

IN DEFENSE OF OUR CHILDREN:

A Statement of Special Concern

From

• The Black Action Council For United Progress •

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In a blanket indictment leveled against local black male youth, a new term has now entered into this community's vocabulary. 'Gang related race-based violence' is being used by police officials, the local press, and some community leaders to describe the negative encounters occurring at both Champaign high schools and in the campus-town area. Black males attending Urbana High have been characterized by Champaign police deputy chief Don Carter as members of 'street gangs' at the central focus of these problems. To date, no such occurrences have taken place at any of the Urbana schools. Carter's explanation of the problem as 'reminiscent of wilding' by 'Champaign and Urbana high-school gangs' was dismissed by Urbana High's principal Rob Nielsen who stated in a Daily Illini article of October 9th: '*We (Urbana High) do not have a gang problem. There are no indications showing that we have a gang problem. I resent anyone saying we do.*' Yet the deputy chief's pronouncements causing untold and unnecessary anguish to the children and families involved, have led to an editorial by WBCP beginning with 'racial attacks perpetuated by young black males', and a Ministers' Alliance press release using the absurd term 'Black Racists'. The reactionary posture regarding these events taken by Champaign's deputy police chief, the management of WBCP, and the Ministers' Alliance, have all led to grossly unfair characterizations of our children.

The campus-town occurrences are being portrayed by deputy chief Carter as indiscriminate black male attacks on unsuspecting white students for the purpose of 'gang initiation'. The high school problems have been characterized by the authorities as unprovoked acts of

violence by black male students against their unsuspecting white classmates. We believe a full discussion of *all the facts* is clearly required in order to protect the rights of our youth as these developments unfold. At this juncture, unfair tactics are being used against our young high school students, placing them at the center of blame in all instances and resulting in unlawful arrest and unfair suspensions and expulsions. With regard to campus incidents, a snowball effort seems to be underway to paint a 'Keep-Out' sign across the entire University banning our local community. We remind that this attitude flies in the face of the espoused 'Your University' program goals as cited this year by the chancellor. We would like to think that if this is an 'open' campus, our law abiding children can seek out social, recreational and new learning opportunities within its environment and be guaranteed the same safety, security and respect afforded any other human being.

Whether occurring on the university campus, at our high schools or in the community at large, we join with everyone calling for an immediate halt to violence. However, a concern of equal importance is not being addressed. A more careful examination of the facts will show that white students, in an overwhelming number of these instances, have been the primary instigators of so called 'unprovoked attacks'. A review of these unfortunate episodes reveals a pattern of precipitous behavior on the part of white male and female students in their interaction with local black youth. This demands full scrutiny as well. These brash, sometimes racist, and often alcohol induced acts are managing to escape attention by the local press, Champaign police officials

and some community organizations who have issued statements using a broad brush to assign all improper behavior to our black male youth.

U. of I. special committee chairman Nate Banks, after his televised October 28th statement on 'unsupervised black youth' will hopefully not play into this same slanted perspective of mislabeling our black youth as the committee's work progresses. Certainly he knows this is not some recent phenomena occurring for the first time in this community. This problem has historical foundations reaching back generations. It is imperative that white parties, their problems of drunkenness, and a clear resurgence of blatant racist behavior when coming in contact with our kids be held on an equally accountable basis. All one-sided blame leveling must be rejected as wholly unfair and totally out of place. To begin labeling all of these incidents as a 'gang problem' is sheer folly, and does nothing to get to the root causes of these disturbances. This community's gang problem is and always was a distinct issue requiring a totally separate agenda.

Perhaps the most realistic perspective to take in viewing this issue is one that sees no pristine, angelic white students and no evil, malevolent black youths, but simply as what happens when drinking-age white kids from Skokie, Kenilworth, Winnetka and other upscale, one race communities encounter average black kids from Champaign-Urbana on a given Saturday night.

LET'S BE FAIR TO OUR CHILDREN

IN DEFENSE OF OUR CHILDREN: THE CHRONOLOGY

Below is a chronology of the events since August 91, discussed on the opposite page of this document. It was compiled from reports by concerned families, eyewitnesses and various local newspaper articles.

<p>INCIDENT AND LOCATION 8/17/91 17 year old black male is assaulted by white female U of I student in Campustown at Fifth and John at approximately 1A. M. Black male was shoved off sidewalk and attacked from behind by one of three intoxicated white females.</p>	<p>INCIDENT AND LOCATION 9/28/91 A group of black males ages 17 to 20 were verbally assaulted and pushed off the sidewalk by a group of college age white males in the campustown area near Sixth and John at approximately 11 P. M.</p>
<p>PARTIES INVOLVED Two black males aged 16 and 17 unnamed white U.I. student and Champaign P.D.</p>	<p>PARTIES INVOLVED Several black males from the local community, several white male students from U.I. and Champaign P.D.</p>
<p>CAUSES Unprovoked attack by intoxicated, belligerent and hostile white female student.</p>	<p>CAUSES Racial slurs and unlawful physical action by intoxicated belligerent white male students against black male youth.</p>
<p>ACTION TAKEN Black male was released from police custody after eyewitnesses corroborated his story. No arrest of white assailant was made.</p>	<p>ACTION TAKEN Two black males were arrested and charged with mob action. Case pending.</p>
<p>INCIDENT AND LOCATION 9/21/91 Several 16 year old black males were verbally assaulted by a group of several white U.I. students on the corner of Sixth and John in Campustown near midnight.</p>	<p>INCIDENT AND LOCATION 10/1/91 Black male high school student at Centennial High School falsely accused with assault against white male student.</p>
<p>PARTIES INVOLVED Several black males age 16, several unnamed white students and Champaign and Campus police.</p>	<p>PARTIES INVOLVED Black male students, white males student high school officials, Champaign P.D.</p>
<p>CAUSES Racial slurs and insults by white students directed against black male youths.</p>	<p>CAUSES Cause unknown.</p>
<p>ACTION TAKEN Champaign police arrested two black males and charged them with mob action. Black males were detained at county youth home for three days. Charges were later changed to battery. Case pending.</p>	<p>ACTION TAKEN Black male student temporarily suspended from classes pending hearing. Facts related at hearing results in lifting of suspension.</p>
<p>INCIDENT AND LOCATION 9/26/91 White male high school student assaulted by group of black male high school students at Centennial High School football game.</p>	<p>INCIDENT AND LOCATION 10/18/91 White student attacked by unknown assailant with pipe in Campustown area.</p>
<p>PARTIES INVOLVED Several black male high school students, several white male high school students, high school officials, Champaign P.D.</p>	<p>PARTIES INVOLVED White student, Champaign and Campus police.</p>
<p>CAUSES Race jokes and insults by white high school students told in the presence of black male students.</p>	<p>CAUSES Cause unknown.</p>
<p>ACTION TAKEN Black students were suspended pending hearing. Hearing results in some black students being expelled and others allowed to return to classes. No action was taken against white students involved.</p>	<p>ACTION TAKEN Investigation continuing by Champaign police.</p>
	<p>INCIDENT AND LOCATION 10/22/91 Black male verbally assaulted and physically threatened with thrown objects by three white students from U of I and Parkland College while walking near Fifth and Healy Streets in Campustown area.</p>
	<p>PARTIES INVOLVED Black male victim, three white assailants, Champaign P.D.</p>
	<p>CAUSES Unprovoked racial assault on black male by intoxicated belligerent white males.</p>
	<p>ACTION TAKEN White students were arrested and charged with racial intimidation. Case pending.</p>

We are requesting any additional information regarding this issue. If you have any such information, please contact us at the following number: 333-6504