

(Fictional) newspaper account of the search for a suspected murderer (assumed also to have raped his victim) in Richard Wright's *Native Son* (1940):

Immediately a cordon of five thousand police, augmented by more than three thousand volunteers, was thrown about the Black Belt. Chief of Police Glenman said this morning that he believed that the Negro was still in the city, since all roads leading in and out of Chicago were blocked by a record-breaking snowfall.

Indignation rose to white heat last night as the news of the Negro's rape and murder of the missing heiress spread throughout the city.

Police reported that many windows in the Negro sections were smashed.

Every street car, bus, el train and auto leaving the South Side is being stopped and searched. Police and vigilantes, ashamed with rifles, tear gas, flashlights, and photos of the killer, began at 18th Street this morning and searching every Negro home under a careful search of all abandoned buildings, which are said to be hideouts of Negro criminals.

Maintaining that they feared for the lives of their children, a delegation of white parents called upon Superintendent of City Schools Horace Minton, and begged that all schools be closed until the Negro rapist and murderer was captured.

Reports were current that several Negro men were beaten in various North and West Side neighborhoods.

In the Hyde Park and Englewood districts, men organized vigilante groups and sent word to Chief of Police Glenman offering aid.

Glenman said this morning that the aid of such groups would be accepted. He stated that a woefully undermanned police force together with recurring waves of Negro crime made such a procedure necessary.

In a radio broadcast last night Mayor Ditz warned of possible mob violence and exhorted the public to maintain order. "Every effort is being made to apprehend this field," he said.

Description of a (fictional) police shooting in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1947):

"And I could see the cop bark a command and lunge forward, thrusting out his arm and missing, thrown off balance as suddenly Clifton spun on his toes like a danger and swung his right arm over and around in a short, jolting arc, his torso carrying forward and to the left ... as his right foot traveled

forward and his left arm followed through in a floating uppercut that sent the cop's cap sailing into the street and his feet flying, to drop him hard, rocking from left to right on the walk as Clifton ... crouched, his left foot forward, his hands high, waiting. And between the flashing of cars I could see the cop propping himself on his elbows like a drunk trying to get his head up, shaking it and thrusting it forward – And somewhere between the dull roar of traffic and the subway vibrating underground I heard rapid explosions ... and the cop sitting up straight now, and rising to his knees looking steadily at Clifton, and pigeons plummeting swiftly into the trees, and Clifton still facing the cop and suddenly crumpling.”

Funeral message by the Invisible Man:

"Listen to me standing up on this so-called mountain!" I shouted. "Let me tell it as it truly was! His name was Tod Clifton and he was full of illusions. He thought he was a man when he was only Tod Clifton. He was shot for a simple mistake of judgment and he bled and his blood dried and shortly the crowd trampled out the stains. It was a normal mistake of which many are guilty: He thought he was a man and that men were not meant to be pushed around. But it was hot downtown and he forgot his history, he forgot the time and the place. He lost his hold on reality. There was a cop and a waiting audience but he was Tod Clifton and cops are everywhere. The cop? What about him? He was a cop. A good citizen. But this cop had an itching finger and an eager ear for a word that rhymed with 'trigger,' and when Clifton fell he had found it. The Police Special spoke its lines and the rhyme was completed. Just look around you. Look at what he made, look inside you and feel his awful power. It was perfectly natural. The blood ran like blood in a comic-book killing, on a comic-book street in a comic-book town on a comic-book day in a comic-book world.

"Tod Clifton's one with the ages. But what's that to do with you in this heat under this veiled sun? Now he's part of history, and he has received his true freedom. Didn't they scribble his name on a standardized pad? His Race: colored! Religion: unknown, probably born Baptist. Place of birth: U.S. Some southern town. Next of kin: unknown. Address: unknown. Occupation: unemployed. Cause of death (be specific): resisting reality in the form of a .38 caliber revolver in the hands of the arresting officer, on Forty-second between the library and the subway in the heat of the afternoon, of gunshot wounds received from three bullets, fired at three paces, one bullet entering the right ventricle of the heart, and lodging there, the other severing the spinal ganglia traveling downward to lodge in the pelvis, the other breaking through the back and traveling God knows where.”