

I read two stories today that dealt with race in America. One broke my heart, one made me smile. Both have ties to Atlanta, my hometown.

I'll lead with the happier story since it's shorter. The son of former NFL star Deion Sanders tweeted "Gotta get the hood doughnuts almost every morning. If my doughnuts don't come in a plain white box, I don't want them!" His father replied in a re-tweet "you're a Huxtable with a million \$ trust fund stop the hood stuff! Lololol." Good natured teasing between father and son.

The story that broke my heart is about a young black man, age 17, named Anthony Stokes. Two years ago he was denied a heart transplant by Children's Hospital in Atlanta because he was deemed to be "noncompliant," i.e., would not follow the drug and therapy regimen to ensure his health. His mother felt that hospital authorities were unfairly stereotyping her son. Media attention ensued and young Anthony received a new heart in August 2013. At that time he had been arrested at least three times for burglary in 2010, 2012 and February 2013, six months before the transplant controversy. At the time of his transplant he was wearing a court-ordered transplant. His mother, however, also arranged for a mentor so that Anthony would have a new chance at life, literally and metaphorically.

Alas, the predictions were correct that he was "noncompliant." This week he died after crashing a stolen car. He carjacked an SUV at a mall, tried to burglarize a home by kicking in the door, shot at an elderly woman who called 911. Police spotted the stolen car and gave chase. Anthony lost control and crashed into the pole of a bank sign.

Since his operation Anthony posted photos and selfies of himself on Facebook posing with a gun. He had further encounters with the law before this week's tragedy. Last year he was arrested for shoplifting and police at that time found a stolen pistol hidden in his jacket. Later in the year he was arrested in a stolen car where police found again stolen pistols. At the time of that arrest he was wearing again a court-ordered ankle bracelet.

Sources for the facts above come from two sources, the [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#) and [KTLA](#).

There is a lot that can and will be said about the Stokes case. I'll leave the handwringing and accusations to others.

What disturbs me is what these two cases have in common, and that is the both young men were attracted to the perceived glamor of the "hood life." Deion, Jr. seemed to want cred by referencing buying doughnuts for the "hood." Anthony not only posed as a "gangsta" but actively led the lifestyle even after what should have been a life-changing operation.

What is the attraction of the hood for young black men? (Or anyone since young men and women of all races adopt to one degree or another the argot, style and attitude of the ghetto).

When we have role models like Barack Obama, Ta-Nehisi Coates and Neil deGrasse Tyson, why does the culture of crime and ignorance still allure? What does it take to make intellectual achievement cool for young black men?

[Link](#)