Today marks the 11-year anniversary of the kidnapping of Ariel Castro victim Amanda Berry on April 21, 2003 blocks from her home on Cleveland's largely White west side while she was leaving her job at the Burger King Restaurant at W. 110th Street and Lorain Avenue. Cleveland teen rapist and kidnapper Castro held Berry, Gina DeJesus and Michelle Knight captive for a decade at his since demolished home on the city's west side of town until
Today marks the anniversary of the kidnapping of Ariel Castro victim Amanda Berry, community activists women, including the Imperial Women Coalition, applaud her courage and that of Ariel Castro victims Gina DeJesus and Michelle Knight they and Berry’s seven-year-old daughter by Castro were rescued by neighbor Charles Ramsey in May of last year. Ramsey is Black.

A fired Cleveland schools bus driver and hoggishly violent and abusive widower with two grown children, Castro, 53, pleaded guilty to numerous criminal charges, including multiple counts of rape and kidnapping, in exchange for a life sentence without the possibility of parole. He hanged himself in the Correctional Reception Center in Orient, Ohio last September, just over a month into his sentence.

Castro admitted at sentencing as part of a plea deal that Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Tim McGinty negotiated in under three months that he raped DeJesus, Berry and Knight, and he told Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas Judge Michael Russo Judge Russo moments before his sentence was handed down, that he and the three girls, and the child he fathered with Berry, were one "happy family."

The serial rapist had also been charged with aggravated murder and faced the death penalty for allegedly murdering at least three of the unborn fetuses of Knight that he help create through rape and torture.

Over 100 feet of chain was found in the Castro home when police raided it in May.

With a 28th-year birthday coming up on April 22, Berry was nearly 17 when he kidnapped her, DeJesus, who knew his daughter, was 14 and also grew up close to the Castro home like Berry, and Knight, now 32 and a women's advocate spokesperson, was 21 at the time.

The ten- year anniversary of the abduction of DeJesus was April 2. Knight was taken captive nearly a year and a half earlier in August 2002.

Women activists groups of greater Cleveland had no mercy on the child rapist and kidnapper and commented as to the anniversary this year of the day Castro saw fit to snatch Berry and hold her captive for nearly 10 years along with Knight and DeJesus.
"We recognize this anniversary of the day of the kidnapping of innocent teen Amanda Berry by monster Ariel Castro less than a mile from her home as a reminder that rape and other violence against women and girls nationally, statewide and locally is an epidemic and we again applaud Amanda, Gina and Michelle for the courage and fortitude to get out alive," said Cleveland area community activist Kathy Wray Coleman, who leads the Imperial Women Coalition, a grassroots group founded in 2009 around the unprecedented murders of 11 Black women on Imperial Avenue on the city's largely Black east side by convicted serial killer Anthony Sowell. "We again call for additional resources to address this crisis around violence against women and as to Ariel Castro, we are pleased that Mr. Castro has moved on to a better place for himself and we hope he rots in hell."

Like the home of Castro on Seymour Avenue that he turned over to the county land bank as part of a plea deal, the home of Sowell on Imperial Avenue, the now infamous street by which the Imperial Avenue Murders drew its name, was demolished too.

A former marine, Sowell 53, raped three Black women and strangled and murdered 11 Black women whose bodies began surfacing at his family's home in 2009. He sits on death row while his appeal of his rape, aggravated murder and other convictions is before the seven-member largely Republican Ohio Supreme Court, which is led by popular Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor. (www.clevelandurbannews.com) / (www.kathywraycolemanonlinenewsblog.com)