

National Affairs by Claire Hoy ? A theme unjustified by the facts

Ever since the horrible events in Ferguson splashed onto our consciousness a little while ago, we've been bombarded with pictures and commentary about how the tragic shooting of a black man by a white cop is not just a terrible thing but a metaphor for American society.

Used to be that when things happened they were reported as happenings. End of story.

Not now. Not with the 24-hour news cycle, and with politicians, political activists, race-baiters and assorted other rabble rousers trying to turn everything into something much bigger than it is.

And so we continue to see pictures, for example, of protesters in the U.S. holding up their hands and saying 'Don't shoot,' as if that has anything to do with the reality of what happened to Michael Brown in Ferguson.

But that's become the central theme of an orchestrated campaign to push the notion that white cops can shoot black men with impunity because, after all, society doesn't value black men.

The extraordinary irony about this is that had Brown actually put his hands up and pleaded with police officer Darren Wilson not to shoot, he'd likely still be alive today.

Instead, the forensic evidence and the preponderance of witnesses ? almost all of them blacks ? show that Brown ? fleeing from a robbery where the large 18-year-old had just roughed up a small shopkeeper ? first punched the officer before Wilson could get out of his car and then later charged at him, causing Wilson understandably to fear for his life and shoot.

But in these things ? and many other highly charged events ? the facts tend not to matter. At least not to those who have an agenda which they are determined to push regardless of whom it harms and what the outcome will be.

Even President Obama, sadly, joined the chorus of those linking a legitimate police action with a broader grievance that much of the black community feels towards authority.

This is not to suggest ? not for a second ? that much of the mistrust by the black community is not warranted. It is. History hasn't always been kind to them.

But rather than attempt to go beyond that and offer some positive reinforcement, many politicians, journalists and assorted elites have jumped on the Ferguson case to push a theme which is completely unjustified by the facts of this particular case.

It is true, for example, that the Ferguson police department does not come close to representing the demographic makeup of the community they police. But that has less to do with a racist desire by the authorities to keep the police white and more to do with the fact ? and it is a fact ? that many young blacks would, dare we say it, rather be caught dead than join the police force. The police, they are taught all their lives, are the enemy and you don't consort with the enemy.

This certainly is a serious problem, but turning a common thug like Brown into a martyr for the cause isn't the way to repair it.

Race-baiters like Rev. Al Sharpton ? who, sadly, has the ear of people such as Obama and the new mayor of New York ? is in his element whenever he can stand on a platform and spew his bile, all the while claiming he wants 'justice,' when his approach has precious little to do with 'justice' but a lot to do with raising his own self-importance, his profile and donations for his cause.

The grand jury in the Ferguson matter spent months sifting through thousands of pages of documents and came to the conclusion that Wilson had done his job and certainly shouldn't be indicted for it.

That, as you know, sparked riots, not only in Ferguson but in various U.S. cities, supposedly based on the absurd notion that the grand jury was biased and manipulated.

None of the critics are actually taking issue with the facts in the case. That's far too difficult to do given the clear-cut nature of them. Rather, they are screaming that this is what is to be expected when a black man dies and the whole grand jury thing ? a bedrock of U.S. justice ? is a sham.

Rather than inspiring rioting in Ferguson, however, Sharpton and his ilk ? along with Obama and others ? should head over to Chicago, for example, where once again they are closing in on 400 homicides this year alone, the vast majority of them black youths murdered by other black youths.

White policemen aren't the thing most young blacks should fear. And crying racism to deflect attention from the real tragedy happening right under their noses is not doing any good for the young black men they claim to care so much about.

