

For Immediate Release
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The Bystander Effect. Kitty Genovese 140 times. The victims were children, many with special needs. Similarities to the tragedy in NJ in 2004, when 3 young boys were being starved and eating plaster to survive, are chilling. Again, neighbors now report seeing children foraging in garbage for food, standing at the end of the driveway in cold weather. One victim filed a complaint in 1998. The foster placements by St. Christopher Otilie and the NYC Administration for Children Services in the home of Gonzales-Mugaburu did not stop.

Two decades, twenty years of horrific abuse to young foster children continued without interference or action from the officials charged with protecting children, or a religious non-profit, or the community, or the schools, or even, apparently, the ASPCA. Where was that village? No heroics would have been necessary; just common decency, as opposed to depraved indifference. Bystander apathy is a psychological phenomenon which operates in inverse proportion to the number of bystanders. "Someone else will call – someone else will help". For 140 defenseless children, no one helped, no one intervened. Where is our conscience, our moral compass? If we are unable or unwilling to protect the most vulnerable among us, who are we? We need to stand up, not stand by.

Of course, with good reason, many Americans are frightened about terrorists and refugees coming across our borders. In Suffolk County, the monster lived next door.