

Goetz

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magistrate, the Dutch men were found guilty, beaten and given an additional four years of servitude. Punch, however, was sentenced to remain a servant for life. This case became the legal precedent sanctioning slavery in America.

The second case, *In Re: Hannah Warwick* was also heard in Virginia. The magistrate, in 1669, ruled that Ms. Warwick, a white servant, was immune to prosecution because her case "extenuated because she was overseen by a Negro overseer." Ms Warwick was guilty of some infraction, probably stealing, but was able to escape punishment because the individual she was bound to obey was an African-American. Commenting 300 years later, Judge A. Leon Higgenbotham wrote, "At that time, the clear inference ... is that the society was more interested in making sure that (African-Americans) did not exercise authority over whites than in prosecuting the infractions of Hannah Warwick."

In 1857, Supreme Court Chief Justice Roger Taney wrote the majority opinion for

the famous *Dred Scott* case which involved slave Dred Scott's belief that once his master took him over the state line into free territory, he was a free man. Taney, however, wrote that "the Negro was so far inferior that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect."

Throughout history, race played a dominant role in allowing white defendants to walk away scott-free after threatening, maiming or murdering African-Americans and other minorities. The men who allegedly killed 14-year-old Emmett Till for complementing a white woman, were found innocent, despite overwhelming evidence of their guilt.

The Ku Klux Klanners who burned that Alabama church with eight children in it never came to trial.

In New York's Howard Beach section several months ago, a policeman's son and court employee, ran over an African-American running from a mob of drunken teenagers. He died on the highway. The driver claimed

he thought he had run over a tire. The police didn't give him so much as a traffic ticket for leaving the scene of an accident. The drunk teens walked out of court to freedom when

Goetz verdict, still said, "the expectation that four young (African-American) males are going to harass you is indeed greater than four whites."

Goetz's attorney, Barry

denied race was a factor in the acquittal. He said the jury believed Goetz was stopping an attack "that was about to happen to him."

But every lawyer knows and every juror is told that law is based on facts presented and not on speculation. You cannot shoot people just because you think they're going to attack you.

Also, having prior juvenile records is no excuse for getting one's constitutional and civil rights forfeited. During his celebrated investigation and trial, John Gotti, reputed Mafia godfather; reputed murderer, reputed prostitution king, reputed chief loan shark and Howard Beach's best known resident, did not lose his constitutional rights. After being found innocent recently, he has now pursued gaining control of legitimate businesses in Virginia Beach and other eastern seaboard resorts.

Is there a double standard in the way the legal system treats whites and minorities? You decide for yourself.

By Dennis Schatzman.



(Editorial cartoon by Pittsburgh Press)

a judge dropped all serious charges because the surviving victims didn't show up for the preliminary hearing. This was done despite guilty confessions from the defendants.

Knowing this, a leading criminologist, Marvin Wolfgang, commenting on the

Slotnick, dismissed charges of racism and stated, "the jury did what was proper and appropriate." He noted that the four victims had prior delinquent histories and were carrying sharpened screwdrivers when they were shot down. Michael Axelrod, a juror, also

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