



Crime & Punishment

James Alan Fox on criminal behavior and the justice system

Don't forget the Coconut Grove tragedy

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I am thrilled that a [concerted effort](#) is being made to set aside the site of the 2003 Station fire in Warwick, RI in order to establish a fitting memorial to the 100 victims who died in the blaze. At the same time, it reminds me of the disgraceful approach that the City of Boston has long taken to the 1942 Coconut Grove fire that killed 492 people.

Tucked away on Piedmont Street in Bay Village, just behind the Radisson Hotel, the site of the Coconut Grove inferno is hard to find, and is unfamiliar to most Bostonians. It has been tarred over for parking. The only remembrances of the tragic events are a small plaque from the Boston Historical Society and an in-ground replica of the building that once was the center of Boston's entertainment district.

It is not completely clear why the Boston city leaders have all but ignored the tragic event. It may have something to do with possible complicity of city officials in failing to respond to serious code violations that played a role in trapping patrons inside the club as flames swept from room-to-room.

It is never too late for the City of Boston to follow the example of the many concerned folks in Warwick. I had two relatives die in the Grove catastrophe. That I never knew them makes it no less important to me, and others like me, to have the site to be secured and memorialized by something more appropriate than a parking lot.



