

# My Bag - Blacks talk about black crime today



BY WARNER SAUNDERS

The telephone caller asked would I attend a seminar to discuss black-on-black crime. I said, "just a minute," put the phone on hold and laughed until tears came to my eyes. Having regained my composure I inquired about the other participants. "Doctor-so-and-so from so-and-so-university, professor by-and-by from bye-bye-college, warden lock-'em-up from the local lockup and detective somebody from the black-on-black crime district," he proudly told me.

"How much is your fee, Mr. Saunders?" he asked. I cleared my throat and said, "\$350.00." I thought to myself that what I had just done could be called black-on-white crime. We cleared the date and then I got nervous.

"I don't know anything about black-on-black crime," I revealed to my secretary. She suggested that I get books on the subject and ready myself for the conference. "A good suggestion — so you get the books," I commanded. She laughed and the following day pushed into my office with a load of the thickest books I'd ever seen. "You can start with these and I'll look for more," she said with a smug look. As I gazed at the pile I wondered if I hadn't asked for too little in fees. In order to read all this I'd have to get a foundation grant and take a year's leave.

Every night after work I read, and read, and read, until I was so smart I'd stop people on the streets and tell them about the crime rate between Roosevelt Road and 16th Street on Kostner. I learned about every possible way people ripped off other people. Armed with all this crime data I got in my car and drove downtown to the seminar.

As I was pulling away from the curb I heard a voice calling me. It was "Fast Willie" the local second-story man. "Gimme a ride to 26th street?" he asked. "O.K., get in," I said. "Where you going, Willie," I inquired. "Court house man," I got to get cut loose this time. The cat who said I ripped him off ain't coming today so the judge gonna let me go," he revealed.

As we rode along I asked Willie about why he robbed and beat up black people who are brothers. He put our conversation on "hold" and laughed until tears came to his eyes. "Man, you playing with me?" he yelled. No, I told him, that I could not understand why black people commit so many crimes against each other. "Look, Mr. Saunders, cats like me ain't black, white, green or any color; we are businessmen.

"We go where the business is and where the man ain't looking. Can you see me going up to Deerfield black as I am trying to stick up. The man would be on me so fast I couldn't get a chewin' gum wrapper. Out here the man is too busy whooping them Panthers and giving tickets to mess with me. Any way he don't care if niggers get ripped off. But you can bet he's watching his 'thang' back in his own 'hood'."

"What would happen if the police patrolled equally in black and white areas, Willie?" I asked. He thought for a moment and said in a shakey voice, "Well if things got that bad, I might have to get a job or something like that... I guess."

And That's My Bag!