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Did Trayvon contribute to this tragedy?

Dennis Coday | Jul. 19, 2013 NCR Today

Eric Holder?s address to the NAACP [1] Tuesday about his father?s talk about how a young black man should interact with the police and Holder?s talk on that subject with his son, was among the most powerful testimonies I have heard in the wake of the George Zimmerman trial.

A similar and equally as powerful witness comes from Fr. Bryan Massingale, a priest of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and an associate professor of theology at Marquette University. Massingale has an essay on the U.S. Catholic website titled: **When profiling is ?reasonable,? injustice becomes excusable** **[2]**. He writes:

> You don?t have to wear a hoodie or sagging pants to be perceived as a threat. The very presence of a black man in any space that violates the expectations of those in authority can constitute sufficient probable cause for suspicion and danger.
>
> This is why the verdict of ?not guilty? has touched a deep well of resentment, sadness, and horror in many African American men (and in those who love us). For I not only know that if I had a son he could look like Trayvon; I know that I could be Trayvon.

But that sadness and horror is mixed with anger Massingale writes:

> Some have said that Trayvon himself contributed to this tragedy. They argue that he should have walked or run away when confronted by Zimmerman. (Note how they deny that he had any right to ?stand his ground? or defend himself against someone who aggressively pursued him without provocation.)
>
> Once again, I feel the blues, but now laced with anger. Because too often I also have been saddled with the responsibility for managing white people?s fear and anxiety, charged with going the extra mile to assure them that I am not a threat. And thus, the anger: Why should I have to constantly interrupt my life and shape my daily pursuits in order to accommodate someone else?s fears? Why must I bear the burden of deciding if I should walk in this neighborhood, or wear certain clothes, or talk in a raised voice, in order to satisfy the fear that is unjustly assigned to me?

Read the full essay here **[2]**.

Source URL (retrieved on *07/28/2014 - 11:50*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/did-trayvon-contribute-tragedy

Links:

[1] http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/attorney-general-eric-holders-remarks-on-trayvon-martin-at-naacp-convention-full-text/2013/07/16/dec82f88-ee5a-11e2-a1f9-ea873b7e0424_story.html
[2] http://www.uscatholic.org/blog/201307/when-profiling-%E2%80%9Creasonable%E2%80%9D-injustice-becomes-excusable-27574