

**who killed mcduffie?
(a definitive question)
*Hakim Al-Jamil***

In 1979, Arthur McDuffie, a Black man, was riding his motorcycle in Miami when police chased him, knocked him off his bike, and beat him to death, crushing his head with billyclubs and flashlights. During the trial that followed, all the police were found not guilty. The Black community launched a massive rebellion that rocked Miami and sent shock waves throughout the country. Hakim Al-Jamil, then a prisoner at Leavenworth, wrote this poem about the incident. (Reprinted from *Notes From a New Afrikan P.O.W. Journal*, Book 6)

his brain was bashed
cranium crashed
skull fractured/broken
all the way around
but they said those who beat him
didnt kill him
so who killed mcduffie?

maybe it was the same ones
who didnt kill
clifford glover/randy heath/
jay parker
claud reese/randy evans/luis baez
auturo reyes/bonita carter/
eula love
elizabeth magnum/arthur miller &
countless others
when they musta tripped or
their fingers slipped

maybe it was the same ones
who didnt kill
jose torres/zayd shakur/
fred & carl hampton/
jonathan & george/joe dell
twyman myers/spurgeon winters &
a few thousand others
perhaps it was those who
didnt kill
lumumba/ché/amilcar/biko/fanon
mondlane/marighella/cordero &
quite a few thousand more

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do you suppose it may have been
those
who didnt kill
the indians and mexicans
who didnt steal the land &
claim that they discovered it
who didnt steal afrikan peoples
halfway across the planet
who didnt loot our customs/cultures/
religions/languages/labor & land
who didnt bomb the japanese/
the vietnamese & boriqua too

do you think it might have been those
who didnt kill at attica/watts/dc/
detroit/newark/el barrios
at jackson state, at southern u
at the algiers motel
who didnt shoot mark essex
for 16 hours after he was dead
ask them & they'll tell you
what they didnt do
but they cant tell you
who killed mcduffie

maybe it was one of those
seizures unexplainable where he
beat himself to death
it wouldnt be unusual
our history is full of cases where we
attack nightsticks & flashlights with
our heads
choke billyclubs with our throats till
we die
jump in front of bullets with our
backs
throw ourselves into rivers with
our hands and feet bound
and hang ourselves on trees/
in prison cells
by magic

so it shouldnt be a mystery that
nobody killed mcduffie
he just died the way so many
of us do
of a disease nobody makes a
claim to
the police say they didnt do it
the mayor says he didnt do it
the judges say they didnt do it
the gov't says it didnt do it
nixon says he didnt do it
the fbi/cia/military
establishment
say they didnt do it
xerox/exxon/itt say they
didnt do it
the klan & nazis say they
didnt do it
(say they were busy in greensboro
& wrightsville)
i know i didnt do it
that dont leave nobody but you
& if you say you didnt do it
we're back to where we started
looking for nobody
who killed mcduffie

you remember nobody dont you
like with de facto segregation
where they said the schools were
segregated
but nobody did it on purpose
like when they said there's been
job discrimination for years
but nobody did it intentionally
thats the nobody we're
looking for

the one with the motive to kill
mcduffie
& you see, we *must* find this nobody
who slew mcduffie
because the next person nobody
will beat,
stomp, hang or shoot to death
wont be mcduffie
it'll be you or someone close to you

so for your own safety,
you should know the pedigree of
who killed mcduffie
you should know the reason of
who killed mcduffie
you should remember all those
forgotten
who died of the disease nobody
makes a claim to
so we wont be here asking
who killed you

In Nazi Germany ... first they put the Communists and Jehovah's Witnesses in concentration camps, but I was not a Communist or a Jehovah's Witness, so I did nothing. Then they came for the Social Democrats, but I was not a Social Democrat, so I did nothing ... Then they arrested the trade unionists, but I did nothing because I was not one. Then they arrested the Jews, and again I did nothing because I was not Jewish. Then they came for the Catholics, but I was not a Catholic so I did nothing again ... At last they came and arrested me, but by then it was too late ... No one was left to speak up. (Pastor Martin Neimoller, 1965)