



Correction, Please!

Media Portrays Knife-wielding Perpetrator as Victim

Item: *On April 20 — the very day 16-year-old Ma’Khia Bryant was shot and killed by a white Columbus, Ohio, police officer — the New York Times published an online article under the headline “Teenage Girl Is Fatally Shot by Police in Columbus, Officials Say.” That article refers to Bryant as “the victim” and states, “The girl’s death cast an immediate pall over public expressions that justice had been served in Mr. Floyd’s case and touched off protests in Ohio’s capital city.”*

Item: *Two days later, the Times published another article and — tossing subtlety to the wind — ran it under the headline “Columbus Grapples With Police Shootings That Have Taken Black Lives.” The article, published April 22, gives a short litany of black people in Columbus who have been shot and killed by police and implies that there is a pattern of officers targeting black people, with Ma’Khia Bryant as the most recent example.*

Item: *Two days after that, on April 24, the Times was back with more fuel for the anti-police fire. Under the headline “‘More Than Just Tragic’: Ma’Khia Bryant and the Burden of Black Girlhood,” the Times asserted that “the timing of the shooting — on the same day that the former Minneapolis officer Derek Chauvin was found guilty of murdering George Floyd last May — underscored, for many, the incessant drumbeat of police brutality and systemic racism.”*

The article is largely a transcription of a conversation between Dr. Jamilia Blake, co-author of a Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality report and a psychology professor at Texas A&M University, and Dr. Monique Morris, president and chief executive of Grantmakers for Girls of Color and author of the book Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in School. Blake is quoted as saying, “So when I did see the video, I saw someone who just reacted and didn’t take a lay of the land in terms of what was happening, didn’t ask questions, didn’t try to interrupt the fight.”

And Morris is quoted as saying, “All the foster care professionals and others who work with girls who I’ve spoken to have said that they, as non-police officers, have been able to disarm girls with a knife engaged in a fight without shooting someone. And the issue here is also the fact that whenever we have moments of crisis in our society, we call upon individuals like this officer, who was an expert marksman, to come in and respond to something that did not require an expert marksman.”

Item: *On April 20 — the day of the shooting — NPR published an online article under the headline “Columbus Police Shoot and Kill Black Teenage Girl.” That article was updated the next day to include the point that “police say” Bryant was holding a knife at the time of the shooting. Describing the shooting, the article says, “Bryant can be seen pushing the girl to the ground. She then approaches a second girl and throws her against a car parked on the driveway. The officer shouts ‘Get down!’ three times, pulls out his gun and shoots in Bryant’s direction at least four times and she falls to the ground. As the officer approaches her, a knife can be seen close to her.”*

Item: *NPR tweeted their article on April 20. That tweet included a link to the article and said, “Ma’Khia Bryant, a Black teenage girl, was shot and killed by a white police officer in Columbus, Ohio, after she called 911 for help when a group of ‘older kids’ threatened her, according to her family.”*

Correction: While the liberal mainstream media is well known for inserting its leftist bias into



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reporting, the treatment it has given to the shooting of knife-wielding Ma’Khia Bryant goes beyond even what many have come to expect as a matter of course. With the single exception of NPR blatantly omitting the fact that Bryant was actually *holding and attempting to use* a knife at the time she was shot by a police officer, the media seem quite comfortable *admitting* that fact while still somehow painting the shooting as evidence of “police brutality and systemic racism.” There is so much misinformation in the above-mentioned articles that it seems overwhelming. That the *Times* refers to Bryant as “the victim” is simply beyond the pale. Consider this: The video shows — in frame-by-frame clarity — that Bryant was the aggressor, the perpetrator, and the would-be-murderer of another black teen. A young woman trying to stab someone to death is not “the victim.” That is, unless she is black and she is shot by a white cop. Then, the media are forced to anoint her as the most recent “victim” of “police brutality and systemic racism.”

What is clear, obvious, and undeniable from watching the video is that if Officer Nicholas Reardon had not squeezed his trigger *at the exact moment he did*, the girl in pink would have been stabbed. And while the mantra that “Black Lives Matter” is a constant drone in both the background and the foreground of our daily lives, it appears that the “black life” of the girl in pink does not matter, because Reardon — according to the very people who chant and shout that mantra — was apparently supposed to allow Bryant to stab the girl in pink.

The assertion by Doctors Blake and Morris quoted in the *Times* article that Reardon should have taken “a lay of the land” and tried “to interrupt the fight” — should have followed the lead of “foster care professionals and others” and tried to “disarm” Bryant as she was armed “with a knife engaged in a fight” — is ludicrous. Not only does it ignore the very real life-threatening nature of a person with a knife who is intent on stabbing someone, it assumes that knife fights are a regular occurrence — a rite of passage, so to speak. After all, aren’t teenage girls *expected* to go after one another with knives? And aren’t police officers *expected* to take that into account and calmly say, “Come now, put the knife down sweetie, you’ve made your point,” and then gently remove the knife from the hand of the would-be-murderer *while she is in the act* of attempting to plunge the knife into her would-be-victim?

That the *Times* would even attempt to use this textbook example of a clean shooting by police as an example of systemic racism misses the point that Officer Reardon shot Bryant to *save* the life of a black person. We will not take the time or space to dispute the claim by the *Times* that its litany of shootings of black people in Columbus is evidence of racism except to point out that even in that very article, the *Times* admits that Columbus “saw 176 hom-icides in 2020, the most of any year on record,” that so far “2021 is outpacing last year,” and that “many of them have happened in neighborhoods like Ms. Bryant’s, where residents say the spike in shootings has been met with aggression from police officers struggling to contain the violence.”

As police officers of all racial backgrounds risk their safety and their lives to protect black people from violence perpetrated by other black people, the media twists facts beyond recognition to paint a picture supporting a false narrative that cops are racist murderers.

Beside that, though, is the simple fact that if the media had a valid argument to make about “police violence” against black people, they would not need to go so far beyond the boundaries of logic to include a shooting that was (first) necessary, and (second) saved a young black woman from being stabbed.



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And since increasing numbers of low-information news consumers form their anemic opinions by simply reading headlines and tweets (without bothering to actually search for factual information about the events in question), the trend of media tweeting misleading garbage is a scourge on society. NPR's tweeted assertion that Bryant called the police for help and wound up dead for her civic trouble is a great case in point. First, it is not supported by the facts. Second, she was not shot for calling 911 while being black, she was shot while attempting to commit murder, as the readily available video from Officer Reardon's body cam makes clear. NPR's assertion that "a knife can be seen close to her" after she is shot is shown to be slanted "journalism" by the fact that a knife can be seen *in her hand* in the video — a knife she is attempting for all she is worth to plunge into the body of the girl in pink.



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