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Black Hate on Trial

An 8-Year-Old White Boy is Slain by a Black Man Spewing Racial Epithets – But The Suspect Will Not Be Charged with a Hate Crime

By Scott Rubush

WHEN IS A HATE CRIME not a hate crime? Perhaps when the victim is white and the perpetrator is black.



In April, Kevin Shifflett, an eight-year-old white boy playing in his great-grandparents' front yard in Alexandria, VA, was slashed to death in broad daylight by a knife-wielding black man screaming anti-white epithets.

From the beginning, the case was handled oddly. Authorities concealed the suspect's race, even though revealing this information might have helped catch the suspect sooner. When they could hide the truth no more, the authorities defended

their cover-up as an effort to keep racial tensions from boiling over.

The national media, which have been quick to give saturation coverage to hate crimes against blacks and homosexuals, have all but ignored the Shifflett case. The murder hasn't become fodder for the presidential debates. And Jesse Jackson and the NAACP certainly haven't discussed it much. Now, in the latest twist, it appears that the defendant will not even be charged with a hate crime.

The case has taken several strange turns recently. Earlier this month, authorities in Alexandria, Virginia indicted Gregory Devon Murphy after he had remained at large for more than two months. Then last week, Mr. Murphy attacked his defense lawyer during a court hearing. Murphy now must undergo mental examinations to determine if he is capable of standing trial.

Another curious twist came when federal authorities declined to press hate crime charges, instead deferring to Virginia's state courts.

But Alexandria Commonwealth's Attorney S. Randolph Sengel, a prosecutor in the case, told FrontPageMagazine.com that he is powerless to prosecute this case as a hate

crime. "There's no applicable hate crimes law in Virginia," he told FrontPageMagazine.com on Tuesday.

Those developments came on top of an already controversial handling of the case by authorities in Alexandria. In July — nearly three months after Shifflett's murder—law enforcement sources familiar with the case revealed the suspect's race to the Washington Times. The same sources also disclosed that Alexandria police had intentionally concealed the suspects race for the sake of racial sensitivity.

This cover-up followed a preponderance of evidence suggesting a racial motive behind the heinous April 19 stabbing. Authorities found a note in a hotel room where Mr. Murphy had stayed prior to the killing that read, "Kill them racist white kids," in mangled English. DNA evidence found in a taxi cab used to flee the scene matches Mr. Murphy's, and seven years earlier, Mr. Murphy was convicted of another racially charged attack, in which he assaulted a white man with a hammer.

Instead of denouncing the cover-up of a piece of information that could have led to the suspect's arrest, authorities defended the move. "What they did was proper," Alexandria City Council member Joyce Woodson told the Times. "We already live in a racially charged world."

Just as puzzling is the media blackout surrounding the case. Remember the media's rush to canonize Matthew Shepherd as a martyr of the gay rights movement two years ago? And who can forget the savage murder of James Byrd by white supremacists in Texas?

These murders served as haunting reminders of the inner beast that will always lurk in the minds of men—despite our entry into a brave new millennium of technology and progress. These barbaric acts rightfully earned the attention of the nation and its two major presidential candidates during the recent debates, and these murders should remind us of the razor-thin line that separates civilization from savagery.

The Shifflett murder is every bit as gruesome as these two cases. Yet, it has been treated differently.

Of course, a hate crime charge would make no difference in the fate of Mr. Murphy. If convicted, Mr. Murphy will likely receive the death penalty. If anything, the Shifflett case demonstrates that hate crime laws are superfluous.

But it also demonstrates that the left's fixation on hate crimes is more about politics than progress. By beating the hate crime drum, the captains of the grievance industry — Sharpton, Farrakhan, Jackson, and their supporters in government — can raise money and push sympathetic voters to the polls. The loss of a white life isn't as valuable to them for those purposes.

In fact, the Shifflett murder case shatters one of the main premises of the racial left—that whites have a monopoly on hatred. Blacks and whites are equally capable of acting like monsters.

Fortunately most Americans on both sides of the racial divide already understand this grim truth. Mainstream America seems eager to bridge the gap between races. But until the leaders of the erstwhile Civil Rights Movement begin speaking honestly about race—in particular, about the murder of Kevin Shifflett—the chasm will remain open.

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