

2 Bright Young Lives 2 Dreams 2 Nightmares...



Northern Iraq, March 2006—Three U.S. soldiers armed with AK-47s burst into the house of 14-year-old Abeer Qassim Hamza. One of the soldiers takes Abeer's father, mother, and 5-year-old sister into the bedroom and kills them in cold blood. He comes out, blood on his clothes, bragging about what he'd just done. Then he and another soldier take turns raping Abeer. When they are done, they shoot and kill her. Then they set fire to her body. The military tries to cover all this up. (Photo above, Abeer as a young child.)



Photos AP

Detroit, Michigan, May 16, 2010—The police raid a home where 7-year-old Aiyana Stanley-Jones is sleeping on the couch with her grandmother, Mertilla Jones. The cops throw a flash bang grenade through a window, severely burning Aiyana. Almost immediately after this an officer fires his gun into the house from the porch, hitting Aiyana, killing her. The cops burst into the house, and grab Aiyana's grandmother, put her in chains and lock her up for several hours. The police lie about what happened and claim the shooting is an "accident."

Two Young Girls Brutally Murdered... By the Same Criminal System

The U.S. capitalist-imperialist system, whose rulers send its military around the world to invade, occupy, murder, and rape...is the SAME system whose police brutalize and kill people and act like an occupying army in the ghettos and barrios here in this country.

1 Criminal System

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The Execution of Aiyana Stanley-Jones, and the Urgency of Putting this Revolution and Its Leadership on the Map

We received the following from a reader:

Bob Avakian, the leader of the movement for revolution that we are building, begins his talk *Revolution: Why It's Necessary, Why It's Possible, What It's All About* by recounting the history of lynching in the United States. As Avakian describes a few especially horrific instances of the lynching of Black men and women at the hands of white supremacist mobs...as he unfolds the details of atrocities that are unbearable and infuriating almost beyond words, he returns to this refrain: **"AND THAT'S STILL NOT THE WORST OF IT!"**

This is exactly how I have felt during the past several days, as details and reaction surrounding the execution of Aiyana Stanley-Jones continue to emerge. For those who have still not heard, Aiyana Stanley-Jones is a 7-year-old girl who was shot and killed by Detroit police during a raid carried out in the early morning hours of May 16. You read that correctly—**7 years old**.

Around 12:40 am on the morning of May 16, Aiyana Stanley-Jones was sleeping on the couch next to her grandmother, Mertilla Jones, when cops swarmed their home. During the raid that followed, Joseph Weekley, a member of the Detroit Police Department's Special Response Team, shot Stanley-Jones in the neck and head, killing her.

In the aftermath of Aiyana's murder, Detroit police—led by assistant police chief Roger Goodbee—have claimed that Weekley's gun went off accidentally after he entered the home, during a struggle with Mertilla Jones; **as if, even if that were true, this would excuse the fatal shooting of a 7-year-old child.**

But Aiyana's family, and their lawyer Geoffrey Fieger, say the police are lying through their teeth. They have filed lawsuits charging violation of civil rights, gross negligence, and a conspiracy to cover up the actual circumstances of Aiyana's death.

During a news conference announcing the lawsuits, Fieger—surrounded by Aiyana's grieving family—said that somebody stopped by his law office to show him a videotape that very clearly shows what *actually* happened during the raid. Fieger said that he is not currently in the possession of the video, and he urged the person who does have it to come forward.

As Fieger described it, here are the actual circumstances of the raid:

Multiple hooded police officers converge on the residence. They encounter a male outside whom they throw to the ground, proceeding to step on his back. He pleads with the officers, "There are children in the house."

Indeed, there were several small children in the house, which police had every basis to know *before even conducting the raid*; there were toys scattered on the front lawn, and a police surveillance van had been watching the residence earlier in the day.

Police then throw a flash bang grenade through a window, and it lands "either onto Aiyana, or close enough to her to burn her severely," as Fieger put it.

"BUT THAT'S STILL NOT THE WORST OF IT!"

Almost immediately after throwing in the flash bang grenade, an officer fires a shot from the porch **outside the house**, clearly exposing as a lie the police claim that the shot was fired accidentally from inside the home during a struggle with Mertilla Jones. The bullet kills 7-year-old Aiyana Stanley-Jones.

"I seen the light leave outta her eyes," Mertilla Jones recounted, sobbing uncontrollably, during the news conference. "I knew she was dead. She had blood coming out of her mouth. Lord Jesus, I ain't never seen nothing like that in my life. My 7-year-old grandbaby—my beautiful, beautiful gorgeous granddaughter. My goodness, what type of people?! ... what type of people?! You can't trust the police. You can't trust Detroit police."

"BUT THAT'S STILL NOT THE WORST OF IT!"

How do officers respond to the crime against humanity that they have just perpetrated—supposedly "by accident"? By carrying Aiyana's dead body out of her home "like a rag doll," in Fieger's words.

"BUT THAT'S STILL NOT THE WORST OF IT!"

After they have just murdered her 7-year-old granddaughter right in front of her, the cops put Mertilla Jones in chains and lock her up for several hours, testing her for drugs and gunpowder in the process.

And on top of all this, it appears that the police did not even have the right address.

"What's being reported in the press is, well the fugitive or the suspect was found upstairs. He wasn't found upstairs in this home!" Fieger said during the news conference. "I don't know why you keep reporting that. This home is a lower flat. There is no upstairs in this home. There's an upstairs flat...which is a separate home, which they did not have a warrant for; they went in there and they subsequently got it and that's where he lived."

"BUT THAT'S STILL NOT THE WORST OF IT!"

While Chauncey Owens, the man whom Detroit police were looking for, has already been arrested and charged with murder... Not only has Joseph Weekley not been arrested and charged with Aiyana's murder... Not only has he not been fired from the police force... He is on *paid* administrative leave.

And how has Dave Bing, Detroit's mayor, reacted to this atrocity? By calling Aiyana's death a horrific crime and demanding Weekley immediately be arrested and charged with murder? NO. In fact, he has urged people *not* to fault the police!

"Too many people are pointing to the police department," Bing said. "I don't think they are the problem. They have to be the solution."

On the other hand, Bing has been more than happy to blame Fieger, the lawyer for Aiyana's family.

"He's taking advantage of a terrible situation," Bing said, "and it's about money as far as he's concerned."

And Bing has also, somehow, found a way to blame the masses of Detroit. Like many other politicians and reporters in the days since Aiyana's death, Bing has sought to lump the murder of Aiyana Stanley-Jones together with recent violence in Detroit *among* the masses, which is *also* a product of this system—more specifically, of the severe desperation and misery and hopelessness into which this system has forced tens of millions of African-Americans and Latinos—though of course, Bing does **not** say that.

"It's a behavior problem, it's a cultural problem," Mayor Cosby—oh, sorry, Mayor Bing—said on May 20, speaking about Aiyana's murder and other recent killings of people in Detroit. "When people don't have jobs, they get frustrated and angry and people are making bad decisions."

Pardon me, Mayor Bing, but one brief follow-up question: Besides everything else that is wrong with what you just said, what the hell does any of that have to do with the police burning and then gunning down a 7-year-old girl in cold blood, as she slept next to her grandmother? **What, pray tell, was the "bad decision" that Aiyana Stanley-Jones made?**

To the reader: Pause for a second and think about these questions...

- 1) What does it say that when I first heard about the police murder of Aiyana Stanley-Jones, *I didn't even have to ask* whether or not she were Black? And that, in reading this article so far, you probably weren't wondering about her race, even though I did not mention it until just now?
- 2) What does it say when this crime against humanity, like the stopping-and-frisking of hundreds of thousands of innocent Black and Latino men every year in New York City alone... like the Federal government's decision not to prosecute the cops who killed Sean Bell... like the cold-blooded execution of Oscar Grant on a BART train platform in Oakland... continues even though we have a Black president and a Black attorney general?
- 3) What does it say about the value that this system, its political representatives, and its media mouthpieces put on the life of a young Black girl that her brutal murder—while receiving extensive coverage in Detroit and some sporadic mention in the national media—has, as I write this nearly a week after Aiyana's death, *still* not become a major national news story? That pundits and politicians across the country are *not* calling for the cop who killed her to even be fired, let alone jailed? That, as of roughly 2 pm ET on Thursday, May 20—more than five days after Aiyana's murder—there was no mention of this story on the front page of CNN.com, but there was apparently enough room to include items such as "Apple agrees to take cash for iPads" and "Warrant out for Lindsay Lohan"?
- 4) Why is it that this raid, and Aiyana's subsequent murder, were documented by a film crew for A&E—the "Arts and Entertainment" channel?
- 5) Why does the following quote from General Stanley McChrystal, the senior commander of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan, seem eerily and terribly relevant to the murder of Aiyana Stanley-Jones: "We have shot an amazing number of people," McChrystal told the *New York Times* in March, "but to my knowledge, none has ever proven to be a threat"?
- 6) When are people broadly, in this society and throughout the world, going to make the connections between what happened to Aiyana Stanley-Jones and children in Afghanistan, Iraq, or Pakistan who are orphaned, or who are themselves killed, by U.S. guns, airstrikes or drone attacks? ... or little children in India working 15-hour days to make soccer balls for people in the United States?
- 7) When are people going to realize that all of these atrocities are not only horrific, not only criminal, but completely unnecessary—that the system of capitalism-imperialism that has spawned all of these nightmares has **no right to rule humanity**, and that there is a basis to bring a completely different, communist world into being?

Whether or not this revolution—and this leader, Bob Avakian—become known broadly in this society, among millions of people of all strata and in all spheres, has everything to do with how people in this society and across the globe understand the answers to all of the above questions.

The entire *Revolution: Why It's Necessary, Why It's Possible, What It's All About* talk by Bob Avakian can be viewed online at revolutiontalk.net, and selected clips are available at YouTube.com/revolutiontalk. As soon as you finish this issue of *Revolution*, go online to watch the talk. If you want the DVD of the talk, order from RCP Publications or pick it up at the nearest Revolution Books store (info on p. 15).

So, in closing, let me just say: If there were anyone with any doubt—or any need for a reminder of—the need for revolution... of the urgency and stakes of the campaign we are building to make this revolution and its leader known to millions in this society... or of the crucial importance of the upcoming conferences in terms of taking that campaign to another level...

Just think of the name: Aiyana Stanley-Jones.

(For more coverage, see pages 14-15 and online at revcom.us)

**See the complete talk by Bob Avakian —
*Revolution: Why It's Necessary, Why It's Possible,
What It's All About*
at revolutiontalk.net and selected clips at YouTube.com/revolutiontalk.**