's 50 Worst Ghetto Neighborhoods,  
By the Year 2006

**The NTLF Mission.** The National Ten-Point Leadership Foundation (NTLF) is a non-profit organization based in Boston, Massachusetts. NTLF's primary mission is to help provide African-American Christian churches with the strategic vision, programmatic structure, and financial resources necessary to saving at-risk inner-city youth—saving them from child abuse and neglect, street violence, drug abuse, school failure, teen-age pregnancy, incarceration, chronic joblessness, spiritual depravity, and hopelessness about the future.

NTLF is co-directed by the Reverend Eugene F. Rivers, III and Mrs. Jacqueline Rivers of the Asuza Christian Community, a church located in Boston's most economically distressed Dorchester neighborhood. Inspired by the half-century of work done in Philadelphia by Pastor Benjamin Smith of Deliverance Evangelistic Church, NTLF grew directly out of the Rivers' own decade-plus of nationally-acknowledged, faith-anchored, street-level work with some of America's most severely at-risk inner-city children, including juvenile probationers (Boston Freedom Summer, Operation Christmas, Operation 2006, and much more). In Boston, NTLF acts in partnership with local synagogues and the Catholic Church, and runs programs in cooperation with social service agencies and law enforcement authorities.

While working diligently to attract the full-time staff and raise the money needed to deepen and expand its youth and community outreach ministry in Dorchester and throughout Boston, NTLF has established on-going ties to many national research institutions, think tanks, universities, and seminaries including The Institute for Civil Society, the New York Theological Seminary, Harvard University, Public/Private Ventures, the Brookings Institution, the Manhattan Institute, and others.

In partnership with these and other organizations and individuals, NTLF is committed to promoting the efficacy of faith-based approaches to inner-city problems; probing the Rivers' own experience for clues to what works and what doesn't in the way of building and sustaining local church networks focused on at-risk youth; discovering how best to mobilize churches for the benefit of inner-city children; and fostering systematic, large-scale experiments with kindred faith-based youth and community development efforts in big cities all across the country. By the year 2006, NTLF aspires to mobilize 1,000 churches to do youth outreach ministries in the most economically and socially distressed neighborhoods of 40 major metropolitan areas.

Below we articulate the rationale for and timeliness of NTLF's mission in terms of the following: (1) the urgent needs it addresses; (2) the realities of the inner-city black youth crisis; (3) the special

historical role and contemporary potential of black churches as agents of positive social change and progress, both within the black community and beyond it; (4) recent empirical research on how the churches and the "faith factor" can have a multiplier effect on efforts to solve socioeconomic crises; and (5) the unique capacity of NTLF to work through diverse ten-point partnerships and via special programs (like the budding Operation 2006) to save inner-city children.

1. The Urgent Need: Neither Post-Crack Nor Post-Problem. In recent years, Boston has experienced a significant drop in gun-related youth homicides and several other categories of juvenile crime. As local newspaper reporters and others close to the action have acknowledged, these positive results were borne of several rather extraordinary community-based partnerships involving churches, police units, and probation authorities, among others. NTLF continues to work and pray for a continuation of this success in saving young lives from drugs, crime, and hopelessness.

But make no mistake: neither this recent good news nor the supposed passing of the much publicized inner-city crack-cocaine and crime epidemic of the 1980s and early 1990s is synonymous with the passing of the challenges of youth crime, substance abuse, and related social spiritual crises on the jobless inner-city streets of Boston, New York, Los Angeles, Detroit, and other big cities. Just consider what three recent reports—one by the National Research Council, a second by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and a third by the Council on Crime in America—have explained and forecast.

As analysts and journalists who have seen the operation up close have been quick to observe...the all-out, help-every-child, "fall asleep in their clothes" character of what Reverend Rivers and his team actually do...goes well beyond what even the most ambitious monitoring and mentoring programs could ever achieve.

—Council on Crime in America,  
Preventing Crime, Saving Children (February 1997).

In 1995 the National Research Council's Panel on High-Risk Youth reported that at least seven million young Americans—roughly a quarter of adolescents aged 10 to 17—are at risk of failing to achieve productive adult lives. The United States, the panel warned, is in danger of "losing generations" of low-income children who abuse illegal drugs, engage in unprotected premarital sex, drop out of school, prove unable to get and keep jobs, succumb to the blandishments of illegal drugs, commit serious crimes or become victims of serious crimes. According to the panel, a big reason why so many low-income urban children are highly at risk of getting involved with crime and drugs is that their neighborhoods commonly lack "good role models for adolescents" and are instead home to many "adults who are involved in illegal markets. The poorest neighborhoods seem increasingly unable to restrain criminal or deviant behavior."<sup>1</sup>

In 1996, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) held a major summit on youth violence. Echoing reports issued the same year by the National District Attorneys' Association, the National Association of Attorneys General, and several other top law enforcement bodies, the

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<sup>1</sup>National Research Council, Panel on High-Risk Youth, Losing Generations (National Academy Press, 1995), p. 5.

IACP noted that the number of juvenile offenders had risen rapidly in recent years, and warned that juvenile crime "will get considerably worse as a big new group of youngsters reach their teenage years." Looking over the horizon of the next few years, the IACP envisioned more kids, more drugs, more guns and more murders.<sup>2</sup> The IACP emphasized that illegal drug use among juveniles began rising again in 1992. According to the IACP, in 1996 crack cocaine use was down, but crack was hardly invisible on East Coast inner-city streets, heroin was making a roaring comeback (especially on the West Coast), and LSD, amphetamine, stimulant and inhalant use was rising among teenagers nationwide. Thus, in several big cities, the percentage of juveniles in custody who tested positive for illegal drug use has more than tripled since 1990. Solutions to the youth crime and substance abuse problems, the IACP concluded, "must run the gamut from early intervention to swift and sure punishment for chronic/violent offenders. The future and well being of our youth demands nothing less."<sup>3</sup>

In 1997, the bipartisan Council on Crime in America, co-chaired by former U.S. Attorney General Griffin Bell and former federal "drug czar" William J. Bennett, stated flatly that "America's crime prevention challenge—at core a challenge of at-risk youth in need of adults—must be met, and soon." According to the Council, in 1994 there were over 2.7 million arrests of persons under age 18 (a third of them under age 15), up from 1.7 million juvenile arrests in 1991. Some 150,000 of these 2.7 million arrests were for violent crimes. In all, juveniles were responsible for an estimated 14 percent of all violent crimes and a quarter of all property crimes known to the police. Nationally, juveniles perpetrated 137,000 more violent crimes in 1994 than in 1985, and were responsible for 26 percent of the growth in violent crime over that period, including 50 percent of the increase in robberies, 48 percent of the increase in rapes, and 35 percent of the increase in murders. While welcoming recent drops in juvenile arrest rates, the Council urged all Americans to place them against the backdrop of a decade's worth of steep annual increases in youth crime and violence.

Moreover, the Council warned, America is now home to about 57 million children under age 15, some 20 million of them aged four to eight. The teenage population will top 30 million by the year 2006, the highest number since 1975. Thus, "no one," the Council concluded, "should feel certain that recent declines in crime will continue into the next century," and we must resist any temptation to "ignore or trivialize our nation's present and future youth crime dilemmas."<sup>4</sup>

Indeed we must.

2. The Continuing Crisis of Inner-City Black Youth. In a forthcoming study of crime and at-risk youth, Professor Byron R. Johnson of Lamar University and Dr. David B. Larson, M.D., president of the National Institute for Healthcare Research, merge two national data sets: the sample of inner-city

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<sup>2</sup>Youth Violence in America: Recommendations from the IACP Summit (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 1996), section III, tables 11 and 12. Selected tables on youth crime trends from the IACP Summit are reproduced with permission as Appendix 1 of this paper.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup>Council on Crime in America, Preventing Crime, Saving Children (Center for Civic Innovation, Manhattan Institute, February 1997), pp. 1-3.

black youth (ICBY) from the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), and the national sample of black youth (BY) and white youth (WY) from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY). Among the results of their baseline comparisons among the three groups of youth are the following:<sup>5</sup>

- In custody of both parents: ICBY 43%, BY 58%, WY 84%.
- Adult male regularly in household: ICBY 29%, BY 65%, WY 76%.
- Household adults working: ICBY 26%, BY 57%, WY 78%.
- Live in public housing: ICBY 31%, BY 13%, WY 3%.
- Receive public assistance/AFDC: ICBY 46%, BY N/A, WY N/A.
- Unemployed youth: ICBY 31%, BY 17%, WY 12%.
- Use drugs: ICBY 36%, BY 14%, WY 23%.

Inner-city black youth are especially at risk, and the concentration of crime and delinquency among black youth is especially striking for crimes of violence, including murder. In 1995, a nationwide total of 21,597 murders were reported to police, a total 7 percent lower than the 1994 total, and representing a national murder rate of 8 per 100,000 inhabitants. But 77 percent of murder victims in 1995 were males, 48 percent were black, and 12 percent were under age 18. Moreover, recent studies find that males ages 14 to 24 are roughly 8 percent of the country's total population, but they constitute over a quarter of all homicide victims and nearly half of all murderers. Between 1985 and 1992, for example, black males ages 14-24 remained just above 1 percent of the population but increased from 9 to 17 percent of the murder victims and from 17 to 30 percent of the assailants.<sup>6</sup>

In a forthcoming study, Professors Philip J. Cook and John H. Laub report that between 1984-85 and 1990-91, the number of black male homicide victims aged 10 to 24 more than doubled, from 3,588 to 7,450. In both periods, 11 percent of the victims were New Yorkers, and New York and 11 other big cities accounted for 51 percent of the victims in both periods. But the cities varied in terms of their rates of increase and contributions to the totals. For example, over these two periods, the number of black male homicide victims increased by 800 percent in Milwaukee (from 10 to 90) and by 420 percent in the District of Columbia (from 70 to 364), but by "only" 41 percent in Detroit (from 287 to 406) and 26 percent in Newark (from 46 to 58). It is unclear what accounts for the inter-city and historical differences in black male homicide numbers.<sup>7</sup>

But one thing is tragically clear: "Homicide for young black males is very concentrated geographically," and remained so throughout the epidemic increases of the last decade.<sup>8</sup> As a 1994 study of youth violence concluded: "The violence now occurring within our cities is a national

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<sup>5</sup>Byron R. Johnson, David B. Larson, et al., "Escaping Crime and Poverty: What Helps At-Risk Youth?," draft, 1997. We are grateful to the authors for supplying a copy of this draft document.

<sup>6</sup>Trends in Juvenile Violence (Bureau of Justice Statistics, March 1996), p. 2.

<sup>7</sup>Philip J. Cook and John H. Laub, "The Unprecedented Epidemic in Youth Violence," forthcoming, pp. 29-30.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, p. 30.

scourge. The fact that minority youth are disproportionately its victims makes it a tragedy as well as a disgrace."<sup>9</sup>

We agree.

3. Black Children, Black Churches, Real Answers. As a class, no Americans are more religious, and none believe so strongly in the ameliorative capacity of churches and faith-based approaches in relation to socioeconomic problems, as black Americans.

The consensus of hope is that urban religious institutions—black churches, in particular—will recognize a unique responsibility and opportunity and get involved in the lives of young people in their neighborhoods.

—The Boston Globe, May 19, 1996.

According to data analyses by George H. Gallup, Jr., belief in God or a universal spirit is unusually high in America, with levels of belief ranging from 94 percent to 99 percent over the past five decades. Currently, some 96 percent of Americans say they are believers. Claims of membership in a church, synagogue or similar place of worship have ranged from a high of 75 percent in 1947 to a low of 65 percent in 1988 and 1990. In 1995 membership stood at 69 percent of the adult population—unchanged from the previous two years. And in 1995 about 43 percent of Americans attended a place of worship during a typical week.<sup>10</sup>

Some groups of Americans have been consistently more likely than others to consider religion important in their lives. For example, African-Americans "of all faiths are in many ways the most religious people in America": 82 percent are church members, and the same high fraction (versus just 58 percent of the population as a whole) feel that religion is very important in their own everyday lives.<sup>11</sup>

Opinion on the capacity of religion, spirituality, churches, or faith-based organizations to help solve contemporary socioeconomic and other problems has varied widely over the decades, from a high of 81 percent in 1957 to a low of 56 percent in 1984. In 1995 about 61 percent of all adult Americans, and 86 percent of black Americans, felt religion can help to solve today's problems.<sup>12</sup>

4. The "Faith Factor". The faith that black people have in faith-based approaches to socioeconomic problems is borne out not only by NTLF, but by the kindred church-based efforts that

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<sup>9</sup>Violence in America: Mobilizing a Response (National Academy Press, 1994), p. ix.

<sup>10</sup>Religion in America, 1996 Report (Princeton Religion Research Center, 1996), pp. 16, 17.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 17, 48.

are underway (and attempting to get underway) in almost every big city, from the "latch-key" ministries of black clergy in the Bronx to the youth outreach efforts of ministers in Louisville, Miami, Camden, and elsewhere. It is borne out as well by the small but growing body of empirical research evidence on religion and socioeconomic problems.

There is a growing body of empirical research evidence which indicates that, other things being equal, at-risk youth, people with mental health disorders, substance abusers, and convicted criminals whose lives are influenced by religion—either directly via church attendance or participation in a faith-based program, or interaction with others who are "churched," or indirectly via the activities of faith-based youth outreach, drug or alcohol treatment, or economic development programs—are less likely to get into trouble with the law, remain jobless, suffer severe depression, abuse alcohol or drugs, or be repeat criminals than otherwise comparable persons whose lives are not so touched by religion. Here are just a few examples:

**At-Risk Youth:** In a 1985 study, Harvard University economist Richard Freeman examined the relation of church-going and other background factors to the socioeconomic performance of black male youths from inner-city poverty tracks. He found that church-going substantially increased the chances that young black males would escape poverty, crime, drug abuse, and school failure, and that "the church-going effect is the result of an actual impact."<sup>13</sup> In a forthcoming reanalysis and update of the Freeman study, Dr. Byron Johnson and his colleagues reinforce Freeman's conclusion, finding even stronger evidence that church-going and other religious influences have an independent inverse relation to socioeconomic problems among young black inner-city males.<sup>14</sup> Likewise, a 1995 review of the relevant criminology literature concluded that, while more research was clearly needed, religious influences probably do inhibit crime and delinquency.<sup>15</sup>

**Mental Health:** A 1991 review of the research on "religious commitment" and mental health found that "the preponderance of evidence suggests that religion is associated with mental health benefits."<sup>16</sup>

**Inmate Recidivism:** A forthcoming review of the literature on religion and recidivism among prisoners indicates that many faith-based programs behind bars have promoted rehabilitation, and, in particular, that released "inmates who are most active in Bible studies are significantly less likely to be arrested" in the future than otherwise comparable released inmates who were not.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Richard Freeman, "Who Escapes?," Working Paper Series No. 1656, National Bureau of Economic Research, 1985, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup>Byron Johnson et. al., "Who Escapes? Revisited," forthcoming, April 1997.

<sup>15</sup>T. David Evans et al., "Religion and Crime Reexamined," *Criminology*, May 1995, pp. 195-224.

<sup>16</sup>John Gartner et al., "Religious Commitment and Mental Health," *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 1991, p. 16.

<sup>17</sup>David B. Larson et al., "Religious Programs, Institutional Adjustment, and Recidivism," forthcoming *Justice Quarterly*, 1997. Related work is underway by professor Todd Clear of Florida State University.

**Substance Abuse:** A number of studies dating back to the 1970s suggest that, regardless of whether the religion variable is operationalized in terms of church membership, active participation, religious upbringing, or how meaningful religion or spirituality is in one's life, religious influences prevent or curtail drug abuse.<sup>18</sup>

With respect to the potential of black churches, what is especially notable about such findings is that we have yet to make, as it were, a "full-court press" against inner-city ills. To date, only some churches have been active and engaged.<sup>19</sup> NTLF will help build their capacity while strengthening its own.

**5. NTLF-Suites and Streets.** In many of the places where our nation's most severely at-risk youth are concentrated, churches—in many cases, black churches—are literally the only institutions left. There are no businesses, no banks, no government buildings (save, perhaps, police stations). NTLF is dedicated to the proposition that the churches must therefore be multi-faceted in the youth outreach and other services they provide or leverage, and in the economic development or other efforts they help to launch. Whether assisting single mothers who have been denied public assistance or working with juvenile probationers, whether doing one-on-one work with drug addicts or administering after-school programs, the churches must have a plan, have the necessary human and financial resources, and be prepared.

NTLF believes the ten-point plan summarized on the next page furnishes a useful set of guideposts around which churches can and should be mobilized to save at-risk youth, both today (starting now!) and tomorrow.

We do not, however, seek to have others "replicate" the plan so much as we aim to have them—and ourselves—proliferate the spiritual and strategic vision that lies behind it. Getting clergy and other churchled adults into the lives of our most severely at-risk youth, for real, here and now. That is the crux of NTLF's mission, and we are grateful that the Institute for Civil Society has taken the lead in helping us to do God's work for America's most truly disadvantaged children. NTLF looks forward to taking its mission to the streets of Boston and other cities, and to the suites of research, corporate, and other civic and religious organizations that share our vision.

*But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.*

Jeremiah 29:7

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<sup>18</sup>For an overview, see The Forgotten Factor in Physical and Mental Health (National Institute for Healthcare Research, 1994). Also see " 'There is a Balm in Gilead': Religion and Substance Abuse Treatment," in Joyce H. Lowinson et al. eds., Substance Abuse: A Comprehensive Textbook (Williams and Wilkins, 1992), chapter 46.

<sup>19</sup>Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya, The Black Church in the African-American Experience (Duke, 1990).



### **A 10 Point Plan to Mobilize the Churches**

1. Establish 4-5 church cluster-collaborations which sponsor "Adopt-a-Gang" programs to organize and evangelize youth in gangs. Inner-city churches would serve as drop-in centers providing sanctuary for troubled youth.
2. Commission missionaries to serve as advocates and ombudsmen for black and Latino juveniles in the courts. Such missionaries would work closely with probation officers, law enforcement officials, and youth streetworkers to assist at-risk youth and their families. They would also convene summit meetings between school superintendents, principals of public middle and high schools, and black and Latino pastors to develop partnerships that will focus on the youth most at-risk. We propose to do pastoral work with the most violent and troubled young people and their families. In our judgement this is a rational alternative to ill-conceived proposals to substitute incarceration for education.
3. Commission youth evangelists to do street-level one-on-one evangelism with youth involved in drug trafficking. These evangelists would also work to prepare these youth for participation in the economic life of the nation. Such work might include preparation for college, the development of legal revenue-generating enterprises, and acquisition of trade skills and union membership.
4. Establish accountable, community-based economic development projects that go beyond "market and state" visions of revenue generation. Such an economic development initiative will include community land trusts, microenterprise projects, worker cooperatives, and democratically run community development corporations.
5. Establish links between suburban and downtown churches and front-line ministries to provide spiritual, human resource, and material support.
6. Initiate and support neighborhood crime-watch programs within local church neighborhoods. If, for example, 200 churches covered the four corners surrounding their sites, 800 blocks would be safer.
7. Establish working relationships between local churches and community-based health centers to provide pastoral counseling for families during times of crisis. We also propose the initiation of drug abuse prevention programs and abstinence-oriented educational programs focusing on the prevention of AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases.
8. Convene a working summit meeting for Christian black and Latino men and women in order to discuss the development of Christian brotherhoods and sisterhoods that would provide rational alternatives to violent gang life. Such groups would also be charged with fostering responsibility to family and protecting houses of worship.
9. Establish rape crisis drop-in centers and services for battered women in churches. Counseling programs must be established for abusive men, particularly teenagers and young adults.
10. Develop an aggressive black and Latino curriculum, with an additional focus on the struggles of women and poor people. Such a curriculum could be taught in churches as a means of helping our youth understand that the God of history has been and remains active in the lives of all people.

# Newswatch

THE OREGON  
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## GOD VS. GANGS

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NON-CIRCULATING

The Hottest Idea  
Time Fighting?  
Power of Religion

The Rev. Eugene Rivers on the streets of Dorchester, Mass.

## NATIONAL AFFAIRS

An ex-gang member who went to Harvard, Gene Rivers is an impolitic preacher on the cutting edge of a hot idea: can religion fight crime and save kids?

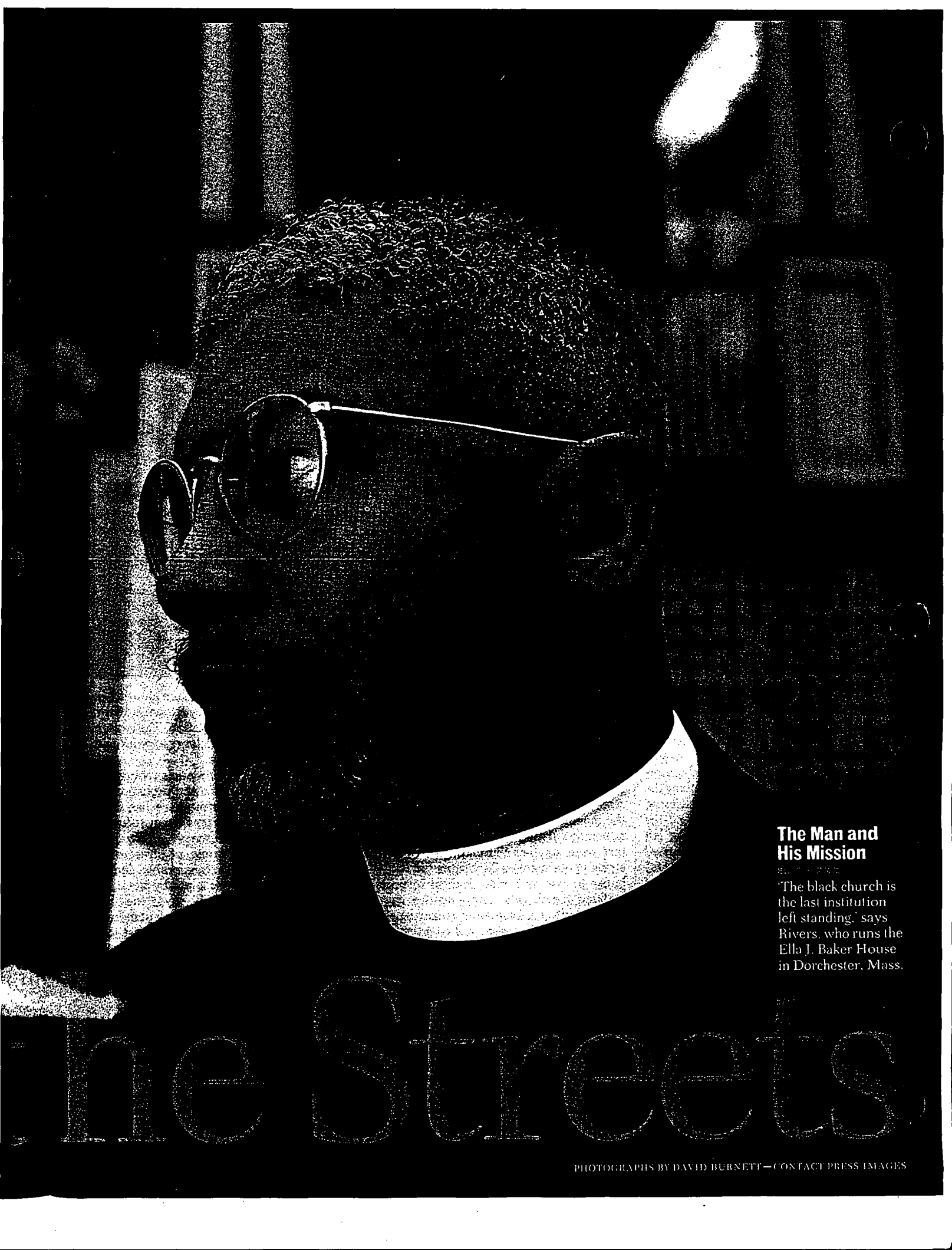
BY JOHN LELAND

**P**ATRIOT'S DAY IS A CITY HOLIDAY IN Boston, but the Rev. Eugene Rivers, a compact, graying black man in a blue dress shirt frayed at the elbows, is working hard. "Yo, wazzup, G money?" he greets a teenager, slapping him five. He wheels on another. "Take your hat off, son. Yes, *what*? No, yes, *sir*, we don't speak no Ebonics here." It is just noon on a spring day, and already the Ella J. Baker House—a grand, bow-front Victorian in Dorchester, one of the poorest neighborhoods in Boston—is full of fires: a man's teenage son has brought home a dangerous pit-bull terrier; a pregnant 16-year-old's parents have kicked her out of the house; the Negroes Latinos, the house baseball team, need uniforms and a gang-neutral field. Rivers, 48, darts from one to the next, a fixer, embattled but engaged.

When he first moved into this neighborhood, as a refugee from Harvard, Rivers sought out a local drug dealer and gangbanger named Selvin Brown—"a sassy, smartass, tough-talking, gunslinging mother shut your mouth," he says, not without some appreciation. Brown took the reverend into crackhouses, introduced him to the neighborhood. And he gave Rivers, a Pentecostal, a lesson in why God was losing to gangs in the battle for the souls of inner-city kids. "Selvin explained to us, 'I'm there when Johnny goes out for a loaf of bread for Mama. I'm there, you're not. I win, you lose. It's all about being there.'"

Ten years later, as the Baker House kids file out into the sunshine, Rivers turns from his full-contact pastoring—a mix of street slang and stern lessons—to tell a group of police officers from Tulsa, Okla., about Selvin Brown. Baker House is Rivers' answer to Selvin: it's run by a dozen people, some of whom have given up professorships, military careers and positions in finance to be there. The Tulsa cops are only the latest in a recent stream of law-enforcement

# Sav

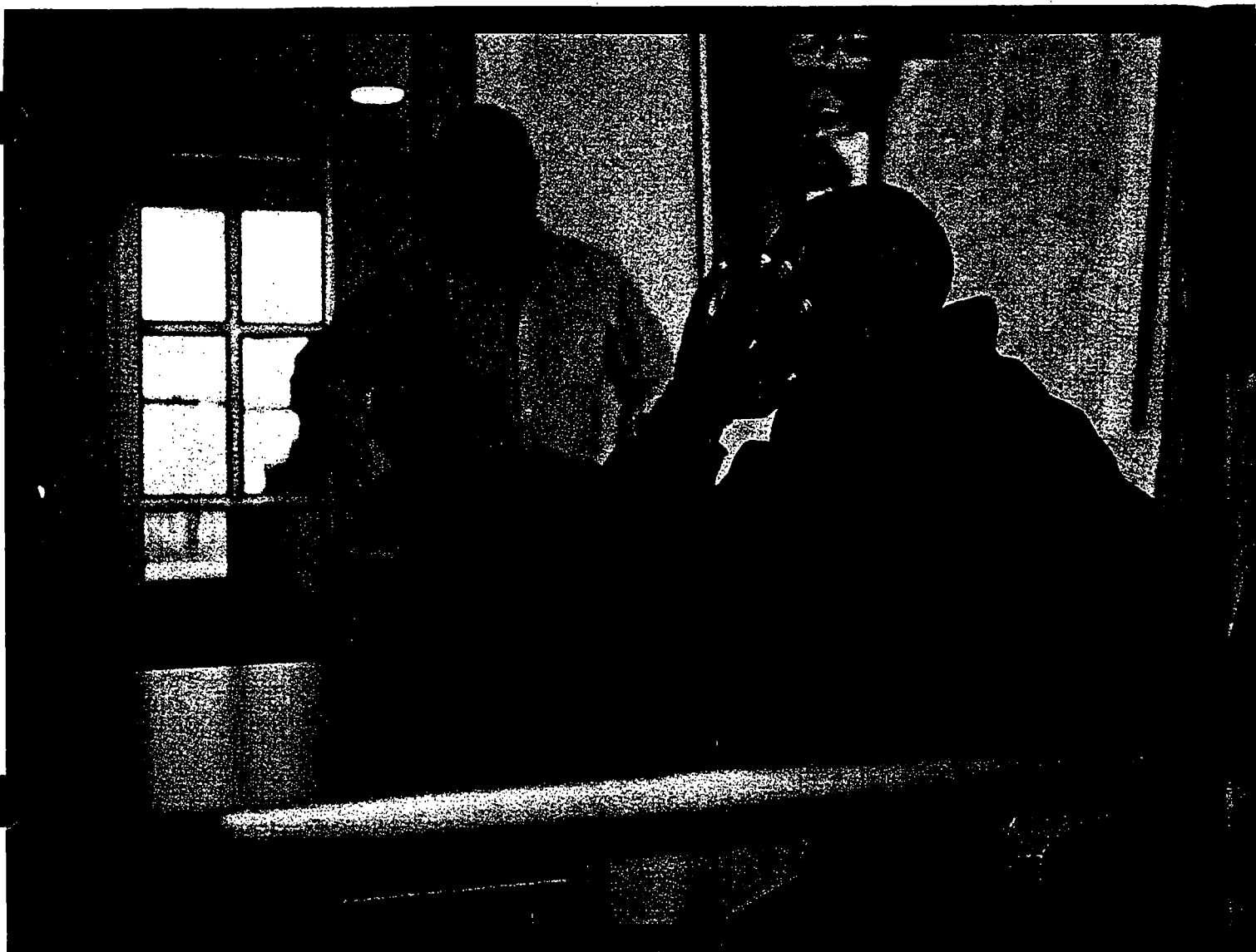


## The Man and His Mission

The black church is the last institution left standing," says Rivers, who runs the Ella J. Baker House in Dorchester, Mass.

# The Streets

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID BURNETT—CONTACT PRESS IMAGES



emissaries who have come to Rivers' domain, a rec center and parish house that Rivers says serves more than 1,300 kids a year, to watch, listen and talk about the hottest new topic in crime fighting: the power of religion. For decades, liberals and conservatives have argued past each other about the crisis in the inner city. The right was obsessed with crime, out-of-wedlock births and the "responsibility" of the underclass; the left only wanted to talk about poverty, the need for government intervention and the "rights" of the poor. Now both sides are beginning to form an unlikely alliance founded on the idea that the only way to rescue kids from the seductions of the drug and gang cultures is with another, more powerful set of values: a substitute family for young people who almost never have two parents, and may not even have one, at home. And the only institution with the spiritual message and the physical presence to offer those traditional values, these strange bedfellows have concluded, is the church.

As the Tulsa cops sit around the Baker House oak table, Rivers tells them about a griev-

ous stabbing inside the nearby Morning Star Baptist Church in 1992. During a funeral service for a young murder victim, a gang chased another kid into the church, beating and stabbing him in front of a crowd of mourners. For the clergy, says Rivers, "this was a wake-up call. We had to be out on the streets," just like Selvin Brown was. While the mainline Boston churches issued a denunciation of the violence, a group of ministers from smaller churches, mostly shoe-string Pentecostal or Baptist, met in Rivers' house to discuss a more radical response: walking the 'hoods, engaging the gangs, pulling kids out. Instead of bickering with police, the ministers vowed to work with them, identifying the hardest cases. "The deal we cut was, 'Take this one off the

streets, we can deal with him in a prison ministry'," the Rev. Jeffrey Brown, a Rivers ally, tells the Tulsa delegation. The cops, in turn, would rely on the clergy to work with the more winnable kids.

Since the 1992 alliance, and a reorganization of the Boston police and probation departments, juvenile crime here has fallen dramatically. Rivers is now trying to forge a similar coalition of churches nationwide. It won't be easy: his brand of street-smart charisma is not easily transferable, and the work is house by house, block by block. But "at the end of the day," he says, "the black church is the last institution left standing." The noted conservative criminologist John DiIulio Jr., best known for predicting a coming wave of inner-city "superpreda-

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When Rivers moved to the neighborhood a drug dealer told him, 'I'm there when Johnny goes out for a loaf of bread for Mama. I win, you lose. It's all about being there.'

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## Building a Bridge to The Police Force

When he first came to Dorchester, cops say, Rivers (here with members of the anti-gang unit) didn't think there was such a thing as a bad kid. That has changed. Now he and the police are unlikely—but effective—allies.

## Providing Family for Kids Who Have None

At Baker House, there is no cursing; the kids say 'yes, sir'—though not always without some prompting

## Praying in the Midst Of Constant Battle

Rivers (with fellow clergy) mixes evangelism with street smarts

tors," has become an improbable friend and ally. In apocalyptic tones, Rivers—a forceful speaker who is sometimes accused of grandstanding—warns that as the teenage population swells in the next decade, "there will be virtual apartheid in these cities if the black church doesn't step into the breach."

Washington is starting to take notice, too. The 1996 welfare bill gives states the option to fund church groups in place of welfare agencies. Research on the effectiveness of faith-based programs is so far largely anecdotal. "But there is a lot of interest in this area now, because secular institutions have failed," says Bernardine Watson, a vice president of the nonprofit Public/Private Ventures. "Anybody who wants to fund faith-based programs is looking at the Baker House model. Conservatives like it because of the crime angle; liberals like it because of the youth angle."

When Rivers first came to Dorchester, the cops say, he believed there was no such thing as a bad kid. That has changed. Now, "ministers will come to us about a kid, say he's menacing the community," says Lt. Gary French, who works with Rivers. The Boston police estimate that 150 to 250 kids are responsible for most of the violent crime

in the city. "We can disrupt a gang by incarcerating the most aggressive player," says French. "But we can also disrupt it by getting the fringe players into alternative programs," like those provided by Baker House. The exchange works both ways. "Right now," says Rivers, "any cop in Dorchester can dump a kid off in Baker House, and say, 'Look, I'm gonna crack this kid's skull, take him.' So we have taken the pressure off the police to play heavies."

At 2 a.m. in his cramped row house, Gene Rivers is still keyed up. "The great thing about serving the poor," he says, "is that there is no competition. These young males, ain't no black preacher want to be around these boys. You see [he names several kids at Baker House] coming, you go the other way." He is on the short side, maybe five feet six—by his own description, a "pushy, aggressive, interloper-would-be-usurper, with this kind of guerrilla campaign." In battle mode, he is scandalously impolitic. He refers to the mainline black churches as "the major crime families" and is a critic of Henry Louis Gates Jr., chair of Afro-American studies at Harvard, whom he has called "the emcee at the Cotton Club on the Charles." His own critics—"[it's a] long list," he says—

dismiss him as a "black Rasputin" who has duped white people into thinking he has power in the black community. He holds no degrees from college or divinity school; his service on a recent Sunday drew just 19 congregants.

Yet Rivers is becoming a national figure. He has met with the president, been courted by the Christian Coalition and served on the religion panel at Colin Powell's 1997 Volunteerism Summit. Though Rivers comes from what he calls a "radical reform" line, his arguments for black self-help, and his unwillingness to make liberal excuses for urban pathologies, have endeared him to the right. "There's been more litmus-test stuff from the left than from the right," he says. (Rivers' ministry condemns homosexuality and abortion.) "One of the good things about the right is that they're sufficiently indifferent toward the concerns of blacks that they don't bother you." His alliance with DiIulio has given Rivers a boost in policy circles. "Gene and John are very odd soulmates," says Rivers' wife, Jacqueline, who trains inner-city teachers in the Boston Algebra Project. "One is so far left he's right, the other is so far right he's left. They really think alike."



## Bullet Holes and Black Panthers

Rivers (here in a Dorchester barber-shop) is an intriguing combination of liberal and conservative. While his critics—and there are many—call him a 'black Rasputin,' he's still becoming a national figure: he's met with Clinton and been courted by the Christian Coalition.

The walls of Rivers' house still bear the bullet holes from two shootings, one a random spray, the second by a drug dealer Rivers had tried to move from a neighborhood park. He roots around for a 1992 essay he wrote for the *Boston Review*, entitled "On the Responsibility of Intellectuals in the Age of Crack." It, like his other writings, argues that after the victories of the civil-rights movement, the black middle class, particularly middle-class churches, abandoned the black poor. The signature phrases of these articles—"virtual apartheid," a "crisis of moral and cultural authority"—swim throughout his conversation, crusty set pieces amid his staccato improvisations. "When he talks slang, I don't understand him," says Police Lieutenant French. "And when he talks the Harvard level, I don't understand him, either."

Rivers was born in 1950 in Boston, the eldest of three children. His mother was a nurse, a Pentecostal; his father, who moved out when Gene was 3, was a painter, a Muslim, who later became art director for the Nation of Islam's paper, Muhammad Speaks. Both parents were black nationalists and intellectuals. "What my mother instilled was that life is duty," he says. "Life itself is a holy war." Rivers grew up in rugged northwest Philadelphia, where he was forcefully inducted into the Somersville street gang at the age of 12. "There was a side my life nobody understood. At 13, 14 and 15, I remember studying Andrew Wyeth, the Brandywine tradition. [And I'm] in a street gang with a lot of hoodlums. You learn to lead

a double life. I've always had that tension."

Whenever Rivers describes the violent potential of the Dorchester kids, his voice livens with a certain rogue romance. "This ain't Yuppie kids, this ain't Cosby kids," he trumpets at one point. In part this is because he's playing to a public that finds lurid gang violence a sexier topic than, say, urban poverty. But it's also because he savors that street edge. Mark Scott, who runs the day-to-day affairs of Baker House, thinks Rivers would be bored in a straighter life. "He's pastor of the church, but he's also pastored by the people around him, especially Jackie." Scott believes that Baker House has saved Rivers, keeping him on the street but out of trouble, giving him a channel for his anger.

As he describes his own past, Rivers' tone becomes more sober. He's riding in Jackie's Volvo—Rivers doesn't have a license—listening to NPR and heading to pick up their two kids, Malcolm and Sojourner, 10 and 8, near their private school in tony Beacon Hill. It does not strike him as a contradiction to send his kids to private school. "I said, Jackie, I'm not a liberal. I'm not going to have my kid go to school where the kids are so completely antisocial that Malcolm will end up resenting black kids. No no no no no." As Jackie drives, Rivers

continues his own story. When he was 13, his life was forever changed by the Rev. Billy Graham's radio program. Rivers was being menaced by an older, bigger kid from a rival gang called the Lane, and Graham's words struck him. "He asked, was I ready to meet my creator? At that point, that was not a farfetched possibility. I had a fear of death, which my conversion experience transformed. My response to fear is faith."

Eventually the Rev. Benjamin Smith, a legendary Philadelphia inner-city evangelical, pulled Rivers out of the gang and into the Pentecostal community. But he was at odds here, too, a bookish intellectual in a working-class church. He dropped in and out of two art schools; he read Herbert Marcuse and Noam Chomsky, getting deeper into radical political thought. The 1969 deaths of Black Panthers Fred Hampton and Mark Clark—men his own age, killed in a police raid—shook his moral center, as Graham had years before. The nonviolent movement of the '60s had crashed around him. Rivers was angry and confused, "buck wild," scorched with a case of "survivor's guilt" that has been his motivating force ever since. "I promised the Lord that if he would let me survive, I would never turn my back on these kids,"

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Rivers' mother was a Pentecostal; his father, who left when Gene was 3, a Muslim.

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'What my mother instilled was that life is duty,' Rivers says. 'Life itself is a holy war.'

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Rivers says. He got a woman pregnant and drifted to New Haven, Conn., where he met Kwame Toure, then known as Stokely Carmichael of the Black Panthers. Taking occasional courses at Yale, he carved three identities for himself, collecting welfare checks in Philadelphia, New York and New Haven. Finally, another mentor—Martin Kilson, an iconoclastic black professor at Harvard—discovered Rivers and lured him to Cambridge. Rivers raged against the privileged black students of Harvard—including, at first, a Jamaican woman named Jacqueline Cooke—and left, angry, in 1983. He and Cooke married three years later.

On a school holiday at Baker House, Rivers is showing two boys the documentary "Eyes on the Prize," the installment about Fred Hampton and the Black Panther Party. The boys are 12 and 13; Rivers takes satisfaction in calling the younger boy, who appeared pseudonymously in a 1997 New Yorker article, "America's worst nightmare." The kids are to write reports on the video, for which Rivers gives them a few

bucks. He hugs the boy, pays him, and the kids are off. "Kareem," as The New Yorker called the boy, was Baker House's most critical case a year ago, and he is still. His day with Rivers began when he showed up at the Rev.'s house for breakfast; it will end around 11 at night, when he asks Rivers for a lift to the city bus, bound for wherever. Rivers doesn't worry that Kareem will get home safely. "I'm worried about whether other people will." For Rivers, Kareem is a test. "[Kareem]'s father got murdered," says Rivers. "His mother lives in the street more than he does. If you can get [Kareem], you've got the whole neighborhood."

In the early days, Rivers pushed religion harder on the kids, but found that it intimidated—and turned off—many of them. So now he keeps preaching to a minimum. But the men and women who are giving their lives to Baker House still see faith at the heart of their mission. "Bob Moses and SNCC, Fred Hampton in Chicago, these folk laid their lives down," says Rivers. "My understanding is that those acts of heroism

were very Christian acts, in the tradition of the martyrs. I live in Dorchester and have weathered what we've weathered because that's my understanding of radical discipleship. There is no crown without the cross. Most folk aren't ready to hear that."

At the end of a long day, a half dozen Baker House members gather for a prayer meeting: Ivy League refugees, MIT doctorates. Their testimony is an ecstatic, Pentecostal affair, full of hand-clapping and spontaneous witness. After half an hour, Rivers ducks out momentarily, passing the receptionist, a single mother he'd counseled years before. "Hallelujah, praise Jesus," he says—then, without pause, "Did you page [a city official]?" This is the refracted life of the Rev. Eugene Rivers, drawing upon Harvard and the Philadelphia street gangs, the church and the state. Rivers checks his pager. The Urban Institute is in for a visit; his wife is on the other line. He ducks back into the prayer meeting and gives thanks once more, and once more again.

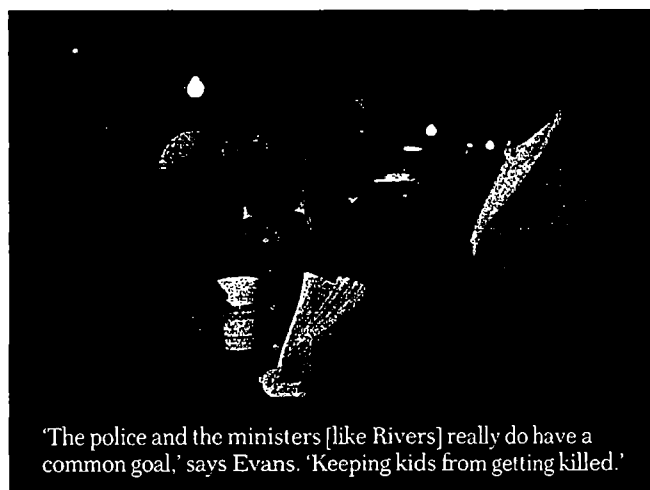
With CLAUDIA KALB

# Cops, Crime and Clergy

Boston's commish on how the new alliance between police and preachers works. BY PAUL F. EVANS

**I** WAS A BEAT COP IN GENE Rivers' Dorchester neighborhood in the early '70s, but back then our paths wouldn't have crossed. At the time, the police force didn't look beyond itself to solve the problem of violence, and we had very little interaction with the clergy. By the early '90s, however, it became clear that our "get tough" policies just weren't working. The 1992 stabbing incident at Morning Star Baptist Church—there was a melee during a funeral—only underscored how bad things had gotten. We finally saw that we couldn't simply arrest our way out of the escalating bloodshed.

It was time for real collaboration. We realized that preachers have tremendous credibility as leaders in the community and that having them working with us out in the streets would have a pow-



"The police and the ministers [like Rivers] really do have a common goal," says Evans. "Keeping kids from getting killed."

erful impact. For their part, the clergy saw cops doing their best to get inner-city kids into summer camps and to get them mentors. We both knew that what children need is an alternative to crime.

The alliance that resulted works because the police and the ministers really do have a

common goal: keeping kids from getting killed. And it's not as if we don't know who is at risk: of the 155 young people who died from violence between 1990 and 1994, two thirds had prior arrests—an average of 9.4 arrests for every victim. For the first time, we can really concen-

trate on these specific kids and make honest assessments of what has to be done with them. We can put our heads together and say this kid has gotten into trouble, but he's a good kid—let's try extra hard to get him the services he needs. This one, we can't save—and if we don't get him off the streets and into prison, he's not going to make it.

With a clear, structured communication network now in place, we didn't have to wait for three or four homicides before realizing we had a problem with the Bloods and Crips gangs. We've got cops and clergy out there, visiting 36 schools and countless homes trying to identify gang wannabes. When there is gang warfare we call members in for an open session with representatives from the D.A.'s office, the probation officers, social-service workers and neighborhood ministers and say, "Look, the community is telling you that the violence has got to stop. If it doesn't, the whole system you see here is going to indict you, sentence you and send you to prison."

EVANS, a 28-year veteran of the Boston Police Department, has been commissioner since 1994.



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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Robert J. Sampson is Lucy Flower Professor of Sociology at the University of Chicago and Research Fellow at the American Bar Foundation. For the 1997-1998 year he is a Visiting Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford. Sampson's major research interests include crime, deviance, and social control; community/urban sociology; and the life course. He is Scientific Director of the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods, with special interest in community social organization and crime. His book, written with John Laub, Crime in the Making: Pathways and Turning Points Through Life (Harvard University Press, 1993), received the outstanding book award from the American Society of Criminology, the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, and the Crime, Law and Deviance Section of the American Sociological Association.

U.S. Department of Justice  
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# National Institute of Justice

## Research Preview

Jeremy Travis, Director

April 1998

# Neighborhood Collective Efficacy— Does It Help Reduce Violence?\*

By Robert J. Sampson, Stephen W. Raudenbush, and Felton Earls

For most of this century, social scientists have observed marked variations in rates of criminal violence in the neighborhoods of U.S. cities. Violence has been associated with low socioeconomic status and residential instability. Although the geographical concentration of violence and its connection with neighborhood composition are well established, the question remains: Why? What social processes might explain why the concentration of disadvantage is linked to violence?

In a major report of the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods, published in a recent issue of the journal *Science*, the researchers found that rates of violence are lower in urban neighborhoods characterized by "collective efficacy." Extending the concept of community cohesion, collective efficacy refers to mutual trust among neighbors combined with willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good, specifically to supervise children and maintain public order. The finding is important because it challenges the prevailing wisdom that crime is the direct result of such factors as poverty, unemployment, the predominance of single-parent households, or the concentration of certain minority groups. These factors do play a role, according to the study. But some Chicago neighborhoods that are largely black and poor have low crime rates. In these neighborhoods, the researchers found that collective efficacy is the most powerful influence keeping violent crime low.

### The Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods

Part of a major, ongoing research program sponsored in part by the National Institute of Justice, the study has been conducted in all areas of Chicago since 1990. The researchers are investigating how children and adolescents develop in many of the city's neighborhoods, as well as the antecedents of criminality, substance abuse, and violence at the level of the individual. A principal aim is to understand the impact on behavior of such factors as

neighborhood characteristics, changes in social services, and the influence of the family, peer relationships, and individuals' personal characteristics.

For this aspect of the study, the research team divided Chicago into 343 "neighborhood clusters," each home to about 8,000 people, and each defined by specific geographic boundaries and internally homogeneous on a variety of census indicators. To obtain a complete picture of all the city's neighborhoods, 8,782 Chicago residents representing all 343 areas were interviewed.

### How to measure "collective efficacy"

The questions asked of residents were intended to elicit their views of how much informal social control, social cohesion and trust, and violence exists in their neighborhood. Thus, in one set of questions they were asked about the likelihood their neighbors would intervene in a number of situations, particularly to discipline neighborhood children (for example, if children were painting graffiti or skipping school). They were also asked how well they thought several statements about social cohesion and trust described their neighborhood. Examples of the statements were: "People around here are willing to help their neighbors," "This is a close-knit neighborhood," and "People in this neighborhood can be trusted."

The level of neighborhood violence was calculated three ways—by asking residents about their perceptions, by asking them about their own victimization, and by reviewing data in police reports of homicide. For each neighborhood, the average homicide rate for the period 1988 to 1990 was included in the calculation to adjust for previous levels of violence. Finally, 1990 census data on several demographic characteristics were combined to create a multidimensional picture of social composition comprising measures of disadvantage, ethnic/immigrant concentra-

\*Abstracted with permission from "Neighborhoods and Violent Crime: A Multilevel Study of Collective Efficacy," by Robert J. Sampson, Stephen W. Raudenbush, and Felton Earls, *Science* 277(August 15, 1997):1-7. Copyright 1997 American Association for the Advancement of Science.

and residential stability. Once the concepts of collective efficacy and social composition were defined and measured, they were analyzed to assess their relationship to each other and to the levels of neighborhood violence.

### **Collective efficacy acts as an intermediary**

Past research has consistently reported links between neighborhood social composition and crime. In the current study, the researchers found that in neighborhoods scoring high on collective efficacy, crime rates were 40 percent below those in lower scoring neighborhoods. This difference supported the researchers' basic premise—Crime rates are not solely attributable to individuals' aggregate demographic characteristics. Rather, crime is a function of neighborhood social and organizational characteristics.

The researchers found that various dimensions of social composition influence the level of neighborhood collective efficacy. In neighborhoods where concentrated poverty (or "disadvantage") was high, collective efficacy was low. Ethnicity/immigration was another important dimension, because areas of ethnic and linguistic heterogeneity may have less capacity to realize common values. Where this dimension was high, collective efficacy was low. In contrast, neighborhoods where residential stability was strong also tended to be strong on collective efficacy.

One key finding was that collective efficacy helps to explain the relationship between neighborhood social composition and crime levels. When the researchers analyzed residential stability and concentrated poverty, they found that a substantial portion of the links between these factors and violence could be attributed to neighborhood differences in collective efficacy. In predominantly black neighborhoods, this was also the case. In other words, disadvantage is the driving force, not race. Among other things, disadvantage is likely to mean large numbers of single-parent households, which may mean fewer adults to adequately supervise children.

When this and other factors are taken into account, the effects of race and poverty on crime are much smaller. Collective efficacy, not race or poverty, was the largest single predictor of the overall violent crime rate.

### **Beyond the understanding of collective efficacy**

What happens in neighborhoods is shaped partly by socioeconomic factors linked to the wider political economy. Nevertheless, communities can be encouraged to mobilize against violence through self-help strategies of informal social control. These strategies can perhaps be reinforced by partnerships with agencies of formal social control (for example, community policing). In addition, strategies to address the social and ecological changes that beset many inner-city communities need to be considered. Understanding collective efficacy can shape these efforts, better equipping planners, policymakers, and community service organizations to work with residents in addressing community problems. For this reason the research is of particular interest to members of the law enforcement community involved in community policing. However, recognizing that collective efficacy matters does not imply that inequalities at the neighborhood level can be neglected.

Robert J. Sampson, Ph.D., is Professor of Sociology at the University of Chicago and Research Fellow with the American Bar Foundation; Stephen W. Raudenbush, Ed.D., is Professor of Education at the University of Michigan; and Felton Earls, M.D., the study director, is Professor of Human Behavior and Development, Harvard School of Public Health. The study was sponsored in part by NIJ grant 93-IJ-CX-K005. Also supporting the project are the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education, and the National Institute of Mental Health.

Points of view in this document do not necessarily represent the official position of the U.S. Department of Justice.

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Dr. Howard Snyder has been the Director of Systems Research at the National Center for Juvenile Justice since 1981. The Center is the research division of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the oldest judicial membership and training organization in the United States. Dr. Snyder received his B.S. degree in Physics and Mathematics from Westminster College and his Ph.D. in Social Psychology from the University of Pittsburgh. Prior to entering graduate school, Dr. Snyder taught science and mathematics for five years at an inner-city high school and served as the school's drug counselor.

Dr. Snyder currently directs a project supported by funds from the U.S. Department of Justice designed to improve the quality, utility and availability of information on juvenile crime, victimization, and the justice system. As a part of this effort, he and his colleagues have authored the *Juvenile Offenders and Victims* series of reports. These reports bring together the best information available on juvenile crime and the juvenile justice system, and present the material in a manner that makes the information easily accessible to a wide audience. The inaugural publication in this series was the first to report on original research that documented the fact that juvenile violent crime rates peak in the hours following the end of the school day.

He also directs the National Juvenile Court Data Archive which stores over 15 million automated case records dating back to the mid-1970s from more than 1,400 juvenile courts. Using these data, the Archive documents the activities of the nation's juvenile courts. He is also directing a U.S. Department of Justice research program studying the outcomes of juveniles transferred to criminal courts. In addition, he recently completed research studies on the nature of violent crime against young children and on historical changes in the nature of juvenile delinquent careers. He is on the faculty of the National College of Juvenile and Family Law where he teaches courses in research and court technology, and is also on the faculty of the National District Attorneys Association's juvenile justice training programs.

Dr. Snyder is a researcher and a teacher who has spent much of his career translating the findings of research and statistical programs into useful information that can support the activities of practitioners and decision makers in the juvenile justice system.

# Today's juvenile doesn't commit more acts of violence than a generation ago, but more juveniles are violent

## New study explores changing nature of juvenile violence

In recent years social commentators have proposed that juveniles have changed, with society facing a new breed of violent predators. Used as evidence for this conclusion is the disturbing growth in juvenile violent crime arrests between the mid-1980's and the mid-1990's. If there is a new breed of violent juvenile offenders, they should be apparent in the official records of the juvenile justice systems, especially in large cities.

To explore this notion, Snyder studied the officially recognized delinquent careers of more than 151,000 juveniles who turned 18 years of age between 1980 and 1995, using the court records from a major urban area in the United States — Maricopa County, Arizona, which contains Phoenix. In this county, policy requires all arrestees under age 18 be referred to juvenile court for processing. Therefore, the court records contain all the officially recognized delinquent behavior of each youth.

If youth are changing, differences should be apparent in the number and types of offenses found in the juvenile court careers of those who graduated (i.e., turned 18) in 1980 and the more recent graduate.

## Study finds more juveniles committing violent acts, not juveniles who are more violent

In many ways, the officially recognized law-violating careers were similar across the 16 graduating classes that turned 18 years of age between 1980 and 1995. Across the classes, the average age of first delinquency referral was 15.2 years; 26% of court careers began before age 14. The average age of first violent refer-

ral was 15.8 years and 1% of referred youth had a first violent offense referral before age 14.

On other characteristics, the most recent graduates differed. A greater proportion of the resident youth population was referred to juvenile court for a delinquent offense in the later classes. Compared with the graduating class of 1980, a smaller proportion of court-involved youth who turned 18 in 1995 had only one court referral (56% versus 62%). Youth who turned 18 in the mid-1990's had on average more delinquent referrals in their careers.

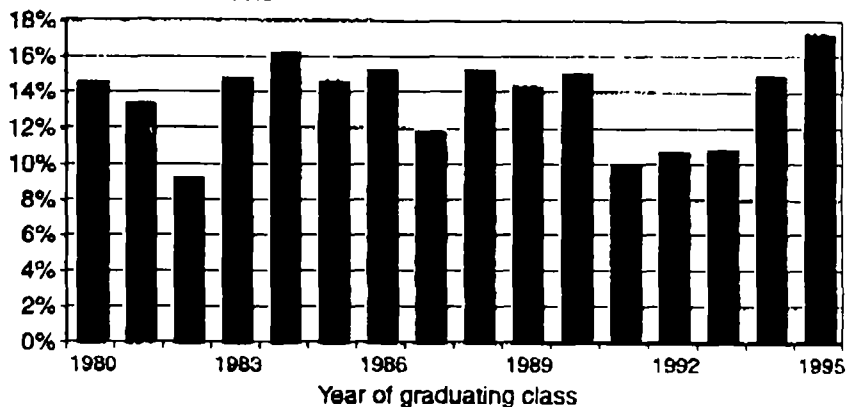
A greater proportion of recent court graduates also had a violent offense referral (i.e., between 6% and 8% in the 1980's and 11% in the mid-1990s). However, the number of violent referrals in each career did not change across the graduating classes. Most youth (83%) charged with a violent crime had only one violent referral in their career. That is, across all gradu-

ating classes, 5 in 6 youth charged with a violent offense were never referred again for another violent charge. If juveniles are changing, if they are more violent, the court records should show an increase in the proportion of violent offenders with multiple violent referrals in their careers. This was not found.

While we know that some acts of juvenile violence have become more lethal, as the doubling of the juvenile arrest rate for murder between 1985 and 1995 and the increase in the use of guns by juvenile offenders clearly demonstrates, this study indicates that the frequency of an individual's acts of violence has not increased. Today's violent youth commits the same number of violent acts as his/her predecessor of 15 years ago. What is different is that a greater proportion of juveniles are committing violent acts. The question for policy makers is "Why are some kids committing violent acts today who would not have done so 15 years ago?"

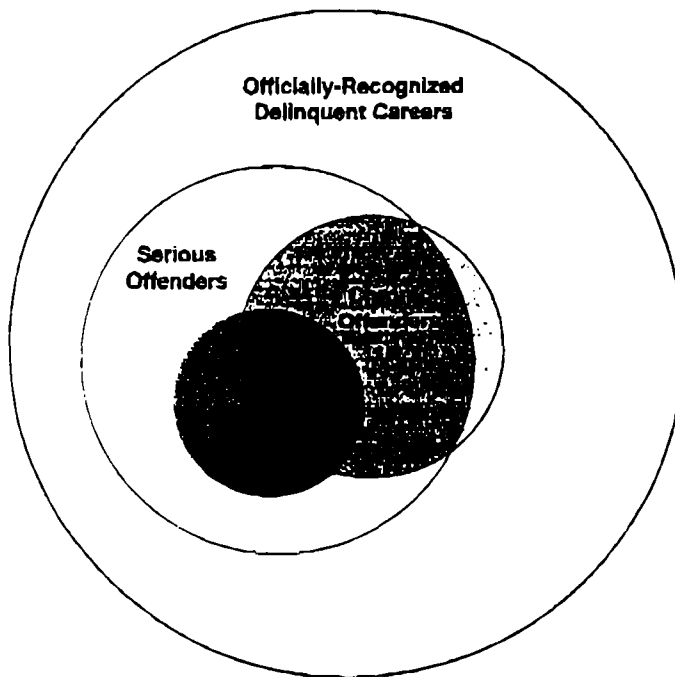
## Study finds the proportion of youth in the juvenile justice system whose first referral for a serious or violent act was before age 14 changed little between the graduating classes of 1980 and 1995

Percent of violent careers



Source: Authors' adaptation of H. Snyder's *Serious, violent, and chronic juvenile offenders: An assessment of the extent of and trends in officially-recognized serious criminal behavior in a delinquent population*.

8% of youth in the graduating classes of 1980 through 1995 who had contact with the juvenile justice system for a criminal law violation were charged with a violent offense by the time they reached age 18 — for most (83%) this was the only violent episode in their official career



- The portion of the large circle not covered by the chronic, serious, and violent offenders' circles represents careers with fewer than four referrals and no referrals for a serious offense. Overlaps represent careers with multiple attributes. The circles and their overlaps are drawn proportional to the number of careers with those attributes.
- **Violent offenses** include murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, kidnaping, violent sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault.
- **Serious-nonviolent offenses** include burglary, serious larceny, motor vehicle theft, arson, weapons offenses, and drug trafficking.
- **Chronic offenders** are those youth with four or more referrals to the juvenile justice system. Chronic offenders were responsible for 45% of all delinquent referrals, 59% of all serious referrals, and 60% of all violent referrals.
- This study shows that a typical 1,000 youth with officially recognized delinquency behavior prior to age 18 have the following delinquency career characteristics: 597 careers have only one referral, 146 careers contain four or more referrals, 336 careers contain a serious or violent referral, 81 careers contain a violent referral, 13 careers contain more than one violent referral, and 43 careers contain at least four referrals with at least one for violence.

Source: Authors' adaptation of H. Snyder's *Serious, violent, and chronic juvenile offenders: An assessment of the extent of and trends in officially-recognized serious criminal behavior in a delinquent population*.

### Today's chronic offenders are similar to those of the 1980's

Juvenile policymakers have been actively concerned since the mid-1970's with the chronic offender, that small portion of system-involved youth who are responsible for the majority of serious crimes committed. Snyder found that 15% of system-involved youth had four or more delinquency referrals before their 18th birthday and were responsible for 59% of the class' serious referrals.

The proportion of each graduating class that was composed of chronic offenders (those with four or more referrals) remained constant throughout the classes of the 1980's, averaging 13% of all graduating class members. The classes of the early 1990's, however, displayed an abrupt increase in their chronic offender proportions, averaging 17% of the careers in the 1992 through 1995 graduating classes. As a result, chronic offenders in the graduating classes of the 1990's were involved in a greater proportion of referrals in all offense categories.

Although the number and proportion of chronic careers grew over the cohorts, it is important to realize that the nature of the individual chronic career remained the same. Over the 16 graduating classes, chronic offenders averaged 6.6 referrals in their juvenile court career, were referred for 4.2 nonserious offenses, 2.0 serious-nonviolent offenses, and 0.4 violent offenses. In all, official records show that the more recent graduating classes contained more chronic offenders (not more active, more serious, or more violent) and that these chronic offenders were generally responsible for a greater proportion of all types of offenses.



## Juveniles, even juvenile gang members, are most likely to commit violent crimes after school

### Juveniles are more likely to commit violent crimes on school days than on nonschool days

About half of the days in a year are school days. The other days fall in summer months, on weekends, and on holidays. Even though school days are half of all days, 57% of violent crimes committed by juveniles occur on school days. In fact, data from the FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) show that 1 in 5 violent crimes committed by juveniles occur in the four hours following the end of the school day (i.e., between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.).

On nonschool days the incidence of juvenile violence increases through the afternoon and early evening hours, peaking between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. Temporal patterns of adult violence do not vary between school and nonschool days. Adult violence increases through the afternoon and evening hours, peaking around 11 p.m.

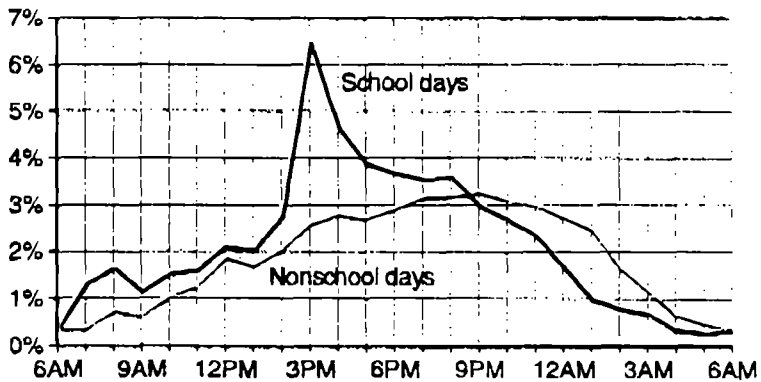
### Similar time-of-day trends are found for juvenile gang crime

Intervention programs to reduce juvenile violence often target juveniles in gangs, while after-school programs may be appropriate for the general delinquency population. The temporal patterns of juvenile gang behavior may differ from those of other juvenile offenders.

This notion has been explored by researchers at the University of California-Irvine. In 1994 and 1995 law enforcement agencies across Orange County, California (a county neighboring Los Angeles) reported each incident of gang activity to the University's Focused Research Group on Orange County Street Gangs. A large number of these incidents involve an

### Violent Crime Index offending peaks after school for juveniles

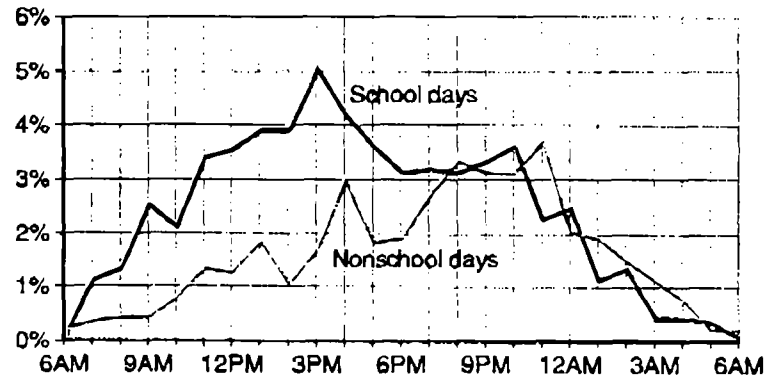
Percent of all juvenile Violent Crime Index offenses



Source: Authors' analysis of the FBI's 1991, 1992, and 1993 National Incident Based Reporting System master file (machine-readable data file) containing data from 8 States (Alabama, Colorado, Iowa, Idaho, Illinois, North Dakota, South Carolina, and Utah).

### Gang crimes by juveniles in Orange County, California, are more common on school days, with their incidence peaking at 3 p.m.

Percent of all juvenile gang crimes



Source: Authors' analysis of data reported in Wiebe's *Hourly juvenile and adult arrest incidents in 1994 and 1995*.

arrest and, therefore, can be tagged to a juvenile or an adult.

A study of the gang incidents involving juveniles shows similar temporal patterns to those found in the NIBRS data. In Orange County in 1994 and 1995, gang activity involving juveniles was most prevalent on school

days, with 60% of all juvenile gang incidents occurring on these days. As with the NIBRS data, juvenile gang crime peaked on these days immediately after school. Unlike the general juvenile violence trends found in the NIBRS data, though, the level of juvenile gang violence did not decline as rapidly during evening hours.

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**Ron Suskind** is a senior special writer for the Wall Street Journal, based in Washington, and the author of "*A Hope in the Unseen, An American Odyssey from the Inner City to the Ivy League*" (Broadway Books, June, 1998).

Since joining the Journal in 1990, Mr. Suskind has written about issues of race, class and gender, as well as stories ranging from the secret life of investor Warren Buffett to illegal union busting in Louisiana to the mysterious death of Boston Celtic star Reggie Lewis.

A series Mr. Suskind wrote about inner city honor students and their struggles to survive won the Pulitzer Prize for Feature Writing in 1995. Launched by that series, his book follows the three-year path of one top student—the prickly and religious Cedric Jennings—as he attempts to escape from the ghetto and find a home at Brown University. "*A Hope in the Unseen*", called an "extraordinary, formula shattering book" (New York Times) and a "tremendous empathetic leap" (Washington Post), is prompting national discussions on affirmative action, urban blight, the role of faith in American life, advancement through higher education and how we can bridge divides of race and income to become one country.

Mr. Suskind, who is a founding contributing editor of Smart Money magazine, a joint venture between Dow Jones and Hearst Publishing, currently helps edit stories and guide coverage on the Journal's front page. He is also the Journal's writing coach and travels the country instructing and motivating the paper's reporters.

Prior to joining the Journal, Mr. Suskind was on the staff of the New York Times, the St. Petersburg Times and was editor of Boston Business magazine. He has been a commentator of National Public Radio and taught Advanced Journalism at Harvard University. He has also written about various subjects for national magazines—including satire for Harper's and political analysis for the New York Times Magazine—and won numerous national awards for his writing and reporting.

Mr. Suskind graduated from the University of Virginia and Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. Before becoming a journalist, he spent several years running political campaigns. He currently lives in Chevy Chase, D.C., with his wife and two young sons.

# Adrift in the Ivy League, Far From the Inner City

By RON SUSKIND

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

**B**Y THE TIME AUTUMN'S FIRST color burst arrived at Brown University, freshman Cedric Jennings found himself impossibly far from home.

Cedric's journey was first detailed in 1994 in The Wall Street Journal, as he struggled to survive and excel in a blighted Washington, D.C., high school where gang leaders ruled and honor students hid. He was then a high school junior with perfect grades, walking a gantlet of threats from peers whose despair was pricked by his pride and hopefulness.

Eventually, Cedric made it out. He pressed through the chants of "you can't" and "why bother," through doubts about his 960 SAT score, to grab a golden ticket: acceptance by the Ivy League, to Brown University.

It is now late September of 1995. It has been almost a month since Cedric was ushered off by his mother, Barbara, a ferocious church woman who quietly feared that faith, alone, might not be enough to sustain her son as he traveled to a place she could never be a part of. It has been almost a month since Cedric's father, a drug dealer and convicted bank robber, thought about how his son was "handling things, facing life head on," and turned himself into the parole officers seeking him for violations. It has been almost a month since the farewell party at which Cedric's relatives, holding hands in a tattered D.C. rowhouse, said a prayer that God "shield and protect" their pride, their one hope, and "not let him be brought down."

Cedric is impossibly far from home—but not because his syringe-strewn neighborhood in Washington is a world away, part of another country. He is already realizing that he can't go back there; that he simply must find a home, somewhere, in the wider country of many races that this prestigious university represents. It is his mission, after all, that brought him here. "A hope in the unseen" is a line from Scripture he holds tight to. The unseen, Cedric figures, is a place, up ahead, where he will be accepted on his merits, where he can finally be comfortable in his skin, a place he struggles each day to envision.

**T**HE FRECKLED blonde girl sitting to Cedric's right in History of Education—8:30 a.m. to 9:50, M, W—is leading the class.

In sleep. It's a mere ten minutes into this morning's lecture—the last in September—and she's already gone, chin buried in her collar, head bobbing gently.

Public sleeping has a way of spreading across a lecture hall. Someone hears soft, steady breathing from a neighboring desk and soon offers his accompaniment, which is why eyelids are drooping at desks near the blonde in what soon will become an informal sleep study.

Professor Tom James, a wan, soft-spoken man in his early 40s, is no match for the humming ventilation system and lack of natural light in this basement classroom. Still, he pushes forward gamely—there's a lot of ground to cover in this survey course—and, by 8:55, he's tying so-

cial characteristics of late 18th-century American progressives to the emergence of public educational institutions, schools that carried, he asserts, "an evangelical fervor in what they saw as the serious business of educating youngsters, especially the hordes of immigrants."

Cedric looks over at the sleepers and shakes his head. "How can they sleep?" he murmurs,

under his breath. "They must already know this stuff." He turns back to his notebook and scribbles "immigrant."

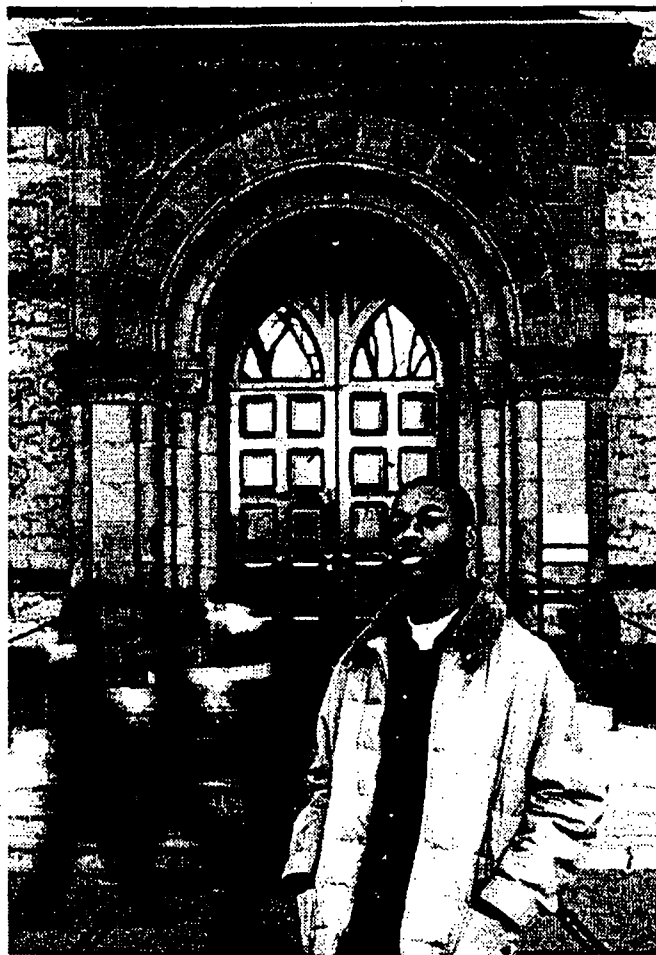
"How many of you have been to Ellis Island?" Prof. James asks, drawing 10 hands out of the 30 attendees, a high ratio among the conscious. Ellis Island is not a core concept in Southeast Washington—it is, in fact, the sort of white peoples' history often passed over in favor of Afrocentric studies—and Cedric has never heard the reference. He jots the word "Ellis" on his pad. It floats on a white sea, without context.

"What happened to that evangelical fervor?" Prof. James asks the class. "Have we lost it along the way?"

On Cedric's left is his hall-mate Maura\*, a red-haired, Irish girl bred in the strong Catholic schools of Andover, Mass., daughter of an administrative judge. Already on her third page of precise notes, she listens intently as a talkative student in the first row parries with Prof. James on the "evangelical fervor" question. The religious metaphors, meanwhile, prompt Cedric to put down his pencil on a thin half page of scribbles and daydream of his apostolic Pentecostal church, Scripture Cathedral, back in Washington.

One month into this new world of higher education, Cedric Jennings's chin is barely above the waterline. So many class discussions are full of references he doesn't understand that he often feels like a foreigner. By now, he understands that Maura on his one side *knows* what to write on her pad and the sleepers on the other *will* be able to skim the required readings, all of them guided by some mysterious encoded knowledge of history, economics and education, of culture and social events, that they picked up in school or at home or God knows where.

*This article is adapted from the forthcoming book, 'A Hope in the Unseen,' by Ron Suskind, published by Broadway Books. Copyright 1998, Ron Suskind. Printed with permission. Names with \* are pseudonyms.*



John Forasté/Brown University

***Jeered at in his Washington D.C. high school for his perfect grades, Cedric Jennings feels socially confused and academically overmatched at Brown University, where he looks for a way to enter the school's swift current.***

Class is dismissed and Cedric nods a farewell to Maura and moves quickly for the door, happy to be alone as he walks across campus to Spanish—a class that offers a brief respite. There, at least, everyone stumbles along on the same uncertain footing of *como esta's* and *bastante bien's* and he doesn't feel as conspicuous or ill-prepared as he does in education class . . . and almost everywhere he goes at Brown.

### SINK OR SWIM

The day is sunny and splendid. Blazing yellows and red leaves that draw peepers to this part of New England are crunching under his Nikes. The thing he loves most is walking between classes, he decides—a time he can feel purposeful, like he's on his way somewhere.

After Spanish, he affords himself an indulgence. All it takes to eat well at Cafe Paragon on Thayer Street, where the eavesdropping is superb, is \$10. Every stratum of the Brown society is represented here from godlike tenured dons to midlevel administrators, assistant and associate profs, grad students and lowly undergraduates. The music is Euro-funk, edgy but quiet enough to allow for easy conversation.

The back-to-school topic of the moment is affirmative action. There is news, starting with July's decision by the California Board of Regents to end preferential admissions based on race and this fall's demonstrations by minority students.

At Brown, like most top private institutions, affirmative action is offered to "under-represented" minority students who often score below the university's mean on standardized tests. Yet, like its peer institutions, Brown's bold initiative doesn't go much beyond the offer of admission. Once they arrive, affirmative-action kids are generally left to sink or swim academically. Like many top schools, Brown offers plenty of counseling and tutoring to struggling students. But—as any academic dean will tell you—it is up to the students to seek it out,

something that a drowning minority student will avoid at all costs, fearing it will trumpet a second-class status. Not surprisingly, dropout rates among minorities, particularly those of lower income, tend to be higher than the rest, but Brown says it has no exact figures.

At the cafe, today, there are several exchanges on the subject. Cedric, settling alone at a table inside, orders a ginger ale and trains his ears to a table immediately to his right. Two professors, both white, are leaning in close over a pair of Anchor Steams.

"Are we doing a service to young people to boost them above their academic level and then not offer the services they need?" asks the squat one, with flying gray hair. "Because, who really can? Who can offer that sort of enrichment? You can hardly blame the

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university. It would take years, and money and a whole different educational track to bring some affirmative-action students to a level where they could compete. There's no choice but *laissez faire*, but sink or swim. They should be going to middle-rung universities. There's no right—as far as I see—to go to an Ivy League institution. If they work hard, their kids can come here. Hell, it's what everyone else had to do."

Cedric listens as his burger arrives and he pretends to read the Brown Daily Herald, the student newspaper. The professors, meanwhile, have moved on to the companion controversy about hiring minority faculty members. "It's a mockery," spits the other professor—a tall distinguished-looking guy—ticking off the names of a few minority professors around campus. "A lot of them are good teachers, sure. But they're unpublished, not respected, not scholars. What do they bring? Their passionate, oh-so personal 'perspective.' Nothing special about that. Jesus, everyone's got one of those."

A few minutes, later, Cedric emerges from the restaurant's entrance and passes a clutch of wrought-iron tables on the sidewalk. He spots Stephan Wheelock, the instructor of his course on Richard Wright. Twenty-four, black and bursting with passionate personal perspective, Prof. Wheelock is eating a barbecued chicken sandwich with a friend, a 30-something white guy who's visiting Providence. Cedric waves, and offers a cursory hello as he passes.

Prof. Wheelock nods back a greeting and then continues talking excitedly with the friend. "At least, you know, Brown is a socially-conscious place. But, you see, it has been a huge transition for me coming here, being brought here under the guise of equality," says Prof. Wheelock, graduate of Tougaloo College in Mississippi, a black school in Jackson. "I am constantly having to play catch-up with guys who've spent that past five years speaking three languages, visiting Europe and reading all the right books. Here, at Brown, they say, don't worry, you're all equal, starting on the same footing. Ready, set, go! They just don't get it. Where I come from, people don't go to France to study. A trip to France is a big deal. I haven't been reading all the right books since I was 12 and then have some Rhodes Scholar Daddy tell me the rest. I didn't have that kind of access. Access that could empower me."

Throughout the day, the overheard conversations at lunch echo in Cedric's head. At this point, affirmative action is the last thing he wants to hear or think about, though he knows he must be seen as a glaring example. During dinner and studying that evening, he finds himself responding to the professors under his breath: I got in. If I fail, I fail; if I make it, I make it. Why does everyone have to draw conclusions about an entire race from that—or take sides. He wanted a chance; he got one.

## HOW 'BIGGER' WAS BORN

The next day, Cedric awakens with renewed ardor; a determination to compete on an even footing, to meet Brown's academic rigors head on. After lunch, he strides into his Richard Wright class. Stephan Wheelock smiles at him—"Helloooo Cedric," he says theatrically—and Cedric offers a grim nod.

He is counting on this class about the familiar novels of Richard Wright—some of the few books he had previously read—to help teach him the thinking and writing skills he so desperately needs.

Up to now, it's not happening. One short paper—an ungraded, one-page autobiographical essay he wrote in class on the first day—came back last week with few comments.

With all 16 students—about half of whom are black or Hispanic—now settled around the seminar table or at desks lining the walls, Prof. Wheelock goes over a few "scheduling changes," cutting assignments off the syllabus, lightening the class's requirements. Then, he starts the discussion with an overview of Richard Wright's signature 1940 novel "Native Son," which the class was to have read by now.

Cedric, sitting against the wall, opens his copy of the book. He knows it cold. He watches Wheelock—light-skinned, with stylishly thin bifocals on the end of a small, thin nose—going through a brief synopsis of the plot. The book's central character, Bigger Thomas, is a laborer whose days of poverty and brutishness and frustration lead to the killing of a white woman. After discussing the basic plot for 15 minutes, Wheelock mentions the novel's oft-noted companion essay—"How 'Bigger' Was Born"—

in which Wright writes at length about the five 'Biggers' he's known since his childhood.

"Why did Wright decide to put this essay at the back of the book?" Wheelock asks, as most of the class begins flipping through its 1993 edition of the book. "Back in 1940, Wright made a literary decision as to where to put it. Clearly, he put it at the end for a reason."

A half an hour of discourse is launched. Cedric looks around the room. There are plenty of black faces. It may not be calculus—his love—but he really knows this book. If he doesn't raise his hand now, then when? His arm shoots up. "All right, yes, Cedric?" Prof. Wheelock says, delighted.

"Umm. I think Wright wanted you to figure things out for yourself, so you wouldn't be thinking about all these larger forces, like racial repression and violence right off," Cedric says. "He had to put the explanatory essay in the back . . . otherwise you'd sort of know the answer before you asked the question."

Prof. Wheelock nods agreement and other students follow up. Cedric exhales. That wasn't so hard. The discussion winds along until Brandon, another black student in the class, raises his hand.

"Prof. Wheelock," he says. "I have an earlier edition of the book and, well, the essay, 'How 'Bigger' Was Born,' is in the front rather than the back. It runs, you know, before you get into the actual novel."

There's silence. Air seems to escape from the room. Everyone sees the mishap, which reduces a half-an-hour of vigorous discussion to a waste of breath.

A dazed Wheelock nods once, wordless.

"Well, okay . . ." he says, finally, trying to recover. "So, the question, then, would be why did the powers that be in the publishing world decide to put the essay in the book's back, you know, in the edition most of you got?"

The frantic rebound gets little response and in a moment he begins shuffling assignment sheets in front of his chair.

"Let's see," he says, forcing a smile. "What do you say we get out a little early today?"

Cedric, sitting at a desk against the wall, puts his head in his hands.

## ONE OF THE GUYS

Cedric Jennings stares at his midterm paper in calculus and finishes off a third bowl of Golden Grahams for lunch at the VeeDub, a cafeteria near his dorm. The grade is a 94.

He looks up. Maura and her roommate, Chiniqua Milligan, are sitting across from him. He naturally gravitates to Chiniqua, who was raised just north of Harlem and is the only other black student in Cedric's dorm unit of 33 freshmen. But Cedric shares little with her beyond skin color. She attended Columbia Preparatory, a Manhattan private school, as part of a special minority enrichment program. Graduated third in her class.

But any good news is worth sharing, so he shows them the paper. They're effusive in their praise.

It does little to cheer him. He's told Chiniqua, at least, that this calculus class is just one level above beginner

math, that he's only taking it pass/fail, like the rest of his classes, that he shot low—even in his forte—out of fear.

Still, when she smiles at him, now, he smiles back. The two girls pile plates and glasses on their trays to go and he pours another bowl of Golden Grahams. It's a cereal he ate a lot of at home, sometimes when there wasn't much else to eat. In the last couple of days, since midterms ended, he's been eating a lot of it.

"Cedric, how many bowls you gonna eat?" Chiniqua asks.

"As many as it he takes," he says, trying to make her laugh.

"Takes for what?" she says, rising with her tray, and then bends in close to whisper. "You should eat some real food."

A frenzy of studying for mid-October's midterms gave Cedric a

break from a month of strife with Rob\*, his roommate. Everyone, Rob included, had other things to worry about. Cedric, nonetheless, did most of his studying in the science-center library to avoid his roommate.

He didn't need to worry though about bumping into Rob in their second-floor dorm room in East Andrews Hall. Conflict started from the first day and his roommate, at this point, is all but living on the third floor, dividing evenings between rooms of various friends. It's not so much that Cedric hates Rob—a casual laid-back son of two doctors. It's just that Rob—messy, nonconfrontational and well-liked—drives him a little crazy. Nothing fazes Rob; everything seems to have been taken care of, already. Because Rob's coolness and confidence are subterranean, surface issues—like the room's cleanliness or the loudness of his music—are afterthoughts. For Cedric, meanwhile, surface issues are defining. He's fastidious, and feels like he's always on display. As a church kid, he doesn't smoke, drink or have sex. While Rob compels his hallmates, who visit in droves, to feel warm and comfortable, Cedric knows he makes everyone feel uncomfortable.

Yet, with sound strategic instincts from a lifetime of confrontation, he forces himself not to retreat from the group of white guys on the hall. At least, then, he can't be characterized for everyone by Rob.

He tries to stick with the group and shake off his confusion at their strange habits. For one thing, the white guys are more physical and affectionate toward one another than he's used to seeing. Black kids from his school and neighborhood rarely showed the sort of self-deprecating, jokey vulnerability that is common here. He's not sure how to react. No one, here, is boastful. They all make

fun of themselves—and each other—though their underlying confidence never seems marred. It's the precise opposite of what has passed for normal his whole life.

One weekday night, he wanders toward the room of Zayd Dohrn, the son of two Chicago college professors, and John Frank, the child of a Manhattan psychoanalyst.

Zayd, especially, is a white kid in whom Cedric sees possibility of an actual friendship. He's cool, knows hip-hop, rap and R&B, and seems separate from the other kids, almost aloof. That, Cedric figures, is maybe because he's done so much already: Northwestern Film School at 16, wrote a play, a sexual farce, called "Phallacy," and was a star at the University of Chicago Laboratory School, a progressive high school run by the university on the town's integrated south side. In any event, Zayd seems fascinated with Cedric in a genuine way. They talk hip-hop until all hours, with Zayd happily deferring to Cedric's superior knowledge.

"Yo Cedric," Zayd says, as Cedric stands in the doorway. "Where've you been? We missed you."

Cedric settles on the edge of Zayd's bed, trying to stay loose. He's in. Seven or eight kids are hanging out, including Ira\*, a gregarious kid from California, hashing it out. Everything—all issues of what to think and how to act, everything from the O.J. verdict to good places, near the dorm, to put the moves on a girl. In this dry-walled freshly painted holding pen, with its little mirror and sink, freshmen hashed out things last year and will again next year. It's just that this year, an exotic bird is among them, an authentic ghetto kid, who, for whatever reason, made it through the urban inferno without donning an armor. Once Cedric finally starts talking, he's open and transparent.

After discussion of a young lady on the hall who is sleeping with an upperclassman, there's a shift. They start teasing each other in a way that Cedric can't abide.

It's homosexual banter. Black guys just don't do it.



Mary Katz

**In 1994, Clarence Taylor, a science teacher at Ballou Senior High, exhorted Cedric not to lose faith, not to worry about what the other kids thought of him and to hold tight to the notion of a promised land up ahead. Cedric, then a gangly junior, sometimes thought Mr. Taylor was pushing him too hard. Later as a Brown freshman, he realizes why his mentor was so persistent.**





*The distance between Cedric's home in Washington (left) and Brown's sylvan campus is vast but no less, Cedric sometimes thinks, than the journey of many immigrants to this country. If they did it, so can he.*

As the white boys start in, Cedric feels his gut tighten. "Come on, bend over and let me fill your gas-tank," one says to another, and everyone starts to crack up. "Come on. You know you want it."

Cedric is not laughing. He can't. He becomes noticeably grim. They don't understand.

So they treat him just like he wants—deep down—just like another guy. Under those rules, anyone who shows uneasiness becomes the focal point. Visible discomfort, on an issue like this, brings a "Lord of the Flies" response: Haze it out of him.

"Hey Cedric," says Ira. "Bend over, and I'll fill your gas-tank."

Cedric gets flushed. "Come on, Cedric," says John, a sort of natural class president among the group. "It's okay. I'll bend over and you can fill mine." Guffaws go around. Even Zayd can't resist the rip-tide.

Cedric jumps up from Zayd's bed. "I don't like that kind of talkin'," he says, loud and firm, but still under control. He doesn't know what else to say. He looks down and races back to his empty room.

His door stays locked. Hours pass. At midnight, he ventures out to go to the bathroom, cracking the door first to see if anyone is in the hall. And then he sees it. On his grease pad is a neatly written message.

"Hey Cedric, Meet us later tonight in private and we all can have some real fun. Love, Ira and John."

Cedric blows.

In a second, he's pounding on Ira's door and then they're nose to nose in the doorway. "Don't be leaving that mess on my door, so I have to wipe it off."

"I didn't write anything," Ira counters. "I don't know what you're talking about."

"You're just doing this to annoy me, Ira! To get me going!"

A crowd is gathering in the hallway.

"Look, I do what I want to do. And I'll do what I want to do to you," Ira bellows. "So get out of my room."

Everything's in the open now, a spectator sport, a free feed.

"You can't just accuse Ira of doing it, unless you know he did," says Corry Mascitelli—a blonde girl Cedric calls Marcia Brady—out in the hall from a neighboring room. "You don't know it was Ira."

"I know it's him," Cedric rants. "He's done stuff like that before. Don't tell me. He's always saying stuff like that."

Zayd tries to defuse it. "Everybody's not against you," he says, keeping his voice quiet and even. "You think that, but it's not true."

Cedric halts. He looks across the corridor, now filled with mostly white peers and a few of color. All eyes are on him. They know about his tension with Rob. And now this. All he wants is to get back to his room and never come out.

John, at Zayd's side, ends it. "Jesus, Cedric. You ignore people just to get attention, and then you get the attention and you don't want it."

Cedric looks, dazed, at John. His ringing ears are shutting off everything. How the hell did he end up here? He walks back to his room and closes the door.

## BACK FROM EXILE

A few days later, Zayd is sitting on the moist grass of Brown's main green—on an oddly warm October day—talking to a buddy about Cedric.

"Other kids wonder why I'm his friend, what I see in him," he says, his smoothly muscled bare arms wrapped around peaks of bony knees. "And it's strange. We're like opposites. We're so different in so many ways, but I just find him so interesting."

More than any other student in the unit, Zayd embodies what passes for merit on this campus and many elite institutions like it: constant, fearless, experimentation—both social and intellectual. The more daring, the better. His prime directive, as he mentioned nonchalantly to Cedric during the first week of school, is "I'll try anything."

Which is why Zayd Dohrn, among all the broad-thinking kids in this right-minded university, is the only one with the daring to knock on Cedric's door, which has mostly been locked for a week since the much-discussed hallway detonation. Zayd gets no answer and writes a provocative note—"C-Came by, heard music inside. I guess we're not friends anymore or something. Zayd."

He passes by again as October nears an end. It's now two weeks into what seems like Cedric's permanent hibernation—and

Zayd wonders if it may end with a transfer application and a bare mattress. The doorknob clicks open. Zayd walks in, talking casually about some new album by Tupac Shakur, the rapper, talking like nothing ever happened. Cedric, parched with solitude, can't resist.

"You know, Tupac's uncle was this guy, Zayd Shakur, a radical black activist who was killed by the cops in the early 60s," Zayd continues. "That's who I'm named after. My mom and dad knew him, or they knew a lot of Black Panthers who knew him."

"For real?" Cedric asks. He knows that Zayd's mom was some sort of 60's radical. Zayd told Cedric her name is Bernadine and she ran the Weather Underground, which Cedric thought sounded like a singing group.

In a few days, parents will be coming for Parents Weekend, and the two of them talk about that for a while, sitting on Cedric's bed. Cedric says he doesn't know whether his mom will make it. It's a long way and she doesn't have a lot of cash. Zayd nods, knowing not to ask too much.

He pauses. "You know, my mom might want to come by to say 'hi,'" he ventures, "if that's all right."

"That'd be fine, no big deal," Cedric answers easily, relieved to be edging out of exile.

Then they walk down to the corner—to Sam Goody's—to buy a CD, figuring that they might as well share it.

# Lucky Cedric

*How a deserving teen-ager from a ghetto school got into a brand-name college,*

## A HOPE IN THE UNSEEN

*An American Odyssey From the Inner City to the Ivy League.*

By Ron Suskind.

372 pp. New York:

Broadway Books. \$25.

By Sara Mosle

EDUCATORS, reporters and more than a few Hollywood screenwriters have been telling, and retelling, the same story about American education for nearly half a century. Its elements — in books like "Up the Down Staircase," "36 Children," "Death at an Early Age," "The Way It Spozed to Be," "Lives on the Boundary," "Small Victories," "Will My Name Be Shouted Out?" and, most recently, "On the Outside Looking In" — are so familiar they've become clichés. Liberal teacher or reporter ventures into ghetto school, meets students resembling the sweat-hogs — the charmingly delinquent, ethnically diverse, underachieving teenagers depicted in the 1970's sitcom "Welcome Back, Kotter" — and witnesses inspirational scenes of learning.

That this story bears repeating is a testament to how little the prospects of the nation's most impoverished students have changed since *Brown v. Board of Education*. But it's also indicative of the narrowness of the debate about education as a whole. To judge from these books, one would think that most classrooms are in terrible urban neighborhoods, when in fact a majority of American students — including a majority of black students — now live outside the city, where they attend public schools that their parents, at least according to polls, regard as good. Indeed, after reading Ron Suskind's extraordinary, formula-shattering book about Cedric Jennings, a poor black teen-ager at a blighted Washington high school who strives to attend the Ivy Leagues, one can't help concluding that we are no longer one country divided between black and white, but two nations even among blacks: the first increasingly middle-class and suburban, the second poor and disastrously isolated in our ghettos.

*and why it's not an inspirational story.*



ILLUSTRATION BY PETRUS

Almost everything about "A Hope in the Unseen" goes against type. Most books of its kind have the air of a travelogue; typically told in the first person, they are usually as much about the journey of the writer as they are about the students' experiences. By becoming a part of the narrative, the author — who is almost invariably white — operates, as a kind of proxy for the race and class biases of the reader. Suskind, by contrast, is completely absent from his story. In a subversive twist on the genre, he allows Cedric to appeal directly to middle-class notions of merit. A nerdy, driven youth, whose grade-grubbing inten-

Sara Mosle is an editor at the Book Review.

sity would almost certainly annoy a laid-back teacher like Kotter, he is the very antithesis of a sweatshop and is no different in his goals from many upper-class students in Greenwich, Conn.

Yet in the topsy-turvy world of the ghetto, his ambition exacts enormous costs. His single mother briefly goes on welfare to provide her son with the intellectual stimulation he needs before entering kindergarten. Even her steady Federal job can't keep the eviction notices at bay. Many nights Cedric must study without benefit of food, heat or

electricity. Far from applauding these efforts, his father, a convicted drug dealer who spends most of the book in jail, thinks of his son as "a straight-A momma's boy who gets no respect from any of the kids."

In this sense, "A Hope in the Unseen" has more in common with memoirs of black aspiration such as Brent Staples's "Parallel Time" than with most of the literature of urban schooling. Although most education writers show greater sympathy for those left behind than for those who make it, Suskind suggests a far more troubling thesis: that at a ghetto school like Frank W. Ballou Senior High, a smart kid like Cedric may have it worse.

Cries of "nerdboy," "whitey" and "geek" rain down on him in the hallways. Gang members steal his books,

mess with his hair and beat him up between classes. After one awards assembly, a student accosts him with a gun. Terrified, Cedric flees to the bathroom, but fails to report the incident for fear of retaliation. With the exception of a chemistry teacher who takes Cedric under his wing, adults at the school are hardly more encouraging. When a girl taunts him with sexual gibes, it's Cedric who gets ejected from the classroom; the principal describes him as "too proud" for his own good. Teachers seem to resent his brash and boastful intellec-

tualism. Real self-esteem — as opposed to the kind taught in courses — is frowned on. Even Cedric's sole friend at Ballou, an obese girl who is as much a pariah as he is, scoffs at his dreams of attending an Ivy League school. "What kind of fool spends his life trying to go somewhere he ain't even seen?"

It's Cedric's profound belief "in the unseen" that sustains him. He and his mother are fervent members of a black Pentecostal church — although even here the bishop warns him against trusting too much in his own abilities instead of in God. Nonetheless, mother and son pin their hopes on a summer school program for minority-group students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology before Cedric's senior year. At first, he is thrilled to be among other smart black teen-agers and is amazed to dis-

cover that he, the "king of the Ballou nerds," has suddenly attained an "imprimatur of coolness" because of his ghetto background. Academically, however, he suffers a similar reversal. Although the top student at Ballou, he soon learns that his similarity to the "suburb-bred minority kids" who constitute most of the program is only skin deep. As the director concedes, "It would take two years of tutoring, not six weeks, to bring some of the inner cities' brightest up to a level where they might be accepted to M.I.T." Cedric returns to Ballou in despair.

Most "year in the life" books would end here, but Suskind relates all of the above in a stunningly economical 100 pages. Cedric remains almost irrationally determined to attend a brand-name school — despite a combined S.A.T. score of just 960 (some 400 points below the average at most Ivy League schools). On a whim, he applies to Brown University for early acceptance and miraculously gets in. When Cedric and his mother arrive on campus, they spot "a tall, thin Caucasian girl with . . . a row of earrings and a shaved head." "Isn't that awful," his mother murmurs. "Must be chemotherapy." Cedric nods sympathetically. It's a comic moment of cultural confusion — indicative of the greater academic and social disorientation he will initially suffer.

A trip through the bookstore leaves him dizzy with apprehension. Authors and subjects like Plath, Hemingway, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson sound only "vaguely familiar" or "draw a blank." He spots a biography of Winston Churchill. "Oh, God," he thinks, "I should know who he is," and tries to commit the name to memory. The point isn't that Cedric needs more rote learning, as "cultural literacy" is often misunderstood. Rather, he has no context in which to incorporate new information. In class, there are so many "references he doesn't understand — he often feels like a foreigner." His failure is not a matter of effort or ability; he has simply never been exposed to much of the material.

**S**IMILARLY, when assigned a research paper in his education course, he panics and turns in "an epic poem" about his own schooling; it's the kind of self-expressive exercise that typically invites raves from inner-city teachers. But Cedric's professor is not so patronizing. Although he praises Cedric's creativity, he insists that he master the analytical skills that he'll need to escape the ghetto. When Cedric acs a calculus midterm, his success is all the more sweet for being genuine.

Suskind underscores the crudeness of many discussions of diversity and identity without ever minimizing Cedric's very real struggles. College, Suskind rightly sees, is a time of experimentation and growth for just about everyone. The fierce antagonism that develops, for instance, between Cedric and Rob, his affluent white roommate, has as much to do with personal differences —

in music tastes (Cedric likes gospel and hip-hop; Rob, heavy metal), morals (Cedric avoids dating, dancing and drinking; Rob does all three) and style (Cedric is maniacally neat; Rob is a slob) — as with weightier issues of intolerance.

Suskind also perceives the range among blacks at Brown. Many of Cedric's African-American classmates have spent years interacting with whites as some of the few minority-group students in prestigious private academies or in the tracked programs at top suburban schools. They yearn for black companionship and gravitate toward the black dorm, which serves as a cultural center. Cedric, by contrast, has spent his whole life among blacks and is more curious to mingle with whites. A subtler anxiety, however, underlies his attitude.

"He was unnerved," Suskind writes "by the brew of black coolness and youthful achievement" at Brown — "a casual blend that almost mocks the brutal adolescent trade-offs he had to make to get here. He had dealt with this crowd somewhat at M.I.T., black kids . . . with bright futures who are as anxious to co-opt inner-city coolness as the white kids in the unit. The difference is that the black middle-class kids can really pull it off."

For many students like Cedric, the notion that anyone who works hard enough can escape the ghetto through education is an empty promise. The vast majority of Cedric's classmates at Ballou who do graduate either can't afford college or are so overwhelmed once they arrive that they drop out by the end of their freshman years. And what Cedric's success finally means, the reader can never know. For, in a mystifying decision, Suskind has chosen to write his book entirely from the point of view of a dozen people, much of it in internal monologues. Besides robbing his subjects of their voices and him of the opportunity to provide some badly needed background — on affirmative action, the rise of Pentecostal churches or even the Jennings family finances (which the reader must piece together from scattered asides) — the approach finally prevents him from ever accounting for his own impact on Cedric's life.

"A Hope in the Unseen" arose from a two-part series that Suskind wrote for The Wall Street Journal and that went on to win a Pulitzer Prize; the newspaper stories appeared before Cedric was accepted to Brown and attracted widespread attention. But the reader doesn't learn, until nearly halfway through the book, that a "Dr. Korb" happened to "read about Cedric" and began paying "for periodic tutoring and incidentals." Did his help improve Cedric's chances? Is it possible that Brown's admission officers read The Journal, too? And did it influence their decision to let him in?

Because Suskind can never break out of his internal monologues, he can't tell us. No one reading this book will doubt that Cedric deserves to go to Brown; if anything, his monumental efforts put to shame arguments against affirmative action. But one begins to fear that his ostensibly inspirational story may be more depressing than we know. For all Cedric's superhuman drive, it may be that the most crucial factor in his eventual success was dumb luck: that in 1994, a reporter named Ron Suskind took an interest in his story. □

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## About James Tierney

James E. Tierney, who served as the Attorney General of Maine from 1980 until 1990, currently practices as a consultant for non-profit organizations and private businesses in their understanding of state regulatory structures. He has also served as a consultant to attorneys general and written a number of articles on the powers of the state attorney general. He also coordinates and facilitates retreats for public and private organizations.

During his ten years in office, Tierney played an active role in the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) that resulted in many multistate enforcement cases and amicus efforts. He served on NAAG's Executive Board and was the Chair of the Environmental Law Committee and Vice Chair of the Committees on Consumer Law and Civil Rights as well as a member of the Criminal law and Antitrust Committees. Tierney often testified on behalf of NAAG before the Senate and the House of Representatives and federal regulatory agencies on a wide variety of issues. Tierney also keynoted the national conventions of both the National District Attorney Association and the American Corporate Counsel Association.

After each election cycle during the 1980's, Tierney advised newly elected Attorneys General on the powers and duties of the office and visited other states to consult on organizational issues. From 1992 until 1994, he served as a Special Prosecutor in Pennsylvania and has authored an analysis of the operations of state grand jury practice throughout the United States. He has also written organizational analysis for several state attorneys general.

Tierney has been a Wasserstein Fellow and occasional guest lecturer at a number of law schools including Harvard Law School, Columbia Law School, New York University School of Law and Cornell Law School on the powers, duties and ethics of state attorneys general. From 1991 until 1996, he served on the Board of Commentators of the Courtroom Television Network and regularly appeared on Court TV as a guest on major trials.

Tierney has visited Eastern Europe and the countries of the former Soviet Union on seven separate occasions. He has gone to these countries to advise prosecutors in emerging democracies and to supervise national elections. His most recent visit was to Croatia in the spring of 1998.

Tierney, a graduate of the University of Maine and its School of Law, is on the Board of Directors of the American Judicature Society and a past member of the Board of People For the American Way. Before becoming Attorney General of Maine, Tierney served as the Majority Leader of Maine's House of Representatives for two terms. He also served as a member of the Executive Board of the Conference of Insurance Legislators and was active in the National Conference of State Legislators.

Youth Violence Dinner  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Bill Jaregan  
New Haven up -  
"Wild West"

Rev Rivers

- role of fathers - not seeing a father <sup>stronger</sup>
- faith & hope dead for good  
destroys my existence of many
- kids are looking for limits &  
formal structure

West

De Tocqueville

Yukie as out of control

on kids

never picks on violence

violence coming in - stereotyped way in.

resp. at what's coming in

- not enough love, nurturance, staying

increasing wealth in equalities

Hendrick

was called - Risk of violence

under the nurturers

ownership

kernel story —

Hendrick -

Put parenting at top of agenda  
child / parent gets

time off - adults - central.

parents - adults, respect.

Andersson for our culture is hard to/s  
we don't give him / dignity to his  
the - parents

Book -

media - just one in five.

few of Sunday kids - school  
this Labor Day

few decentering

of life - excitement, death

Hymen

depression - young (young)

parental shame

we want answer

stigmatized families - problem kids,  
hard support.

pay attention? alienation

when / my parents was really alienated  
myself.



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Managed care -

decreases time of any health care given -  
understanding not to buy up / up / long  
term pros.  
costs final dec.

~~the~~ Kall - Move -

home visitation / nurse / parent  
quality day care

~~Samuel~~ ~~for~~

with down - new solutions

urban block youth -

intensive efforts - pro/cons

entire day - young black males

blacks / superior -

no more of one / to: better of the other

growth - teen rates will rise -

will have more teens (black / white)

Demographics do not have to be destiny

extra insurance - give us an opp. to invest in  
lots of kids, though hard to predict.

~~the~~

Snyder

Not kids getting more violent, but  
more kids doing violence -

Circles are getting bigger  
school shootings - changing our  
approach to violence.

Kennedy

crack - cut in urban - diff. landscape

Potter

Social organization - disorganized.

managing - how - / social powers.

may be other places - leaders

Sanger

collective efficiency

- mutual trust - neighborhood
- shared expectations - social control
- collective nature - child rearing

collective feeling - values.

community power

higher the efficiency,  
lower the crime rates

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Sampson -

AA - less tolerant of crime

increased collective effort -  
impact on crime.

Independent contact.

act of social control - looking

black on black violence -  
internal motivation.

Gunderson -

community - ADD

same response - different

6 and 7 year olds - 2 parents w/ 4 jobs -

Hartlett

time and fear at home

parents - understand - spend more wage  
and less.

Boris

Parents Bull of the Photo

Reno

fed gov in partnership

strong parents

violence vs women.

Med care - early, D-3 Educ

It's a double pay.

Sampson -

Any parent can - controlling crime -  
even-handed approach to violence

Boke -

Tool - intent  
children violence - wof.

must be anti-violence.

Webster

understand. social org.

partnership - w/ local com.

fed crime - make a diff.

Are there others are reason

① early intervention

② place - train - wage / labor law

train wages - long with  
gum

③ educate - fam - school - church / community  
self - write / self - conf.

feel your success - democracy

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Ronald Kamehara

- home visitation
- child care, qual.
- paid leave
- incentives - stay at home

Kennedy

- investment - long term
- while you do that, can do other things -
- (econ. dev. new pos.) -
- disincentive - diff. kind of youth violence -
- needs consistent response.

Rivers

- get to most violent communities - factors
- in 1, 6, 7, 8, 9 - coming up to pathways
- avoiding access library,
- fight for employment
- can't get much support for voluntary
- teen nutrition council
- connect black factor comm. (eco. con. deficit.)
- coopt - idealizing reality -
- justice for the poor

Hewlett

returning the gift of time - common agenda

cause of saving the child  
Parents' Bill of Rights.

Internet - homepage to use -  
bringing parents

Parental leave - support was silent  
opponent - tough.

moral seriousness to keep a  
number.

Guskin

emphasize lack of experience - growth  
6, 7, 8, 9 y. olds - college experience  
critical mass

Rea

49% juvenile crime - after school hrs.  
violence, violence - afternoon.

Northwest - Mass. survey - most - h-s. level.  
many - certain restrictions - B average  
discipl. problems - couldn't part. (definitely)  
transition  
transportation - don't have ride home

Do it in the right way - but build more  
so that kids who most need it can part.  
school vacate

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Hyman:

schools - good place to recognize

why w/ justice system

like catalyst - can development support

Parental share - can't deal w/ all problem  
deal of problem

abuse of resp

giving up on post-prison

over 70% - EVAS

80% - min wage

cc plan - 70% sup

Chicago - 6% magnet school district  
sum

WHSO LAYOUT FINAL

a/o 7/31/98; L. Schwartz

**VIOLENCE AMONGST YOUTH DINNER**

**Monday, August 3, 1998**

Blue Room

Gate Time: 6:15 p.m.

Invite Time: 6:30 p.m.

**Principals Time: 7:00 p.m.**

Approx. 26 Guests/Closed Press/Business Attire

*No Social Aides/5 Interns*

6:15 p.m. East Appointments Gate opens and guests proceed to the State Floor for cocktails.

7:15 p.m. **THE PRESIDENT, THE FIRST LADY** and The Attorney General receive briefing in the Map Room.  
*Contact: Jennifer Klein*

7:30 p.m. **THE PRESIDENT, THE FIRST LADY** and The Attorney General greet guests on the State Floor and invite them into the Blue Room for dinner.

Dinner is served and discussion begins.

*Note: Bruce Reed to facilitate discussion.*

9:15/9:30 p.m. **THE PRESIDENT** and **THE FIRST LADY** depart to the Residence.

Guests depart East Gate.

|                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>SET UP NOTES:</b> coat rack in China Room; piano in Grand Foyer; WHCA record. |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Staffing

|                        |                          |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| East Appointments      | Bronson Frick + 1 Intern |
| East Portico           | 1 Intern                 |
| Book Sellers/Colonnade | 1 Intern                 |
| Stair Bottom           | 1 Intern                 |
| Stair Top              | 1 Intern                 |
| Grand Foyer            | 1 Intern                 |

### Dinner Guests

The President

The First Lady

Sissela Bok, Author of Mayhem: Violence as Public Entertainment

William Finnegan, Author of Cold New World: Growing Up in a Harder Country, and writer for the New Yorker

James Fox, Dean, College of Criminal Justice, Northeastern University of Boston Massachusetts and author of Mass Murder; Overkill; and, Killer on Campus

Sylvia Ann Hewlett, co-Author of The War Against Parents (with Cornel West)

Dr. Steven Hyman, Director of the National Institute of Mental Health

Robin Karr-Morse, Author of Ghosts from the Nursery: Tracing the Roots of Violence

David Kennedy, Author of "Can We Keep Guns Away From Kids?" in *The American Prospect* and Director of the Boston Gun Project

Rev. Eugene Rivers, Director of the Ella J. Baker House in Dorchester, Massachusetts

Robert J. Sampson, Professor of Sociology at the University of Chicago

Dr. Howard Snyder, Director of the National Center for Juvenile Justice in Pittsburgh, PA

Ron Suskind, Author of A Hope in the Unseen and *Wall Street Journal* reporter

John Tierney, Former Attorney General of Maine

Cornel West, co-Author of The War Against Parents (with Sylvia Ann Hewlett)

### Administration

Attorney General Janet Reno

Shay Bilchik, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Department of Justice

Leslie Thornton, Chief of Staff, Department of Education

Melanne Verveer, Chief of Staff to the First Lady

Rahm Emanuel, Senior Counselor to the President

Bruce Reed, Domestic Policy Advisor to the President

TBD others

# Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

## Clinton Library

| DOCUMENT NO.<br>AND TYPE | SUBJECT/TITLE                           | DATE | RESTRICTION |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------|-------------|
| 001. list                | Contact Information (partial) (2 pages) | nd   | P6/b(6)     |

### COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records  
First Lady's Office  
Domestic Policy Council (Nicole Rabner)  
OA/Box Number: 15417

### FOLDER TITLE:

Youth Violence Dinner, White House, 7/31/98

2012-1035-S  
kc1068

### RESTRICTION CODES

#### Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]  
P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]  
P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]  
P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]  
P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]  
P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

#### Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]  
b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]  
b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]  
b(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]  
b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]  
b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]  
b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]  
b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

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[001]

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P6/(b)(6)

## About James Tierney

James E. Tierney, who served as the Attorney General of Maine from 1980 until 1990, currently practices as a consultant for non-profit organizations and private businesses in their understanding of state regulatory structures. He has also served as a consultant to attorneys general and written a number of articles on the powers of the state attorney general. He also coordinates and facilitates retreats for public and private organizations.

During his ten years in office, Tierney played an active role in the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) that resulted in many multistate enforcement cases and amicus efforts. He served on NAAG's Executive Board and was the Chair of the Environmental Law Committee and Vice Chair of the Committees on Consumer Law and Civil Rights as well as a member of the Criminal law and Antitrust Committees. Tierney often testified on behalf of NAAG before the Senate and the House of Representatives and federal regulatory agencies on a wide variety of issues. Tierney also keynoted the national conventions of both the National District Attorney Association and the American Corporate Counsel Association.

After each election cycle during the 1980's, Tierney advised newly elected Attorneys General on the powers and duties of the office and visited other states to consult on organizational issues. From 1992 until 1994, he served as a Special Prosecutor in Pennsylvania and has authored an analysis of the operations of state grand jury practice throughout the United States. He has also written organizational analysis for several state attorneys general.

Tierney has been a Wasserstein Fellow and occasional guest lecturer at a number of law schools including Harvard Law School, Columbia Law School, New York University School of Law and Cornell Law School on the powers, duties and ethics of state attorneys general. From 1991 until 1996, he served on the Board of Commentators of the Courtroom Television Network and regularly appeared on Court TV as a guest on major trials.

Tierney has visited Eastern Europe and the countries of the former Soviet Union on seven separate occasions. He has gone to these countries to advise prosecutors in emerging democracies and to supervise national elections. His most recent visit was to Croatia in the spring of 1998.

Tierney, a graduate of the University of Maine and its School of Law, is on the Board of Directors of the American Judicature Society and a past member of the Board of People For the American Way. Before becoming Attorney General of Maine, Tierney served as the Majority Leader of Maine's House of Representatives for two terms. He also served as a member of the Executive Board of the Conference of Insurance Legislators and was active in the National Conference of State Legislators.

Youth Violence Dinner  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Bill Jaregan  
New Haven 4p -  
"Wild West"

Rev Rivers

- role of fathers - not seeing a father - <sup>energy</sup> gone
- faith & hope dead for good  
deserts my existence of many
- kids are looking for limits -  
formal structure

West

De Tocqueville

- youth as out of control
- on kids
- media preys on violence
- violence coming in - stereotyped way in.
- resp. at what's coming in
- not enough love, nurturing, staying
- increasing wealth in inequalities

Hendrick

- was called - Risk of violence
- under the nurturers
- ownership
- kernel story

Hendrick -

Put parenting at top of agenda  
child / parent sets

time off - adults - central.

parents - adults, respect.

Respect for our culture is hard to do  
we don't give him / dignity to have  
the - parents

Book -

media - guidance in film.

fear of sending kids - school  
this late day

fear disorientation

of life - entertainment, death

Hyma

depression - young / young

parental shame

we want answer

stigmatized families - problems kids,  
lack support.

pay attention? alienates

when / my parents who really alienated  
myself.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Managed care -

decreases time of any health care given -  
understanding not to buy up - up/long  
term pros.

constant det.

~~the~~ Kall - Morse -

home visitation - nurse / param  
good day care

~~Samuel~~ Bob

when down - new soluz

urban block youth -

intensive efforts - prod of

entire day - young black males

blacks / superman -

no more of one / to: little of the other

growth - teen rates will rise -

will have more teens (black / white)

Demography do not have to be destiny

extra insurance - give us an opp. to invest -

lot of kids, though harder to predict.

~~the~~

Snyder

not kids getting more violent, but  
more kids doing violence -

Circle is getting bigger

school shooting - change in  
approach to violence.

Kennedy

crack - cut in water - diff. landscape

Potter

social organization - disorganizing.

managing - Am - / social powers.

my own other places - leaders

Samuel

collective efficiency

- mutual trust - neighborhood

- shared expectations - social control

collective nature - child rearing

collective feeling - values.

community power

higher the efficiency,  
lower the crime rates

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Sampson -

AA - less threat of crime

increase collective eff -  
impact on crime.

\* Intergovernmental contact.

act of sexual abuse - looking

black on black violence -  
internal intimidation.

Sandford -

country - ADD

same league - deter

6 mil Am fam - 2 parents w/ 4 kids -

Harbelle

time and fear at home

parents - understand - spend min wage  
and leave.

Basics

Parents Bill of Rights

Reno

fed gov in partnership

my parents

violence vs women.

Med care - early, D-3 Educ

4-5, 10th prg.

Sampson -

reg (assist) com - controlling crime -  
even handed approach to violence

Rele -

Tool - Interg

children violence - w/

must be anti-violence.

Webster

understand. social org.

partnership - w/ local com.

fed citizen - make a diff.

are that options are real

① early intervention

② at place - min wage / labor law

min wage - imp w/ the  
gov

③ educate - fam - school - church / community  
self - w/ self - conf.

feel your success - democracy

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Robin Kanare

- home visit
- child care, qual.
- paid leave
- incentives - stay at home

Kennedy

- involvement - long term
- while you do that, can do other things -
- (econ. dev. new pos.) -
- destructive - diff. kind of youth violence -
- needs a distinct response.

Rivers

- get to most violent comm. - factors
- int. 1, 6, 7, 8, 9 - coming up to
- avoiding access library,
- fight for employment
- can't get any support for voluntary
- teen nutrition council
- connect to black factor comm. (eco. con. assist.)
- coopt - idling/reading -
- justice for the poor

Hewlett

returning the gift of time - common agenda

cause of saving the child  
Parents' Bill of Rights.

Internet - home page to use -  
bringing parents

Parental leave - support was silent  
opponent - tough.  
moral seriousness to bring a  
number.

Gustafson

emphasize lack of experience - growth  
6, 7, 8, 9 y. olds - college exposure  
out of school

Loa

49% juvenile crime - after school hrs.  
vision, violence - afternoon.

Andreassen - Mass. survey - most - h-s. level.  
many - certain restrictions - B average  
discipl. problems - couldn't part. (definitely  
tricking  
transportation - don't have ride home)

Do it in the right way - but build more  
so that kids who most need it can part.  
school vacate

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Hyman:

schools - good place to recognize

why w/ justice system

~~the~~ catalyst - comm development / support

Parental stress - can't deal w/ all problem  
deal of problem

abdicating of resp

growing up in post. pm

over 70% - EVAS

80% - min wage

cc plan - 70% sup

Chicago - 6% suggest ~~sum~~ debt  
sum