

## **Synopsis**

### **Homicide in Huston - © Stephen Shames**

Drugs and the availability of powerful automatic hand guns brought a homicide epidemic to our large cities in the 1990s. A good number of the victims are innocent children killed by random gunfire. Houston, a sprawling city in the heart of Texas, was number four in 1991 with over 700 murders. These photos were taken in Houston in 1992 and 1994 (and Philadelphia in 1994). The issue documented in these photos is no longer front-page news. Gun violence in 2015 is way down. Most of the murders in Houston occurred in ghetto areas. The ghetto was never “nice”, but in the past it was a family-oriented, relatively safe place. The ghetto is a different world today. Rather than a community of supporting neighbours, too many areas have become hostile, unsafe locations where murder is commonplace. The problem is bad for all youth, but African-American teens face a particular challenge.

Homicide is the number one cause of death for young black males – placing an entire generation at risk.

But make no mistake. This is not only about victims – it is also about a generation of killers who came of age in the 1990s. These young people who grew up on ghetto streets are angry. Today, young people have a greater access to guns – often automatic weapons – and a willingness to use them without remorse.

These photos are shocking. But they should not surprise us. In a sense, this set of photos is about what happens to the abused and neglected children we saw in *Outside the Dream*. While the parents of these children cannot and should not escape blame for failing their children – neither can we.