

Stolen Lives: Metro Detroit Area

P.O. Box 44925 Detroit, Michigan 48232

August 26, 1998

The Coalition is demanding justice in the following recent cases of killings and brutality by police in the Metropolitan Detroit area. Call us at (313) 628-4932 or come to our meetings every Wednesday at 6 p.m. at the Unitarian Church Parsonage, Cass at Forest, especially if you have cases to add.

DETROIT POLICE DEPT.

LAMAR GRABLE, age 20.

Moments after leaving his father's home for a church party. Lamar was shot eight times including twice in the back and three times in his chest at close range, by police officer Eugene Brown with P.O. Vicki Yost on Sept. 21, 1996, on Field near Kercheval.

Lamar was not known to carry a gun and no physical evidence has been produced tying him to the gun police claim he was carrying. Lamar was a loving son to Arnetta Grable and Herman Vallery, brother, grandson, and father, active in community affairs. He had no police record. He was African-American. No justice or punishment of the police has been rendered to date. P.O. Brown was given an award for his shooting because he was wearing a bullet-proof vest!

JIMMI RUTH RATLIFF, 47.

A beautiful, professional woman who worked at Blue Cross for 22 years, Jimmi Ratliff was shot to death by police in her apartment at 1300 E. Lafayette on December 9, 1997. The shooting took place after a horrific assault on her building

by an army of police including a SWAT team using tear gas and the latest in modern assault weapons. The police were called by the apartment manager simply because Ms. Ratliff would not allow staff into her apartment. Although police claim she fired a gun, her sister Eva Crowley states that the gun she owned had only been fired twice, at a practice range.

Family members called to the scene were not allowed to see or talk to Ms. Ratliff. While guarded by police, they heard current Police Chief Benny Napoleon and others cold-bloodedly plan her killing. Ms. Ratliff was shot through the wall of her bedroom by a rifle with an infrared sight. No justice has been obtained to date. Ms. Ratliff was African-American.

RAHAAB WHITE, 21.

On December 9, 1995, Rahaab left his mother Jamellah Sombai's house late at night after having dinner, helping a neighbor start her car, and shovelling the sidewalks in front of the townhouse complex where they lived. He was to meet a friend who worked near the Union Street restaurant on Woodward. Moments later, he

lay dying on Woodward, shot twice in the chest, only once at close range, by off-duty police officer Thomas Phillips. Phillips and a parking lot valet claimed Rahaab had tried to rob them of \$40 in receipts at gunpoint.

Rahaab had money with him when he left his mother's, and was planning to get married and go to Wayne State University in January. He had just completed a year of study in Africa. He had no reason to commit a robbery and did not own a gun. Contradictory statements about the incident were given to the police by the parking lot attendant and other witnesses. Rahaab was African-American.

CORA BELL JONES, 79.

On August 15, 1998, police stormed into Ms. Jones' home, beat her great-grandson who was trying to protect his family from a drive-by shooting that had just occurred, and maced her daughter who was in a wheelchair. Ms. Jones, frail, with Alzheimer's disease, partially blind and deaf, sought to confront the intruders who were hurting her family. With twenty police officers in the house, Ms. Jones was shot to death. Cold-bloodedly, Assistant

Police Chief Charles Wilson claimed the shooting was "a proper use of force." Homicide Inspector William Rice said "A shot was fired and it went where it was directed." Ms. Jones was African-American.

DAMIAN SOLOMON, 26.

This young African-American and two companions were stopped by police on Feb. 12, 1998 on Tyler near Linwood, for allegedly "loitering" in a vacant lot. Residents in the area stated no one had complained about their presence. Police officer Marlon Benson shot Damian three times at point-blank range in the heart, allegedly after a chase during which P.O. Benson was shot in the hip. Although police claimed Damian had a gun with him, residents observed them searching through the area for a weapon after the killing. Residents also complained of constant police harrassment.

RICARDO GORDY, age 21.

While handcuffed, Ricardo choked to death in the back of a police car near his home on Seyburn on March 24, 1993. Witnesses stated variously that police either refused to help him when he choked, or intentionally used a "death choke." The police officers responsible for his death were not punished or reprimanded, although a small legal settlement was obtained in his case by his family.

ROY HOSKINS, age 14.

A ninth-grader at the time of his death in 1997, he was the youngest of seven children of Lena Hoskins. Witnesses reported that Police Officer James Woods was seated in his car when he shot and killed Roy. They say that Roy was standing still, with his arms raised and his back turned to the officer. He was not armed. He was shot in the back.

P.O. Woods was cleared of any wrongdoing after two police investigations, although the Hoskins family accepted a lawsuit settlement of \$1.6 million in his death March 24, 1998.

MACOMB CO. POLICE

JOHN COSBY III, age 26.

After arrest in 1994 by the Macomb County police, this young African-American was subjected to constant physical and verbal abuse, culminating in a beating August 2 that left him in danger of bleeding to death. While in custody of the Detroit police after being hospitalized, John informed them that he feared for his life if returned. Despite complaints filed by his attorney and the testimony of other prisoners in the Macomb County jail, he was scheduled to be returned. He was only able to physically avoid further brutality and death by commandeering the helicopter returning him to the Macomb County jail.

ROYAL OAK POLICE

DANTE FOSTER, AGE 26.

A new father, Dante was shot to death March 27, 1998 by Royal Oak police officer Mark Porter, while sitting in the car he owned, with \$4,000 in his pocket to purchase a new car. His crime? Allegedly using his younger brother's ID to buy the car because his credit was bad. Although the medical examiner and witnesses confirmed that Porter fired at Foster from well outside the car, the prosecutor has just refused to bring charges, claiming the shooting was an "accident" occurring during a struggle in the car. A federal investigation of the case has been announced, and a lawsuit has been filed by the family.

DEARBORN POLICE

DALON GUNN, age 24.

The mother of a 3-year-old girl, DaLon was killed July 19, 1997 when Dearborn police officer Michael Christoff slammed into her car during a high-speed chase through a residential neighborhood. Witnesses stated Christoff's car was leading at least a dozen cars from several departments, going up to 90 mph, with no sirens in use. The force of the collision slammed DaLon's car 150 feet into the porch of a house. Even though the State Police found Christoff at fault, the Wayne County prosecutor refused to bring charges. Lawsuits are pending.