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BNN launches "Stop The Violence" mini-series [\[EMAIL | PRINT | SHARE \]](#)

Caitlin Yoshiko Buysse

Calling for nonviolence and ceasefire in Boston, "Stop the Violence: Start to Love" inspires local youth to shun violence and embrace the values of peace, hope and love.

The 8-part mini-series is being aired this week on Boston Neighborhood Network Television.

The series grew out of Topper Carew's short film, "A Dream Deferred," which he created last May for a fundraising event for the Trinity Boston Foundation, Urban Improv and the Boston Ten Point Coalition. The piece wove together the stories of local families who had lost children to gun violence, the analyses of community leaders, activists and politicians on the causes of violence, and the voices of the hopeful youth who have been impacted by violence.

The film's production was a "very emotional experience," said the critically acclaimed film and television producer in an interview with the Banner. While filming, "tears would be running down my face." But Carew said he also realized that addressing the topic of gun violence is "very necessary" and "very important."

After witnessing how his film affected people – and how the film affected him – Carew decided to expand the project. With the support of BNN-TV and the Boston Ten Point Coalition, "A Dream Deferred" was transformed into "Peace Day: Stop the Violence, Start to Love," the following August. This 24-hour broadcast "devoted to peace, nonviolence, and ceasefire in our neighborhoods," featured films, and panel discussions, interviews, and inspirational messages from local and national leaders.

This week's 8-part series is a re-working of the "Peace Day" programming into smaller segments, and also features some new footage.

For Carew, rebroadcasting this material is "based on what I see as a continuing need, . . . a chance to change the social environment" and an opportunity to reach a wider audience. It is "important for young people and families and communities to know there are people out there who care," he said.

Social engagement has been an important aspect of Carew's life since his youth. Born and raised in Roxbury, Carew later moved to Washington, D.C. where he attended Howard University and became active in the student Civil Rights Movement.

Originally an architect, Carew's interest in film developed gradually after he founded a community arts organization. In order to run a filmmaking program at the organization—which he started because of its particular appeal to young men—he began learning how to make films.

Carew was soon making his own films and winning awards, and eventually returned to Boston for a film fellowship at MIT. After the fellowship, he received an opportunity to produce at WGBH, which marked the official turning point in his career from architect to filmmaker.

This year, Carew was named one of BNN's National Media Heroes as part of the Network's "Celebrating Silver: 25 Years of Media Access and Excellence" campaign.

Although the topic of gun violence is new to him, Carew's vision behind "Stop the Violence" returns to important ideals from his youth.

"We have to re-instill very important values that were very important to people of color in the 1960s," he said, which include peace, care, families, love and unity. This program, he hopes, will "reignite some of these values."

By focusing on these, Carew hopes to shift away from the misogyny and violence that are common today, in order to "begin thinking about a new narrative that can permeate the community."

The first episode, "Causes of Violence," which aired Monday, included "A Dream Deferred," and Carew's award-winning animated film "The Maggot," as well as a discussion between Carew, and co-hosts Rev. Gregory Groover, pastor of the Charles St. AME Church and Rev. Jeffrey Brown of the Boston Ten Point Coalition.

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When asked about the causes of violence, Groover emphasized poverty and the lack of access to quality education. "When children are equipped with high-quality education, they are also equipped and fostered with hope," he said. "Hope for their future, hope in knowing that they will have a better day tomorrow."

Brown agreed, saying that despite the reduction of violent crime this year, "if we're going to really strengthen community and restore it, then we have to begin addressing those structural issues as well."

Tune in on BNN's News and Information Channel (Comcast 9 / RCN15) at 8:30pm for the remaining episodes: Gang Life (Thursday); Viral Impact (Friday); Not All Kids are Bad (Saturday); Re-Entry / CORI (Sunday); Solutions (Monday).

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