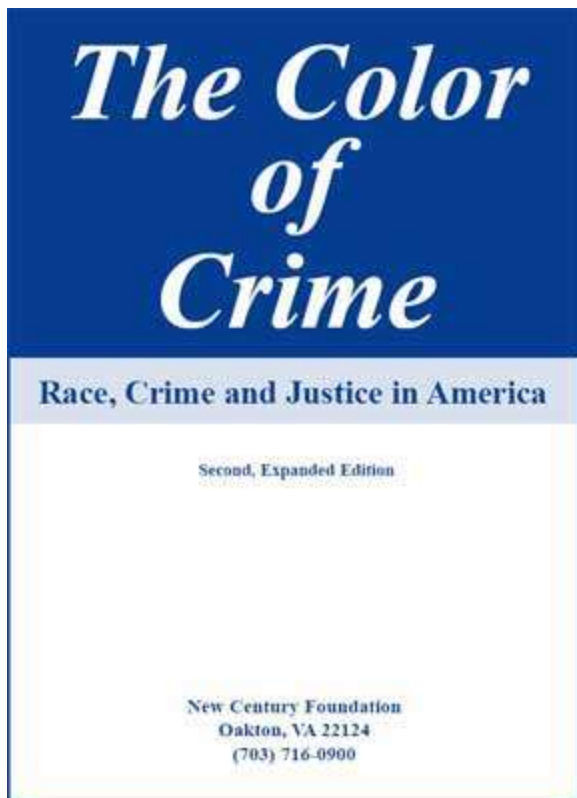


An Ugly Conspiracy of Silence

by **Walter Williams**

IF THERE'S TO BE RACIAL GOODWILL and harmony, at the minimum we must be willing to confront sometimes ugly truths. One of those truths has to do with interracial crime.

We all readily condemn highly publicized racial violence, and rightly so, such as last year's brutal murder of James Byrd by white supremacists in Jasper, Texas. However, there's little notice and condemnation of interracial crimes when whites are the victims.



Last June, Jared Taylor, president of New Century Foundation, in Oakton, Va., held a press conference at Washington's National Press Club to report on the foundation's recently released study, "The Color of Crime." Some of the study's findings about interracial crime were surprising, so much so that I did an independent verification of the numbers.

Since 1972, the U.S. Department of Justice has conducted a National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) to determine the frequency of certain crimes.

One category is interracial crimes. Its most recent publication (1997), "Criminal Victimization in the U.S.," reports on data collected in 1994. In that year, there were about 1,700,000 interracial crimes, of which 1,276,030 involved whites and blacks. In 90 percent of the cases, a white was the victim

and a black was the perpetrator, while in 10 percent of the cases it was the reverse.

Another finding of the NCVS report is that of the 2,025,464 violent crimes committed by blacks in 1994, 1,140,670 were against whites — that's slightly over 56 percent. Whites committed 5,114,692 violent crimes; 135,360, or 2.6 percent were against blacks.

In 1997, there were 2,336 whites charged with anti-black crimes and 718 blacks charged with anti-white crimes, so-called hate crimes. Although the absolute number of

white offenders was larger, the black rate per 100,000 of the population was greater, making blacks twice as likely to commit hate crimes.

Regardless of race, criminal violence is despicable and deserving of condemnation. But far more destructive are the official and unofficial attempts to mislead and conceal. Roughly 400 members of the major print and electronic media were invited to the press conference on "The Color of Crime." According to Taylor, several asked for advanced copies before they'd consider sending anyone. Only 14 people stayed for the briefing and only a couple reported on the study, most notably The Washington Times and C-Span. One reporter said that he'd like to write a story but he doubted he could get it by his editor.

If the facts were the other way around, everybody from The New York Times and President Clinton to the NAACP, Jesse Jackson and the Congressional Black Caucus would be shouting about it and demanding that something be done. Some might want to keep silent about the facts for fear that publicizing the true nature and magnitude of interracial crime might give, as I've been told, "aid and comfort to America's white racists."

To the contrary, silence is perhaps one of the most effective recruitment tools for racists. They can use our silence for proselytizing disaffected whites with demagoguery about how hate crimes are not important unless a black is the victim and how no one cares about blacks raping white women and assaulting white men.

Interracial crime has other devastating effects on racial relations. Whites are apprehensive of blacks, and blacks are offended at being the subjects of that apprehension. Whites are less willing to live in black neighborhoods. For the unthinking among us, these and other responses to racial disparities in crime translate into simple racism.

Multi-ethnic societies are inherently unstable, and how we handle matters of interracial crime is just one of the ways that we're contributing to that instability.