



Jordan and Trayvon: Where is the Justice?

Forum featuring
The Dream Defenders



Sponsored by the FMU Lions for Justice

**Monday, February 17, 2014
7:00 p.m.**

OPENING AND WELCOME

Courtney D. Wright
President, Lions for Justice

INVOCATION

Rev. Wendell Paris
University Chaplain

WORDS

Chapter 3 Poetry Troupe

PANEL DISCUSSION

Dr. Anthony Britt, Attorney-at-Law, Adjunct Professor
Dr. Flora Holmes, Attorney-at-Law, Adjunct Professor
Mr. C. Vernon Martin, Director of Student Activities
Rev. Wendell Paris, Instructor of Religion & Philosophy
Dr. Kis-sha Sharp, Attorney-at-Law, Adjunct Professor
Sherika Shaw, South Florida Regional Organizer, Dream Defenders
Rev. Dr. Jeffery Swain, Director, Centers for Academic Support & Retention
Dr. Tameka Hobbs, Assistant Professor of History, Moderator

Q&A

CANDLELIGHT VIGIL & CLOSING PRAYER

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The Miami Times

Tempora Mutantur Et Nos Mutamur In Illis

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WHY ARE BLACK WOMEN SO ANGRY?

Problematic question draws many responses

By **Carla St. Louis**
cstlouis@miamitimesonline.com

Unlike women of other races, Black women are regularly viewed as angry by society. The Urban League of Greater Miami addressed the disparity by hosting a forum that asked the women of Liberty City, 'Why are Black women so angry?'

Held on February 13th at the Freedom Hall, 60 to 80 attendees including a six member

panelist with five women and one man addressed a multitude of underlying sources of Black women's perceived anger.

Some of those sources included racism, classism, unresolved past trauma just to name a few. The conversation was split into three re-occurring themes: community, church and school.

"I probably can tell you why Black women are angry," said Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall. Please turn to **ANGRY 8A**



Forum spurs talk on racism

Collegiates share stories on racism

By **Carla St. Louis**
cstlouis@miamitimesonline.com

"What is it about white folks that makes them feel in danger?" asked Reverend Dr. Jeffrey Swain, director of Florida Memorial University's FMU Centers for Academic Support and Retention.

In the FIU/FMU Auditorium among a crowd of 50 Black collegiates, a seven-member panel including Swain dis-

cussed white America's narrative about Black men in the context of the slayings of Jordan Davis and Trayvon Martin.

The panelists addressed topics like the criminalization of Black men and the racist implications of Stand Your Ground. They also talked about activism, how to perpetuate change and mentorship in an attempt to bridge the disconnect between the

See more
commentary on the
DUNN VERDICT

youth and elders. Guests were given the opportunity to participate in the conversation.

Held on February 17th, the town hall meeting included a forum by the Dream Defenders, an invocation led by chaplain Reverend Wendell Paris

and hosted by the FMU Lions for Justice. It was moderated by FMU's assistant professor of U.S. history and African-American history, Dr. Tanekia Hobbs.

The event titled, Jordan and Trayvon: Where is the Justice?, acted as a safe place for students to discuss their encounters with racism. Students shared their outrage of the murders of two Black Florida youths who resembled themselves, brothers, boy

Please turn to **FORUM 8A**

Dunn found guilty of attempted murder

Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE — Prosecutors say they may retry a Florida man on first-degree murder charges in the fatal shooting of a teenager after an argument over loud music.

A jury convicted Michael Dunn, a 47-year-old software developer, on Saturday of attempted murder for shooting into a car full of teenagers after the argument but jurors couldn't agree on the most serious charge of first-degree murder. A mistrial was declared on that charge. State Attorney Angela Corey said her office would consider seeking a retrial.

Please turn to **DUNN 8A**



Mom, mayors' report lacks context for interpreting data on violence at schools

Misguided message on guns

By **James Alan Fox**

A new report on school shootings was released Wednesday on Capitol Hill by two like-minded advocacy groups striving to move Congress toward action on gun control. Whatever the impact on lawmakers, the statistical study of gun-related deaths and injuries in schools is quite disturbing, but not just in the way intended by its promoters.

According to Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America and Mayors Against Illegal Guns, there have been as many as 44 shootings, including 28 deaths, in schools and colleges nationwide since the devastating massacre at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., that had millions of Americans demanding change in gun regulations. To place the recent tally in particularly mind-numbing terms, the

mom and mayors report highlighted the rate of more than three incidents per month — and that would include the summertime when schools are essentially gun-free and student-free.

One need not read very deeply between the lines to get the intended message: Our nation's schools continue to be personal battle zones for gun-toting teens and post-teens, and we

Please turn to **MESSAGE 8A**

Why wasn't Dunn found guilty of murder?

By **DeWayne Wickham**

Jordan Davis can't be dead. Not if there is any sense to be made of the decision a Florida jury produced Saturday in a trial of the man that all the world knows killed him.

The evidence against Michael Dunn, a 47-year-old white man who pulled a gun from his car's glove compartment in November 2012 and fired 10 shots into a nearby SUV that

carried Davis, 17, and three other Black teens, was overwhelming.

Dunn was the aggressor. While the two vehicles were stopped outside a Jacksonville gas station, he demanded that the four teenagers turn down the loud rap music coming from their SUV. After some words were exchanged, Dunn opened fire — and then fled the scene.

He went a motel and ordered



WICKHAM

a pizza. Then he went to bed, apparently sleeping off the several rum and cokes he drank at a wedding reception shortly before his fatal encounter with the Black teens.

Davis was the only one hit by the gunfire. And while he was pronounced dead, in a twisted way the jury's verdict in this controversial murder case calls into question that medical finding.

How else do you explain the 12-member jury's conclusion that Dunn was guilty of three counts of second-degree attempted murder for firing into the SUV and missing three of its occupants, but desiccated on the question of whether he was guilty of murdering Davis?

Before you answer, consider this: The jury also found Dunn guilty of a charge of shooting



DAVIS

into an occupied vehicle. But it was not able to convict Dunn of being responsible in any way for killing Davis. It failed to find him guilty of first-, second- or third-degree murder, or manslaughter.

Some members of this jury must believe that Davis isn't dead. How else could all 12 jurors agree to convict Dunn for firing the bullets that didn't

hit anyone, but fail to reach a verdict on what resulted from the ones that hit Davis?

Somebody on that panel must believe Dunn's lame defense. He testified to shooting only after seeing someone in the SUV point the barrel of a shotgun at him. But that story should produce a pungent odor of mendacity for anyone but the village idiot, or shameless racist.

As Dunn drove away from Please turn to **VERDICT 8A**

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Mad Black woman stereotype ignites fervent discussion

ANGRY
continued from 1A

school board member of District 2. "I think they are courageous, stand their ground women like Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth and your mamas who stood and said, 'You are not going to mistreat me.' If that's angry, I guess I'm an angry Black woman."

The discussion was moderated by Sharron L. Henley, the vice president of programs for the Urban League of Greater Miami, Inc. Henley recounted her own experience of anger during her youth, a period that left her "angry but not necessarily aware of it." She suggested that many Black women and young girls adopt practices that

helped her release and understand her anger like mentorship and anger management.

"Education is not always academics," she said. "It's a learning process and comes in many forms."

Henley read audience submitted comments, and the following comment from an anonymous Black woman fostered the most responses: "Black men have become scarce and absent. Black women are mothers and fathers. Of the Black men that are left they are gay, in prison, polygamists or left our race to be with another race. In conclusion we have become angry."

Major Stephanie Daniels, the commander of the Miami Dade Police Department, northside

station addressed the prison element of the comment and said, "Because of the violence that plagues our community, we are playing a major part in making Black men scarce."

Roger G. Williams of Miami-Dade College framed the answer to the question in the context of history. "We cannot ignore the racial aspect of this statement," said Williams. "We are suffering from post-traumatic slave syndrome. We have to look at that history because it is so recent. Black men never have the opportunity to control their own image. Negative stereotypes of Black women makes it simplistic to label them. Black women aren't angry, but more so frustrated. An environment must be

created where they can properly heal because what you're witnessing are women who have not healed from the historic trauma of slavery. Every incident that occurred after slavery — Jim Crow, the Civil Rights movement and the fracturing of the Black family by the 1980s drug wars — impeded that healing process."

Another aspect of the dialogue was the consequences of Black women's anger in the context of a heterosexual relationship. "I do believe Black women are so strong," said Paul Gayle, a U.S. veteran and the sole male panelist. "They held down the fort for so long that they're tough. But men don't like tough women. And 'tough' don't mean

'strong.' The softness or gentleness of a woman is what makes a man a man. A man against your toughness won't work."

Crystal Goss, a University of Florida graduate alluded to relationships with her comments. "I am angry because I am categorized," she said. "The root of the problem lies in the root of the question; its problematic. The miseducation of our community is what's causing anger within women. Because your mother wasn't taught how to positively cope within a negative environment now you're prone to that ratio. The very things we accept or condone in our community is what we regret. The man I should potentially be dating wasn't informed properly on coping in a negative

environment and now he reacts accordingly."

At least 30 minutes of the conversation focused on the importance of healing including counseling and sharing positive energy exchanges with people on a consistent basis.

The discussion was part of the On Us (IOU), a series of forums on topics pertaining to our community by the Urban League of Greater Miami. Its next event is scheduled for March and is part two of the topic, "Why are Black women so angry?" and will focus on jealousy between women.

For more information on the Urban League of Greater Miami, Inc. log on to <http://miamiurbanleague.org> or <http://iourban.org>.

Jurors unable to see Jordan Davis' side of the story

VERDICT
continued from 1A

the shooting scene with his girlfriend, who was inside a convenience store during the confrontation, he made no mention of the teens having a shotgun. That excuse didn't surface until after cops arrested him the next day at his home in Brevard County, Fla.

It is his claim of a mystery shotgun on which Dunn pinned

his hope of being set free. Once this tale allowed Dunn to cling to Florida's controversial "stand your ground" law that permits a person who has a reasonable fear that their life is being threatened to respond with deadly force.

At trial, Dunn's defense suggested that the teens might have gotten out of the shotgun during the short time they fled the gas station after the shooting. But in an affidavit released by prosecutors before the trial, the lead

detective said they drove just 100 feet from the station before returning for help once they realized Davis had been shot.

I've got another theory about why Dunn started shooting. Davis was guilty of what Ken Burns, the award-winning documentary filmmaker, called "unforgivable Blackness." Burns was talking about how some whites reacted to the brazenness of Jack Johnson, this nation's

first Black heavyweight boxing champion.

I suspect it was Davis' refusal to turn down the rap music — his unforgivable Blackness — that caused Dunn to start shooting and which rendered a jury unable to accept the reality of his death.

DeWayne Wickham, dean of Morgan State University's School of Global Journalism and Communication, writes on www.usatoday.com.

Hung jury on first degree murder

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Meanwhile, defense attorney Cory Stolla said he plans to appeal based on several issues, including how the jury could reach guilty verdicts on four counts and deadlock on another.

Dunn was charged with fatally shooting 17-year-old Jordan Davis, of Marietta, Ga., in 2012 after the argument over loud music coming from the SUV occupied by Davis and three friends out side a Jacksonville convenience store. Dunn, who is white, had described the music to his fiancée as "thug music." He claimed he acted in self-defense.

After more than 20 hours of deliberations over four days, the 12 jurors found Dunn guilty of three counts of attempted second-degree murder and a count of fitting into an occupied car.

Earlier in the day, the panel said in a note to Judge Russell L. Healey that they couldn't agree on the murder charge. They also had the option of convicting him of second-degree murder or manslaughter. The judge asked them to continue their work, and they went back to the deliberation

room for two more hours before returning with a verdict.

"I've never seen a case where deliberations have gone on for this length of time," Healey said afterward, praising the jurors. "They've embraced their civic duty, and they are to be commended for that."

Jurors declined to talk to the media.

Davis showed no emotion as the verdicts were read. Each attempted second-degree murder charge carries a maximum sentence of 30 years in prison, while the fourth charge he was convicted on carries a maximum of 15. A sentencing date will be set later.

Davis' parents each left the courtroom in tears. Afterward his mother, Lucia McBeth, expressed gratitude for the verdict. Sunday would have been the teen's 19th birthday.

"We are so grateful for the truth," McBeth said. "We are so grateful that the jurors were able to understand the common sense of it all."

Jurors heard testimony that Dunn, who has a concealed weapon permit, fired 10 shots, hitting the vehicle nine times. Davis was the only person hit.

FMU students discuss personal profiling experiences

FORUM
continued from 1A

friends and friends.

"I've never been more afraid of a white person in my entire life — and I have white friends," said one attendee as he recounted being pulled over and questioned by a white police officer. "He gave me a ticket for over \$300 for speeding in a school zone" despite not actually speeding and described the entire incident as "walking on pins and needles." Although the police officer never touched him, in the context of the recent white on Black murders that have occurred in Florida, he said, "I now look at white men of a certain age differently in fear of what they might do."

Shenika Shaw, the South Florida Regional Organizer of the Dream Defenders understands his fear. "My blackness does not make me a threat to society," said Shaw. "Stand Your Ground's underlying message is Black men are criminals. The overall narrative [in America] is [Blacks] are criminals. We are basically being punished

for walking while Black."

Panelists discussed the outcome of the first degree murder trial of Michael Dunn, the white man who killed Davis.

"The verdict is a disappointment because of the jury's failure to hold Dunn accountable for Jordan Davis's murder," said Hobbs. "The parallels, however, between the Dunn case and the Zimmerman case illustrate the dangerous intersection of race, self-defense, and the interpretation in the criminal justice system. Our conversation tonight seeks to explore this connection and to work towards strategies to correct the situation. We cannot have another Trayvon or Jordan."

When I found out about the verdict, at first I was confused at why this generation, the best of Stand Your Ground, and they don't even know what it is, is Jordan and Trayvon died because of it and he looks like me. I'm telling you, it's going to get worse [...] We need to build power in our community to necessitate change."

the Zimmerman case, has really opened my eyes to the injustice that we, as a people, are receiving due to the Stand Your Ground Law."

Shaw along with her fellow Dream Defender, Steven J. Pargett pushed changing "Blacks' narrative within America through an effective form of abating within the Black community — oral communication.

"If we don't change the narrative we will always be criminalized," she said. "Young people must be on the forefront to change the overall narrative; we must share our stories."

The stories she's referring to are Blacks' experiences with racism and injustice.

"Young children growing up in this generation are fearful of Stand Your Ground, and they don't even know what it is," said Pargett. "All they know is Jordan and Trayvon died because of it and he looks like me. I'm telling you, it's going to get worse [...] We need to build power in our community to necessitate change."

There are no easy ways to fix gun control

MESSAGE
continued from 1A

need to act fast before more young lives are needlessly and senselessly sacrificed to our country's love affair with guns.

What I find so disturbing about the moms and mayors report is not just the tallies of homicides, suicides and other shootings in schools, but the complete lack of any context for interpreting these figures.

As it happens, the numbers assembled by the moms and mayors are not out-of-line with historical patterns, and, in fact, are lower than two decades ago when gang violence was especially problematic at school settings. And, as added perspective, consider that there are more than 50 million school children in America, making the risk of fatality well below one in two million. By comparison, many times more youngsters are killed annually in bicycle accidents. I would trust the moms, if not the mayors, would support a national helmet law as quickly as a gun restriction.

Without a doubt, each gun-related student or teacher fatality is tragic in and of itself, but children are far more at risk out side of school than at school. For most kids, school is a place of great (if not the greatest) safety, offering a level of structure and supervision that many children do not enjoy elsewhere, possibly not even at home.

Let me be clear in embracing the often-stated position that even one death is too many. And I hardly wish to disregard or minimize the suffering and anguish of victims, their families as well as their entire communities



that are devastated and traumatized when gunshots disrupt the school day.

However, the suggestion that school shootings are a problem on the rise and in need of immediate resolution tends to promote quick and easy responses that don't work and may make matters worse, instead of more difficult approaches that will indeed improve the climate at schools of all levels.

Posting armed guards at school doors, running children through lockdown drills, and surrounding classrooms with cameras and metal detectors not only fail to prevent some teenager or adult determined to wreak havoc on innocent children and their dedicated teachers, but they send the wrong and excessively scary message concerning the risk. Overinvestment in visible security can serve as a constant reminder to impressionable youngsters that they indeed have a target on their backs.

In the process of trying to protect children's lives, we can easily destroy their sense of safety and ultimately disrupt the learn-

Correction(s) from edition, Volume 91 number 25:

In the article titled, "Planting the SEED Are We ready to send our at-risk children to boarding school?" by Carla St. Louis the photo on page 8A incorrectly labels Lesley Poole, the director of outreach at the SEED Foundation as Garmi Baker's mother. Poole is not related to Baker.

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