



SEARCH

HOME ABOUT CIR CIR INVESTIGATIONS THE REPORTERS REPORTER TOOLS BLOGS DONATE SHOP RSS

ERICA BAKER | THE INVESTIGATIVE REPORT | MARCH 31, 2008

## Death penalty doc reveals disturbing trends

### The Muckraker Blog

Your daily dose of muckraking.

#### Billions lost in Iraq could be "the largest war profiteering in history"

SHAHIEN NASIRIPOUR | JUNE 13, 2008

The BBC reports that \$23 billion may be lost, stolen, or unaccounted for in Ir ...

IN THE INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

#### Blackwater—the new CIA?

CIR STAFF | JUNE 11, 2008

The mercenary corp expands into counternarcotics and "CIA-style" intelligence ...

IN THE INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

#### It's alive ...

CIR STAFF | JUNE 10, 2008

ProPublica launched its new website today. Check it out ...

IN THE INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

#### Child prostitution in America

CIR STAFF | JUNE 3, 2008

Tens of thousands of kids are caught up in the sex trade. PBS NOW investigates ...

IN THE INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

*Race to Execution* was a poignant film about the devastating effects racial prejudice plays in determining the fate of those accused of capital crimes in America. The stories of Madison Hobley and Robert Tarver left me haunted by the unscrupulous nature of the way their cases were tried, and distressed by the frequency of how similar cases are handled across the country.

One disturbing scene that lingered with me long after the film was Madison's personal account of the verbal and physical abuse he endured at the hands of police. At one point he says: "They said they didn't care who did it. As far as they were concerned, I was a nigger and I did it and they had me. One officer stood behind me and held me while the other officer hit me in the stomach. And then one of them got a plastic typewriter cover and put it over my head."

A clip from *Juror Number Six* explored the role the media plays in producing and reinforcing stereotypical images of criminals. This piece resonated most with the audience of mainly reporters and journalism students at the San Francisco screening last Thursday, and fostered a lively discussion about the responsibility journalists have in curbing this trend. Panelist and filmmaker Rachel Lyon cited the O.J. Simpson trial as a tipping point of media sensationalism of race and murder. Co-panelist Audrey Herron shared startling anecdotes of how she's seen negative media representations manifested in our legal system. And a former *San Francisco Chronicle* reporter in the audience summed up the evening by applauding the films as being some of the best counter-narratives to biased reporting that he's seen.

I walked away from this documentary with a better understanding of how the death penalty is used disproportionately against African-Americans, the poor, and the powerless. I believe this film will leave viewers longing for true justice on behalf of the marginalized in our society.

[EMAIL THIS](#) [del.icio.us](#) [Digg](#) [Technorati](#) [Facebook](#) [Reddit](#)

#### Blogs by Category:

##### The Investigative Report

The best of investigative journalism from around the world and thoughts on the state of the Fourth Estate.

##### Dispatch

Dispatches from journalists as they're reporting in the field.

##### Backstory

Journalists tell the backstory behind their reporting through essays, Q&As, and multimedia.

##### Update

Updates on and fallout from CIR investigations.

#### Blogs by Reporter:

[Anna Badkhen](#)

[Anna Isaacs](#)

[Ben Lurie](#)

[Carrie Ching](#)

[Christa Scharfenberg](#)

[CIR Staff](#)

[Craig Pves](#)

[Duane Moles](#)

[Emma Brown](#)

[Erica Baker](#)

[Jacob Schneider](#)

[James Sandler](#)

[Jonathan Vanian](#)

[Loretta Tofani](#)

[Mark Schapiro](#)

[Shahien Nasiripour](#)

[HOME](#) | [CONTACT](#) | [DONATE](#) | [PRIVACY POLICY](#)

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS: THE REVA AND DAVID LOGAN FOUNDATION, DEER CREEK FOUNDATION, AND FORD FOUNDATION | [SEE FULL FUNDER LIST](#)  
COPYRIGHT 2007, CENTER FOR INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

2927 NEWBURY STREET SUITE A, BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA, 94703 | T: 510.809.3160

[Will Evans](#)

---

**Blogs by Investigation:**

[America's Racial Cleansings](#)  
[Business of the Bomb](#)  
[Exposed](#)  
[Judicial Independence](#)  
[Money and Politics](#)  
[No Place to Hide](#)  
[Nuestra Familia, Our Family](#)  
[Reasonable Doubt](#)  
[The Chauncey Bailey Project](#)  
[The Dick Goldensohn Fund](#)  
[The War on Whistleblowers](#)  
[Waking to Warming](#)

---

**Blogs by Topic:**

[Corporate Responsibility](#) (36)  
[Education](#) (2)  
[Environment](#) (27)  
[Government Accountability](#) (89)  
[Health](#) (35)  
[International Affairs](#) (29)  
[Military](#) (7)  
[Money and Politics](#) (45)  
[Science and Technology](#) (11)  
[Social and Criminal Justice](#) (43)

**>> All Muckraker Blogs**

---