

**The
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**Wal-Mart Shoppers Give Jdimytai Damour the Death Penalty
The Substance of Truth
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*"No man is an island/
Entire of itself/
Each is a piece of the continent/
A part of the main/
... Each man's death diminishes me/
For I am involved in mankind/
Therefore, send not to know/
For whom the bell tolls/
It tolls for thee"/*

John Donne, Meditation XVII, [Devotions Upon
Emergent Occasions and Death's Duel](#).

If the esteemed poet, John Donne, had lived long enough to witness [what happened](#) on Nov. 28th, at Nassau County, New York, he might have rethought penning those timeless words. Precious poems ought not be wasted on a soulless generation. Even for the strong-willed, it takes a level of soul-numbness to digest the [eye-witness accounts](#) of shoppers whose [uncontrollable greed](#) ended the life of Jdimytai Damour.

While many have remained shocked at the level of apathy directed at the 34-year old Jamaican native's fragile soul, various anti-consumerism advocates have kindly outlined

the inevitability of this tragic incident, following years of programming through relentless advertisements, by Wal-Mart and co. As conscionable members of society tried to reconcile with the reality of a world they never new encompassed them, consumer-activist, Al Norman sought to draw a parallel between the marketing ploys of big-money corporations, and the beast-like attacks of the Valley Stream Wal-Mart shoppers. In a [blog post](#) on Nov. 30th, Norman suggested that not only were the socially-unconscious, robot-minded Wal-Mart patrons a victim of circumstance, but they *"were merely lab rats responding to a stimulus. When the door opened, they went after the cheese. In the past, it has been fellow shoppers who have been killed in the "savage" rush, as one onlooker at the Valley Stream store described the incident. Our culture of mass consumption has bred these "supershoppers," who will show up for every clearance, every special, with one goal in mind: to be at the cash register first."*

If we are to be candid, it would seem unequivocally clear that society, as it stands today, has, for a long time, accommodated such foolishness, and [muffled voices](#) of reasoning which have consistently attempted, rather hopelessly, to [set up proactive measures](#), in anticipation of Nov. 28th's horrific incident. The dog-eat-dog world, in which we live, has put competition at the center of our existence. Success has trumped greatness, and "being first" has a higher fulfillment value than concrete accomplishments. No more is this visible than in the usage of the [highly flawed](#) Electoral College system, to elect leaders of the free (or mentally incarcerated) world. Since the unforgettable event of November 28, many have attempted to come to grip with the [unbiased display of inhumanity](#), which has, hopefully, stained the legacy of "Black Fridays" to come.

The actions of the Valley Stream shoppers are appalling, but also inevitable, in our television-controlled realm of existence. A [TV-raised generation](#) is illimitably susceptible to the felicities of temporary pleasure, and satisfaction. The truth is that we live in a sick, demented, twisted and ungodly society. Our disdain for organized religion, while understandable, has sucked the life-blood of spirituality from our consciousness. Nothing more shackles an unbroken soul, than the reports of shoppers who, having been informed of their life-ending (literally) actions, neglected orders by store-clerks to stop shopping. These discount-fiends must assume that, somehow, the acquisition of low-priced electronic toys is equitable to the life of a 34-year old man.

The fate of Jdimytai Damour, a Black man, also reminds us of the not-so changing attitudes toward the plights of Black men – in spite of the President-Elect's recent victory. The Black Community can hardly claim astonishment at the degree of neglect Mr. Damour suffered from, as the biblical *Good Samaritan* narrative has become customary for many of its inhabitants. For the Black Community, the only difference has been the omission of a happy, colorful and redeeming ending. Black folks have always been, and still remain, offspring of the [Curse of Ham](#).

On an experiential level, the term "Black Friday," says it all. It is clear that our feeble-minded, slow-witted society lacks the temerity to confront the connotations aroused by attributing darkness (or Blackness) to evil, and lightness (or Whiteness) to the herald of good tidings. A Utah State Senator would [remind us](#), earlier this year, that to be a Black baby, is to be a "dark, ugly thing." Our "post-racial" society still clings to terms such as "Black Monday," "Black Friday," "Blackball," "Blacklist," and "Blackmail," in ascribing nefarious intentions to character traits. Dr. King, who fought vociferously to lay bare the hypocrisy of our adopted culture, [understood](#), quite clearly, the lethal havoc misplaced language wreaks on the psyche, and self-esteem of Black people:

"Don't let anybody take your manhood [or womanhood]. Be proud of our

heritage as somebody said earlier tonight, we don't have anything to be ashamed of. Somebody told a lie one day. They couched it in language - they made everything Black ugly and evil. Look in your dictionary, and see the synonyms of the word Black - it's always something degrading and low and sinister. Look at the word White - always something pure, high and clean."

A society which [promotes entertainment](#) as a guise to justify the pejorative usage of [racial slurs](#), such as "Redskins," is, [in the words](#) of Hip-Hop artist and philosopher Canibus, "on the brink of extinction." Mankind cannot live on bread alone, and certainly not on [stupidity](#) or commercial profit.

In the years to come, it would be intriguing to gauge how truly remorseful shoppers are, vis-à-vis the tragedy of Brother Damour. Radio host and activist, [Mark Thompson](#) has proposed a moral solution to remind shoppers of the endless possibilities embedded in *shopaholism*. Mr. Thompson has recommended that "Black Friday" be renamed "Jdimytai Damour Day." Perhaps this would persuade shoppers, who feel an obligation to the cash register, to critically assess the ramifications of their actions. More important than Thompson's suggestion, is the reality that Black folks should be the last *wallet-happy* shoppers in a society that openly dehumanizes them, without any repercussions. For what does it profit a man [or woman] to gain the whole world, and forfeit his [or her] soul?

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BlackCommentator.com Columnist, Tolu Olorunda, is an 18-year-old local activist/writer and a Nigerian immigrant. Click [here](#) to reach Mr. Olorunda.

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