



Written by [Ralph R. Reiland](#) on July 30, 2013

Stop the Madness in Detroit

“Detroit Free Press — 45 minutes ago — The Detroit City Council unanimously passed a resolution today calling for a federal investigation to see whether civil rights charges are warranted against George Zimmerman, who was acquitted July 13 of second-degree murder and manslaughter charges in the killing of Florida teen Trayvon Martin.”



The aforementioned was a top news story on AOL when I opened my computer to write this column, a commentary I intended to write on the economic roots of Detroit becoming the largest city in American history to file for bankruptcy.

African-American councilman Kenneth Cockrel voted for the Zimmerman resolution but added this comment: “We need to have that same level of outrage with respect to the black-on-black crime that takes place in our community. How many people were shot — maybe even shot and killed this past weekend in the city — most likely by folks who look just like them.”

And shot and killed, Cockrel could have added, accurately, by folks who look more like Trayvon Martin than George Zimmerman.

Detroit was the deadliest city last year among the nation’s top 20 most populous cities, measured in the number of murders per 100,000 citizens.

Detroit is also the nation’s most African-American city. In its January 2012 report, “Black History Month: February 2012,” the Census Bureau reported that 84.3 percent of Detroit’s population was black in 2010, “which is the highest percentage nationally among places with populations of 100,000 or more.”

Detroit had 411 murders in 2012, up 11 percent from 2011. New York, in contrast, with a population more than 11 times larger than the population of Detroit, had 414 murders in 2012.

“If New York City had the same murder rate as Detroit, they would have recorded nearly 4,400 homicides in 2012,” reported the Huffington Post.

Much attention is now being paid to “the economic disaster that is Detroit,” recently wrote Jack Lessenberry, a political analyst at Michigan Radio and a professor of journalism at Wayne State University. “But there is another horrendous crisis destroying Detroit that we don’t talk about. Black people are killing black people at a horrendous rate, and nobody seems sufficiently concerned.”

“Chief Logan knows a lot about violence,” wrote Lessenberry, referring to Detroit’s African-American interim chief of police. “His own brother was shot to death in Detroit in 1968, when Logan was serving in Vietnam. Last year, the chief’s nephew was gunned down at his job at a Detroit barber shop.”

The accumulated numbers are astounding. “Since Logan joined the force in 1969, the chief estimates 15,000 black men have been killed in the city,” reports Lessenberry. “To put this in perspective, more



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people were murdered in Detroit last year than our nation lost fighting in Afghanistan.”

Most of the dead were young black males. “Our children, our young men are dying like dogs in the street and it seems like we’re passing it by,” Logan told a gathering of people who’ve lost family and friends to violence.

The chief said he was angry because everyone knows about Trayvon Martin but not about the thousands of dead in Detroit. He asked: “Why isn’t there the same rage when we do it? Our civil rights organizations didn’t speak out. You didn’t see Al Sharpton come here. Why? Why don’t we make the next civil rights movement the reduction of black-on-black violence in our major cities? That should be almost our singular focus — to stop this madness.”

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