

as being criminals and the misperception in our culture that crime is a black phenomenon. The study on the racial typification of crime conducted by Chiricos, Welch, and Gertz focused on trying to explain why our prison populations have exploded in the last thirty-years and have become predominately black (despite the fact that racial rates of criminal activity have remained the same).

Lindsay shows that her neighbors could not comprehend why she would apply for a position at the local police department. The neighbors had assumed that she was not eligible because of the pigmentation of her skin. They had classified the black population as one whom commits the majority of crimes; therefore, being black, she must have a previous criminal record in addition to being lazy and/or under qualified.

A young participant told how he was racially classified when he was a child as being deviant and interfering with the other kindergartener's ability to learn:

-five kids in the classroom [and] I was the only black kid. One day, while I was doing my schoolwork, she grabbed me by my left arm it was a tight grip pretty hard. I was a little kid five years-old. She pulled me into the little library that we had in the classroom it was like in the back part of the classroom and she grabbed me by my shoulders and looked me straight in the eye and she was lik

kid I mean all other kids were white. I was your typical 5 year-old. I was doing what any other five year old

-spirited while she was talking to me and after class she wrote give it to my parents.⁴

In this narrative, Wilson is expressing that he was an average kindergartener attending to his schoolwork when his teacher was compelled by racial classification that resulted in a threatening grip. Wilson goes on to state the problem that the teacher had addressed in the pink slip:

This pink slip addressed a common identity that is linked to the black population: that they are troublemakers, even at the innocent age of 5 when racial ideologies are unknown to children.

Another participant, Tiffany, discussed how her son was a victim of being racially classified because of a negative disposition about young black men and the stereotypical crimes related to this population, (even though no crime was committed):

deciding to label another one of our little black young men, but they just picked the wrong one because rather not going in his record that is not going to follow h them, and now you are trying to tell me that he tried to pull her pants off.⁵

This narrative is controversial in the sense that both parties involved in the story were friends and joking around to the point where the young-white-girl said "oh, Jake* you're trying to take my pants off, pull my pants down," while she was giggling her way off the school bus. It was not until the bus

Prompt 1 Participant 5, I will refer to this participant as Wilson through the remainder of this paper.

Prompt 2 Participant 3, I will refer to this participant as Tiffany through the remainder of this paper.

* Name has been changed to protect identity

- he would give them their letters and everything but for the black people he would give us D-II, D-III letters and then keep all the white athletes letters because he felt like he felt all the black athletes that he had at Garfield High School at the time was just head cases and he got a

college or not doing nothing at all right now. I had got into an argument with him one day after one of my football games. I asked him why- where was all my college letters because I had a big article in a newspaper after week or two so I came up to him because I had talked to another coach from Akron East High School about it until he told me. I went up to him and I asked him what is going on and he denied everything about it, but my mom had went up there next day and she seen letters for me like from big schools that I never even thought were just going to be looking at me and so she got mad at him [and] cussed him out. I got kicked off the team with three games left

said that I was not in his classroom I had not been there and he had been turning in absence sheets. Well the principle had saw my counselor and saw him talking to me and she could see the look on my face, and she

s graduating. That other student who was a white girl who has not

I had not been there.

Second, there is a cultural difference between whites and blacks, although it is not to be feared or threatened. The primary reason by which people fear or feel threatened by difference is in view of the fact that whiteness is the default standard, which is agreed to be the norm. Seeing here it is easy to understand why differences are exaggerated and there is high divisiveness between the cultures, because if it is out of the norm, then it should be feared. In my field notes I had a big circle around " what is whiteness?" Is whiteness the way white folk carry themselves, is it the sense of dominance over other cultures, or is it the lack of observing racial complexities?

Finally, through gathering, more importantly, understanding and appreciating the narratives, we need to address the profound despair and hopelessness in black neighborhoods that lack good structure and no agency. Attention needs to be served to the lack of agency and the structural obstacles that inhibit blacks to equality due to the neglect from our government. Deep seeded anger lies in the black community that does not have the agency to provoke laws to enable them to have equal opportunity in our advancing society.

DATA

The stories gathered from the Akron Urban League encouraged me to understand and appreciate the importance of the scholarly data because it laid a foundation for me to build my analysis. If I had gone to the Akron Urban League story circles without prior knowledge of the complexities of racism I would not have been able

A well respected Marine who has served his country for twenty-five years could probably tell of stories about his times at war and his achievements of being in the United States Marine Corps, yet when it came to racial conflict Jacobs lived experiences were disgusting enough that all he could say was that he has *met some assholes*. Has racial conflict had a dynamic effect on his twenty-five years of service or his life? I will never know if this is true.

References

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Story Circle Stories, Story Circle #5, stories collected on May 27, 2009 at the Akron Urban League for *Law, Mediation and Violence* at the University of Akron.