

|      |                                                                                                                            |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| タイトル | Multiculturalism in America : Problems and Portrayals (JOINT RESEARCHES : Multiculturalism in Western Countries and Japan) |
| 著者   | O'Brien, Patrick                                                                                                           |
| 引用   | 北海学園大学人文論集, 18: 123-183                                                                                                    |
| 発行日  | 2001-03-31                                                                                                                 |

# Multiculturalism in America: Problems and Portrayals

Patrick O'Brien

*Multiculturalism grew rapidly in the 1980s and early 1990s by directing itself in simple terms against an evil widely resented, the narrowness of the prevailing culture of the United States.*

David Hollinger<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

Multiculturalism in America can be seen as a strategy to topple the group that has held power longest and shaped culture and society to the greatest degree: White American males. An alliance of minorities has been assembled and for over three decades they have worked to undermine White male power and substitute it with their own. From the Black civil rights movement born of the 1950s to women's liberation movements/feminism to the current push for "hate crimes" laws (*de facto*, crimes committed by Whites against minority members), a wide range of tactics has been employed in this "long march." This massive social movement encompasses broad arenas of American life — from the legal field, to journalism, education (at all levels), immigration laws, and more.

One of the most visible aspects of this multicultural campaign has come in popular culture: how images are constructed and propagated to the great masses. The first part of this essay will examine a pillar of pop culture images — the filmic portrayal of White American males

over the last few decades of the twentieth century. Specifically, I will use the trope of airline pilot to interrogate the status of the image of White males.

In the next two sections of this long essay, I will change both focus and approach. From a look at mainstream visual images of White males in America, I will move out to the middle of the Pacific Ocean, to the far reaches of America's nominal boundaries. Multiculturalism in Hawaii will be the topic of the second part of my essay, and I will insert myself and my own experiences there into my analysis. See it as "history from below," if you will.

In the final section I will explore race relations in multicultural America, always a contentious set of topics in these times of culture wars. Taken as a whole, I hope these three approaches may provide a glimpse into the nature of multiculturalism in America today, some of the problems associated with that movement, and some possible insights into where we may as a nation be headed in the future.

### **White Men Crash and Burn: The Falling Image of the White American Male**

Before addressing the issue of White male images in American cinema and on television, I would, as a critic of American multiculturalism, like to offer a range of critiques of that movement, using such prominent authors as Samuel Huntington, David Hollinger, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Nathaniel Glazer and others.

In an attempt to interpret "the evolution of global politics after the Cold War. . . . to present a framework, a paradigm, for viewing global politics that will be meaningful to scholars and useful to policymakers,"

Samuel Huntington focused on the renewed importance of culture and identity in a world newly freed of Cold War ideologies:

In the post-Cold War world flags count and so do other symbols of cultural identity, including crosses, crescents, and even head coverings, because culture counts, and cultural identity is what is most meaningful to most people. People are discovering new but often old identities and marching under new but often old flags which lead to wars with new but often old enemies.

One grim *Weltanschauung* for this new era was well expressed by the Venetian nationalist demagogue in Michael Dibdin's novel, *Dead Lagoon*: "There can be no true friends without true enemies. Unless we hate what we are not we cannot love what we are. These are the old truths we are painfully rediscovering after a century and more of sentimental cant. Those who deny them deny their family, their heritage, their culture, their birthright, their very selves! They will not lightly be forgiven." The unfortunate truth in these old truths cannot be ignored by statesmen and scholars. For peoples seeking identity and reinventing ethnicity, enemies are essential . . . We know who we are only when we know who we are not and often only when we know whom we are against.<sup>2</sup>

In the ongoing attempt to construct identity, many minority groups in the United States, new and old, have turned toward describing who they are in terms of whom they are against. Given the tradition power of White males over these groups, it is understandable why they resist that domination. Still, as Berkeley intellectual historian David Hollinger notes, this may not be enough to construct a workable identity. "Multiculturalism is a prodigious movement, but its limitations are increasingly apparent. It has not provided an orientation toward cultural diversity strong enough to process the current conflicts and

convergences that make the problem of boundaries more acute than ever . . . .”<sup>3</sup>

Arthur Schlesinger, author of the much-discussed *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society*, worries that like its great neighbor to the north, the United States is susceptible to the forces of disintegration, the main impulse of which is a return toward ethnic and racial identities. “A cult of ethnicity has arisen,” he writes, “both among non-Anglo whites and among nonwhite minorities to denounce the idea of a melting pot, to challenge the concept of ‘one people,’ and to protect, promote, and perpetuate separate ethnic and racial communities.”<sup>4</sup>

While I agree with Schlesinger’s emphasis on the desire of non-Whites to preserve and treasure their own identities, I believe he overstates the case for non-Anglo separatism, for an increasingly monolithic White, “Eurocentric” bloc has emerged since the rise of multiculturalism.<sup>5</sup> Still, Schlesinger’s basic argument deserves our attention: “The new ethnic gospel rejects the unifying vision of individuals from all nations melted into a new race. Its underlying philosophy is that America is not a nation of individuals at all but a nation of groups, that ethnicity is the defining experience for most Americans . . . .”<sup>6</sup> In the sections to follow in this paper, I will illustrate how these ethnic — and racial — tensions have increased in recent years.

Other observers of the American scene have broadened the scope of multiculturalism, including non-majority groups that Schlesinger, for one, leaves out. Nathan Glazer, principal author of the classic *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City*, for example, who was surprised by the rise of racial politics in the 1960s, now believes that “multiculturalism in education . . . has, in a word, won.” He too downplays the divisions among

European-derived groups but adds two other important categories, noting that “multiculturalism is indifferent to the variety of ethnic groups of European origin but has come to encompass women and gays and lesbians . . . . Women’s studies is part of multiculturalism, so large a part that it often outweighs all the rest.”<sup>7</sup>

In essence, then, I envision of critique of multiculturalism as a movement whose intent is to dethrone the reigning leaders of Western culture: White males. Those aligned against this perceived hegemon would include women, African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanics, and homosexuals. While later I will explore how these two often antagonist blocs interact in daily life in America, I will first explore how their images have been represented in those quintessential media of popular culture, film and television.

### **Film Theory and the Power of Imagery**

Stanley Rothman, as director of a large study on leadership and social change in America, has been associated with a number of books which examine the impact media has had on American culture. In *Hollywood’s America: Social and Political Themes in Motion Pictures*, Stanley Rothman is joined by Stephen Powers and David J. Rothman in a work that stresses that “Hollywood’s creative leadership impacts the larger society even as it is influenced by that society.” The authors, in noting that “films are made by a relatively small number of people, who . . . tend to share a common outlook,” argue that “over time, motion pictures have had an undeniable impact on the beliefs, lifestyles, and action of Americans.” By way of explanation, they write:

There is little reason to believe that a single film or even group of films significantly influences audiences' views over the long haul. However, if large numbers of motion pictures portray businessmen or Jews as thieves, blacks as violent or stupid, women as weak or clinging, and the military as corrupt, as a matter of course, it is reasonable to believe that such presentations will affect audiences to a significant extent . . .<sup>8</sup>

Margaret Miles, author of *Seeing and Believing: Religion and Values in the Movies*, expands on the theme that the power of movies comes from their repetition of an image:

No one film has iconic power, but the recurrence of similar images *across* films weaves those images into the fabric of the common life of American society, influencing everything from clothing styles to accepted and expected behavior. Filmic conventions, of which most spectators are never consciously aware, cumulatively affect Americans' self-esteem, expectations, attitudes, and behavior in relationships . . . . The answer to my question concerning the power of film, then, is that, to a greater or lesser extent, "we [as a society] are what we look upon and what we delight in," or, in less elegant language, what you see is what you get. But we "get" (the cultural message, as Roland Barthes said), or *are*, what we see not once but repeatedly. We get, at a subliminal and hence utterly effective level, not the narrative but the conventions of Hollywood film.<sup>9</sup>

Film scholar Robert Sklar has explored the history of the rise of cinema in America and has examined the growing power of movies to influence society. In *Movie-Made America: A Cultural History of American Movies*, he notes that by the late 1930s, Hollywood's ascendancy in this regard was already widely recognized. Many academics and literary types regarded moviemakers with "respect, awe and even envy, as the possessors of the power to create the nation's myths and dreams." Scholars and writers of the day acknowledged that "movies

had taken over cultural functions they themselves had exercised, or aspired to, in the past," a theme upon which Sklar expands:

In traditional American society the task of describing the world and communicating that vision to its members had belonged, with different emphasis at different times, to the clergy, political statesmen, educators, businessmen, essayists, poets and novelists. There had never been a totally uniform cultural expression in the United States, there had always been schisms and struggles, alternatives and counterviews, but in general the combatants had come from similar ethnic and class backgrounds and had utilized the same means — the written and spoken word. Now for the first time power to influence the culture had been grasped by a group of men whose origins and whose means were different.<sup>10</sup>

This has been an important achievement because of the great impact film in general has had on modern American culture. Writing in 1975, Sklar laments the lack of cultural studies concerning the effects of film. Setting out to effect a remedy, he composed "a single volume covering the cultural history of American movies from the 1890s to the present, to provide a broad framework for understanding their significance." Sklar stresses the impact film has had: "It is important to begin with a recognition that movies have historically been and still remain vital components in the network of cultural communication, and the nature of their content and control helps to shape the character and direction of American culture as a whole."<sup>11</sup>

Later film critics share Sklar's desire to elevate the status of film to the same level of cultural importance as literature. For example, David Desser and Lester Friedman make the case that film deserves recognition and respect as a social construct: "Like a generation of literary critics, we also seek to situate a group of texts within a stream of social, cultural, historical and ethnic factors. Our subject, however,

is film instead of literature, and our focus is filmmakers instead of writers.”<sup>12</sup>

As important as these film experts consider film to be, there may be a yet more influential visual medium today: television. Two television scholars, for example, have written about the power of this medium that supplanted film after World War II:

[T]elevision's penetration was to be all-encompassing, its influence enormous. The new medium was unprecedented in its "sheer mass, in its rapid infiltration of everyday American life, and in the fact that its images . . . have been transmitted, year after year into the consciousness of hundreds of millions of viewers." . . . Unlike feature films with their one-time exposure, television series have the unique characteristic of continuity, offering viewers a sense of familiarity and comfort through the ongoing characters whom they welcome, week after week, into their homes, their lives, and their thoughts . . . .

Even the made-for-TV movie, which like the cinematic feature is initially a one-time viewing event, has far greater exposure than the theatrical release; television movies immediately reach a much larger audience, and continue to do so for many years afterward through repeat broadcasts and syndication. Thus they have greater short-term and long-term opportunity to affect audiences.<sup>13</sup>

For these reasons, I will pay special attention to the patterns associated with portrayals of the two sides in today's multicultural struggle: White males vs. Women, Blacks, etc. In order to establish the contrast between the images of White males when they were more clearly in hegemonic control, versus today, I will begin with traditional images that support the power and privileged position of those White males. By looking at one category of the elite, I hope to show how it functions as a metaphor for who controls American culture. While doctors, lawyers, and soldiers have long functioned as real and symbolic

categories of leaders, I will focus here on the image of the White male as pilot; the airplane will be a metaphor for America, the pilot its leader. The ups and downs associated with his image, then, will give us clues as to where the White male stands today, and where those who create these images wish him to stand.

## **White Men at the Yoke: Tradition Images**

### **Airport**

This 1970 classic starring Burt Lancaster, Dean Martin, Jean Seberg, Jacqueline Bisset, George Kennedy, Helen Hayes and others is replete with traditional stereotypes, from the playboy pilot with his stewardess lover to the gruff cigar-smoking mechanic who drives a modern jetliner the way his grandfather would have driven a team of horses. With the possible exception of the pro-choice conversation between the pilot and his pregnant lover, this film everywhere reifies roles that had been traditional in America for decades and more. Thus, I use this as an example of a movie that reinforces rather than challenges or undermines the status quo.

The images of White men and flying machines have been intertwined ever since Wilbur and Orville Wright successfully flew their plane from the sand dunes of Kittyhawk, North Carolina. Later, two world wars brought tens of thousands of men into the cockpit, and these real-life events were duly portrayed in filmic renditions. From John Wayne as a fighter pilot in first *Flying Tigers* (1942), then *Flying Leathernecks* (1951), to Gregory Peck as a World War II bomber pilot in *Twelve O'Clock High* (1949), to the hero test pilots in *The Right Stuff* (1983), to the mischievous tops guns in *Top Gun* (1986), to the men who

went to the stars in *Apollo 13* (1995), Hollywood films have accurately cast White men in the roles real White men have actually performed.<sup>14</sup>

Returning to the 1970 *Airport*, the drama is established when a Trans Global 707 lands at Chicago's Lincoln Airport and promptly gets stuck in the snow on a taxiway, thus blocking the runway. Lancaster stars as the harried airport manager Mel, whose job it is to keep the runways in operation. Conveniently, Mel has contact with (and a sympathetic ear from) beautiful (and available) Tanya (Jean Seberg), a representative from Trans Global Airlines. Mel's brother-in-law is Capt. Verne Martin, the rakish pilot of a flight bound for Rome. In keeping with the spirit of the times, the married Martin has two romantic scenes with a young stewardess whom he has gotten pregnant. (Martin's wife is good natured about her husband's philandering; when Martin offers to buy her white gloves in Rome but gets the size wrong, she teases, "No *I'm* the one that wears seven-and-a-half.") This sexual license given airline pilots is one not normally afforded most respectable members of society at the time.

In the cockpit, Capt. Anson Harris and check-pilot Martin are two handsome and reliable White men, joined by a third White male, the young flight engineer. The captains' appearance and status are underlined by their introductory scene together where they are shown in a brightly lit hangar, the camera focusing exclusively on them while they exchange manly banter and compliment each other on their stylish captain's uniforms.

Once aloft, the action begins. A mentally disturbed passenger explodes a bomb in the rear lavatory, ripping a hole in the fuselage. From here on, the White male pilots are at their finest. In the end, they safely land the crippled plane, and Capt. Martin rushes back to comfort his girlfriend, who has been injured in the blast. This scene

emphasizes the stereotype that women are weak and helpless, while men are strong and protective. This image is reinforced consistently in the film.

### ***Freefall: Flight 174***

The movie opens with two White men in the cockpit of a modern jetliner. Suddenly, warning lights go on, the engines stop, and the plane enters into a vertical dive from which it will not recover. Fortunately, it turns out to be only a flight simulation, though, as the credits tell us, this scenario was “based on an actual event that occurred on July 23, 1983.” This event was the fuel starvation of a new Boeing 767 jet caused by errors in the calculations regarding metric and English units of measure. The plane departed Dorval Airport in Montreal without sufficient fuel to reach its intended destination, Edmonton, Alberta. In fact, it turned out that the plane lacked enough fuel to reach even Winnipeg Airport, its chosen emergency landing site. Both engines flamed out at cruising altitude, and the pilots were faced with the task of flying and landing a powerless jetliner weighing one hundred and fifty tons. What is of interest here is the portrayal of the actors involved in this true incident.

Just as in the flight simulation, both pilots aboard Flight 174 are White males. In fact, all pilots that appear in this movie are White males, showing that the director did not take liberties with changing the racial/gender identities of the actual pilots. In addition, all flight attendants are White females, further bolstering the impression that this is not a multicultural crew. One flight attendant, however, is male, and true to rumor/received wisdom, he may be gay.<sup>15</sup>

In *Freefall*, the White male pilots are portrayed as highly competent professionals. Captain Bob Pearson (William Devane), in addi-

tion, has special skills as a sailplane pilot, a fortuitous fact when it comes to gliding a powerless jetliner. The co-pilot, though preoccupied with his wife's serious medical condition, remains cool, figuring fuel loads, course settings, etc. Finally, the airline's top mechanic, another White male, happens to be aboard, and he is shown as a man very knowledgeable about his trade. This threesome represents the best of White male talent.

The extent of the crisis becomes clear as the plane glides toward Winnipeg's main airport. Based on hand calculations, the co-pilot determines that they cannot reach the safety of the long runways there. Remembering an old military field between the airport in Winnipeg and their present position, the co-pilot suggests seeking that out as an alternative landing spot. With no other choice, the pilot takes his suggestion. As they pass over Lake Winnipeg, they search feverishly for sight of the airfield. Failing to find it, they consider a highly dangerous water landing, rather than risk coming down somewhere with the city limits of Winnipeg.

At the last moment, the co-pilot sees the abandoned airfield. Captain Pearson's sailplane skills become even more crucial here as he applies a sailplane technique known as "side slipping" to bring his massive jet in line with the runway; they obviously will have only one chance at a landing attempt. Dropping much faster than the optimum rate, the captain manages to line up with the runway but just as he is about to touch down, he sees people and cars on the abandoned runway. They in turn see (but do not hear) the powerless plane and scramble to clear the way. Touching down hard, the plane just misses two boys on bicycles. Because the front landing gear never locked properly, the nose of the plane slams heavily on the runway. At high speed, the plane rockets down the runway, no power available for reverse thrust

to slow the plane. The pilots frantically apply the brakes. A massive shower of sparks trails from the dragging nose. And now the end of the runway looms large.

With little distance to spare, the pilots manage to halt the plane, but a fire has erupted under the cockpit. While a competent cabin crew evacuates the back of the plane, the two pilots attempt to extinguish the fire. Failing, they too escape to the rear of the plane. In the end, there are no fatalities; the White male pilots have achieved a near miracle, as is evidenced by the fact that simulator crews are not able to land a plane under identical conditions. So, we have here a case where in fact two White males succeeded in saving their passengers and crew. What is germane to this paper, however, is the fact that the film portrayal of this true event is accurate and wholly positive. This will not be so in the other four films I examine later.

The negative image of the weak White male pilot is by no means a monolithic one. In addition to *Airport* and *Freefall*, we can still find positive images. For example, in *Air Force One* (1997), major film star Harrison Ford appears as the President of the United States. Having just cemented a ground-breaking agreement for peace in the former Soviet Union, he heads back home aboard the presidential plane. His trip, though, is interrupted by a terrorist hijacking. There is plenty of suspense and action to follow, but the key point here is that all the pilots are portrayed positively; and they are White males, an image that corresponds to the general case in both commercial and military flying in the United States.<sup>16</sup>

The next four movies (including made-for-TV movies) all share one theme: they begin with the traditional image of the White male pilot, then dispatch him one way or another. How they do this, what it may

represent, and who assumes the vacant leadership role will be the next section of this essay.

### ***Six Days Seven Nights***

This Hollywood film stars Harrison Ford and Anne Heche as an ill-matched pair stranded on a remote South Pacific island. Ford plays Quinn Harris, an independent, hard-drinking pilot whose social skills are not quite fit for the cosmopolitan Manhattan fashion magazine editor Robin Monroe (Heche). When she needs to connect to a flight on another island, though, only Harris is available. Taking off into the evening sky, the forecast is good and it should be a smooth flight. Into their flight, however, a tropical thunderstorm explodes, putting the lives of pilot and passenger in jeopardy. With his radio knocked out, Harris is forced to land his plane on a stretch of beach on a deserted island. Only sporadic lightning illuminates his way.

Once on the island, this love-comedy unfolds in a predictable, though pleasing way. Harris maintains the rough exterior and manly physical skills of someone of his rank, while Monroe remains femininely attractive despite her sharp barbs directed at Harris.

I have included this film because of the role reversal at the end of the movie. Chased by modern pirates, Harris is wounded by a shell fired from the pirate ship. He manages to take off in his patched-up plane but he soon lapses into unconsciousness from loss of blood. Now it is up to city girl Monroe to take over. Recalling the few instructions Harris was able to give her, she makes a successful, though none-too-beautiful landing in the lagoon in front of her resort hotel. Standing in isolation, this scene can hardly be said to merit attention. Paired with other images, however, a pattern emerges.

### **Turbulence**

Ray Liotta stars as a psychopathic serial killer in this airborne suspense thriller. Appearing as prisoner Ryan Weaver, he is taken in handcuffs aboard a 747 bound for Los Angeles. Flight attendant Teri Halloran (Lauren Holly) assumed it would be a relaxing holiday flight, given the paucity of Christmas Eve travelers aboard. She and another attractive blonde are the flight attendants for this flight. Guarded by four Federal marshals sit their most dangerous passengers for the trip, Weaver and his fellow prisoner Stubbs.

As their journey begins, the flight crew is warned of severe weather ahead. The first tremors of this storm foreshadow far more dangerous tremors to come. In the cockpit are two White males, standard issue for commercial aviation in the United States. The captain, however, is not long for this world, as Stubbs, in a daring and bloody escape attempt, kills one of the marshals, igniting a murderous gun battle in which Stubbs, the other marshals and the pilot are killed. Serial killer Ryan Weaver is now free, and there is no one there to stop him. He quickly dispatches Teri's co-worker, then makes for the cockpit, where he kills the co-pilot.

Stalked by Weaver, Teri locks herself in the cockpit, where she learns how to use the two-way radio. She is able to establish contact with a passing 747 captain who calmly walks her through the intricacies of keeping a jumbo jet aloft. Of course, Weaver is of no help. He lures her out of the safety of the cockpit once, but she manages to escape and find her way back. Still, she is not out of the woods: a killer storm full of deadly turbulence lies directly in her path. Because the auto pilot cannot counter the forces of the storm, the plane pitches, dives, and rolls wildly. Weaver only makes matters worse by disabling the automatic landing system, by which time Teri has had enough: she

kills Weaver with one bullet through the forehead.

The question is, can Teri land a 747 on her first try? Despite the challenges in front of her — such as hitting the top of a hotel, where she picks up a Ford truck on her landing gear — Teri maintains her composure and brings the hulking plane in for a safe landing. Once again, the White male pilots have been unable to maintain control, and a woman has had to step in.

### ***Free Fall***

This 1998 made-for-TV drama stars former Charlie's Angel Jaclyn Smith as National Transit Safety Board member Renee Brennan. The movie opens with a stunning sequence of an airliner crash. Children are playing in the aisles of the plane, two blonde flight attendants cheerfully go about their business, and two handsome White males pilot the plane. Suddenly, there is a rudder malfunction warning and soon the plane is out of control. The pilots struggle to bring the plane out of its dive but they fail. Computer-generated graphics blended with scenes from inside the plane provide a chilling enactment of a plane disintegrating as it cuts through forests and plows into the ground. No one survives.

Brennan is called in to investigate the crash, one that is eerily reminiscent of one she investigated one year prior. That Seattle crash involved the same airline: Trans Regional Airlines. Brennan is contacted by the saboteur responsible for this latest crash, and soon he causes another Trans Regional plane to crash into San Francisco Bay, then another as it heads for Washington, D.C. Her new boyfriend was on that plane, but he was helpless to do anything as they plummeted to the ground. (In neither of these crashes are the pilots shown.)

Finally, Brennan figures out the saboteur's motives and predicts the next means of bringing down a loaded jetliner. When Trans Regional takes to the skies again, a plane is quickly stricken with an electrical failure, and the pilots lose control. Anticipating the problem, Brennan reaches them by radio from the air traffic control tower and tells them what to do. Paralyzed by fear, the two seasoned White male pilots do nothing. Without Brennan's firm prodding and instructions, they surely would have crashed. But now Brennan is in control.

In the climactic final segment, Brennan and her FBI counterparts believe the saboteur has died, so they let down their guard and board a flight back to D.C. Guess which airline? It is Trans Regional again. This time the saboteur has killed a pilot in the parking lot and used his uniform to sneak aboard the soon-to-depart airliner. Once in the cockpit, he kills both pilots — both White males, helpless to resist. Next, he begins his unapproved take-off roll, while Brennan and the other passengers hurriedly close the door of the plane.

Thinking quickly, Brennan grabs a penknife and begins to remove various circuit breakers from the plane's electronics bay. Knowing just which circuits to remove, she deprives the pilot of control of the plane. The two White male FBI agents take this opportunity to break into the cockpit, whence a gun battle ensues. The saboteur pilot is mortally wounded, while the only FBI agent to have flying skills is rendered helpless. No one can fly the plane. No White male is of any use.

Brennan, again taking control, rushes into the captain's seat and pulls the plane out of its dive. Having never flown or landed a plane before, she nevertheless accepts the challenge. With a White male FBI agent sitting next to her telling her how little he can help beyond giving her verbal encouragement, she concentrates on the approaching runway

and brings the plane in for a perfect landing. Once more: White males zero, White females everything.

### ***Killing Moon***

This TV movie is based in the United States. The first scene shows the Molokai, Hawaii, airport, where two White men are preparing to board an inter-island flight. One of them feels weak, then begins to bleed from his nose and eyes. Within minutes he has lost consciousness and dies. His partner conceals the body and boards the plane. Once aloft, however, this passenger begins to show the same symptoms that had so recently killed his accomplice. Fortunately, there is a doctor aboard, Japanese-American Dr. Yamada. Unfortunately, the doctor cannot save the dying passenger, whose unusual death naturally arouses the concerns of crew and fellow passengers.

In the cockpit are the two stock pilots: competent White males. The flight attendant is an Asian America woman. There is an obnoxious White businessman, his female employees, a young White girl, two young White men, and a smattering of other passengers. And there is Lt. Dave Thatcher, a naval intelligence officer. His identity is not so easily established as he is clearly not Northern European (clearly no military “Aryan”).

Lieutenant Thatcher, along with Dr. Yamada, assumes control of the crisis. Dr. Yamada’s authority is compromised by the fact that he is a coroner, while Lt. Thatcher — for as yet unexplained reasons — knows a lot about viruses and death. Because of the consensus that the death of the passenger was caused by a contagious virus, the plane is diverted from its Honolulu destination and is vectored toward Glen Ord Air Force Base north of Los Angeles.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the (fictional) National Security Commission (NSC) are alerted and have set up a quarantine center at a secret base. Scientist for the CDC is a beautiful young blonde, Dr. Laura Chadwick. Frank Conroy (Daniel Baldwin) is running the operation for the NSC. Chadwick is quickly set up as a positive figure, while Conroy is from the start portrayed as sinister, overbearing, and rude. For example, when he finds out that the virus aboard the plane may be a rare chemical weapon, he relishes the opportunity to acquire it for his project. His only interest in landing the plane safely is this. Chadwick, meanwhile, was summoned by mistake and she cannot understand the activity taking place.

Back on the plane, the situation deteriorates. The captain has taken ill and soon dies. The co-pilot also shows signs of weakening, so Dr. Yamada asks the passengers if any of them has ever flown an airplane. A young blonde admits she has, but only a single-engine Cessna. Still, that is more than other passengers can say, so she is given a crash course in flying a Boeing 737 by the dying co-pilot and assumes her position in the captain's seat.

Back in the cabin, tensions rise. One more White male — a hemophiliac — has died from the mysterious disease. Dr. Yamada and Lt. Thatcher surmise that the medicine intended for a hemophiliac, Taxinol, would protect a healthy person from the virus, so they retrieve extra vials of it from the dead man's bag in the cargo hold. Because there are not enough vials for all the passengers, only the sick will automatically receive treatment; the rest must draw straws.

Here, the character of the obnoxious businessman is shown most clearly. Earlier, he had erupted when he heard of the plan to divert to California and he abandoned one of his employees because she showed signs of catching the virus. His tirades against other passengers and

the flight attendant were ongoing. At one point, however, a member of the multicultural caste challenged him and took control. The diminutive Asian America flight attendant stood up to the much larger White male and showed that she outranked him. Now that the viles of antidote are available, he has a chance to draw a long straw and get a vile for himself. Unfortunately, he draws a short straw. Not willing to leave his life in the hands of fate, he crassly badgers a passenger who has a vile to sell it to him. The bidding price soon rises to \$100,000, then \$250,000. In the end, however, the passenger donates the medicine to an older man.

Lt. Thatcher — Dave — remains a mystery character. His military bearing and knowledge of germ warfare suggest some degree of complicity in this biological crisis, leading Dr. Yamada to challenge him to reveal why he knows so much. The naval intelligence officer is elusive and escapes to one of the galleys. Dr. Yamada follows because he is suspicious. The ensuing dialogue cements this movie's multicultural bearings. When asked if this is some kind of biological military experiment gone wrong, the lieutenant replies:

I know all about Taxinol because my lover used it to stop his bleeding when his lungs were covered with Karposia's Lesions. I'm probably not getting sick because I'm on so many protease inhibitors the bubonic plague couldn't survive my system. I know all about viruses because I've got one inside me, slowly killing me.

Dave is one of the multicultural good guys. Meanwhile, another White male passenger dies, as does a White female, the only woman to die from the virus. Another small multicultural touch comes with the only reference to prayer throughout the whole ordeal. Though Americans

are overwhelmingly Christian, the prayer a young passenger recites is a Native American one.

Back at the NSC facility, Conroy has changed plans. Now, rather than seeking to obtain a sample of the virus, he will cover up his earlier efforts to secretly obtain samples. Hearing his superior's suggestion, he asks, "Plane crash?" to which the boss coolly replies, "It's extreme. Bring 'em down in the ocean. Do what you have to do. This was your baby — put it to bed." To carry out this order, he gives false coordinates to the woman flying the plane. Now clear of the coast and nearing mountains on the West Coast, the warning proximity alarm blares in the cockpit, and the plane heads into the mountains. The air traffic control screen back at the NSC base shows the plane entering the mountains, then disappearing from the screen. Horrified, Dr. Chadwick realizes that the NSC men never intended for the plane to land safely; it has been deliberately crashed.

Suddenly, a blip reappears on the screen, and Dr. Chadwick and the air traffic controller realize the plane has not crashed after all. Taking advantage of Conroy's absence, Dr. Chadwick convinces the air traffic controller to help save the plane. This man, by the way, has features that could be interpreted as Black. Though he has thinning straight hair, his facial structure and dark features recall that of possibly a mulatto. In any case, he is rotund and friendly, not at all a threatening, cold-blooded Aryan figure like Conroy or his NSC boss.

Recruited to the cause, the air traffic controller joins blonde Dr. Chadwick in helping the blonde woman bring the plane in for a safe landing, the fourth woman in these movies to do so. Once the plane has landed, the passengers are understandable elated, save for one: the businessman. Fidgeting about, he discovers a dollop of blood in his ear. Within seconds he is in his death throes. The camera slowly

zooms in on his demise. Another White male has died.

I am not arguing that there are no longer any such positive and accurate portrayals of White men as pilots, for as I have shown, there are. Rather, I am seeking to interrogate those movies that do the opposite, that show a negative and largely fictional view of the White male pilot. That I have identified a pattern suggests that popular culture is an avenue proponents of multiculturalism have chosen as a means to imagine their desired new world. If so, the status of the White male will not be what it has been in the past.

## **Part Two — Multiculturalism in Hawaii: A Perspective**

In this section I abandon the pose of objectivity and provide a personal story regarding multiculturalism. Much of my focus will be on White-Hawaiian animosity. During my three years in Hawaii, I cannot recall even one incident where Whites attacked non-Whites in Hawaii. Rather, the following headline was much more representative of what I saw and experienced there:

### **Jury acquits in tourist beating**

A Californian attacked here on Halloween is 'speechless' at the trial result

Under this front-page headline is a picture of Jay Waller in a hospital bed, tubes running down his throat, his eyes and face black and swollen from his injuries. The caption reads: "Jay Waller lies in a coma after a beating. He suffered multiple facial fractures, a crushed forehead and brain injuries. His orbital sinus exploded when his right eyeball was forced into his head." What was happening in paradise?

I lived in Hawaii from July 1995 until March 1998. I could have been Jay Waller, a White male from the mainland now in Hawaii. My

experience in Hawaii has, I believe, allowed me to understand why this happened to Jay Waller and to other White males, and why it has gone unreported in the national press. All is not well in paradise. Since at least the 1960s, there has been a simmering backlash against the White presence that has dominated Hawaii since the second half of the nineteenth century. The historical grievances against Whites are real, but in this second section I would like to explore how these grievances are now playing themselves out within the greater national context of multiculturalism.

### **My Story: Introduction**

I grew up in a small New England-style town along the Pennsylvania-New York border, an area that is still overwhelmingly White. My college years at Fordham University in the Bronx were, not surprisingly, a culture shock, but I adapted. Thus, when I went to Tokyo in 1985, I was prepared for more cultural variety. Then, after six years in Japan, I returned home and attended Cornell University, which was about an hour north of my hometown. I earned my M.A. in Asian Studies, after which I lived in Washington, D.C., returned to Japan for a half year, went back to America and lived in Atlanta for the rest of that year, then travelled on the West Coast of the United States. Since leaving high school and my home town in 1980, I had seen a bit of the country and of the world at large.

Still, I was unprepared for what Hawaii had in store for me, largely because I had internalized the assumptions most of us Americans on the mainland have about Hawaii, beginning with the fiction that it is "part of" the United States. There is no doubt that politically it is. Economically, there are strong links to America. The American military

still occupies Pearl Harbor and many other parts of Hawaii. Signs are in English, supermarkets sell American food, and subdivisions look like those in Southern California. But does that make it part of America?

Perhaps that is too existential a question. Rather than consider whether it is part of the United States, let us consider the nature of the multicultural society in Hawaii ca. 1995. There may be a larger message in that story which could apply to the increasingly multicultural society of the mainland. After all, just last year in California, according to official Census records, Whites became a minority. Other parts of America are projected to do so too by the year 2050. An investigation of what such a society might be like based on an early test case may be of interest and of use.

### **First Experiences in Hawaii**

On the mainland, there are certainly divisions, the most urgent of which, perhaps after universal ones like male/female or young/old, is the Black/White split. There are also categories such as Asian American, Pacific Islander, Native American, and Hispanic, all of which are enshrined in official government statistics. Hawaii, however, divides itself most fundamentally in this way: There are "locals," anyone living there who has Pacific Island or Asian blood, and there are "haole," those we conventionally consider White. Of course there are a few liminal cases, cases which are more difficult to classify, but I will leave those for later consideration.

When I arrived in Honolulu I was looking forward to yet another new start in life, this time as a graduate student in American Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa (U.H.). It was hotter and drier than I had expected but pleasant nonetheless. With a month to go

before classes started, I explored the city and found a house not far from the Kahala Mall, which is close to the Waialae Country Club, site of the Sony Hawaiian Open. It all seemed friendly enough.

I grew up on the mainland aware of the antagonisms between Blacks and Whites, but of the Asians and Asian Americans I had met in America, I had never found any great animosity, let alone threats to myself, a White male. Living and travelling in Asia for six years certainly taught me the divisions between Asians and Whites, such as the *Nihonjin/gaijin* split found in Japan, but in all my time in Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Thailand, I had never once been threatened, let alone attacked. Thus, I had no reflexive reaction to be on guard in the presence of Asians, nor did I consider that locals in Hawaii harbored ill will against me, personally or collectively. I was quickly to learn otherwise.

For starters, there was a general unfriendliness from the locals toward me on a daily basis, particularly on the campus of U.H. It was nothing debilitating, so I went about my business, which in my case was taking graduate courses in American Studies. Ironically, our department and our field is very much concerned with "race and gender," the twin pillars of multiculturalism, so as I learned in the classroom about the history of White male privilege and oppression, I learned outside the class that I was a second-class citizen. This produced a bit of cognitive dissonance, to say the least.

With my six years of living in Japan, my competence in the language of that country, and my master's degree in Asian Studies, I had applied to the Ph.D. program in American Studies with the intent to compare and contrast the Jewish American experience with that of Asian Americans. (I am, for the record, Christian on both sides of my family.) Yet in my first semester at U.H. "classmates of color" and/

or women were vocally opposed to yet another White male writing the history of Asian peoples, so lacking any support from faculty, I dropped the Asian part. No one seemed concerned with the Jewish side of the equation, however; when I left some three years later, some graduate student classmates still assumed I was Jewish. I thought, “Patrick O’Brien Jewish?” I could hardly believe it, but then again, such distinctions are often lost far out in the Pacific.

My next big educational step came when I learned of the name Haunani Kay Trask, a part-Hawaiian former faculty member in my department, and now head of the Center for Hawaiian Studies at Manoa. To give an idea of her views — and how they reflect the local/“haole” split in Hawaii, I quote from the very first lines of her book *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai’i*: “Despite American political and territorial control of Hawai’i since 1898, Hawaiians are not Americans.”<sup>17</sup> Her story seems emblematic of that of many in the multicultural movement. To learn her story, then, is to see the possible future of a multicultural America.

My introduction to Prof. Trask came in the wake of a September 1990 controversy that was still sending reverberations through the campus when I arrived. It seems that one Joey Carter, a “haole” from Louisiana (I will drop the scare quotes from now on and simply italicize the word as *haole*), published a letter in the school newspaper, where he complained that he had been chased and beaten by a group of locals simply because of his race. He called for an end to such “*haole* bashing.” Further, he argued that “racism is not an exclusively white endeavor” and that the use of the term “*haole*” is akin to the way “nigger” was used in Louisiana in his childhood. Trask’s response was instructive.

She argued in the same school paper that Carter was White and therefore *haole* and always would be. Further, she justified the attack on Carter by saying that given the historical relations between *haole* and peoples of color, the hostility experienced by Carter was not *haole* bashing but “smart political sense honed by our historical wounding at the hands of the *haole*.” Trask finished her article by saying, “Hawaiians would certainly benefit from one less *haole* in our land. In fact, United Airlines has dozens of flights to the U.S. continent every day, Mr. Carter. Why don’t you take one?” Joey Carter, embattled *haole*, took her advice and left.

In Prof. Trask’s mind, Carter had been confused about the meaning of racism. “Nigger” and “*haole*” were not symmetrical because in America only Whites could be racist:

Mr. Carter does not understand racism at all, another common characteristic of white people. For racism is a system of power in which one racially-identified group dominates and exploits another racially-identify group for the advantage of the dominating group. People of color in America don’t have enough power to dominate and exploit white people.<sup>18</sup>

To me, this had become a familiar justification. In fact, in more than one class at U.H. faculty members had taken time to write on the board the catchy slogan “POWER + PREJUDICE = RACISM.” While other groups are (possibly) capable of bearing prejudice, it is only Whites, they argued, who hold power. Thus, only Whites can be racist. No discussion allowed. Having lived as a member of a tiny minority in Japan for six years, I knew from first-hand experience that others were quite capable of racism. (For a current example, I recently received an e-mail from David Aldwinckle, a White America who was refused admittance to an onsen in Otaru, Japan, because of his race.

Though Aldwinckle last year received his Japanese citizenship, he is still not allowed to enter the onsen that his Japanese wife and children use.<sup>19)</sup>

Back at the Center for Hawaiian Studies, Trask was not the only one to advance this view regarding *haole* and racism. As assistant Professor Lilikala Kame‘eleihiwa wrote in the Center’s newsletter, “The history of Haole in Hawaii is like a series of men who repeatedly rape your grandmother. When the child feels anger and hatred towards men because they continually rape her grandmother, does one blame the child?” That is a metaphorical justification for *haole* bashing, leading us to another form of expressing it: poetry. Trask, who gained some measure of fame when she was quoted in a *New Yorker* article (“Part of me hates the *haole* with a passion; part of me doesn’t care. They’re just stupid, and I want them to stay away . . . . I don’t feel like killing them — I just want them to leave us alone.”) was also a poet. In “racist white woman” she wrote about a former chair of the American Studies Department:

i could kick  
your face, puncture  
both your eyes  
you deserve this kind of violence  
no more vicious  
tongues, obscene  
lies  
just a knife  
slitting your tight  
little heart

This convenient belief that Whites are at the root of all American evil may sound simplistic, but it operates to a surprising degree in ethnic studies departments and, for that matter, humanities departments throughout the country.<sup>20</sup> I believe that it is of a piece with

multiculturalism, and one of its primary uses is to make women and non-Whites perpetual victims who are allowed to make perpetual claims against alleged racist/sexist/homophobic White males. That it is gaining wider currency in the culture has been of great concern to many.<sup>21</sup>

Returning to the meaning and intent of the word "*haole*," my own experiences with the word may support Joey's Carter's tale. First, I noticed that in practice the word was rarely used in isolation. Instead, it was usually "fucking *haole*." So common was this practice that one local woman in one of my graduate seminars, a woman whose own children were half *haole*, uttered the term "fucking *haole*" by mistake during class. Twice. And no one called the hate speech response team.

It was out on the streets, however, that things were getting worse. For example, one afternoon a car driven by a local man nearly hit me while I was riding my mountain bike. I caught up to him at the light and exchanged a few words. Had I not barred his door with my bike, he would have charged out at me. As it was, he was left shouting a string of epithets, of which the chief phrase was "fucking *haole*." But such traffic encounters could happen in other places in America, so I attached little racial significance to it.

Soon after that, however, I went to a Waikiki club and ordered my first beer. I went out on the dance floor for a few minutes and when I came back my beer was gone, so I asked a bouncer if he had seen it. I am still not exactly sure what I did wrong, but without exchanging any angry words, I had provoked a fight with this local, and he bounced me out of the club on my head. Perplexed by the whole thing, I spoke to the local manager, and she told me that if I had any complaints I could report them to the police, which I did. The Japanese American

policeman who responded was very professional, but his Hawaiian colleague actually grunted at me when I was in the station. I would have eventually dropped the whole thing, but as a student learning about race and racism, I was curious about how it might apply to my own case in Hawaii, so I pursued it.<sup>22</sup>

These run-ins with local men suggested that it was not mere coincidence. I had managed to stay out of fights for the previous thirteen years no matter which part of the world I was in, but it seemed that in Hawaii I had to be much more careful. Feeling threatened, I paid much closer attention to the local/*haole* split.

Back on the campus of U.H. I continued to encounter a barrier because of my race. For instance, I once wanted to ask a classmate of Chinese heritage a question about class, so I sent a message to the e-mail administrator asking for my classmate's e-mail address. The next day I got an urgent message from the administrator saying the local woman in question had asked in a panic, "What did he want with *me*?" I chalked up her response to perhaps a woman's fear of being stalked, so I let it go at that. Until, that is, I had an exchange with a local classmate of Japanese heritage. She has earned her M.A. in Boston and was much more relaxed around us *haole* than I found more parochial locals to be. Before class one day, she mentioned that four of her single local girlfriends were scheduled to have a party that weekend. Never against the idea of meeting new friends, I innocently suggested she might invite me. Shocked, she stared at me and shouted in front of the whole class, "But you're *haole*!" That said it all.

There may be a certain note of humor to the above story, but back out on the streets, the *haole* bashing started getting more serious. For example, a dental student visiting Hawaii got into a traffic altercation at a corner near my house. A local passenger allegedly dragged the

dental student out of his Jeep and punched and beat him. That is the gruesome story that opened this section. I now return to that story.

Jay Waller graduated from Yale University in 1995, then worked as an expert skier. He visited Hawaii prior to interviewing at two dental schools. Because of his injuries from the beating, he does not remember the attack but he believes that the defendant had attacked him, based on state testimony. After the attack, doctors were able to mostly reconstruct his face using metal plates. "I was very close to dying," Waller said, adding that his traumatic brain injury initially altered his speech and mental activity.

What added a discouraging twist to this story was the ensuing courtroom trial and verdict; the local man accused of the attack on this mainland *haole* was acquitted of the charges against him. As the defense attorney explained, jurors were in disagreement due to conflicting descriptions of the suspect who attacked Waller. Though the defense attorney claimed witnesses did not identify the defendant, the victim noted incredulously, "He was turned in by his uncle, who was the driver of the car. How much more evidence do you need?"<sup>23</sup>

Again, in isolation, this case could simply be an aberration, possibly implying no racial animosity, possibly being just another case of injustice in an American courtroom. After all, two White men in Detroit were acquitted of charges of beating Chinese American Vincent Chin to death, an incident that has spawned much coverage, including the documentary *Who Killed Vincent Chin?* But in the case of modern Hawaii there is other compelling evidence to suggest that anti-*haole* racism is something of a pattern.

## Case Two

Here is how the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* reported an incident that took place on Oahu Island the night of April 22, 1996:

Sunset Beach resident Garth Johnson woke from a sound sleep to what he described as “a very loud, desperate cry for help” outside his second-floor apartment. Johnson called 911, grabbed his flashlight and looked into the face of James Boreczky, a Chicago police officer, who sprayed blood when he tried to talk. “Blood was just running out of him,” Johnson said yesterday as he testified in the first-degree robbery trial of Rodney Balbirona, 18, and Darrell Ortiz, 22.

The state has accused Ortiz and Balbirona of causing serious bodily injury to Boreczky on April 22 when they allegedly beat him and stole his possessions, including a Member’s Only leather jacket and about \$400 in cash. Each faces a 20-year term if convicted.

Boreczky, 33, had cut short a visit to his brother on the North Shore and was at a Kamehameha Highway bus stop at the time of the midnight incident. He suffered multiple facial fractures, two black eyes, a broken nose and a broken jaw. He also has metal plates in his cheeks and remained on medical leave for four months.

Dennis R. Jones, a Kahuku High School teacher who had Balbirona in his special education class in April, also testified yesterday in the trial before Circuit Court Judge Sandra Simms. He said Balbirona had told him he was involved in the incident, but had said: “We never meant for it to be as bad as it was.”

Jones testified Balbirona said they just wanted to rob the guy, figuring that someone out that late with a suitcase either had cash or drugs. He added that Balbirona said the victim “just wouldn’t knock out.”<sup>24</sup>

Like the Jay Waller case, this one also involved an attack on a male *haole* by local men.<sup>25</sup> And like the Waller case, the local defendants were not convicted of the physical attack. Instead, Darrell Ortiz

was sentenced to ten years in prison for second-degree robbery, Rodney Balbirona was given five years' probation, and a 14-year-old boy who plea-bargained to a reduced misdemeanor theft charge was sentenced to "read basketball superstar Michael Jordan's biography and write a three-page essay."

The victim, James Boreczky, was not the only person outraged by the verdict. The following letter to the editor sums up the sentiment against the verdict in some quarters:

The beating of Officer Boreczky is simply one more in a long list of hate crimes against Caucasians that have been going on for all of the 35 years I have been in Hawaii. This crime should have been prosecuted under the hate crime provisions. I regret this tragedy that happened to Officer Boreczky. The responsible people of Hawaii must start warning our visitors of the dangers in Hawaii. No amount of tourism money can justify a loss of ethics and morals.

Stephen Foster Williams, Waimanalo<sup>26</sup>

### **Case Three**

Daniel Nadler was a White soldier based at Wheeler Army Air Field on Oahu Island. One night in March, 1996, Nadler and two friends were strolling along the Fort Street Mall in downtown Honolulu. Soon after a homeless man asked them for money, a local youth, Toeun Chhin [sic] accosted Nadler by striking and kicking him in the head. As a result, "Nadler suffered fractures near his left eye, his nasal cavity and inside the skull, which lead to a leak in brain fluid." Because of this, he must undergo treatment for the rest of his life. In addition, "he cannot do more than one task at a time and has trouble with short-term memory and concentration. He also speaks with a slight slur and

suffers from cluster headaches.” He was also discharged from the Army.<sup>27</sup>

Chhin, who was 17 years old at the time of attack, was sentenced to five years probation with one-year imprisonment after pleading no contest to second-degree assault.<sup>28</sup>

### **Other Anti-Haole Racism**

Not all *haole* bashing involves violence. Take, for example, the case of baseball in Hawaii. On the mainland, Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in 1947, and since then sports in general have become open to talented people of any race. In Hawaii, however, race remains a factor. Billy Blanchette is a Franco-American who tried to join a baseball team in a league run by Americans of Japanese Ancestry, the AJA. This ten-team league has a rule that members must be of Japanese heritage. When former U.H. pitcher Blanchette tried to join, however, he was denied because of his race. That the AJA league uses public parks funded by tax dollars did not make a difference when the league voted to exclude Blanchette. Similarly, “the Cherry Blossom Festival requires its contestants to have Japanese surnames.”<sup>29</sup> This anti-*haole* attitude can be found elsewhere as well.

In employment, for instance, *haole* have occasionally run up against barriers because of their race. Witness this August 23, 1996, headline from a Honolulu newspaper:

#### **Tour operator accused of bias:**

Suit charges Roberts Hawaii shuns Caucasians as guides

As reporter Ken Kobayashi writes, “The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission filed a federal lawsuit yesterday, alleging that one of Hawaii’s largest tour operators refuses to hire Caucasians as narrators

and tour guides because of their race.” A commission lawyer said “the commission believes Roberts Hawaii companies deny employment to people simply because they aren’t of Japanese descent.”<sup>30</sup>

From another part of the islands comes this similar headline: “Crisis shelter settles ‘multiculturalism training’ suit.” In this suit, seventeen former employees of the Family Crisis Shelter settled with a payment of \$120,000 and “a formal apology by the present and past management of the shelter.” This 1993 suit

was filed in 1993 alleging that shelter management divided the staff into “white women” and “women of color.” Management then allegedly discriminated against the Caucasian staff by accusing them of inherent racism, ordering them to be subservient to non-Caucasian staff and prohibiting their contact with non-Caucasian spouse abuse victims at the shelter.

Former Executive Director Allegra Perhaes said in 1993 that the division was done only as a means of training staff to be sensitive to racism.<sup>31</sup>

Taken together, these cases, as well as the accounts of the physical attacks on White males in Hawaii, certainly suggest that an anti-White bias is firmly embedded in Hawaiian society. With Whites making up only 33.4 percent of the state’s population (versus the roughly half that are Asian and the 23 percent who are Hawaiian/part-Hawaiian),<sup>32</sup> to what extent can this be seen as a harbinger of things to come on the mainland as Whites inexorably head toward minority status? The next section suggests that Whites are already in danger, possibly because the elite that holds such sway over the country is determined not to allow any expression of White consciousness, let alone solidarity. The following reports are chilling indeed.

### Part Three — Black over White

The Christmas season had been a busy one for me last year. What with the Japanese custom of December *bonenkai* (forget the year) parties and my own Christmas parties, I was happily tired by the last day of the year 2000. Rather than go out that evening, I elected to spend New Year's Eve home alone relaxing. I was in the middle of a vacation period, so things could not have been more comfortable. It was with great shock, then, when I read about a horrible mass murder in the heartland of America. Casually checking my e-mail the afternoon of Dec. 31, I found a source that lead me to a small local newspaper in Wichita, Kansas. The story was appalling:

#### **Brothers held in deaths**

4 killed, 1 badly hurt in execution-style shooting in snowy soccer field

Four people were shot to death early Friday and a fifth was critically wounded during a crime spree that began as a home robbery in far east Wichita. The victims were all shot in the back or head . . . .

Police said the five were abducted during a robbery at a home . . . where the three men lived. The surviving woman said the five were taken to ATMs near 21st Street and Webb Road, then to a soccer field just west of 29th Street North, where the women were raped. The victims were ordered to kneel and were then shot . . . .

[Police Captain] Lee said detectives don't know when the crime spree began, but friends of some of the victims said Thursday night began as a routine evening . . . .

The surviving woman told investigators that the intruders forced their way inside the home about 11 p.m. Thursday. When the intruders left, police said, they took all five victims and Befort's 1999 Dodge Dakota pickup. It is unclear whether another vehicle was used.

The surviving woman said the five were taken at gunpoint to at least two banks . . . After leaving the banks, the woman said, the suspects forced the victims to . . . a soccer complex just east of Jabara Airport. After each victim was shot, the men left . . .<sup>33</sup>

I had two reactions to this story. First, given the enormous attention American media, educational institutions, and Hollywood have given to racial strife in America, this would certainly qualify as a major news story, but it had not. I discovered it December 31, yet the original story quoted above was from December 16, more than two weeks prior to my discovery of the mass murders. As a student and teacher of American culture, I follow ethnic and racial relations quite closely, so surely I would have noticed this interracial slaying had the story been abroad. But it had not, which brings me to my second reaction: If no news outlet save for the *Wichita Eagle* was reporting it, could it be a hoax? For the next week, that idea filled my head alongside the confusion I encountered when thinking about the implications for the country were the story true.

Further leads came as the new year dawned, but the lack of any meaningful coverage left me with doubts. For example, a Kansas television station, KSN News, had pictures on their website, but only a short story. Finally, a seeming confirmation of the facts of the story came with the online version of the *Wichita Eagle*. On Friday, January 5, 2001, their headline read: "Brothers charged in attacks on seven." Worse, it also noted that "the crimes now appear even more heinous than first reported." It was difficult for me to imagine what could have been worse, but the following three paragraphs summed it up:

The new charges filed in the attack on five friends at an east-side home accuse Reginald Carr, 23, and Jonathan Carr, 20, of raping the two women and sodomizing one of them.

Prosecutors also accuse the Carrs of forcing the two female victims to perform sex acts on each other, and of forcing the three male victims to perform sex acts with the women.

Prosecutors also charged the Carrs with murder in the robbery and shooting of a symphony cellist and with the kidnapping and robbery of a man that started at an east-side convenience store.

There is yet more to the story. Where, for instance, did police get such detailed information about the crime? And why have I labelled this an “interracial” crime? The answer to the first question provides yet another shocking aspect to the story.

*Wichita Eagle* reporter Tim Potter wrote on Saturday, December 16, 2000, about the “brutal ordeal” of a survivor’s courage. Here is how his account begins:

It’s about 2:30 on a bone-chilling, snow-covered Friday morning in far east Wichita. A young couple awakens to someone frantically ringing the doorbell.

They find a young woman, shaking, panicky. Her hair is wet and matted. She is naked. Blood covers her back. Words rush out of her mouth as they bring her in. “Help me, help me, help me!”

They wrap her in blankets. At first, they don’t realize she is the lone survivor of one of the worst crimes in Wichita’s history. “We’ve all been shot,” she says. “Three of my friends are dead.” She doesn’t know that another — her fiance — will die.

Though brutally raped and shot in the back, she had not only survived, she had made a near-miraculous journey across the frozen Kansas countryside. As Potter writes, she “had to walk wounded, unclothed

and barefoot across snow, perhaps as far as a mile, across [Highway] K-96, through brush, through construction, around a pond, to their house, probably the first home she sees.”

It was her precise description of the killers and of events surrounding the attack that allowed Wichita police to catch the suspects within hours. Potter notes her description:

She wants everyone to know that one robber wore an orange FUBU-brand sweater. That he was tall. That the other robber was shorter and heavier and wore a black jacket and boots.

One credits the courage and presence of mind of this young woman but is less willing to do so for those at the *Wichita Eagle*. The *Eagle*, which showed the race of the victims by printing their pictures as early as Dec. 16, 2000, neither printed the pictures of the suspects nor mentioned their race until some three weeks after the attack. Yet they specifically repeat that one of the attackers wore an orange sweater. That it was FUBU brand. That the other attacker wore black boots. Yet the *Eagle* says not one word about the color of the attackers. In fact, the suspects arrested by the police are black. Is it conceivable that the survivor could have failed to notice or failed to relay this normally elementary and crucial information?

I myself got the information from the American Renaissance website ([www.amren.com](http://www.amren.com)), which had a link to pictures in the case. A MSNBC affiliate, KSN News, had pictures of the suspects and a short description of the massacre. The pictures showed two black men.<sup>34</sup> This tendency for print media to avoid mention of the race of non-White suspects and criminals and to not show their pictures seems to me to be a growing and unwelcome tendency. As long as they continue

to emphasize White “hate crimes” and “White supremacism,” why not also communicate the reverse?

In any case, the local prosecutor in the Wichita case found race to be irrelevant, noting some three weeks after the murders, “The Carrs are African-American. Their victims were white. But the fact that the defendants and victims happen to be of different races has no bearing. Let’s just look at the underlying crimes.”<sup>35</sup> In the remainder of this essay, I will examine whether the district attorney’s judgment on this matter is sound. More broadly, however, I will examine how multicultural America treats instances of “hate crimes,” particularly their public portrayal. To do this, I will compare some of the more well-known hate crimes in America with some of the lesser known and explore the construction of images surrounding each type.

### **White on Multicultural**

When there are incidents of White-on-minority crime, they are often considered and/or charged as “hate crimes.” We might date this new era of race relations to the night of March 3, 1991, when Los Angeles Police stopped a speeding African American motorist named Rodney King. A witness secretly taped the scene as a group of policemen clubbed and kicked King. This tape was released to the press and became one of the most widely shown scenes on American television that year. Later, four White policemen were tried and acquitted of abuse of police power. News of this acquittal led to the massive Los Angeles riots of 1992, when hundreds of stores in the city were looted and burned and many people killed. White-on-Black violence certainly became a more pressing issue after that.

For instance, there was the horrifying lynching death of African American James Byrd, Jr., June 7, 1998. He was dragged to his death by three racist Whites in Jasper, Texas. First, Byrd was taken to a deserted area, then he was beaten, and finally he was chained to the back of a pickup truck. The three men dragged Byrd along a country road, a journey on which Byrd was decapitated. A sheriff's deputy later noted that the victim's head and arm were found a short distance from the mangled body.<sup>36</sup> The media coverage of this case has been intense, including that of the trials of the three suspects. All have been convicted of murder, and two of the men have been sentenced to death. The third received a sentence of life in prison.<sup>37</sup>

Back in a much more urban part of America, Haitian immigrant Abner Louima was the victim of police torture in the bathroom of a police precinct in Brooklyn, New York. Authorities accused an officer of sexually assaulting Louima with a wooden stick, then breaking his teeth with that stick. Officer Justin Volpe was convicted of sodomizing the victim, Charles Schwarz was convicted of violating Louima's civil rights, and two other officers were convicted of conspiring to conceal Schwarz's role in the attack.<sup>38</sup>

An even more prominent case of (White) police brutality against a Black occurred with the accidental shooting death of Amadou Diallo on the night of February 4, 1999. Four White policemen from an elite anti-crime unit mistook Diallo for the suspect in a series of rape cases in the area. The four officers fired 41 bullets at Diallo in the vestibule of his Bronx apartment. Diallo was hit 19 times and died. All four officers were tried for murder and acquitted. The public exposure for this accidental shooting has ranged from over 700 stories in the *New York Times* to a song written by pop legend Bruce Springsteen.

As African Americans, Byrd, Louima, and Diallo all fit squarely into the multicultural narrative, and their victimization at the hands of Whites is part of the larger story that multiculturalism in America has become. One other category of multicultural victim is that of homosexual. Thus, when a young gay man was murdered on the plains of Wyoming, it was bound to become a major national story.

On the night of October 7, 1998, Matthew Shepard made homosexual advances on two straight men in a Wyoming bar. The two men kidnapped and beat Shepard, tied him to a fence post, then left him to die. Both men were tried and convicted of first-degree murder. Russell Henderson was sentenced to two consecutive life sentences, while his partner Aaron McKinney faced the death penalty. Only a plea from Shepard's parents to spare McKinney's life saved him from execution.<sup>39</sup>

Finally, I wish to add another multicultural perspective to this story, that of White attacks on Asians. One of the best known cases while I was in graduate school in Hawaii was the murder of Vincent Chin, perhaps because of the documentary that was produced as a result of his death. *Who Killed Vincent Chin?* is a 82-minute exploration of the factors that contributed to the death of this Chinese American. That he was killed by two White auto workers in the heart of the American car industry suggested to some that the attack was a hate crime aimed at the Japanese. During the 1970s and 1980s, Japanese car manufacturers were becoming increasingly competitive with American manufacturers, and layoffs were rife in the American auto industry. The film documentary examines this, as well as other factors.

Originally, both men were charged with second-degree murder, but they were allowed to plead guilty to manslaughter. Wayne County Circuit Judge Charles S. Kaufman sentenced the two men to only

three years probation and fined each of them \$3,000 plus \$780 in fees, igniting protests across the country. Asian Americans in Detroit and several California congressmen requested that the US attorney general investigate the case. The Justice Department asked the FBI to carry out the investigation. Later, a grand jury indicted both men on two counts of violating Chin's civil rights. One man was convicted, but his appeal was upheld, and he was retried in Cincinnati, where he was acquitted of all charges. Neither he nor the other man spent a day in jail for the death of Vincent Chin.<sup>40</sup>

Another case involving White-on-non-White crime was the tragic Yoshihiro Hattori Shooting outside Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Hattori was a young Japanese exchange student who mistakenly went to the home of Rodney Peairs looking for a Halloween party. Peairs, fearing for the safety of his wife and himself, discharged the 44 magnum he was holding, killing Hattori. While many news accounts focused on the anti-Japanese or at least anti-Asian sentiment behind the killing, I believe it had little to do with that; young Hattori was wearing a Halloween costume, so it is likely Peairs did not know he was Japanese at all.

Janet Ashby, in the pages of the *Japan Times*, offers the most likely cause of the shooting by pointing to the conclusion drawn by the authors of a book on the tragedy. After Peairs was found not guilty by a jury, the authors concluded that "in the dark Peairs probably mistook Hattori for a young black. Central, where the shooting took place, is an almost all white bedroom community of those fleeing from crime in Baton Rouge." The next part of the article is even more germane to this essay: "Just a month before the shooting residents had been shocked by the killing of a white college student by four blacks aged 16-19 in a carjacking in an area previously regarded as relatively safe."<sup>41</sup>

At the time of the Hattori killing, I had already lived in Japan for six years and was getting my M.A. in Asian Studies, thus I certainly heard about the case. But I suspect many others without a specific interest in Asia had also had heard about it, for the case was widely disseminated in the American media. Coming as it did at a time of Japan-U.S. frictions, it served as an example of the problems the two countries were having with each other. As for the carjacking/murder, I had never once heard about it prior to reading Ashby's article. Did this suggest that the murder of a White by Blacks was much less important than a White shooting an Asian, even if accidentally? Or worse, did it suggest that Black crimes against Whites were so commonplace that it was not even newsworthy? This essay, I believe, tends to support both views.

All of the above crimes and killings are indeed terrible. And in most cases, the perpetrators have been duly tried by law. But the point here is not necessarily how the American judicial has system treated the suspects and perpetrators, but how the American media has treated the entirety of each case, from perpetrator to victim, from the specificity of each case to its broader implications. Not only were all of these cases major national news stories, they tended to become international news as well. By way of comparison, I would now like to return to one of the most deadly Black attacks in recent years to see how that case is being handled by the American media.

### **Dissection of the Wichita Massacre**

Perhaps the most distressing aspect of the Wichita Massacre is the near complete suppression of news about the case. Not only have national media completely ignored the case, but even local Wichita news organi-

zations have been prevented from following the case because of a judge's decision that the case be sealed.<sup>42</sup> Thus, here in early February, we can say that a news blackout regarding the case is securely in effect.

Not only is there a news blackout, there is no evidence that government organs are moving to investigate the case from a hate crime or violation of civil rights point of view. From Vincent Chin to Rodney King, the American government was willing to pursue charges against White suspects, but in the Wichita case all we have so far is the district attorney's press announcement that "the fact that the defendants and victims happen to be of different races has no bearing." A more skeptical observer might beg to differ. To address this suspicion, let us turn to a literary product of the 1960s to see if race could in fact have had some bearing in the Wichita case.

### **Soul on Ice**

When former Black Panther Eldridge Cleaver died in 1998, the New York Times obituary noted that Cleaver had "metamorphosed into variously a born-again Christian, a follower of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon, a Mormon, a crack addict, a designer of men's trousers featuring a codpiece, and even, finally, a Republican." This was indeed a man different from the one who raged through the Sixties. In and out of prison for violent crimes, Cleaver was involved in a gun battle with police, resulting in injuries to himself and a policeman and the death of a young Black Panther. His parole was revoked and he faced a long prison term, the prospect of which forced him to flee the country, first to Cuba, then to Algiers, where he set up his "American government in exile."

The point of this digression is to introduce the thinking behind the violent criminal actions of this man. We are fortunate in that Cleaver wrote an autobiography *Soul on Ice* that more than suggests the racial connection in the rape of White women by Black men. As Cleaver writes:

I became a rapist. To refine my technique and *modus operandi*, I started out by practicing on black girls in the ghetto . . . and when I considered myself smooth enough, I crossed the tracks and sought out white prey. I did this consciously, deliberately, willfully, methodically . . .

Rape was an insurrectionary act. It delighted me that I was defying and trampling upon the white man's law, upon his system of values, and that I was defiling his women — and this point, I believe, was the most satisfying to me because I was very resentful over the historical fact of how the white man has used the black woman. I felt I was getting revenge.

Cleaver goes on to add that had he not been apprehended by the police, he undoubtedly would have “slit some white throats.”<sup>43</sup>

Black Power literature, as works like Cleaver's are sometimes called, encompasses writers from Malcolm X to Richard Wright. Premeditated rape of White women is not rare. Take, for instance, this review of Wright's *Native Son*, which is currently displayed on the Amazon.com website for the book. The book's dialogue takes place after the character Bigger has killed a young White woman:

In *Native Son*, Wright was aiming at something more. In Bigger, he created a character so damaged by racism and poverty, with dreams so perverted, and with human sensibilities so eroded, that he has no claim on the reader's compassion:

“I didn't want to kill,” Bigger shouted. “But what I killed for, I am! It must've been pretty deep in me to make me kill!

I must have felt it awful hard to murder . . . . What I killed for must've been good!" Bigger's voice was full of frenzied anguish. "It must have been good! When a man kills, it's for something . . . I didn't know I was really alive in this world until I felt things hard enough to kill for 'em. It's the truth . . ."

Wright's genius was that, in preventing us from feeling pity for Bigger, he forced us to confront the hopelessness, misery, and injustice of the society that gave birth to him.<sup>44</sup>

Now, let us return to the testimony of the survivor of the Wichita Massacre, the woman who walked naked in the snow to find a phone: "She wants everyone to know that one robber wore an orange FUBU-brand sweater." FUBU brand is a line of clothes created by four African American men. The initials mean "For Us By Us," and the brand's website says "FUBU- it's a New Era- about Pride and Respect in what you wear and who you are!"<sup>45</sup> Thus, it is likely the wearer of this FUBU sweater was conscious of the Black identity the brand championed.

### ***A Time to Kill***

Perhaps the most egregious aspect of the entire issue of interracial crime is the wide gap between the reality surrounding such crimes and the deliberate filmic portrayals of interracial relations. Though U.S. government statistics consistency show Black-on-White crime to be very prevalent, movies produced since the advent of multiculturalism create images that are precisely the opposite. Take, for example, the 1996 movie *A Time to Kill*. Joel Schumacher directed this movie about the legacy of White racism in Mississippi, the second time that year that Mississippi had been featured for its White racism (Rob

Reiner directed and produced *Ghosts of Mississippi*, a courtroom drama based on the real-life assassination of Black activist Medgar Evers).

This movie starts with an absurd — though chilling — premise: Southern White rednecks menace a Black neighborhood and rape and brutally beat a pre-pubescent Black girl. Now, it must be noted that White-on-Black rapes in America are an exceedingly rare thing. For example, when leftist writer Andrew Hacker — certainly no friend of White men — came out with his indictment of White society, *Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal*, even he had to admit that “None of the survey respondents reported a case of rape where the assailant was white and the victim black.” The *Uniform Crime Reports* (UCR) of the FBI, the standard reference work for crime in the United States, show that Black-on-White crimes, including rape, are much higher than the reverse.<sup>46</sup> As I will now show, there is a wide and depressing range of violent attacks on Whites, and very little of it is reported beyond the local press.

### Black on White

In the early 1990s, the *New York Times* was still willing to be relatively balanced in their reports on interracial crime. For instance, in December of 1993, a Black man named Colin Ferguson boarded a car of the Long Island Rail Road. He had a gun. With a deep hatred of Whites, his goal was to kill as many White males as possible. His efforts that day produced six dead Whites and nineteen injured. He cornered many of the victims in their seats and shot them point blank. One victim's wife, Carolyn McCarthy, was galvanized by this mass murder to act against gun violence and was elected to the U.S. Congress as a Democrat from New York. Her son was also seriously wounded in

this attack. Coverage of this racial murder was fairly broad at the time. Even the *New York Times* had not adopted its "hands off" approach to minority-on-White crime yet. That would come later.

In 1995 we discussed this case in a class at the University of Hawaii. Given the anti-White male ideology of the instructor (ironically, a White male), it was not a surprise when an otherwise considerate female African American classmate joked that the only problem in the Ferguson case was that there were not ten other Black men like him. The class enjoyed a laugh at that. To me, this represented the reversal of power in the new multicultural America.

In the middle of the decade, other Black-on-White crimes were still in the news. For example, one night the former wife of Black football standout and movie star O.J. Simpson was found brutally murdered, her throat cut open wide. She was White. O.J., her estranged husband, became a suspect. The saga of his arrest and trial gripped the nation in 1995. It had all the elements of an epic American drama: interracial love, the rise and fall of the rich and famous, murder mystery, questions of racism, and finally, interracial violence. Though he was ultimately acquitted in his criminal trial, the consensus on the street seemed very much to be that O.J. had in fact killed his wife that night, along with her companion, Ron Goldman. In a civil court, he was later held liable for their deaths.

Other crimes that involved less luminous actors still earned their space in the papers. Two years after Colin Ferguson killed six Whites on the Long Island Rail Road, for example, the *New York Times* reported this story on page nine:

On the last day of his life, Richard Will, a 32-year-old white man, begged two black police officers in this dangerous, almost entirely black Chicago suburb to give him a ride to the

police station, Mr. Will's friend says.

About 15 minutes later, after walking five blocks in search of a telephone, Mr. Will was attacked by a group of young black males. He was beaten, doused with lighter fluid and set afire. He died a few hours later.

What seems to be of interest to the *New York Times*, however, is less the tragedy of a White man being burned to death by a group of Chicago Blacks than the parallels this case has to another case. Indeed, the article comes close to blaming the victim for his own untimely demise. The reporter notes that this case "bears some resemblance to an incident in 1989, in which two white Chicago police officers dropped off two black teen-agers in a rough white neighborhood known as Canaryville." One of the teen-agers was beaten, leading to outrage among Blacks in the area and large demonstrations.

Some Whites felt that this 1995 burning death of a White man was being downplayed. The late *Chicago Tribune* columnist Mike Ryoko, for example, suggested that had the perpetrators been White and the victim Black, "there would be quite an outcry." A radio show host said his station had been buried under "a ton of calls and faxes" about this case, with many messages asking, "Why aren't you talking about this?" The news media did not seem to have its suppression equipment quite as well tuned in 1995 as it was to be by the time of the Wichita Massacre of 2000.

In its offhand attempt to blame the victim, the *New York Times* notes that Mr. Will "did not have a valid driver's license and had been drinking." Further, they write that the police in the area suspected Mr. Will and his friend were in this Black area to buy drugs. "In fact, Mr. Will, who lived in nearby Chicago Heights, did have a police record . . ." After throwing in this irrelevant piece of information, the paper

is generous to add that according to a lawyer, the police record was "for petty theft, not drugs."

Finally, the *Times* appears to side with those who maintain that race was not a factor, quoting one of the Black officers involved as saying "he doubted that the young men who attacked Mr. Will were acting out of racial motives. 'They were just doing something stupid.'" This denial of Black-on-White animus presages that of the Wichita Massacre. Finally, the *Times* continues to insinuate that the dead White man was to blame, ending its article with a quote from a Black sociologist at Northwestern University, who opined that the brutal immolation itself might reflect the "growing level of hostility in poor black neighborhoods that the larger white society sees them as faceless."<sup>47</sup>

If these Chicago Whites were upset about the lack of an outcry over this murder in 1995, one wonders how they felt in 2000, when suppression of the Wichita Massacre of December 2000 was in effect. The Wichita Massacre is but one recent example of a long line of heinous crimes committed by Blacks against Whites. That media coverage of these crimes is becoming more vague or even non-existent is cause to worry. Here is a representative list of Black crimes against Whites that has generally not appeared in the wider press. And certainly these images have not found their way into Hollywood products.

### **The Burning to Death of David Holt near Augusta, Georgia:**

On Father's Day 1998, David Holt, a father of two boys was kidnapped, forced to open the safe at his place of business, driven across the Savannah River, and locked in his car trunk.

His car was then set on fire and he was left to burn to death. He was burned beyond recognition. His charred remains were identifiable only through dental records. The case remained unsolved for over two years. The three suspects in this horrific crime are all Blacks with criminal records.<sup>48</sup>

On August 21, 1998, a local Fayetteville, North Carolina, TV affiliate reported that "Six of the seven people accused in a double murder appeared in court Friday morning. Investigators say the group committed random murder as part of a gang initiation." The suspects, who "have not shown any remorse for the crimes that they've committed," are accused of murdering 18-year-old Tracy Lambert and 25-year-old Susan Moore. Investigators found their bodies in a field. As is becoming more characteristic of print media in America, there is no mention of the race of the individuals in this case, but the online version includes television stills: The dead are young White women, while the suspects are Black.

This kind of Black-on-White women violence continues. Take, for instance, this pre-New Year's rape/murder: "Killing robs woman of her best friend": "I buried my best friend. Just like that; she was gone. A violent senseless killing. What has happened to our town? Why so much violence?"<sup>49</sup>

This woman was mourning the loss of her friend Vickie Lynn McGraw, 48. According to a local news report, McGraw was accosted by two Black men as she stepped out of her Chevy Blazer. She was then driven to an ATM to get cash, sexually assaulted, and finally killed. In a twist to the normal reporting pattern, the *Shreveport Times* ran the pictures of the five suspects, all Blacks, but not that of the victim. The only way readers knew of McGraw's race was to look at her obituary picture, paid for by her family.<sup>50</sup>

## Little Jake Robel

On the day of February 22, 2000, six-year-old Jake Robel was sitting in the passenger seat of his mother's sport utility vehicle, waiting for her to return from a sandwich shop. Suddenly, a Black convict jumped into the car and began to drive away. Alerted to the kidnapping, Jake's mother tried to get her son out of the car, but his seat belt held him in. Finally, she was able to release the belt, but her son got caught in the shoulder harness. A CNN.com news report, in its story "Motorists describe efforts to save boy dragged to death in carjacking," quotes witnesses as to what happened next: "A Blazer came around us at a high rate of speed and cut over in front of us . . . . We saw something beside it tumbling and got a closer look and realized it was a kid." Motorists tried to stop the vehicle, but the African American driver only sped up.

After being dragged for "five miles at speeds of more than 80 mph," the murder came to an end. The Blazer had to stop at a crowded intersection, at which point a would-be rescuer blocked its path. He and his brother brother "jumped out and ran back there and the first instinct was to help the kid," but they quickly realized it was too late to save Jake. "It was a terrible sight." A woman who had followed the Blazer took out a blanket and covered the boy. Meanwhile, the suspect "tried to escape by ramming the vehicles that had stopped to aid the boy."<sup>51</sup>

The parallels between this dragging death and that of James Byrd, Jr., some two years before were not perfect but they shared many salient details. Yet no one would argue that the media coverage given to each case is even remotely comparable. Byrd's martyrdom has become a cause célèbre, while six-year-old Jake Robel went to his grave

mourned only by his family and those local people who heard about the case.

Not long after young Jake's murder, another Black suspect killed a young White boy, this time, it appears, precisely because the boy was White. On April 19, 2000, Kevin Shifflett was playing outside the house of his great-grandmother in a suburb of Washington, D.C. Suddenly, an African American approached him and, according to witnesses, said something about hating Whites. The man then slashed Kevin's throat. His great-grandmother and another woman tried to fend off the attack, but the suspect punched and stabbed them. Kevin died on the spot. Initially, there were reports that the police were not interested in the racial aspects of the case. And while the small, more conservative *Washington Times* addressed the case, the more prestigious *Washington Post* avoided it, an oversight about which they later had doubts.

Some three months after the murder of Kevin Shifflett, after witnesses had identified the race of the suspect and a racist note had been found in the suspect's hotel room, the ombudsman for the *Post* ran a column in their July 16 paper. It began, "Since a black man being held for possible parole violation has become the focus of an intensive investigation of his possible role in the slaying of an 8-year-old white boy in Alexandria last April, some readers have demanded to know why *The Post* is not treating the slaying as a 'hate crime.'" In isolation, there might be no reason to think this an egregious oversight, but the *Post* itself had a track record of downplaying anti-White sentiment, as the ombudsman goes on to admit:

Editors did make a debatable call in editing a quotation in a July 6 article about the 1993 assault on a white man by the man now in custody. In that incident, which the article said bore

many similarities to the Shifflett attack, the 1993 victim recalled his assailant saying, "What the [expletive] are you looking at, whitey?" Not sure about the source or the relevance of race to the unfolding investigation, Post editors deleted "whitey."<sup>52</sup>

That the *Post* seems to prefer to err on the same side that more and more of mainstream American media do raises troubling questions about the biases involved. For example, let us review an Internet search of the *New York Times*' archives for stories about these crimes. While not all stories that appear will be relevant, the "hits" produced should give an indication of the interest that "paper of record" takes in these "hate crimes" reports.

**"Multicultural" Victims:**

|                 |     |
|-----------------|-----|
| Rodney King     | 417 |
| James Byrd, Jr. | 334 |
| Abner Louima    | 715 |
| Amadou Diallo   | 859 |
| Matthew Shepard | 272 |

**"Traditional" White Victims:**

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Wichita victims    | 0 |
| Kevin Shifflett    | 0 |
| Jake Robel         | 0 |
| David Holt         | 0 |
| Tracy Lambert      | 0 |
| Vickie Lynn McGraw | 0 |

One struggles to explain such stark contrasts. True, stories close to home are emphasized more — Louima and Diallo were New Yorkers — but King, Byrd, and Shepard lived far from New York. What could account for which stories our media chooses to report and which they pass over in silence? This paper suggests that an anti-White bias

is becoming the norm with respect to American media representations. Whether this is the inevitable outcome of the growth of multiculturalism, or whether there are other forces pushing the trend is hard to say. But there is enough evidence presented here to suggest that a more multicultural America will be an America more hostile to Whites.

### Notes

1. David A. Hollinger, *Postethnic America* (New York: BasicBooks, 1995), 2.

2. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (London: Touchstone Books, 1998), 20-21. Arthur Schlesinger has taken a similarly dark view of (re)emerging multiculturalism:

The fading away of the cold war has brought an era of ideological conflict to an end . . . . One set of hatreds gives way to the next . . . . As the era of ideological conflict subsides, humanity enters — or, more precisely, re-enters — a possibly more dangerous era of ethnic and racial animosity.

The hostility of one tribe for another is among the most instinctive human reactions . . . . Unless a common purpose binds them together, tribal hostilities will drive them apart. Ethnic and racial conflict, it seems evident, will now replace the conflict of ideologies as the explosive issue of our times.

On every side today ethnicity is the cause of the breaking of nations (Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society* [New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1993], 9-10).

3. Hollinger, 1.
4. Schlesinger, 15.
5. See, for example, Mary C. Waters, *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).
6. Schlesinger, 16.
7. Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The*

*Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1970), viii; Nathan Glazer, *We Are All Multiculturalists Now* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 14-17.

8. Stephen Powers, David J. Rothman, and Stanley Rothman, *Hollywood's America: Social and Political Themes in Motion Pictures* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), 10, 287.
9. Margaret R. Miles, *Seeing and Believing: Religion and Values in the Movies* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 190-191.
10. Robert Sklar, *Movie-Made America: A Cultural History of American Movies* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 195.
11. Sklar, ix-x.
12. David Desser and Lester D. Friedman, *American-Jewish Filmmakers: Traditions and Trends* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 4-5.
13. Jonathan Pearl and Judith Pearl, *The Chosen Image: Television's Portrayal of Jewish Themes and Characters* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, Inc. 1999), 8. The Pearls justify this attention to the content of television by arguing:

Because of its unique capacity to reach and influence a massive audience, television is gaining in prominence and stature as a resource for the study of popular culture and as a primary historical source. The significance of using television as a primary source lies in the need to know and understand what most people perceive. And a most effective way of gaining an awareness of people's perceptions is to tune into their channels of communication. As a measure of television's central position in the lives of most Americans, consider that "what a series such as 'The Waltons' has to say about life in the Depression is likely to have a far more penetrating and long-lasting effect on the nation's consciousness than any number of carefully researched scholarly articles or books" (8-9).

14. There was a program to train Black Americans as military pilots, known as the Tuskegee Airmen. Trained to be fighter pilots for the famous 99th Fighter Squadron, they were slated for combat duty in

- North Africa. Additional pilots were assigned to the 322d Fighter Group which flew combat along with the 99th Squadron from bases in Italy. A 1995 movie about these men, *The Tuskegee Airmen*, was directed by Robert Markowitz and starred Laurence Fishburne.
15. Relaying a complaint from one of the passengers, this male flight attendant ends his description with an inflection that could be considered effeminate.
  16. Recent statistics show that 95 percent of active U.S. military pilots are White, while the figure for commercial airline pilots is 94 percent.
  17. Haunani Kay Trask, *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai'i* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992).
  18. The background for this case is drawn from Roy Yount, *Who Runs the University: The Politics of Higher Education in Hawaii, 1985-1992* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), 339-346. The controversy surrounding Trask's tenure in American Studies and her activism on campus was so impassioned that the Matsunaga Institute for Peace offered seven public forums on ethnic harmony, the result of which was a book called *Restructuring for Ethnic Peace: A Public Debate at the University of Hawaii*, Majid Tehranian, ed., (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991).
  19. Howard French, "'Japanese Only' Policy Takes Body Blow in Court," *New York Times* November 15, 1999; Howard French, "Nanporo Journal; Turning Japanese: It Takes More Than a Passport," *New York Times*, November 29, 2000. For a scholarly view of comparisons between American and Japanese racism during World War II, see John Dower, *War Without Mercy* (NY: Pantheon Books, 1986).
  20. See, for example, Roger Kimball, *Tenured Radicals: How Politics Has Corrupted Our Higher Education* (New York: Harper and Row, 1990) and Dinesh D'Souza, *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus* (New York: Free Press, 1991).
  21. Schlesinger's *Disuniting of America* comes to mind.
  22. For over two years, various local authorities sent me papers to fill out, but the closest we ever came to resolving the issue was a call from a policeman outside Honolulu who said he had located the bouncer's new

*Multiculturalism in America: Problems and Portrayals (Patrick O'Brien)*

address. I returned to Japan soon after that.

23. Linda Hosek, "Jury acquits in tourist beating," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, April 25, 1997, 1.
24. Linda Hosek, "Attacker gets prison term in beating of tourist," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, November 22, 1996.
25. The name "Ortiz" is most probably Portuguese in origin. During the plantation era in Hawaii, Portuguese from the Azores were brought in to be the overseers in the fields, occupying a position higher than the Asians but lower than the "Whites." To this day, the category "Portegees" is very ambiguous in Hawaii.
26. Letters to the Editor, "Chicago officer's beating qualifies as a hate crime," December 12, 1996.
27. Ken Kobayashi, "Attack victim returns to testify in quest for justice," *Honolulu Advertiser*, October 11, 1996.
28. Debra Barayuga, "Prosecutors want probation revoked in beating of soldier," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, February 26, 1999.
29. Pat Bigold, "'Pure' AJA has no place in public parks," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, October 4, 1996.
30. Ken Kobayashi, "Tour operator accused of bias," *Honolulu Advertiser*, August 23, 1996, A3.
31. Rod Thompson, "Crisis shelter settles 'multiculturalism training' suit," *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, March 8, 1997.
32. David Yount, *Who Runs the University*, 340; Jonathan Y. Okamura, "Why There Are No Asian Americans in Hawai'i: The Continuing Significance of Local Identity," in *Social Process in Hawaii*, Vol. 35, 1994, 162.
33. Hurst Laviana, Deb Gruver, and Tim Potter, "Brothers held in deaths," *Wichita Eagle*, December 16, 2000.
34. See <http://www.msnbc.com/local/ksnw/162606.asp> for Dec. 18, 2000.
35. Tim Potter, "Brothers charged in attacks on seven," *Wichita Eagle*, Jan. 5, 2001. While prosecutors may feel racial animus is not a factor in this case, they do believe that cruelty to animals is. Of the 58 counts lodged against the brothers, one of them is the misdemeanor charge of killing the victims' dog.

36. See CNN.com, "Man decapitated in possible racial killing," <http://www.cnn.com/US/9806/08/texas.decapitation>, posted June 8, 1998.
37. Adam Cohen, "A Life For a Life," *Time*, March 8, 1999.
38. Christopher John Farley, "A Beating in Brooklyn," *Time*, Aug. 25, 1997, Vol. 150, No.8.
39. Michael Janofsky, "Parents of Gay Obtain Mercy for His Killer," *New York Times*, November 5, 1999.
40. Christine Choy and Renee Tajima (producers), *Who Killed Vincent Chin?*, (New York, 1988).
41. Janet Ashby, "Tragic testimonies of violent crime in the U.S." *Japan Times*, April 1, 1994, 17.
42. Ron Sylvester, "DA, public interest clash over records," *Wichita Eagle*, January 13, 2001.
43. Eldridge Cleaver, *Soul on Ice* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), 14. Quoted in Roger Kimball, *The Long March: How the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s Changed America* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2000), 211-224.
44. See [http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0060809779/qid=981436500/sr=1-2/ref=sc\\_b\\_2/102-7999538-8884136](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0060809779/qid=981436500/sr=1-2/ref=sc_b_2/102-7999538-8884136). Spike Lee has been honest with his film creations. In *Malcolm X* (1992), for example, he does not gloss over the fact that Malcolm X had transgressed the law, including attacks on White women.
45. "GA School Bans FUBU, Flag Shirts," [http://www.apopulistreview.com/special\\_links/ga\\_school\\_bans\\_FUBU\\_flag\\_shirts.htm](http://www.apopulistreview.com/special_links/ga_school_bans_FUBU_flag_shirts.htm):  
HAMILTON, Ga. (AP) — A group of parents angry that their children were suspended for wearing shirts with the Confederate flag persuaded school officials to place a similar ban on a popular black-designed clothing brand . . . . Some of the suspended students' parents complained to Andrews that if white students were not allowed to wear the flag-emblazoned shirts, then black students should not be allowed to wear the hip-hop FUBU brand.  
FUBU, which stands for "For Us, By Us," is a New York-based clothing company founded by four black men in 1992. The clothes feature vibrant colors, oversized styles and prominent logos. The

brand has spread from urban areas to malls and department stores nationwide.

46. Andrew Hacker, *Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal* (NY: Ballantine Books, 1995), 190. Overall, UCR statistics show that for cases of interracial crimes involving Blacks and Whites, Blacks commit 90 percent, while Whites commit only 10 percent. Further muddying these waters is the fact that "Hispanics are considered a victim category for hate crimes but not a perpetrator category. A Mexican who is attacked because of ethnicity is recorded as Hispanic, but if the same Mexican attacks a black or white for racial reasons he is considered white. This inflates the figure for 'white' hate crime perpetrators . . ." (*The Color of Crime: Race, Crime, and Violence in America*, [Oakton, VA: New Century Foundation, 1998], 1; See also Michael Levin, *Why Race Matters: Race Differences and What They Mean* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1997), 294-295.
47. Dirk Johnson, "Friend Says Police Left Man Before Killing, *New York Times*, November 5, 1995, 9.
48. Larry Burton, "Former carjacking suspect back in jail: Suspects in kidnapping/murder face prosecutors," <http://miva.nwlouisiana.com/miva/cgi-bin/miva?archive/archive.mv+action=display&sfx=135> Archive; and Larry Burton, "Date set for carjacking, slaying case," 1/11/2001, <http://miva.nwlouisiana.com/miva/cgi-bin/miva?archive/archive.mv+action=display&sfx=169>.
49. Peggy Saunders, <http://miva.nwlouisiana.com/miva/cgi-bin/miva?archive/archive.mv+action=display&sfx=233>," 1/9/2001.
50. Larry Burton
51. "Motorists describe efforts to save boy dragged to death in carjacking," posted February 24, 2000, <http://www.cnn.com/2000/US/02/24/boy.dragged/index.html#top>.
52. E.R. Shipp, "The Shifflett Case," *Washington Post*, July 16, 2000, B6.