

Senseless killing

MUSLIM YOUTH SLAIN

By Rhena Muslimah Muhammad

It was Eid ul Fitr — the day of festivities after the month-long Ramadan fast, and Labor Day, the last big holiday of summer. A time for families and friends to gather around picnic tables and in back yards in an effort to prolong the summer fun.

For the family of Shahidah Qaiyim, things weren't too much different. The youngest of her 10 children had been out all day with an older sister, and towards the evening, things got even quieter around the house.

Her 19-year-old son Aazim Qaiyim (Gregory Owens) had been home all day, changing a tire on the car and doing other things around the house for his mother. He left home that evening around 8 o'clock with a friend, and six minutes later, peace in the home of Shahidah Qaiyim was shattered.

AAZIM QAIYIM lay bleeding to death on a Southside Chicago sidewalk, a bullet wound in his throat, the victim of a senseless attack.

His killer, now identified as Simon Dawydenko, a caucasian male, had hurled a racial slur at Aazim, and when challenged, shot Aazim then sped away in his car. "I feel like my insides are going to explode," his mother told *Bilalian News* the day after the shooting.

Aazim, a member of the Marine Corps Reserve, was a good son, she said, and he was known by everyone for his assertive manner and his willingness to stand up and speak out to protect his rights and the rights of others.

"Everyone — young and old alike — loved him," Mrs. Qaiyim said, and

WITNESSES SAID AAZIM'S killer had, moments before the shooting, left a private social club located down the street from the Qaiyim family house.

The club, located in a neighborhood that is 95-98 per cent Bilalian, is one of several such clubs in the area that are known to be the exclusive hangouts of Caucasians who no longer live in the community.

There had been several previous ugly racial incidents in the area, Aazim's mother recalled, usually instigated by members of the private club, or by patrons of a lounge half a block down the street from where Aazim eventually bled to death.

When the neighborhood started to change over, Mrs. Qaiyim said, most of the Caucasians moved out, but they still frequented the clubs and bars in the area.

SOMETIMES THE OUTSIDERS would get drunk and become rowdy. That's when they would leave the clubs and race up and down the quiet streets breaking out windows in cars and homes:

Or they would disrespect the women in the neighborhood or beat up or shoot the young men.

Aazim's friend came here just minutes after they left," recalled Mrs. Qaiyim. "He was out of breath and he told me to hurry because Aazim had just been shot."

"I jumped up, and called an ambulance, but it took so long to get a response I left. As I walked out the door, I got a phone call saying the ambulance was on the way. I'm still waiting for it," she said bitterly.

"I WALKED AROUND the corner to where Aazim lay sprawled on the sidewalk. Blood was everywhere." A crowd of police officers ringed Aazim's body, she said, and no attempt was made to aid or comfort him.

"His friend said a young Caucasian man rode by in his car and called them niggers. Aazim told him he had to business in this neighborhood anyway, and that's when the guy pulled a gun.

Aazim ran to an alley and tried to hide behind some bushes, but the man followed him in his car and shot Aazim in the throat before he took off.

"SOMEHOW AAZIM managed to stumble from the alley to tell his friend he had been shot before he collapsed on the sidewalk where I found him."

And that's when the nightmare really started, she said. A police squad roll arrived on the scene and Aazim was put in it. His mother got in with him for the ride to the hospital but the truck wouldn't start.

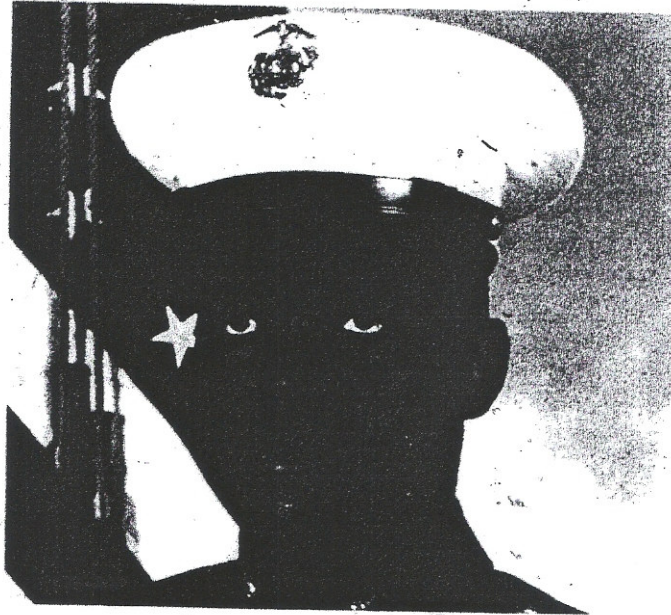
"I got in and we just sat there. I banged on the doors to be let out, but they kept us both in there until they were ready to let us out. I asked what was going on, but I got no answer from anyone.

"Meanwhile, my son was just lying there bleeding to death. Finally, another squadroll came, but this one didn't have any emergency equipment in it — it had nothing but a stretcher.

"My son lay dying but no one offered him any emergency aid — not even a towel to wipe away the blood."

AAZIM WAS PRONOUNCED dead on arrival at nearby Jackson Park Hospital: "The emergency room doctor told me he could have been saved had he gotten there earlier," recounted Mrs. Qaiyim.

"He told me Aazim was possibly a victim of negligence because he received no first aid and that I should follow up and see why he was not given the any



emergency medical care that might have saved his life."

Though speedy and proper emergency medical care probably could have done much to save the life of Aazim Qaiyim, the lifesaving process actually should have started in his own neighborhood years ago.

The family moved in to the neighborhood in 1972, Mrs. Qaiyim said, and almost from the beginning, there were racial fights.

Three years ago, Aazim and two other youths were attacked by drunken Caucasian marauders as they sat in a car one night. All the car windows were shattered, but none of the youth suffered serious injury.

NO SERIOUS COMMUNITY efforts to drive the clubs and their patrons from the area were initiated at the time of the earlier incident, and as a result in this year alone, Aazim Qaiyim and another young man are dead, two other youth were severely beaten.

Aazim Qaiyim was not only the victim of a gunshot wound, and improper emergency medical care — he was first the victim of the community apathy and ignorance that permitted the clubs and racial incidents to exist and happen in the first place.

Days after the death of Aazim Qaiyim, that apathy is dying, although it is a slow death.

Two blocks to the west of Aazim's house, residents on one street are quietly forming block clubs and starting efforts to change the zoning laws that make it legal for the clubs to sell alcoholic beverages in residential areas.

AAZIM'S FRIENDS, gathered on one porch and then another, hostile one minute, confused the next.

"I don't know what we are going to do about it," one young man said, "but I do know that they certainly killed a good brother," he added, a sentiment that set everyone's head nodding in agreement.

"I have a good attorney and the police officers assigned to the case have been very helpful," Mrs. Qaiyim said.

"I've been thinking — I know it is the will of Allah that my son died. I am hoping that He will give me the strength to accept it and be strong.

"Right now, I want to see that justice is done, so that my son will not have lost his life in vain."

Editor's note: Following news of the murder of Brother Aazim Qaiyim, Chief Imam Wallace Deen Muhammad suggested the following prayer be said after each of our daily prayers.

"Oh Allah, come to our rescue, and give us justice. Oh Allah, make the Courts execute swift justice on this murderer. Oh Allah, please make an example out of this particular murderer so that future murderers will not be so bold. Amen."