

EXILED IN PURGATORY: KILLING OUR CHILDREN

I remember when I was a youngster we had toy guns that shot little yellow rubber pellets. We mercilessly pelted each other as we ran through the neighborhood. Sometimes we'd walk down to the elementary school which had playground equipment that could give us some cover from each other.

No one called the cops saying there were suspicious kids carrying guns. None of us were shot by trigger happy cops. In fact, most people would hardly give us a glance as we ran through their yards gunning each other with pellets or carrying the guns.

Other times I would carry a B-B gun down the road where I would shoot cans, paper bags and plastic bottles. No one ever called the cops.

Which is why I was completely surprised to read about the 12 year old Cleveland, Ohio boy shot dead while holding a toy gun. That boy was me at one time, he was one of my friends. The only difference is we were white and he was black.

It doesn't surprise me that two hired experts — a former FBI agent and a Colorado prosecutor — found the shooting "reasonable within the law". The FBI are hardly a model of honesty when it comes to excessive force. A prosecutor, who favors law enforcement officers is not an unbiased

evaluator. Both no doubt did their own "Monday Morning Quarterbacking" to help out their fellow law enforcement officers. They were the last two people who should have been giving "expert" opinions.

This is unquestionably a race issue. We know the boy was black and he wasn't the first boy gunned down for holding a toy gun. What we also know is it never happens to white children.