

## Quentin Jones

### *Not How or What But Why*

Every day I watch the news or read the newspaper I learn of another senseless act of violence perpetrated by one black person against another. In particular, young black males for whom the chances of becoming a victim of homicide are greater than the chances of going to college.

Every time that I hear politicians, lawmakers, or our supposed black leaders discuss this topic the focus is always on the “How?” and “What?” but never the “Why?”—as in “how can we stop black-on-black violence?” and “What,” as in “what laws can one create to punish the perpetrators of these acts?” If one is really serious about addressing the issue of black-on-black violence, then it is imperative that one must start focusing on the “Why?” “Why,” as in “why is black-on-black violence so prevalent in this country?” It seems that nobody ever wants to discuss the “Why?” I guess because in doing so one would undoubtedly expose the flawed system that is designed to destroy black lives, but appears to promote FREEDOM, JUSTICE, and EQUALITY.

It’s not a coincidence that black-on-black violence is most prevalent in the urban communities where there is a lack of education, lack of resources, residential segregation, high unemployment rates, and poverty. These conditions play a significant role in the black-on-black violence epidemic. In addition, the average family living within the urban community is living below the poverty line. On the surface it may appear that black-on-black violence is nothing more than crimes being committed by criminals, but it is much deeper than that. The system that was supposedly designed to ensure equality to all American citizens has failed us. Yes, black people have to accept some responsibility for the black-on-black violence epidemic, but one also has to consider all other external factors which contribute to black-on-black violence.

First, let’s examine the lack of education, which I consider to be the most significant external factor contributing to black-on-black violence. Why are so many schools being closed in black communities? Why do suburban schools use computers in the early years, while urban schools either don’t use computers or start much later? Why is the curriculum taught at the urban schools outdated, thus putting urban students at a disadvantage academically? Why is it that the least qualified teachers go to the urban community schools while the more qualified teachers go to the suburban schools? The lack of education in black communities contributes, again, to high unemployment and poverty and thus the epidemic. Many variables exist which underscore the concept of black-on-black violence, and contrary to what contemporary America wants

the public to believe, black males are not some hyper-violent, super-predatory animals, whose innate nature is to kill. Rather, black people, for innumerable years, have been and continue to be so oppressed that some of us have, ultimately, become hopeless.

I would argue that the root of black-on-black violence is internalized self-hate, which stems all the way back to the era of slavery. For over 400 years black people have endured some of the most atrocious acts of hate known to humankind at the hands of Europeans. These centuries of hatred have had a damaging, psychological effect on all black people. Therefore, black males in particular, who have long been targeted for extinction, have unconsciously developed a self-hate complex. What this means is that black males have internalized all of the hate inflicted upon one's self for centuries, and have subconsciously started to hate other black people thus perpetrating the original slavemaster's mentality. Hence the black-on-black violence epidemic plaguing this country right now. Black-on-black violence is a very serious issue—one that needs to be immediately addressed. However, the solution doesn't lie so much in the "How?" or "What?" but rather in the "Why?"

So long as there is a minimal focus on the "Why," and black people constantly lack knowledge of self, black-on-black violence will continue to run rampant within this country. But then again, maybe that's their goal.

Just a little food for thought...