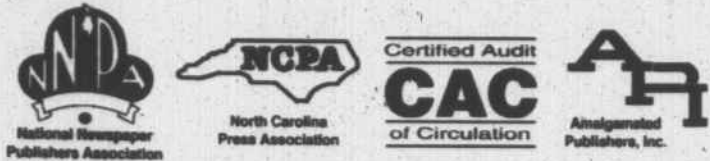


OPINION

THE CHRONICLE

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A tale of two killings

On February 4 Guinean immigrant Amadou Diallo was riddled with bullets by four white New York Police officers as he entered his apartment building. One month earlier 19 year old Tyisha Miller was riddled with bullets by four non-black Riverside, Calif., police officers as she sat in her car in a near comatose state.

On March 31 after dozens of marches, demonstrations, and hundreds of arrests, the four New York officers were indicted for second-degree murder. Three days earlier on March 28 Riverside city officials claimed they needed more time to complete their investigation into the Miller shooting.

The Miller and Diallo killings ignited a firestorm of national outrage and even prompted President Clinton to painfully say that he was "deeply disturbed" about police violence. But the big question is will Riverside police and city officials whitewash the Miller shooting?

The parallels between the two killings are too eerily similar for this to happen.

In both cases the evidence is damning that neither Miller or Diallo was engaged in a criminal act, and posed no real threat to authorities. The Diallo shooting tossed an ugly national spotlight on police abuse of mostly blacks and Latinos in New York City. The Miller shooting tossed that same spotlight on police abuse by some police officers of blacks and Latinos in Riverside. A three-year comparison by the Riverside Press-Enterprise of the practices of Riverside police with those in other California cities of similar size found:

- A significant increase in the number of police use of force incidents in 1998.
- A significant increase in the number of excessive force complaints against officers
- A near total absence of any disciplinary action by police or city officials against the officers.
- A far higher arrest rate of blacks and Latinos, even though the city is still predominantly white.

The pattern of police abuse in Riverside and New York City is mirrored in dozens of cities nationally. In its annual report on police violence in America, Amnesty International warned that more police are using choke holds, chemical sprays, and electric shocks as well as punching, beating, kicking people who pose little or no threat than ever. The nearly 12,000 complaints of police abuse in 1996 almost matched the total number for the entire period from 1984 and 1990. To better aid law enforcement agencies and federal prosecutors track patterns of abuse, the Violent Crime and Control Act of 1994 authorized the Justice Department to collect data on the frequency and types of police abuse complaints. At the end of 1998 it still had not issued any report on the level of police misconduct in America.

Despite the soaring number of police abuse complaints officials in most U.S. cities are still just as reluctant to speak out. District attorneys are still just as reluctant to prosecute officers guilty of misconduct. In the rare case they do, juries are still just as reluctant to convict them. In the even rarer cases where they do convict them, judges are still just as reluctant to impose stiff sentences on them.

The Miller case is a classic example of how city officials jump through hoops to avoid any public criticism of police. Riverside's mayor blasted Jesse Jackson for critical remarks about the police, and the city is paying \$315 an hour to a public relations firm to spruce up the city's battered image.

If Riverside officials take no action, would the feds prosecute? In March Attorney General Janet Reno told black leaders that the Justice Department has prosecuted 100 police officers for misconduct and there are 300 more cases under investigation. But these are anemic numbers when compared to the escalating level of police violence nationally.

Riverside city officials say they will release the report on the Miller shooting April 28. Let them know that she must get justice too.

Fax, or email this message "No whitewash of the Tyisha Miller shooting" to: Riverside Mayor Ronald Loveridge, email: rloveridge@ci.riverside.ca.us.

Earl Ofari Hutchinson is the author of *The Crisis in Black and Black*. His email address is ehutch344@aol.com.

Alcohol Awareness Month

April 1999 is the 13th Annual Alcohol Awareness Month.

This year's focus is on "Binge Drinking."

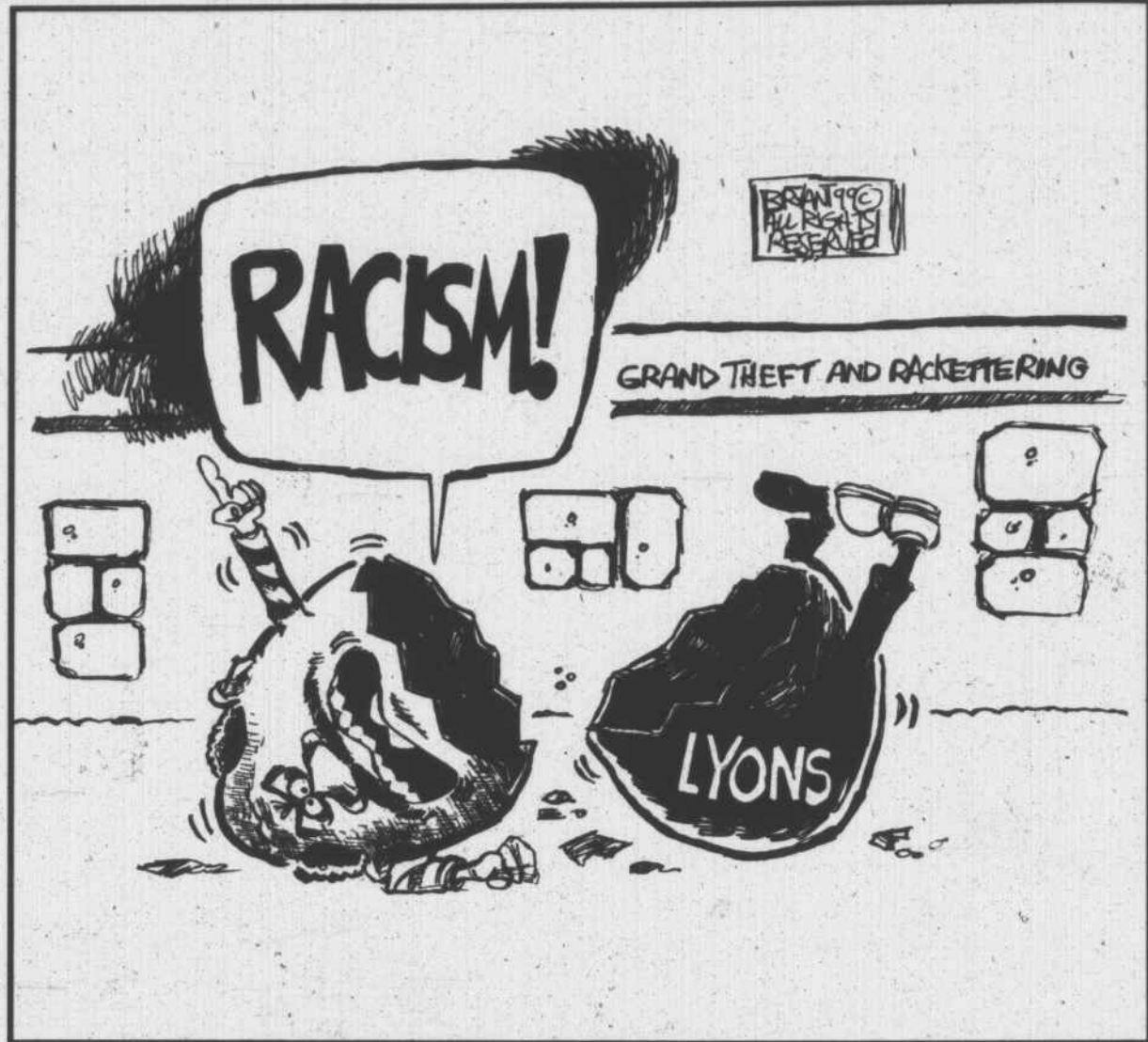
Drinking too much too fast can kill you, a fact that many youths are not aware of.

This is the reason I am a peer educator on the campus of WSSU, and work as an intern at The Coalition for Drug Abuse Prevention, one of six pilot sites throughout the state for the N.C. Initiative to Reduce Underage Drinking.

Many of us may not know it, but alcohol is a depressant. It slows down your heart rate and other bodily functions. Many drink alcohol as a way of unwinding and relaxing, while others see it as a way of having fun. Alcohol is becoming more and more popular for young people, starting as early as middle school aged youth on through college.

Although it is illegal to consume or purchase alcohol before the age of 21, many fail to abide by this law. Alcohol is a legal drug found in many homes, and is most often very easy for youths to obtain. It is quite shocking that so many young people are becoming addicted before they even reach the legal age of 21.

Where should the blame be placed? Can we really hold the media responsible for the rise in early alcohol consumption? In part, yes, we can. Take a good look at the many advertisements displayed by major alcohol beverage companies. These ads may not be released with the intentions of targeting youths, but if you check out their unique themes, bright colors, animated characters, like the Budweiser Frogs, cool crowd atmosphere, and other eye-catching scenes, it's no wonder youths are attracted.



It almost subliminally tells the viewer, "If you drink this brand of beer, you're doing the cool thing, or you can attract the best looking girls/guys."

What can be done about the situation of underage drinking?

An African proverb states, "When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion."

If the community begins to

peacefully protest alcohol advertising in newspapers, magazines, and through the broadcasting medium, something can be done.

Get local government officials and school boards involved; get them to enforce the existing rules and laws pertaining to youths and underage drinking.

When many small groups rally together for a cause, they can "tie

up a lion."

Let's make a change for a more healthy and sober community. Save our youths.

Annie Bush is a student at Winston-Salem State University. She is also an intern with The Coalition for Drug Abuse Prevention/N.C. Initiative to Reduce Underage Drinking.

Making Milosevic say uncle



The way I see it, Slobodan Milosevic, president of Yugoslavia, is in a no-win situation. He's managed to challenge the dictate of the most powerful country in the history of the planet.

He's managed to engender sympathy for hundreds of thousands of Albanian refugees and the Serbian people are about to undergo unspeakable hardships if he remains in office.

How can Milosevic avoid the impending hardships on his people? Well, all he has to do is surrender, leave office, cry uncle and turn the governance of Yugoslavia over to the NATO.

Many would say that sounds like a fair deal when you consider all that has happened to the Albanians and other non-Serbs in Kosovo. And I would be the first to acknowledge that what has happened to the Albanians is horrific, inhumane, and unforgivable.

But I question the remedy and the method that we've chosen to punish Milosevic for his crimes. I'm not sure that setting ourselves up as the source of final political approval is the best way to handle Slobodan Milosevic.

We cannot afford to send the message that we are prepared to remove any leader of any country that goes against our sense of right and wrong or our sense of proper moral and human behavior.

Requiring Milosevic to say uncle and allow NATO troops to be placed in his territory to oversee the repatriation of Albanians to Kosovo is asking for nothing short of complete and unconditional surrender.

But I'm afraid that's exactly what going to happen.

Either Milosevic will surrender or the Serbs' quality of life will be reduced to that of the refugees. And if this is the case, is our threat really against Slobodan Milosevic, or is it against the Serbian people?

I think the reality of the matter is that the threat is to the Serbian people.

The threat is in essence "throw the bum out of office or well destroy your ability to live as modern human beings."

As a humane, honorable and intelligent nation, when we will stop punishing the people of a nation for the sins of their leader? Especially when in the many cases where the people have no say in who is leading them.

There are many countries that are governed by leaders the people didn't elect nor does the average Joe have a choice - save for a coup of some sort - on whether that leader will stay in office.

When will we stop requiring the overthrow of leaders from Iraq, Libya, North Korea, and Iran in order that we might lift sanctions. Long-term sanctions can have a devastating effect on children and the elderly.

Maybe we ought to stop requiring folks to say uncle and try being an uncle to them with increased foreign aid and fewer exports of mili-



President Clinton flanked by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright vows to keep on Kosovo.

tary weapons.

Milosevic won't survive this ordeal, and Yugoslavia will never be the same. Time will pass and who knows, in another 500 years the Albanians might reenact some ethnic cleansing of the Serbians. If that happens, I hope the people of Albania don't have to be bombed into submission to remove their leader. I hope by then we as human beings will have evolved beyond such primitive measures to resolve our differences.

Val Atkinson is a columnist for the Triangle Tribune.

VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY...

Four black men have alleged that they were the victims of racism at Souper!Salad!, a new Winston-Salem restaurant. The men say the incident, which is featured in this week's issue of *The Chronicle*, has left them in shock. We asked local people whether they thought racism was prevalent in restaurants and stores.



Eugene Harris

"Racism still exists today. I notice that in some restaurants that they put all the black people together. And of course it is still going on in the mall, with people watching us all the time when we are just shopping."



Tim White

"Look at the incident at Four Seasons Mall (where black students boycotted because of alleged discrimination). It doesn't come out as much in situations like that, but racism is everywhere."



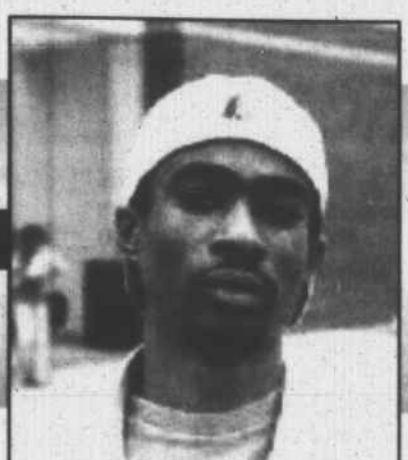
Namika Harley

"Whatever way you turn, racism is always going to be there. There is always going to be someone who does not like you because you are black. People are going to be people. They are going to be cruel. I think we as young blacks need to set a positive example so that the younger people can deal with it because it is getting worse."



Cordelia Campbell

"Racism is in air when we go shopping. Sometimes they look at us like we can't afford to shop in their stores. Also, when you go out to certain restaurants, they feel like we don't belong there. I think it is on the rise."



Quintin Alexander

"I feel that it is just a part of our society now when you shop and everywhere else. It is something that is known but not really discussed. We come in to contact with things like this every day. It's out there."