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When Double Murders Don't Matter



By [John Perazzo](#)

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When will it end? New York is the city, you probably recall, where a black man named Abner Loiuma was tortured by a white policeman in the restroom of a precinct station in 1997, making national news headlines for months; where the African immigrant Amadou Diallo was gunned down by four white police officers in 1999, creating a similar firestorm in the media; and where civil rights activists like the Reverends Al Sharpton, Calvin Butts, Herbert Daughtry, and Jesse Jackson have spent many field days publicly alleging that racism and a predisposition to brutalize black men runs rampant in the NYPD. As recently as January 2003, Sharpton and New York City Councilman Charles Barron were among the many who called for a special investigation into why city police officers had felt it necessary to shoot three black suspects during the first few days of the new year.

Against this backdrop, the last thing New York needed was yet another potentially high-profile altercation between cops and black city residents, ending with two African American men lying dead – in pools of their own blood. But that's precisely what occurred on the night of March 10 in Staten Island, when two men known in their community to be of excellent character – 34-year-old Rodney Andrews, who leaves behind two young sons, and 36-year-old James Nemorin, who is mourned by his wife and three children – both died of gunshot wounds to the head.

If you live outside of New York, you may perhaps be wondering why you haven't heard much about the deaths of these men. Even though both victims were black, and both were killed in an altercation between cops and civilians, the civil rights watchdogs were silent. There were no public rallies denouncing the killings; there were no pained lamentations about anti-black violence permeating the city and its police force; there were no desperate calls for greater respect for black lives. Why not?

It's actually quite simple. First, the triggerman who killed both Andrews and Nemorin was also black. And second, Andrews and Nemorin were the police officers involved in the incident, not the civilians. In the contemporary civil rights game that assigns varying degrees of significance to the deaths of human beings,

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that makes the victims oh-for-two.

Detectives Andrews and Nemorin were killed in a sting operation that turned disastrous. Their plan was to purchase a \$1,200 submachine gun from 20-year-old Ronell Wilson and 16-year-old Jessie Jacobus, at which point they were to arrest the pair for illegally selling a firearm. The youngsters, meanwhile, had other ideas: they would simply steal the \$1,200 at gunpoint and call it a day. As Andrews and Nemorin drove the young men toward the location where the aforementioned weapon was stashed, they were trailed by backup undercover vehicles. Unfortunately, at some point Wilson spotted the backup cars and asked, "Are we being followed?" Because Andrews and Nemorin were wired for sound, the backup officers heard Wilson's question and thus veered off the road so as to give the appearance that no one was following the lead vehicle. Nevertheless, when the lead car reached a relatively isolated area shortly thereafter, the suspicious Wilson shot both detectives in the back of the head, execution style. He and Jacobus then pulled the dead officers out of the car and drove off.

A member of the infamous Blood gang, Wilson is a remorseless monster who spent the days immediately following his double murder cavorting with a girlfriend. At his arraignment a few days after the crime, he "didn't seem fazed by it in the slightest," according to a detective in attendance. Jacobus and four other accomplices – including one Omar Green, who orchestrated the \$1,200 robbery plot – are no better. They place utterly no value on human life. For them, murdering a man is no more morally taxing than swatting a fly.

Their wasted lives are a tragic testament to the devastating effects of fatherlessness in the black community today. According to various bits of background information in newspaper accounts, neither Wilson nor Green has a father who plays any meaningful role in his life. Nor does sixteen-year-old Mitchell Diaz, who supplied Wilson with the murder weapon. Whether any of the other three conspirators have any significant contact with their fathers is anybody's guess, but it's very unlikely that they do. In some American cities, 80 percent or more of children raised in black households have no father. What chance do such boys really have in life, growing up without the barest shred of the love and guidance they desperately need from a man whom they can respect and emulate? It is hardly surprising that they often turn, as Ronell Wilson did, to gang life not only for a sense of family, but for instruction in the difficult art of growing into manhood.

It is difficult not to feel pity for the overburdened women in their lives, who were unable to keep their boys from going astray. Consider the words of Omar Green's grandmother Deborah Jackson, who rationalized, "Even if he [Green] was the mastermind, he wasn't in the car with them [the killers]." Green's mother, for her part, depicted her son as a basically normal boy who has a girlfriend and likes video games. Perhaps we can understand the reluctance of these women to acknowledge just how depraved is the youngster about whom they speak, for they are surely feeling maternal grief of the deepest kind.

But there is one group of folks for whom we ought not similarly cut any slack. These are the so-called "civil rights" activists of our day. Instead of talking about the vital issue of fatherless black homes, and instead of using such horrific incidents as these Staten Island killings as opportunities to encourage greater paternal involvement in the lives of young black men, these usually vocal racial hucksters suddenly become mute. They much prefer to save their breath for the next occasion when they can trace the death of an African American to the hand of

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a white police officer, at which time they will shout from the rooftops about police racism and brutality – as though that were the greatest source of hardship in the lives of young black men.

John Perazzo is the author of [The Myths That Divide Us: How Lies Have Poisoned American Race Relations](#). For more information on his book, click [here](#). E-mail him at wsbooks25@hotmail.com

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