

Stop police violence and cover-ups!



Unite St. Petersburg through

JUSTICE and REPARATIONS

**to the families of
unarmed African teenagers killed
by law enforcement in St. Petersburg**

by Penny Hess

African People's Solidarity Committee

www.apscuhuru.org • info@apscuhuru.org

Stop police violence against young black men!

**Javon Dawson, 17-years-old, murdered by
St. Petersburg police on June 7, 2008**

The evening began with congratulation and celebration of another school year completed.

Around 10:30 pm more than two hundred young people poured out onto the streets as a private graduation party at Shining Light Masonic Lodge in South St. Petersburg ended.

With the teenagers still laughing and talking outside at least twelve St. Petersburg police officers arrived on the scene.



17-year-old Javon Dawson

Within minutes 17-year-old Javon Dawson lay dying on the ground with two bullets in his back.

The shots that killed Javon were fired by St. Petersburg Police Department rookie, 24-year-old Terrence Nemeth. A sharpshooter and Iraq war veteran, Nemeth had spent four years as a Marine on the battlegrounds of America's war for oil in the Middle East.

Nemeth claims he was defending himself and the crowd from gunshots fired by Javon as he was allegedly running away.

The teens were shocked, traumatized and frightened by the police violence that resembled TV news videos of war scenes on the other side of the world.

His younger brother Keon tried to aid Javon as he was left bleeding and convulsing on the grass for hours. When a friend took off his shirt in an effort to cover Javon he was pepper sprayed and threatened by police himself.

Known by his nickname “Hollyhood,” Javon had just completed his sophomore year at Gibbs High School. Gibbs High principal Antelia Campbell called him a “good kid.”

Javon was popular, known for a great sense of humor, and loved by his large, tight-knit family and classmates alike. Friends described him as “quiet” and “funny” and someone who did not “get in trouble.”

Javon’s sophomore English teacher Carolyn Pendergrass, talked about the last conversation she had with him before the end of the school year. In response to her question, “In five to 10 years, what do you see yourself doing?” Javon answered that he would like to have his own computer business. Pendergrass told him she would help him make a plan to accomplish that goal next school year, she recalled in a *St. Petersburg Times* article.

One neighbor and school friend of Javon’s testified, “I don’t think he deserved to die. I never saw him fight. Never saw him get mad. All you saw was him trying to flirt with girls.”

Javon was described by his family as a pretty typical “happy teenager who liked joking with his twin sister, downloading music and eating boneless barbecue ribs,” according to the *St. Petersburg Times*.

Javon’s mother stated she “never even heard him curse.” His MySpace page included photos of him with friends and family and the usual banter between friends.

The cover-up

In an attempt to cover up the truth, the police and State Attorney have consciously tried to paint a negative picture of this young unarmed black man. Despite their slander of Javon, his family and his community, Javon had no record of arrests or prior encounters with law enforcement. No drugs or alcohol were found in or on his body.

Though Javon was known for being quiet and amiable, the authorities want us to believe that Javon suddenly became a brazen outlaw that night, brandishing a gun and wildly shooting at the police, carrying out some kind of suicidal death wish.

There are too many questions about the state’s story. If Javon were shooting into a crowd why didn’t he hit someone? If he had a gun

why were there no witnesses to this? Why were no bullets found?

As Javon’s younger brother Keon, who was with Javon that night, observed of his brother’s murder, “He’s a black boy with dreads, gold in his mouth. Add it up. They shot him. Now they’ve got to have something to cover it up.”

Ruling of justifiable homicide and police “code of silence”

The official report issued by State Attorney Bernie McCabe on August 12, 2008 declares that Terrence Nemeth was justified in shooting Javon Dawson twice in the back and killing him.

Full of “evidence” that is dubious and conflicting, McCabe’s report is a blatant cover-up of the truth.

McCabe rules that Nemeth was justified in the murder even though he admits that Nemeth is the only person who claims to have witnessed Javon with a gun at the time of the shooting.

In the report McCabe states, “Despite the hundreds of people in the area of the shooting no witnesses have been located that have been able to give a complete account of what transpired at the time Dawson was shot, except Officer Nemeth.”

It is important to note that every one of the dozen or more other police officers present on the scene denied witnessing the shooting, a clear indication of the police “code of silence,” protecting the crimes in their own ranks.

A teenaged witness cited in the report states, “Javon Dawson was not the type of person to have a gun.”

Nemeth had been on the force for 18 months at the time of the killing of Javon. There is no indication that Nemeth was ever tested for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) prior to being hired by the police department.

Violent behavior in Iraq war veterans with PTSD is manifesting around the country. A series in *The New York Times* last January documented more than 120 cases of U.S. veterans of the wars in Iraq or Afghanistan

who have committed or have been charged with murder.

In the short time Nemeth has been on the force, McCabe relied on the officer's testimony in court to attempt to convict suspects in over 90 cases. This is an indication of the incestuous relationship between the State Attorney's office and Nemeth, and is a clear conflict of interest.

Other aspects of State Attorney McCabe's report used to "justify" the murder of Javon do not stand up to scrutiny as well.

A gun was supposedly found by police "near the body," while no bullet casings from the gun were present. No statement has been made as to whom the gun is registered, and no fingerprints were taken from it. No powder residue was found on Javon's hands, only on his shorts, which most probably came from the shots that killed him.

We have to raise questions about this mysterious gun. Five years ago four Miami policemen were sent to prison for planting guns in cases of police shootings. In Huntington Beach, Florida in 2006, police officers were forced to admit that they planted a loaded revolver in a man's car during a DUI accident investigation. So it is not unusual at all for so-called evidence to be planted by police.

Allegations by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and McCabe that Javon's DNA was on the gun are extremely questionable. Official reports stated that the chances of the DNA found on the gun belonging to another African person were about one in 30,000.

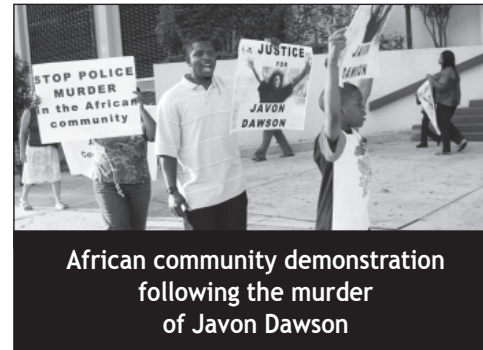
Other forensic experts questioned this. "One in many trillions is considered a good match, so the numbers aren't strong," observed David Foran, director of the forensic science program at Michigan State University, who was quoted in the *St. Petersburg Times*.

McCabe's DNA "evidence" would never hold up in court. The *St. Petersburg Times* quoted Debra Figarelli, a DNA technical leader at the National Forensic Science Technology Center in Largo, FL, as saying, "Unless they found spent casings at the crime scene that they would be able to trace back to the 17-year-old's weapon, it doesn't sound like this (DNA report) is a whole lot of information."

Figarelli's analysis clearly exposes some of the serious problems with McCabe's DNA "evidence." However it is important to point out in regard to her quote that the only proven "crime" at the scene was that

Javon Dawson was murdered by Terrence Nemeth and, secondly, there is no evidence at all that the weapon belonged to Javon.

Grief and outrage in the black community



African community demonstration following the murder of Javon Dawson



Javon Dawson's brother and stepmother speak at the Uhuru House

On June 8, the day after the murder of Javon, grief stricken family members and friends flooded into the Uhuru House on 18th Avenue South in St. Petersburg for the weekly Sunday afternoon open community meeting of the Uhuru Movement.

Javon's stepmother, Ollie Godfrey testified to the outraged and distraught audience that afternoon, "This is an injustice in our community because that could have been anybody's child laying out there last night. They said he was in the hospital. We went to the hospital, and they said he wasn't there. We went back out there, and they left him lying out there for four hours like a dog in the streets. We know that the police are going to put it the way they want to, to make themselves justified, but it was not justified to shoot somebody in their back. I don't care what the circumstances were."

Javon's body was not released by authorities to the family until four days after his murder. It took calls to Mayor Rick Baker's office from hundreds of concerned supporters from throughout St. Petersburg and the country to force the city to turn over Javon's bullet-ridden body to his family. No reason for the hold up was given.

Out of the Sunday meeting the Justice for Javon Dawson Committee was born. The committee has struggled tirelessly for the cover-up of this case to be exposed and for justice to be served. The committee, led by the International People's Democratic Uhuru Movement, has mobilized demonstrations, held press conferences, spoken out at city

council, handed out tens of thousands of leaflets and knocked on doors in the community.

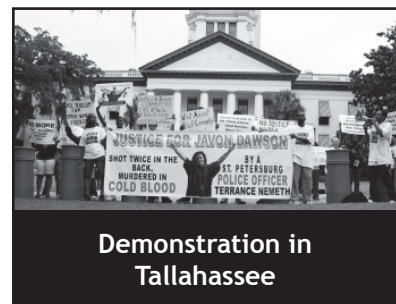
The Justice for Javon Dawson Committee called on Florida Governor Charlie Crist to remove State Attorney Bernie McCabe from the case because of McCabe's close working relationship with the St. Petersburg Police Department and Officer Terrence Nemeth in particular.



When Bernie McCabe came out with his ruling on August 12 justifying the murder of Javon Dawson by Nemeth, the community was outraged.

DeAndre Brown, 27, in a random interview by the *St. Petersburg Times* as she was coming out of a grocery store on 22nd Street South, summed up the sentiments of many: "You know they weren't going to find the police guilty of nothing. It's always the black man that is guilty."

An immediate press conference was called at the Uhuru House that same day denouncing McCabe's justification of Javon's murder. The Justice for Javon Dawson Committee vowed to intensify its demand that Gov. Crist overrule McCabe's report.



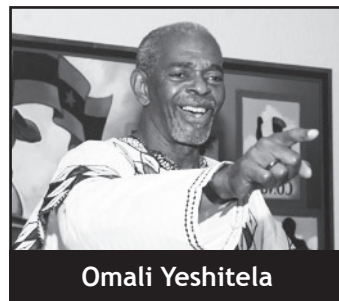
The next day, August 13, more than 30 Justice for Javon Dawson Committee members and supporters traveled five hours north to Tallahassee, the state's capital, to demand a meeting with Gov. Crist.

After a protest on the grounds of the capital building and a militant sit-in of Crist's office, a representative of the governor met with members of the committee and presented them with a letter calling for a review of McCabe's justifiable homicide ruling.

It was the first time that a governor in Florida has made such a request regarding any of McCabe's rulings. Crist called for the Florida Department of Law Enforcement to oversee the review. McCabe was subjective and vindictive. "If you don't think [the report is] compelling," he sniffed, "I'm sorry."

Gov. Crist's precedent-setting review of McCabe's decision was a real victory for the committee and for all justice-loving citizens of St. Petersburg. The struggle now is for the FDLE to conduct a transparent process outside of the usual channels of Florida's good old boy network.

Uhuru Movement and the movement for justice for Javon



Since its beginnings in the 1960s when Uhuru Movement leader Omali Yeshitela, then known as Joseph Waller, snatched down the offensive racist mural that hung on the landing of St. Petersburg's city hall for decades, the Uhuru Movement has organized the African community in the face of injustice.

The police killing of Javon Dawson was the fourth such case of a blatant police murder of a young African man in the past several years.

The Uhuru Movement has led tireless community opposition to murders by law enforcement of three other African teenagers: TyRon Lewis in 1996, Marquell McCullough in 2004 and Jarrell Walker in 2005, all of which sparked community outrage.

All of these murders of young black men were ruled justified by reports from Bernie McCabe. All the reports involved questionable "evidence" and cover-ups of the truth.

The demands of the Justice for Javon Dawson Committee are:

1. Establish an open, community-based police review board with subpoena power.
2. The city of St. Petersburg must pay reparations to the families of Javon Dawson, TyRon Lewis, Marquell McCullough and Jarrell Walker.

As Chairman Omali Yeshitela summed up, "We shall not rest until justice has been brought to this community. The police cannot simply murder people without any consequences."

Cover-ups, lies, violence and corruption in law enforcement: Military-style policing and the “good old boy network” must go!

Police murders, violence, misconduct and deception have become pervasive. Many families and individuals have been affected by flagrant violations of the law by those who are supposed to enforce it.

In St. Petersburg, we see the murders of young black men by heavily armed police and SWAT teams.

Here and in cities around the country, African communities are under siege by paramilitary forces. This is often accompanied by helicopters flying overhead, cops intimidating young people on the streets and the use of “no-knock warrants” to break down people’s doors by brigades of armed forces.



In November 2007, 92-year old Kathryn Johnston was shot at 39 times and then left to die after the police blasted into the wrong house in an Atlanta African community. The three cops who killed Johnston had secured a “no-knock” drug warrant based on deliberately false information.



Atlanta police murdered 92-year-old Kathryn Johnston

A cover-up of the brutal murder was carried out on all levels. Before leaving the scene, the mortally wounded elderly Johnston was handcuffed by the police, who then planted drugs in her basement.

For weeks, according to one account, the cops “continued to lie to investigators with elaborate details

of how they had observed drugs being bought at Ms. Johnston’s house.”

The Atlanta police hierarchy denied knowledge of the routine use of lies to get warrants to break down doors and the frequent planting of drugs on the scene to boost arrest and conviction rates. One of the officers was later convicted of lying during an investigation, but not for the murder of Ms. Johnston. (*Workers World, “Atlanta cop convicted in Kathryn Johnston’s death,” May 29, 2008*)

According to a recent Cato Institute report, “Overkill: the Rise of Paramilitary Police Raids in America,” there are more than 40,000 such raids in the U.S. each year. The vast majority of these raids target African and Latino communities, using the same violent tactics that we denounce when they are used by the U.S. military against the people of Iraq.

Such military-style raids were employed by the St. Petersburg police and Pinellas County Sheriff’s departments to murder the African teenagers TyRon Lewis, Marquell McCullough, Jarrell Walker and Javon Dawson over the past few years.

The white, racist “good old boy network” is then used to cover up and justify these crimes of law enforcement.

The African community is attacked in the same way the people of the Middle East are assaulted by the U.S. military because, like the Arab people, African people in America are colonized by the government.

Colonialism can be defined as the forced economic, political and military domination of a people by another nation or people.

The reality of two Americas

From the white community we can aspire to peace, prosperity, constitutional rights and full protection under the law. This is quite different from the situation faced by the majority of the black community.

This country is built on an economic foundation of African slavery for

more than 200 years and the genocide of the Native population of this land. This is why life for black and oppressed communities bears more similarities to the lives of the peoples of Palestine or Iraq than to middle class white America.

America's legacy is found in white lynch mobs, the injustices of Jim Crow and the forced labor of the system of convict leasing. Out of this history is born the reality that today one in every eight young black men is in prison.

Five thousand African men per every 100,000 are imprisoned in this country, compared to 736 per 100,000 white men. According to a Pew Hispanic Center report, the average African family earns only 60 percent of the average white family income.

"Drugs" are often the excuse for police terror against the black community, but the statistics show that 73% of drug users and sellers in the U.S. are white, while only 15% are black. Yet, we rarely if ever see these tactics of violence, terror and intimidation used against the white communities where the majority of drugs are located.

The U.S. government has over the years often found it more expedient to continue to suppress the African community with brute force rather than infuse it with resources to transform its economic conditions and level the playing field. Thus the war zones of black communities remain enmeshed in a cycle of systemic poverty and oppression.

Today militaristic policing takes the form of an overall containment policy targeting African, Latino and other oppressed communities.

Police brutality is rampant in areas tagged for gentrification or white real estate development.

It is no surprise that we see a spike in police violence in St. Petersburg at the time when the elite are planning to move the Tropicana Dome baseball stadium and develop upscale condos and retail stores bordering the most impoverished neighborhood in the city.



Tropicana Field redevelopment plan

Because no one stands against this violation of black rights and the wanton taking of black life, police misconduct spills over into the entire system. No standards of accountable policing are upheld. This leads to the police abuse, misconduct and cover-ups that are becoming more prevalent in white and other communities as well.

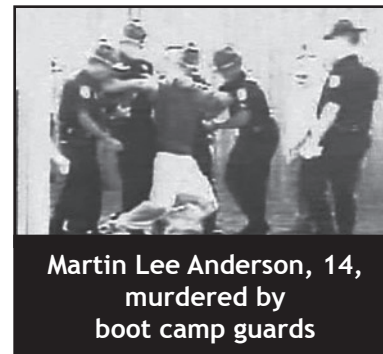
Police misconduct and cover-ups rampant

The following are examples of vindictive, violent and dishonest behavior on the part of law enforcement and of the white, racist good old boy network in this state used to cover over the truth. This is the basis for the case for reparations for the families of the four black teens murdered by police or deputies here in St. Petersburg.

Law enforcement personnel allow their personal feelings and vendettas to guide their actions

The Tampa Tribune reported on August 21, 2008, that two St. Petersburg police officers, **Courtney Zak** and **George Lofton**, were suspended for violating department rules after they vindictively and subjectively decided to tow a parked truck displaying posters commemorating **Javon Dawson** ten days after Dawson was killed by Officer **Terrence Nemeth**.

Although Zak and Lofton initially reported to supervisors that the vehicle was a "community hazard," during his disciplinary hearing Lofton told supervisors that the posters "disturbed him." Zak too told the disciplinary panel that her actions were "motivated by personal feelings about the posters."



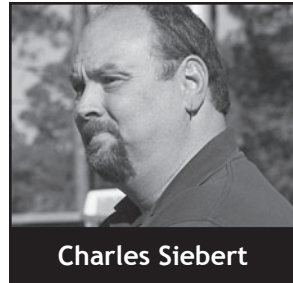
Martin Lee Anderson, 14, murdered by boot camp guards

The cover-ups of crimes against the people involve all levels of Florida officials

The racially-motivated beating death of 14-year-old black youth **Martin Lee Anderson** by Bay County boot camp guards in January 2006 gained worldwide attention both for its shocking brutality and for its blatant cover-up.

Bay County medical examiner **Charles Siebert**, who falsified the death report and lied that Anderson died because of the Sick Cell Anemia trait, had been the Pinellas County medical examiner under **Bernie McCabe** until 2003.

Siebert, who was fired from his \$180,000-a-year job as Bay County examiner after the exposure of the Anderson case, was given his job back in 2007. Prior to that case Siebert was already under investigation for signing off on autopsies he did not conduct, failing to renew his medical license and issuing many dubious autopsy reports.



Charles Siebert

Siebert was also accused by the family of **Michael Niesen** of covering up the fact that Niesen was fatally beaten by police officers in 1977. (“Another family claims examiner hid a homicide,” May 26, 2006, *tampabay.com*; “Doctor in boot camp case loses his job,” Dec. 30, 2007, *tampabay.com*; “After boot camp, calm in Bay County,” Sept. 18, 2007, *tampabay.com*)



Guy Tunnell

At the time of the murder of Martin Lee Anderson, **Guy Tunnell** was the head of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), which investigated Anderson’s murder. Tunnell founded the boot camp where Anderson was killed, and hired and trained all the guards who killed him.

Tunnell, who emailed racist remarks during the Anderson case and was fired by the FDLE after the case, was later rehired as an investigator for the Bay County State Attorney’s Office. (“After boot camp, calm in Bay County,” Sept. 18, 2007, *tampabay.com*)

Tunnell was also on the advisory board of **Drug Free America**, formerly known as the **Straight Foundation**, which has many lawsuits against it for its repeated abuses of young people who were part of the program. (*Huffington Report*, Feb. 23, 2006)

Straight was founded by **Mel Sembler**, the wealthy real estate

developer and big **Republican Party** donor who built and recently sold **BayWalk**, an upscale movie and restaurant complex in downtown St. Petersburg intended to attract white tourists and North County residents. BayWalk’s policies were known for being hostile to the black community, especially teenagers.

In 2003 Uhuru Movement member **Mutundu Stewart** was arrested for speaking out in defense of another African man who was being beaten by police on BayWalk grounds. The Uhuru Movement led weekly demonstrations outside of BayWalk for more than nine months until all charges against Stewart were dropped.



Mel Sembler

As a major Republican Party donor Mel Sembler was a “pioneer” for the campaign of **George W. Bush**, meaning Sembler contributed more than \$100,000 to Bush’s campaign. For this, Bush rewarded Sembler with the ambassadorship to Italy. Sembler is also a major contributor to the campaigns of Florida Governor **Charlie Crist** and St. Petersburg Mayor **Rick Baker**. After Crist launched his political career in the Florida State Senate in 1993 he introduced the reinstatement of the chain gang using prisoners, thus earning the

nickname “Chain-gang Charlie.”

(<http://rightweb.irc-online.org/profile/7480.html>)

As key parts of Florida’s “good old boy” network **Bernie McCabe**, **Rick Baker**, former sheriff **Everett Rice** and current sheriff **Jim Coats** were part of Gov. Charlie Crist’s “transition team” as he took over the office of governor in January 2007. (http://blogs.tampabay.com/buzz/2006/12/big_pinellas_pr.html)

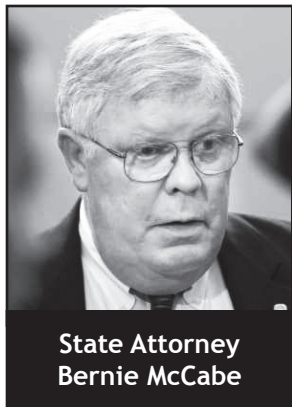


Gov. Crist reinstated chain gangs in Florida

Many of the state’s prisons are clustered in rural, white North Florida communities. Renown for its culture of violence and corruption, Florida’s Department of Corrections is headed up by former Florida drug czar, retired colonel, get-tough drug policy advisor to President Bush and key player in Florida’s good old boy network, **James McDonough**.

McDonough was selected for the position in 2006 after former Florida prison chief **James Crosby** was convicted following a sweeping federal probe of corruption inside the state's prisons and is now serving an eight year sentence.

African people make up 54 percent of Florida's prison population of **92,000 inmates**, despite being only 14 percent of the population of the state. With North Florida's citrus and agriculture economy in decline, prisons exploiting African people are an important source of economic stimulus for the depressed area. Florida's prison system, including the notoriously brutal juvenile system, has numerous lawsuits against it for murder and violence by guards against inmates. (Time/CNN, "What's wrong with Florida's prisons?" October 17, 2007)

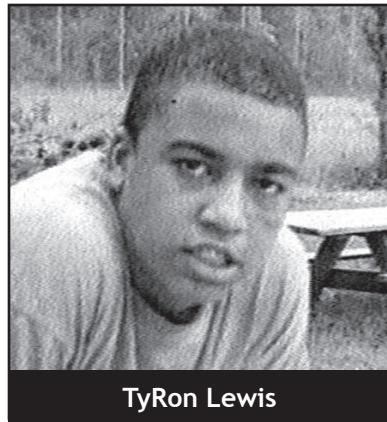


Cover-ups and false "justified" rulings by police and State Attorney McCabe

The police murders of teenagers TyRon Lewis, Marquell McCullough, Jarrell Walker and Javon Dawson are part of a policy targeting the African community with violence and cover-ups

TyRon Lewis was shot to death during a traffic stop on 16th Street South in St. Petersburg on October 24, 1996 by Officers **James Knight** and **Sandra Minor**.

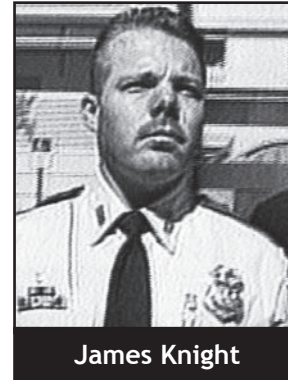
Knight killed Lewis with three shots of five that he fired within 55 seconds of stopping Lewis in his car. Knight violated police policy that a gun cannot be fired until all other means have been exhausted.



TyRon Lewis

In his report of the murder Knight lied, saying he was "bumped" by Lewis' car. This was contradicted by both witnesses and evidence, which showed that the car being driven by Lewis posed no threat. Witnesses also said that Lewis had his hands up.

Major **Cedric Gordon**, Knight's supervisor, said that Knight could have backed away from the car and Gordon recommended that Knight be fired. However, Judge **Horace A. Andrews** did not allow lawyers to question Major Gordon in the civil suit filed by the family.



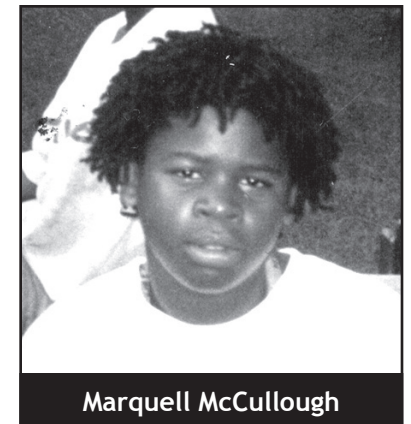
James Knight

Knight is a member of the St. Petersburg police SWAT team. In 2001, Knight was suspended for three days when he once again lied in his reports to his superiors, after "he placed himself in danger by pulling his police cruiser in front of an allegedly stolen car."

Knight falsely stated he was "rammed" by the car and used this to justify a police chase of the vehicle. ("*Trial may open old wounds,*" May 10, 2004, St. Petersburg Times)

Because of a powerful movement in the African community led by the Uhuru Movement protesting the police murder of TyRon Lewis, there was an eight year span before another African teen was killed by law enforcement. **Marquell McCullough**, 17, was murdered by Pinellas County sheriff's deputies on May 2, 2004.

It is therefore chilling to find an article that ran in the *St. Petersburg Times* in 1994 about Officer James Knight who was registering the Christmas bike of Marquell McCullough who was only seven years old at the time. This was two years before Knight shot TyRon Lewis to death and ten years before little Marquell himself would be murdered by cops also.



Marquell McCullough

The *St. Petersburg Times* article from Dec. 28, 1994 read:

“Marquell McCullough, 7, watches as St. Petersburg police Officer Jim Knight registers the boy’s new Christmas bike and Sgt. Bill Proffitt pumps air into the tires...The city police and fire departments held a free bike clinic at the Enoch Davis Center...”
(*Presents need protecting*,” *St. Petersburg Times*, Dec. 28, 1994)

The city police and fire department held a free bike clinic at Enoch Davis Center in the heart of the African community in order to fill their database with the names and addresses of young African people they would be arresting, brutalizing and murdering a few years down the line.

Pinellas County sheriff’s deputies David Antolini and Nelson DeLeon killed Marquell in a hail of 15 bullets. Marquell, unarmed, was hit by nine of those bullets through his car window.

Despite the fact that State Attorney Bernie McCabe ruled the murder of McCullough “justified,” McCabe later revealed that it was a case of “mistaken identity.” McCullough was “probably” not the person the deputies were after that night, McCabe admitted, a revelation that did not affect McCabe’s justified ruling. Conveniently, the video cameras mounted in the deputies’ patrol cars that would have captured the murder “weren’t working” that night. (*Suit blames deputies for death of grandson*,” May 19, 2006, *Tampa Tribune*)

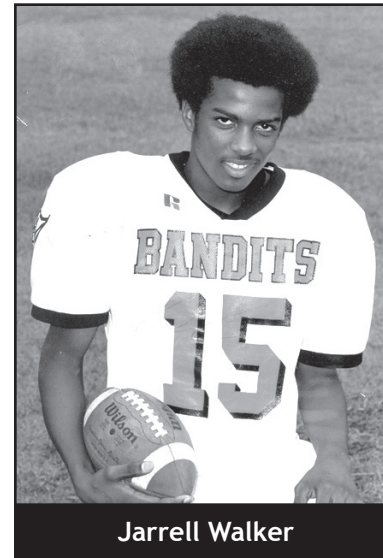
Nevertheless, deputies Antolini and DeLeon were given **exceptional service awards** almost a year to the day after the murder. (*Deputy honored for courage under fire*,” *St. Petersburg Times*, May 6, 2005)

In 1993, eleven years before he murdered Marquell, David Antolini was a cop in Indian Rocks Beach. He was involved in a fatal, high-speed car chase about which he lied and falsified reports. During the chase 21-year-old **Michelle Elstro** was instantly killed. (*Officer lied about car chase, report says*,” *St. Petersburg Times*, Dec. 2, 1993)

Despite being fired by Indian Rocks police department for lying about his illegal car chase that resulted in the death of an innocent person, Antolini was then hired as a deputy by Pinellas County Sheriff Everett Rice a few weeks later. Antolini was engaged to another deputy’s

daughter from the same Pinellas County department. (*Sheriff hires officer involved in fatal chase*,” *St. Petersburg Times*, Dec. 28, 1993)

In 2007 Antolini was again cleared by McCabe in a third fatal case. In Clearwater, Antolini tasered and beat to death Daniel Bradley Young, a 33-year-old mentally disturbed man. (*Deputies cleared in death of suspect*, Jul. 10, 2007, *Tampa Tribune*)



Jarrell Walker, 19, was murdered on April 12, 2005 by members of a Pinellas County sheriffs SWAT team. Jarrell was shot in the back as he lay sleeping on the couch after a flash bang grenade was used by deputies to break down his door and enter his house.

Jarrell’s 3-year-old son was sleeping in the other room. The child was taken in by authorities and fingerprinted, given a mug shot and was not released to his mother until she was made to take a drug test.

Walker was murdered by Deputy Christopher Taylor. The murder was ruled justified by Bernie McCabe, even though Taylor was involved in two previous non-lethal shootings and his supervisor stated that “Taylor sometimes becomes excitable and confrontational.”

Taylor said that Walker had a gun under the couch where he slept but other officers found no gun or weapon. (www.elmerfudd.us/darkwind_nohate25.htm, www.theempirejournal.com/530051_pinellas_county_fbi_probe.htm)

McCabe ruled Taylor’s murder of Jarrell Walker “justified,” even though McCabe stated that the sheriff’s department needed to review its policy on deadly force. The case was so blatant that it was investigated by the FBI to determine if Walker’s civil rights were violated. (*Bay News 9*, “Walker case now a national investigation,” May 25, 2005)

Another person in the house with Jarrell at the time he was killed

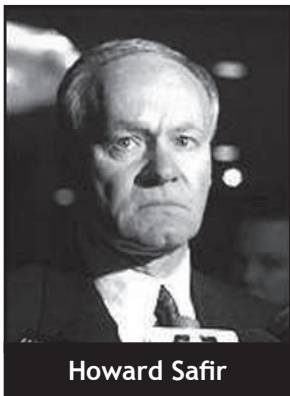
testified at a community meeting at the Uhuru House that he was ordered onto the floor by the sheriffs as they tried to clean up the scene immediately following the murder of Jarrell. This young person stated that he was threatened with having a “foot put in my face” if he looked up. (“Black community under siege,” by Omali Yeshitela, www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=44331)

Javon Dawson, 17, was murdered on June 7, 2008 by St Petersburg Police and Iraq war veteran **Terrence Nemeth**. Dawson was killed by two shots in the back as he was allegedly running away. Again, the murder of a young black man was ruled justified by State Attorney Bernie McCabe.



McCabe’s report produced no evidence: no bullets, no residue on Javon’s hands, no witnesses, no fingerprints, no ID of gun registration. (“Crist orders unusual review,” St. Petersburg Times, Aug. 14, 2008)

The DNA testing of the weapon that police claim Javon was holding was contracted out by McCabe to **Bode Technology**. The CEO of Bode is **Howard Safir** who was the police commissioner of New York City under Mayor **Rudolph Giuliani**.



During Safir’s tenure as police commissioner he oversaw the shooting of **Amadou Diallo**, who was murdered by police with 41 bullets, and the brutalization of **Abner Louima**, who was tortured by police when they rammed the handle of a toilet plunger into his rectum. This was the city where in November 2006, 23-year-old **Sean Bell** was killed in a hail of 50 bullets on his wedding day by three New York Police Department officers who were later acquitted.

In 2000, Safir as police commissioner shot and killed an unarmed black homeless man as he and Mayor Giuliani left a press conference. (www.gothamgazette.com/article/crime/20000401/4/197)

Justice for Javon Dawson, TyRon Lewis, Marquell McCullough and Jarrell Walker!

The Justice for Javon Dawson Committee is raising the demand that the city of St. Petersburg pay reparations to the families of the four young black men murdered by the St. Petersburg police or Pinellas County sheriff’s deputies in the past 12 years.

Regardless of the cover-ups and lies in the State Attorney’s reports, the facts are clear. TyRon Lewis, 18-years-old, was shot during a traffic stop in 1996. Marquell McCullough, 17, was killed by sheriff’s deputies while he was in his truck in 2004. Jarrell Walker, 19, was murdered by deputies as he slept with his young toddler in the next room in 2005.

In June of this year, 17-year-old Javon Dawson was killed by St. Petersburg police officer Terrence Nemeth after a high school graduation party.

With their whole lives still in front of them, each teenager was unarmed and in a vulnerable position. Two were shot in the back, one as he was allegedly running away. Another was shot in the side and one with his hands up, as countless witnesses verified.

In every case the victim was black while the shooter was white. Not one victim was in the process of “crime.” In every instance the murders were ruled “justifiable” following questionable investigations by the very corrupt and unsavory State Attorney Bernie McCabe.

The population of St. Petersburg is only 22.4 percent black, according to Pinellas County statistics, yet the African community is the victim of an inordinate percentage of police murders. Police violence against the African community is often carried out by SWAT teams acting like an invading army.

In the white community we would not expect our children to return from a graduation party in a body bag as a result of being shot in the back by police. Even white serial killers, spouse murderers and lethal sexual predators are taken in by police and given due process of the law.

Yet, African teenagers in the course of everyday life are shot down by police.

Thus, white criminals regardless of the violence they wreak can expect to get a fair trial for their crimes. Yet African teenagers and their families experience the daily insecurity that they may be murdered by law enforcement at any moment for no other reason than they are young and black.

Police policy targets young black men

We charge that the murders of young black men by armed employees or representatives of the city of St. Petersburg are not accidental. They are the result of policy laid out by the city.

It is a policy that dates back to the curfews surrounding the black community every night in the early 20th century, to the lynchings of black men on Second Street South in the 1920s, and the hideously racist mural that hung in city hall until snatched down by Uhuru Movement leader Omali Yeshitela in the 1960s.

This policy is no longer called Jim Crow but it still reeks of a two-tiered system of legal rights for white people, and vigilante violence against the African community.

It plays out today in heavy-handed police containment tactics that put the entire black working class community on lock down and under the thumb of martial law, even as policemen often present a friendlier face in some of our neighborhoods.

Why does this policy exist? For money, advantage and careers, of course. The violence against black people in the 20th century was based on the legacy of the very lucrative system of slavery that built this city and the U.S. as a whole. It was fueled by a profit motive of cheap manual labor and service sector jobs forced on black people.

Today, the city's policy of two-tiered policing enforces its plans for development, condo building, a new baseball stadium, gentrification and a general gold rush of possibilities for cheap property in a county that is hungry for new construction space, even in the middle of an economic downturn.

The only problem is that the property in question is in the middle of or bordering the African community, where at least a quarter of the population lives in deep poverty, where much of the housing is substandard, where salaries are little more than half of white salaries and only a third of students graduate from high school with a diploma.

Thus, in the black community the police act as a force to sanitize, intimidate and disperse the residents for the benefit of the elite and all those who would seek their fortune at the expense of black people.

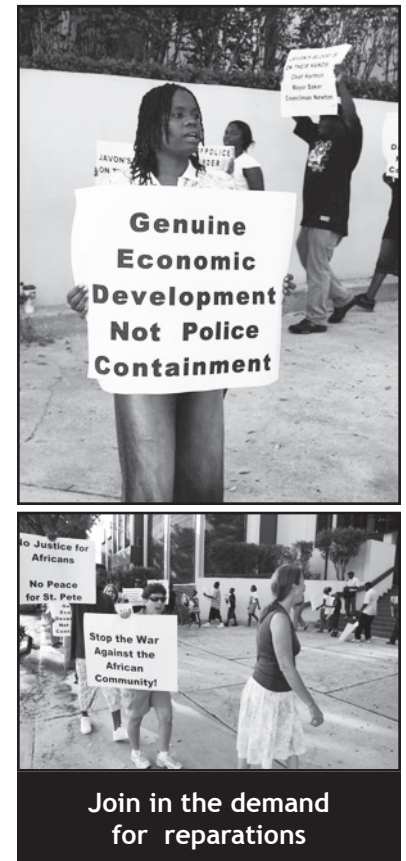
City of St. Petersburg must pay reparations

This injustice cannot continue to tear apart our city. We must demand that our city stop this police violence. We must call for programs to truly eradicate the systemic poverty in the African community through genuine economic development that transforms the conditions and possibilities for all.

We call on everyone to join us in this urgent and just demand. Reparations to the families of these four young black men would be a key step forcing the city to raise the standards of policing across the board through ending its policy of targeting the black community with heavy handed and militaristic law enforcement tactics.

Reparations are not the same as money paid out as a settlement for a case. Reparations involve an apology from the city and a commitment to abandon the practice of the meaningless theft of young black life.

For the city of St. Petersburg to pay reparations to the families of these young African men would set an important precedent for what is an epidemic of police violence around the country.



Get Involved!

What you can do:

Sign the petition and collect signatures

- Online: www.ipetitions.com/petition/reparationsforpolicemurders
- Print version available at www.apscuhuru.org

Join the Reparations Campaign

Get involved in campaign meetings and actions:

Weekly meetings, every Sunday, 4pm
at the Uhuru House, 1245 18th Ave. S., St. Petersburg, FL
For more info contact the International People's Democratic Uhuru Movement
stpete@inp dum.org, 727-821-6620

Solidarity meetings every Thursday, 6:30pm
For more info contact the Uhuru Solidarity Movement
stpete_office@apscuhuru.org, 727-683-9949

Organize an event

Tell your friends, family and neighbors why you support reparations to the families of young black men murdered by police. We can provide a speaker or other presentation materials and handouts for your event.

Donate

Make checks payable to "Uhuru" and mail to:

Uhuru House
attn: Reparations Campaign
1245 18th Ave. S.
St. Petersburg, FL 33705

Visit www.apscuhuru.org and uhurusolidaritystpete.blogspot.com for updates on the Reparations Campaign.

About the Author



Penny Hess is Chairwoman of the African People's Solidarity Committee, active in the organization since its founding conference held in St. Petersburg, FL in 1976. She is author of *All Diamonds are Blood Diamonds* and *Overturning the Culture of Violence*. She also writes at UhuruSolidarity.blogspot.com.

All of the ideas and analysis in this pamphlet are based on the theory and understanding of Omali Yeshitela, Chairman of the African People's Socialist Party and leader of the Uhuru Movement, proponents of African Internationalism, a world view through the eyes of the African working class.

African People's Solidarity Committee

The African People's Solidarity Committee (APSC) is active in bringing campaigns of the Uhuru Movement into white communities on local and national levels. We organize forums, demonstrations, studies and fundraisers in support of African community demands for an end to police brutality and massive imprisonment, and for economic development, reparations and justice for African people everywhere.



For more info contact the African People's Solidarity Committee
P.O. Box 4176, St. Petersburg FL 33731
727-683-9949 • info@apscuhuru.org • www.apscuhuru.org