

WAITING FOR SUPERPREDATOR

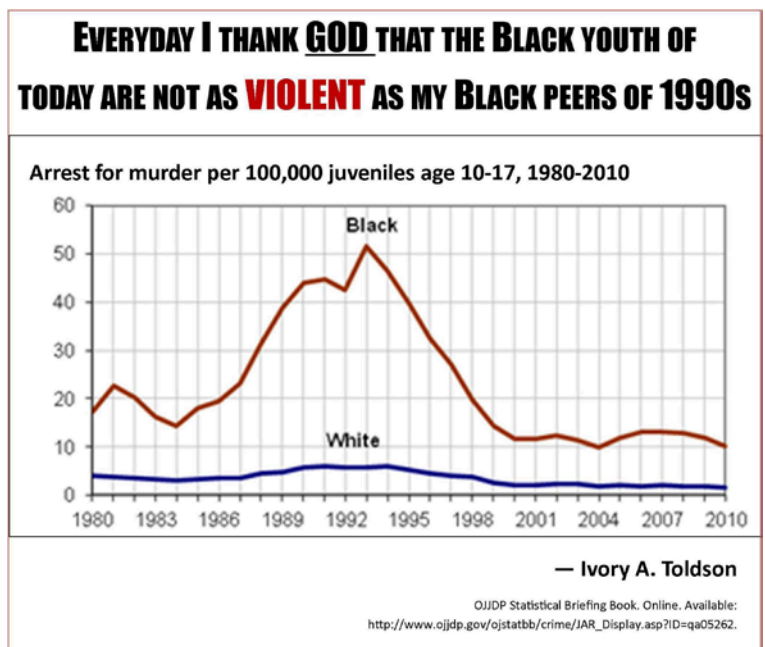
THE CURIOUS CASE OF JOHN J. DIULIO JR.

By Ivory A. Toldson (born 4/26/1973)

“Superpredators” and “Crack Babies” were 1980s and 1990s tropes that the media used to forecast a conjectural threat from future generations of Black teenagers. Both theories were based on junk science, and have since been debunked.

The crime rate among subsequent generations of Black teenagers did not reach dangerous and unprecedented levels. The crime rate actually experienced an unprecedented plunge, and has now finally reached pre-1980s levels. Similarly, the most comprehensive research studies have found no evidence that prenatal exposure to crack leads to long term cognitive or emotional impairment, beyond the problems associated with such exposure to any substance including alcohol. Since alcohol is more prevalent, “Alcohol Babies” have always been a more enduring national threat than “Crack Babies.”

Notwithstanding, because of the BS (Bad Stats) about Black children that we were exposed to in the 80s and 90s, and into the 2000s, we tend to expect the worst of Black teenagers today. Most adults who are in their late-30s and older have been preparing for superpredators for decades. Our confirmation bias prevents us from accepting the fact that teenagers today are less violent and more academically engaged than we were. We see loving, caring and smart Black teenagers as aberrations and violent Black teenagers as the norm. We also see normal, age-consistent acts of deviance as threatening and tend to respond disproportionately (e.g. a 5-day suspension from school for a scuffle).



The irony is that my generation, not the younger generation, was the most violent. Our murder rate was off the chart. We invented the Crips and Bloods, powerful drug cartels, drive-bys, and gangsta rap. Now, as grownups, we hang on to righteous indignation about sagging pants and casual use of the “n-word.”

I’m not saying that Black youth of today are perfect, but I am saying that based on any objective analysis, they are a better version of us. And hopefully the next generation will be a better version of them.

I know many Black teenagers often wonder, “Why are they so afraid of us?”

The honest truth is that we have unwittingly been conditioned to.

[As Ex-Theorist on Young 'Superpredators,' Bush Aide Has Regrets](#)