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Data Zone
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Page 8

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The Soul of New Orleans

40th Anniversary of the King Assassination

Will Black Voters Turn Against the CBC?

Page 2



Will You Have to Repay Road Home?

Page 5

Newsmaker

Data Exclusive Interview
Sen. Mary Landrieu



Page 4

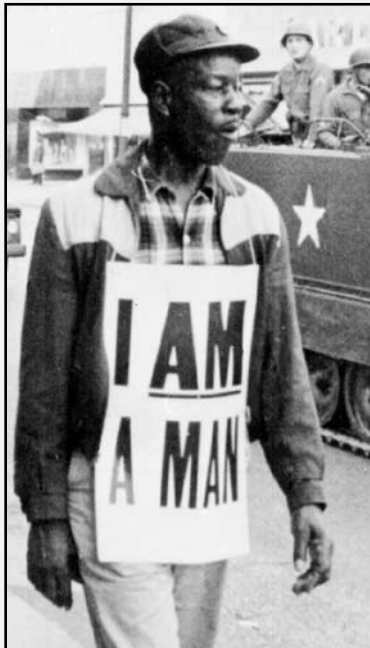
On Anniversary of King Assassination: Top Black in Congress Warns that Unfairness to Obama Could Cause Voter Relapse



By. Hazel Trice Edney

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – House Democratic Whip Jim Clyburn (D-S.C.), the highest ranking Black member of Congress, is warning on the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. that perceived unfairness toward U. S. Sen. Barack Obama in the electoral process could cause a relapse back to voter apathy.

“If we were to fail to nominate Barack at the end of this process and he’s still leading in delegates, then we’ve got a serious problem that will affect the participation of Black people in a big way for the next 40 years,” says Clyburn, who has staunchly declined to publicly endorse either Obama or Sen. Hillary Clinton in order to avoid conflicts in his whip job to



unite Democrats behind legislation.

In an interview with the NNPA News Service, Clyburn illustrated as an example the mood of the country in 1968 when King and Sen. Bobby Kennedy were assassinated only months apart and five years after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, Nov. 22, 1963. “You have to ask yourself what was going on in the country at the same time as the King assassination. King was assassinated around the same time as Bobby Kennedy and just [five] years after John F. Kennedy, he said. “Those three assassinations launched and thrust us into a real [state of apathy] that we all of a sudden seem to be coming out of at this point in time. If something were to short-circuit that and people

think it was unfair, we could collapse right back into that.”

Americans around the nation this week are commemorating the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. amidst the contentious Democratic Primary that has inspired a groundswell of activism not seen since before King’s death on April 4, 1968. The Nobel Peace Prize winner was a champion for voting rights and civil rights.

Clyburn’s concerns appear to reflect those of the Democratic Party leadership overall as some voters have threatened not to go to the polls or to vote for Republican John McCain if unfairness is perceived in the Democratic process.

Democratic National Committee Chairman Howard Dean said his greatest concern is that the party is united before the August convention in Denver.

“I hope that the super delegates will make their views publicly known some time between now and the first of July because we don’t want to take this convention

Continued next page.

INSIDE DATA

Cover Story	2	In The Spirit	7
Newsmaker	4	Love Dr..	11
State & Local.	5	Opinions	11
Data Zone	8	@Issue	12
Health.	10	National News	7

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James Earl Ray

Did He Murder Dr. King?

James Earl Ray (March 10, 1928 – April 23, 1998) was convicted of the assassination of American civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., which occurred on April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee. Ray had been twice placed on the FBI Ten Most Wanted Fugitives list.

A little more than two months after King's death, on June 8, 1968,

Ray, an escaped convict who had broken out of the Missouri State Penitentiary a year before the assassination, was captured at London's Heathrow Airport while trying to leave the United Kingdom on a false Canadian passport in the name of Ramon George Sneyd. Ray was quickly extradited to Tennessee and charged with King's murder, confessing to the assassination on March 10, 1969, (though he recanted this confession three days later) and was sentenced to 99 years in prison. On the advice of his attorney Percy Foreman, Ray took a guilty plea to avoid a trial conviction and therefore the possibility of receiving the death penalty.

Ray later fired Foreman as his attorney (from then on derisively calling him "Percy Fourflusher") claiming that a man he met in Montreal, Canada, using the alias "Raoul" had been deeply involved, as was his brother Johnny, but not himself, further asserting that although he didn't "personally shoot Dr. King," he may have been "partially responsible without knowing it," hinting at a conspiracy. He spent the remainder of his life attempting (unsuccessfully) to withdraw his guilty plea and secure the trial he never had.

On June 11, 1977 Ray made his second appearance, this time as the 351st entry, on the FBI Most Wanted Fugitives list. He and six other convicts had just escaped from Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary in Petros, Tennessee on June 10, 1977. They were recaptured on June 13, of the same year, and returned to prison.[1] One more year was added to his previous sentence to total 100 years. Shortly after, Ray testified that he did not shoot King to the House Select Committee on Assassinations.

In 1997 Martin Luther King's son Dexter King met with Ray, and publicly supported Ray's efforts to obtain a retrial. Loyd Jowers, a restaurant owner in Memphis, was brought to civil court and sued as being part of a conspiracy to murder Martin Luther King; Jowers was found liable, and the King family was awarded \$100 in restitution to show that they were not pursuing the case for financial gain.

Dr. William Pepper, a friend of King in the last year of his life, represented James Earl Ray in a televised mock trial in an attempt to get Ray the trial that he never had. Pepper then represented the King family in a wrongful death civil trial against Loyd Jowers. The King family does not believe Ray had anything to do with the murder of Martin Luther King.

Ray died in prison on April 23, 1998, at the age of 70 from complications related to kidney disease, caused by hepatitis C probably contracted as a result of a blood transfusion given after a stabbing while at Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary. It was also confirmed in the autopsy that he died of liver failure.



'Where are We?' Civil Rights, Policy Analysts Say America Must 'Keep Moving'

By. Hazel Trice Edney

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – Over the past 40 years since the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., extensive advancements have been made in the Black community.

For example, the African-American high school graduation rate has increased by more than 214 percent and the college graduation rate for African-Americans has increased by more than 400 percent, according to the Institute for Policy Studies in a special report released this week.

However, at the rate of the advancements over the past 40 years, in most instances, it would take more than another decade for Blacks to catch up with the current graduation rate of Whites, states the IPS policy briefing.

It further states:

- With the high school gradua-

tion rate having increased by 214 percent since 1968, it would take until 2018 to reach equality.

- With the college graduation rate increase of 400 percent since 1968, it would take until 2087 to reach equality.
- Furthermore, it will take more than 537 years to reach income equality with Whites if the income gap continues to close at the same rate it has since 1968.
- If the racial wealth divide continues to close as slowly as it has, since 1983, it will take 634 years for Blacks to reach wealth equality with Whites.
- Today, a third of the Black workforce earns a gross income of less than \$385 a week and a gross income of less than \$20,000 annually.

These are just some of the economic and educational atrocities pointed out in a report,

The report, titled, "The Unrealized American Dream", was compiled by Dedrick Muhammad, a senior organizer for the IPS's Program on Inequality and the Common Good. Responding to King's question, "Where do we go from here?", the report's introduction asks the question, "Where are We?" It was distributed in commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the King assassination, April 4.

"Dr. Martin Luther King recognized that the next phase in African Americans quest or civil rights and equality was one that would focus on the economic divide between the wealthiest Americans, the working class, and those left to suffer in poverty," the report states. "During this time where 10 percent of the wealthiest Americans control 70 percent of the country's wealth and African-Americans have only 10 percent

Continued on page 6.



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Up Close with Senator Mary Landrieu



United States Senator Mary Landrieu

By: Cheryl Mainor

The National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO) last week honored United States Senator Mary Landrieu, D-La., with a 2008 Congressional Award for her commitment to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). Since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Sen. Landrieu has made it a priority to secure federal funding and low-interest loans for the schools' recovery in the Gulf Coast.

"I am honored to receive this award and will continue to fight for the full recovery of all of Louisiana's HBCUs," Sen. Landrieu said. "Many of Louisiana's campuses were submerged by floodwaters that destroyed their infrastructure, and two and a half years later, they are still struggling to rebuild. We have made some good strides with federal funding and low-interest loans, but we must continue to reinforce these tools and resources. Our students deserve a quality education that prepares them for successful careers.

In an exclusive interview with Data News Weekly, Senator Landrieu addressed some of the issues surrounding the Democratic Primary and her upcoming election.

Responding to the question regarding the internal temperature within the Democratic Party over Primary battle between Senators Clinton and Obama, the Senator said, "I'm really excited about it, I think we have two really outstanding candidates, and for the first time in a long time, democrats are really excited about their choices. Even when [Senator] Edwards was in the race they liked him, they like Senator Clinton, they like Senator Obama, and now that there's just the two of them, I find they are very enthusiastic." She continued, "Senator Obama won our primary, and some would say that obviously he has more support in our state. But people are saying I am for Senator Obama, but I'm not against Senator Clinton, and so I hope that's how the Clinton supporters will feel as well they are for Clinton but they are not against Sena-

tor Obama." Landrieu said. "Because once we decide who the nominee will be, it will be important to reach out not only to unite Democrats, but to independents and republicans as well that are or should be dissatisfied with the direction of the country and want change."

There is much speculation regarding the volatile division forming within the Democratic Party, and many are predicting an implosion, and Landrieu like others, is on the side of transparency, "I don't know how it will all work out, [the eventual nomination decision] but I hope it will be a transparent process as possible and I hope it is worked out before the convention. But I think that it's still too close of a race to call." it has the potential to blow up if the process is not transparent," says Landrieu.

It is almost a given by the experts and the media that without DNC intervention, this Primary will end in a brokered Convention in Denver and the decision on the nominee will be up to the Super Delegates. Regarding her role as a Super Delegate, Landrieu said, "My view is that the role of the Super Delegate would be to reflect the view of the state proportionately. I don't think the Super Delegates should go against the will of the people. I am in the position of being neutral. I am very close to both of them, and I think that my vote as a Super Delegate should be reflective of the will of the voters of the State."

Continuing her discussion on the Primary saying that she feels that either of the two candidates will be far better leaders in the recovery of this district. She said the race has captivated the attention of the entire world, noting they have created a television show in England around this Presidential Primary, between Obama and Clinton. "Every one in England is talking about it. They have captured the attention around the world. I think the world is very intrigued by the prospect of a woman or Af-

rican American in the White House. That is why the Democrats should be so proud. We should be excited to lead the world in a different way," said the Senator.

"It has gotten testy, but so far, I think Senators Obama and Clinton have handled themselves honorably toward each other. Both of these candidates deserve full and complete respect, not because of their race or gender, but because of their intelligence, knowledge and commitment. That is what they should be judged on." Continuing she says, "they can control their intellect, their platform, but they can't control their race or gender. They are both up against a lot of prejudice. Their respective surrogates need to step back and slow their rhetoric, the candidates deserve more respect than the surrogates to both campaigns are giving."

Senator Landrieu gearing up for her own campaign for re-election this fall. When asked about a significant opponent, she said she is very confident, having so far, only one announced opponent, John Kennedy the current State Treasurer. Of her opponent, Landrieu said, "He [Kennedy] was a Democrat, who switched to run as a Republican for short term political advantage. He ran for the State Legislature as a very liberal democrat, and now is running as a very conservative Republican, so I assume he just wants to be a Senator and thinks that this is his ticket. Karl Rove came recruited and promised him a lot of money to run."

She said, "I think the people of Louisiana are of the mind that they want to re-elect a Senator who has delivered for them, whose been effective, who has fought for them during a difficult time, maybe the most difficult time in our state's history. And to have a Senator that is despite all the setbacks, a non-responsive, incompetent and sometimes downright hostile, to the whole notion that Government should help people who've lost

everything. And despite the problems at home, with the Mayor and the Governor who has been able to step up to the task and deliver time and time again and deliver; they are saying why would we get rid of her?"

We asked the Senator what message will be to the people of Louisiana, given the disasters, which have hit the state since her last campaign, and the turn-over from a Democratic Governor to a Republican Governor and how she would benefit the people of New Orleans if re-elected.

The Senator responded, "I think people are saying that we have a Senator who has been delivering for us. 'Why would we send a freshman, Republican representative?' She continued, 'He has very little name recognition, and frankly other than beating up on Gov. Blanco, and basically, beating up on other elected Democratic officials, I don't know what he has contributed at all, to the rebuilding of New Orleans, the region or the State.' Landrieu continued, 'That's the record I am running on, experience, effectiveness, seniority; I've been a fighter who has not just been fighting but winning battles. I am proud to be a Democrat, although I don't agree with everything the national party stands for.' Landrieu, who is a member of the centrist group 'Group of 14', within the Senate finds a value in being a centrist, and believes it's a beneficial position to be in for Louisiana saying, 'I believe that working with others, which includes reaching out to Republicans is an effective way to get things accomplished. I think that is the way our delegation, from Louisiana is more independent, and therefore I can be more effective for our constituents than my opponent. Being in this centrist position allows Landrieu to be a negotiator within the Senate, 'we need a negotiator to be able to get the things done here to rebuild our area' she said.

Katrina victims may have to repay money

Contractor says it rushed to deliver aid; agency to collect overpayments

Imagine that your home was reduced to mold-covered wood framing by Hurricane Katrina. Desperate for money to rebuild, you engage in a frustrating bureaucratic process, and after months of living in a government provided-trailer that gives off formaldehyde fumes you finally win a federal grant.

Then a collector announces that you have to pay back thousands of dollars.

For thousands of Katrina victims, this may be a reality.

A private contractor under investigation for the compensation it received to run the Road Home grant program for Katrina victims says that in the rush to deliver aid to homeowners in need some people got too much. Now it wants to hire a separate company to collect millions in grant overpayments.

The contractor, ICF International of Fairfax, Va., revealed the extent of the overpayments when it issued a March 11 request for bids from companies willing to handle "approximately 1,000 to 5,000 cases that will necessitate collection effort."

The bid invitation said: "The average amount to be collected is estimated to be approximately \$35,000, but in some cases may be as high as \$100,000 to \$150,000."

The biggest grant amount allowed by the Road Home program is \$150,000, so ICF believes it paid some recipients the maximum when they should not have received a penny. If ICF's highest estimate of 5,000 collection cases — overpaid by an average of \$35,000 — proves to be true, that means applicants will have to pay back a total of \$175 million.

'Finding the underpayments'

One-third of qualified applicants for Road Home help had yet to receive any rebuilding check as of this past week. The program, which has come to symbolize the lurching Katrina recovery effort, has \$11 billion in federal funds.

ICF spokeswoman Gentry Brann said in an e-mail Friday that the overpayment recovery effort was made inevitable when insurance and other aid to Katrina victims was eventually measured against what an applicant received from the Road Home program.

Brann said there was a sense of urgency in paying Road Home applicants, and ICF knew applicants might eventually have to return



some money.

"The choice was either to process grants immediately or wait until the March 2008 deadline (for submitting Road Home applications) before disbursing any funds," Brann said in her e-mail.

Brann pointed out that 5,000 collections cases would represent a 4-percent error rate for the Road Home that is "quite good for large federal programs."

Frank Silvestri, co-chair of the Citizen's Road Home Action Team, a group that formed out of frustrations with ICF, sees it far differently.

"They want people to pay for their incompetence and their mistakes. What they need to be is aggressive about finding the underpayments," he said. "People relied, to their detriment, on their (ICF's) expertise and rebuilt their houses and now they want to squeeze this money back out of them."

Governor under investigation

The prospect of Road Home grant collections comes less than two weeks after the Louisiana inspector general and the legislative auditor said they were investigating why former Gov. Kathleen Blanco paid ICF an extra \$156 million in her waning days in office to administer the program. With the increase, ICF stands to earn \$912 million to run Road Home, a contract that also sweetened its initial public stock offering, helping it buy out four other companies and enter government contracting in sectors including national defense

and the environment.

Paul Rainwater, executive director of the Louisiana Recovery Authority, the state body that asked for the Blanco-ICF investigations, acknowledged the col-

lections could be painful for applicants, many of whom have used up their nest eggs to rebuild.

"The state must walk a fine line of treating homeowners who have been overpaid with fairness and

compassion and ensuring that all federal funds are used for their intended purpose," said Rainwater, an appointee of new Gov. Bobby Jindal.

Upon receiving money from Road Home, grantees sign forms that say they must refund any overpayments.

Melanie Ehrlich, co-chair of Citizen's Road Home Action Team, which has documented Road Home cases that appear littered with mistakes, said she had no confidence that ICF had correctly calculated overpayments. She charged that the company was more likely using collections as retribution against people who had appealed their award amounts in effort to get the aid they deserved.

"I think they are looking for ways to decrease awards and that's part of dissuading people," she said.

Brann said applicants are told an appeal could boost or diminish their award. She called Ehrlich's charge "a totally unfounded assertion."

SBA Honors Henry L. Coaxum Jr. For Outstanding Disaster Recovery Effort



WASHINGTON - Henry L. Coaxum Jr., owner of Coaxum Enterprises, Inc. lost three of his New Orleans area McDonald's restaurants, an office complex, and his own home to Hurricane Katrina in August 2005. The

care, concern and innovation that Coaxum displayed in getting his employees back to work in the aftermath of the worst natural disaster in U.S. history, and his tireless devotion to the rebuilding of New Orleans' business sector has earned him the 2008 Phoenix Award for Small Business Disaster Recovery.

The award will be presented during the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) National Small Business Week 2008, to be held in Washington, D.C and New York City April 21-25.

"The Phoenix Award is an acknowledgment of an individual's heroic effort and a recognition of contributions to the physical and economic recovery of their communities," said SBA Administrator Steve Preston. "Mr. Coaxum displayed tremendous courage

and resourcefulness in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, and he exemplifies the spirit one must have to rebuild after a tragedy like this."

Although three of Coaxum's original restaurants were damaged and closed due to Hurricane Katrina, he recently bought and opened a restaurant on St. Charles Avenue in February 2006 - just in time for the 150th Mardi Gras celebration. This was the first McDonald's restaurant to reopen in New Orleans on the east bank of the Mississippi River.

This marks the 10th year the SBA has given Phoenix Awards to business owners, public officials and volunteers who displayed courage, ingenuity and tenacity in the aftermath of a disaster, while contributing to the rebuilding of their communities.

LSU Opens Community Health Clinics in Neighborhoods Throughout New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS – The Interim LSU Public Hospital is opening community health clinics throughout New Orleans, offering comprehensive primary health care and access to specialty care, preventing minor illness from becoming major.

The press conference and ribbon cutting for the clinics will be at the LSU - HCSD Community Clinic - Frederick Douglass Senior High, 3815 Burgundy St., at 10:30 AM, Monday, March 31, 2008.

"LSU has long pursued the development of medical homes," said Dr. Michael K. Butler, acting CEO of the LSU Health Care Services Division. "These community clinics are another step in the provision of this concept of care."

Clinic staff includes a physician, family nurse practitioner, licensed practical nurse, and a behavioral

health specialist.

"These clinics are available throughout the city, affording quality primary health care to those who might otherwise be constrained by transportation or financial issues," said Dr. Dwayne Thomas, hospital administrator of the Interim LSU Public Hospital.

With an emphasis on prevention, the LSU- HCSD Community Clinic - Murray Henderson, 1911 Hendee, LSU- HCSD Community Clinic - Frederick Douglass Senior High, 3815 Burgundy St., and the LSU- HCSD Community Clinic - Martin Behrman, 725 Vallette St., provide comprehensive routine examinations, internal medicine, pediatrics, sports physicals, hearing and vision screens, immunizations, injury prevention, evidence-based chronic disease management (treatment for

hypertension, obesity, diabetes, hyperlipidemia, and asthma), nonemergent acute care, sexually-transmitted disease screenings and treatment, stop-smoking programs, access to specialty care, injury prevention, telemedicine services, and assistance with obtaining needed medications.

The LSU- HCSD School Based Health Center - O Perry Walker, at 2832 General Meyer Ave., provides the aforementioned services but is available only to students.

With an emphasis on prevention, the LSU HCSD Community Clinic - Jackson Barracks, 6460 N. Claiborne Avenue, and the LSU HCSD Community Clinic - New Orleans East, 5501 Read Blvd., provide direct family-centered services including internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, telemedicine services,

access to behavioral health, pharmacy assistance, and prenatal care.

LSU also has the following clinics at 1450 Poydras Street in the building that had housed the Lord and Taylor department store: dermatology, internal medicine, neurology, podiatry, endocrine, orthopedics, general surgery, plastic surgery, allergy, Coumadin, neurosurgery, rheumatology, ophthalmology, radiology, physical, speech and occupational therapy, vascular, physical medicine and rehabilitation, telemedicine services, the Stroke and Heart Attack Prevention Clinic and the Breast and Cervical Cancer Program. Clinics have a total of 96 exam rooms and 12 eye exam areas. A full-service pharmacy is also on site for LSU patients.

Clinic services are available

from 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

The LSU Health Care System is one of the largest public health care delivery systems in the country. It has over 60,000 admissions, 350,000 patient days, 1 million outpatient visits, and over 350,000 emergency department visits. Each year 1700 residents from the LSU and Tulane Schools of Medicine and Ochsner Health System and 4,000 nurses and allied health students from many colleges and universities are trained in LSU facilities.

LSU is the largest single provider of uncompensated inpatient care in Louisiana. LSU hospitals have an economic impact of over \$1.6 billion in asset business activity, \$918 million in personal earnings, and support over 10,000 jobs.

Area Code Change for Lower Plaquemines Parish Becomes Mandatory May 1



Beginning May 1, 2008, communities in lower Plaquemines Parish will complete the change from area code 985 to area code 504, marking the end of the nine-month transition period begun July 29, 2007. Beginning May 1, 2008, you must use the 504 area code when placing calls to the communities of Buras, Pointe-a-la-Hache, Port Sulphur and Venice.

Be Sure to Reprogram Your Equipment.

You may need to reprogram your speed dialing lists and customer-owned telephone equipment as a result of this change. If you live or work in lower Plaquemines Parish, you may need to reprint your checks, personal stationery and other printed materials that contain your area code. Note: Local calls to communities in a different area code must be dialed on a 10-digit basis (area code + seven-digit number). Please visit our Web site at www.bellsouth.com/areacode for more information.

Cover Story, Part 3, continued from page 2.

of the wealth of White Americans, King's analysis of economic inequality as the foundation of racial inequality remains as valid today as it was 40 years ago."

The IPS analysis is just one of a string of impacting reports and observations being expressed this week. Across the country, marches, rallies, and special church services are being held at which orators are giving voice to the atrocities that still exist. Also, written documentation of where America stands in relation to African-American advancement is being distributed broadly with hopes that conscientious hands will move forward a speedy and progressive agenda.

"Today, 40 years after Dr. King's mountaintop vision, we seem to be paralyzed outside the gates of our promised city. True, we have made amazing progress to get where we are," states a report, "Beyond the Mountaintop: King's Prescription for Poverty", a policy brief by labor specialist Steven Pitts and economics professor Bill Spriggs. "Our out-of-wedlock birthrate has fallen by half. And countless positions of authority – from school boards to political offices to the boardrooms of Fortune 500 corporations – are now filled by black

women and men. All of this is testament to black competence, the evidence of which had been stifled for centuries under the weight of racial oppression."

The recognition of progress, coupled with the vision for "the promise land" of equality appears to be a consistent and unified theme during this season of commemoration.

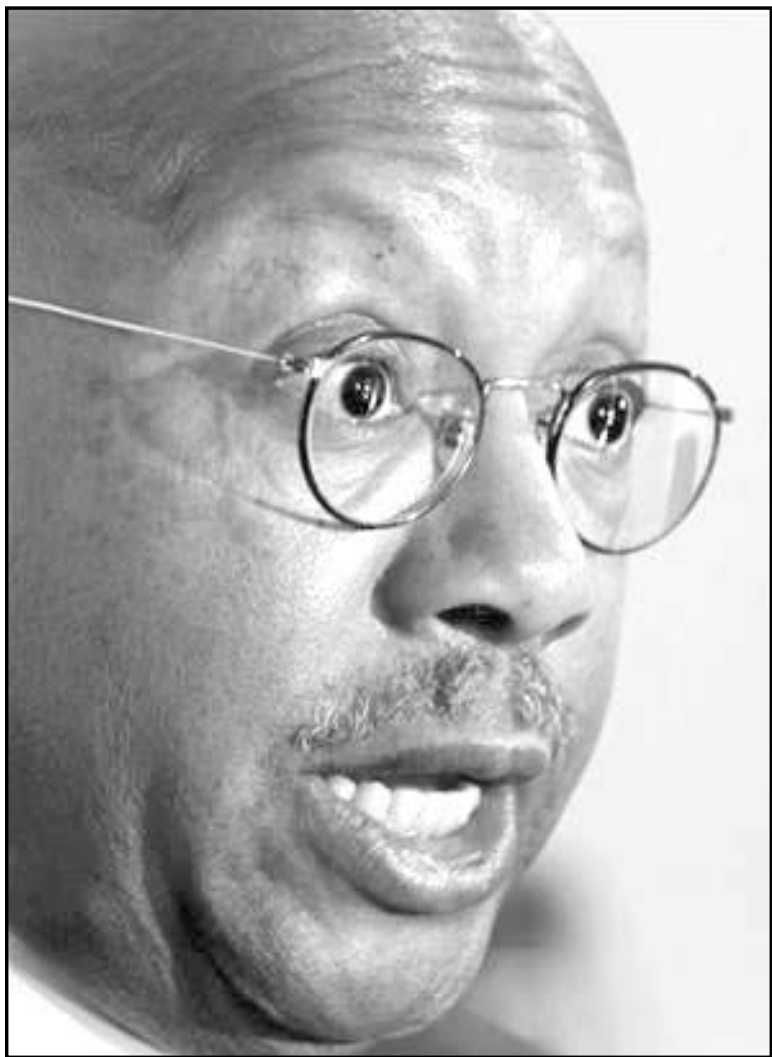
Even U. S. Sen. Barack Obama, himself an iconic representation of progress as the leading Democratic contender for president, referred to racial barriers as being "problems that confront us all" even as many right wing advocates think Blacks should be satisfied.

A statement by more than a dozen Black economists released this week, also seeks to push past perceptions that African-Americans have come so far that this is a week to applaud rather than plan.

Dr. King died in Memphis as he planned a march in support of Black sanitation workers that would further an escalated vision for economic empowerment and justice. But, in his final days, he often exhorted listeners to "keep moving," as he did in his speech, "Transforming a Neighborhood into a Brotherhood." Reports released

Embattled HUD chief resigns, cites family

Jackson makes no mention of investigation, Democratic pressure



Housing and Urban Development Secretary Alphonso Jackson

The Bush administration's top housing official, under criminal investigation and intense pressure from Democratic critics, announced Monday he is quitting.

Housing and Urban Development Secretary Alphonso Jackson said his resignation will take effect on April 18. The move comes at a shaky time for the economy and the Bush administration, as the housing industry's crisis has imperiled the nation's credit markets and led to a major economic slowdown.

Jackson, 62, has been fending off allegations of cronyism and favoritism involving HUD contractors for the past two years. The FBI has been examining the ties between Jackson and a friend who was paid \$392,000 by Jackson's department as a construction manager in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.

The HUD chief made no direct mention of that in his resignation statement. Explaining his move, he said: "There comes a time when one must attend more diligently to personal and family matters. Now is such a time for me."

He did not take questions or elaborate on the family reasons

he cited for the decision. The group assembled to hear Jackson's statement applauded and he left the room.

President Bush said he accepted Jackson's resignation "with regret."

"I have known Alphonso Jackson for many years, and I have known him to be a strong leader and a good man," Bush said in a prepared statement released by the White House.

Jackson has a friendship with President Bush that dates to the late 1980s, when they lived in the same Dallas neighborhood. He was the first black leader of the housing authority in Dallas and president of American Electric Power-TEXAS in Austin.

On Monday, Jackson said he has spent more than 30 years of his life improving housing opportunities for all Americans regardless of income or race.

"My life's work has been to build better communities that families are proud to call home," the embattled housing director said.

Jackson said he is staying on three more weeks to ensure an orderly transition of the leader-

ship of HUD.

His statement offered an upbeat review of his own record.

He said he and his team at the housing agency had helped families keep their homes, reduced chronic homelessness and "transformed public housing."

Democratic Sen. Patty Murray of Washington state, who had called on Jackson to step down, said the resignation "means little to the millions of homeowners struggling to stay above water. What they care about most is meaningful action from an administration that so far has responded to Wall Street but not to Main Street."

Murray and Christopher Dodd, D-Conn., have said that Jackson's problems represented a "worsening distraction" at HUD at a time when the nation needs a credible housing secretary who is beyond suspicion.

When the existence of the criminal probe against Jackson was revealed in October, the White House said President Bush supports Jackson and that Jackson "expects that the investigation will clearly establish that he did nothing improper or unethical."

In The Spirit

Love & Relationships



Dr. Aaron E. Harold
Data Columnist

Hi Family, today I'm going to talk to you a little on love and relationships. First, we need to understand that Love is not automatic, it's taught to us. Most of the time it may have been your parents, relatives, or a close friend that taught you how to love. To truly love someone, this must be a decision that you and only you must do on your own. Family, love is something more than an intense liking; it is the attachment to and caring about another person.

Attachment involves a powerful desire to be with and care about by another person. Caring involves meeting the satisfaction of another person's needs as significant as the satisfaction of your own. In other words, love is not just about being on the receiving end, but it's about you giving of yourself. Love involves trust, understanding, mutual assistance, and caring about your spouse or partner. In relationships, we must learn how to serve that person, and maintain a physical closeness to him or her.

For a true relationship to work, you must nurture it. Family, you that are in relationships now or planning to get in a relationship, there has to be a balance in that relationship. Let me put it like this; you can't put in 40 percent into the relationship, and expect to get a 100 percent profit on your investment. There's a rule of thumb that says that, "What you put into a relationship, that's what you will get out of it." Love and relationships is not just a story that we read about or see on television like Romeo and Juliet, or Cinderella and the Prince, but it takes real work to

make a good and loving relationship to work.

Many relationships don't have to end the way that they do. If you really want to have a good loving relationship folks, again you have to work on it. There is no perfect relationship, because we all make mistakes. Also, in a relationship no one will always agree upon everything. There will be sometimes arguments, verbal fights, and threats to leave in a relationship.

Family, love can be a battle in a relationship, but isn't it all worth it when you really love someone? When you are in a relationship, you must treat it like a garden, when you really love that person. It needs ongoing cultivation, but hard work is the key to a successful loving relationship. If one person is not receiving that nurturing, then he/she will get dissatisfied and eventually will leave in search of true love. Family, few relationships last forever, because most couples do not go the extra mile to make that relationship last.

Folks, what causes relationships not to last? Researchers suggest that when unequal commitment is not there by the

other person, this can be a major problem in a relationship, because one person is less involved than the other. However, when both persons are equally committed, the relationship may be quite stable. On the other hand, some break-ups are necessary when you or the other person falls out love.

Family, let me ask you this question, "When was the last time you told your spouse, or the one you love, that you love them; When was the last time that you told them that you appreciated them; and when was the last time you told that person that you will be there for them in good times and the rough times?" Maybe if you haven't, you should try it. It might improve your relationship with that person. Remember this; it's a beautiful feeling to truly be in love. It's healthy for your soul and soothing to your mind. Family, can we all get along? Let's try loving more.

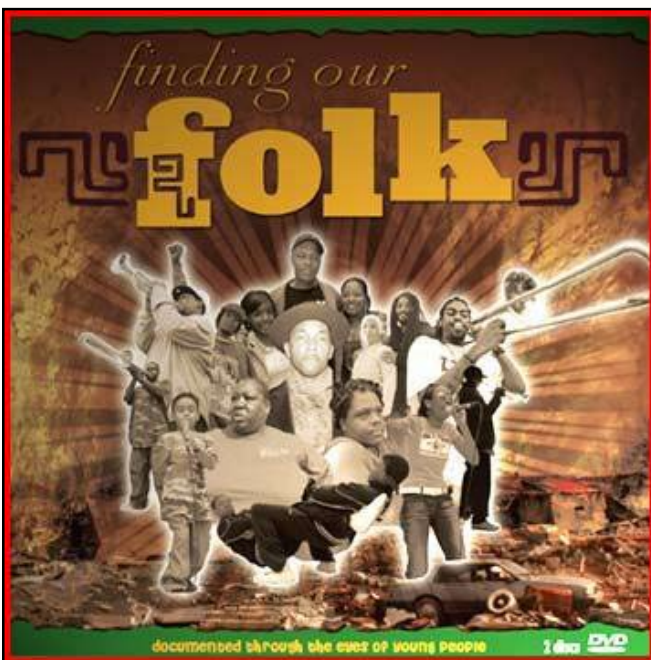
Dr. Aaron E. Harold is the pastor of New Millennium Breakthrough Ministries. To contact him with your comment or suggested topics he can be reached at rharold@cox.net or (504) 813-5767

New Orleans 5th Annual International Human Rights Film Festival

April 9 - 20

Twelve days, more than fifty films, at least twenty directors presenting their films, five world premieres, plus workshops, performances, parties, and more.

This year's festival celebrates the best of New Orleans filmmaking, bringing you the first chance to see local filmmaking at its best. In addition to the premieres of *Wade in the Water* and *The Fullness of Time*; the festival will present the world premieres of *Vows of Silence*, New Orleans writer Jason Berry's new film about corruption and sexual abuse in the Catholic church; *Cut Off*, Broderick Webb and Edward Holub's new film about public housing in New Orleans; and the first New Orleans festival screening of *Glory at Sea*, a new fiction film from New Orleans filmmaker Benh Zeitlin.



Hollywood is coming to the festival this year. In addition to director Jonathan Demme, don't miss *Chicago 10*, an exciting new film from Academy Award-nominated director Brett Morgen, featuring Jeffrey Wright, Roy Scheider, Nick Nolte, and Mark Ruffalo.

And, don't miss this year's Academy Award-winner for best documentary feature, *Taxi to the Dark Side*, a stunning exploration of the dark side of the Bush administrations' war on human rights; the Academy Award-nominated *War/Dance*, an uplifting and beautiful film about a dance competition in Uganda; and *Shock Doctrine*, a breathtaking film from writer Naomi Klein and Academy Award-nominated director Alfonso Cuarón (*Children of Men*, *Y Tu Mamá Tambien*).



The International Human Rights Film Festival exists to support movements for social justice – not to just show problems, but to show solutions, to celebrate hope and resistance. April 20, see the New Orleans premiere of the most thorough, up-close perspective on the struggle of the Jena Six, from a journalist who was there long before the corporate media showed up – see Big Noise Tactical Media's *The Jena Six*. And, check out a snapshot from New Orleans' activist past in Rudy Mills' *Neo-Black Leaders and Politics*. When the people of Oaxaca, México led an uprising and the corporate media demonized them, they seized the media. See the story in *Un Po-*

quito de Tanta Verdad (*A Little Bit of so Much Truth*). For an unforgettable story of struggle against all odds, see *Bilin My Love*, a story of one



Palestinian village's inspiring resistance to displacement and dispossession.

In addition to beautiful and inspiring films, incredible performances, and fabulous parties, we have a wide range of other special events, including workshops and discussions with filmmakers, activists, and human rights workers.

Ticket Prices:

All programs and events are \$8, with the following exceptions:
 Wednesday April 9, Opening Night Film: \$10
 Wednesday April 9, Opening Night Party: \$20
 Sunday April 13, Human Rights Workshop: Free
 Saturday April 19, Screening at the Porch: Free
 Saturday April 19, Ya Heard Me Premiere concert and party: \$20
 Sunday April 20, NAFTA Gets Militarized workshop: Free
 Sunday April 20, Award Ceremony: Free
 April 11 and 12 festival programming free with pass from V10/Superlove.
 New Orleans Film Society members receive discount to the films *Taxi to the Dark Side*, *War/Dance*, and *Chicago 10*.

Buy a festival pass and get free admission to all festival events, including parties and concert.
 For more schedule and ticket information, visit <http://www.nolahumanrights.org>



Germaine Bazzle • Leah Chase BJ Crosby • Topsy Chapman

April 26 at 9pm in Harrah's Theatre

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For more information, call 504-533-6600 or visit www.harrahneworleans.com



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G A M B L I N G P R O B L E M ? C A L L 1 - 8 0 0 - 5 2 2 - 4 7 0 0

Adella Gautier Directs the Louisiana Premiere of "The Bluest Eye" On April 4-27

New Orleans, LA. March 22, 2008... The Anthony Bean Community Theater presents the Louisiana Premiere of The Bluest Eye, A powerful drama adapted by Lydia Diamond from the novel by Toni Morrison. The play is directed by Adella Gautier.

The drama takes place in Lorain, Ohio,

ance for Community Theater (Best Supporting Actress, Best Director and the prestigious Robert D. Costley Award), Rockefeller Foundation (Creation Award), The Mayor's Arts Award 2002, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. (Artie for Theater) and three Ambie nominations. The literary contributions of Toni

Cutno as Woman 1, Carol Thomas as Woman 2 & Greta Zehner as Little Miss Fisher.

Performances take place April 4-6, 11-13, 18-20 & 25-27. On Friday and Saturday at 8:00pm with Sunday's matinee at 3:00pm. On April 6, Sunday's performance will be at 8:00pm ONLY. Tickets

are \$18.00 for adults, \$16.00 for students and seniors, and are available by calling the Box Office at (504) 862-7529. (Box Office hours are Tuesday-Saturday at 2-6pm. and two hours before performances). You can also charge by phone or charge on line at www.anthony-beantheater.com



Adella Gautier

1941. Eleven-year-old Pecola Breedlove (Codi Gayles) prays for the one thing she knows will change her life – eyes as blue as Shirley Temple's. The year the marigolds in Lorain do not bloom, Pecola's life does change – in unexpected and devastating ways. This vivid adaptation of Toni Morrison's Pulitzer Prize-winning debut novel is the heartrending story of three girls coming of age into a world that is equal parts beauty and ugliness, love and hate, triumph and tragedy. The Director, Adella Gautier AKA Adella, Adella, the Storyteller, has been a part of New Orleans arts scene for well over 30 of her 39 years. As an actor, producer, director, storyteller and arts educator, she has honed and shared her vast creative energy. Her talent has been awarded recognition by : Louisiana Division of the Arts (recipient of Theater Fellowship, 1989, 2000) Alli-

Morrison, Octavia Butler, Zora Neale Hurston, D. H. Lawrence and Leo Tolstoy have all greatly enriched my spirit and soul. Toni Morrison is my favorite and it is with much honor and humility that this stage adaptation of The Bluest Eye as offered. The cast includes Alozia St. Julien as Claudia, Gisselle Nakhid as Freda, Codi Gayles as Pecola, Linda Merritt as Mama, Donna King as Mrs. Breedlove, Alex Lewis, III as Daddy, Roscoe Reddix, Jr. as Cholly, Marie Weatherspoon as Maureen Peal, Nadine

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Sitting on a Powder Keg: Suicide in the Black Community

By Gordon Jackson

DALLAS (NNPA) - Theories continue to abound surrounding the deaths of Rufus and Lynn Flint Shaw, found shot to death in their Oak Cliff home March 10.

The case has raised the painful issue about suicide, particularly in the Black community.

In the book, *Lay My Burden Down*, noted Harvard Medical School psychiatrist Dr. Alvin Poussaint and writer Amy Alexander analyze how much of the Black community - determined to be victors, not victims - strive to downplay issues of mental illness, depression and resulting suicides within the culture.

"It is very much a misperception that Black people don't commit suicide and that comes in part from a need, the very real and legitimate need, for Black people, for many years to be very strong," Alexander is quoted as saying in a book review by HealthyPlace.com. Alexander had an older brother who committed suicide.

"They [Blacks] see mental disorder and depression as a sign of personal weakness or moral failure," said Poussaint, who considered his brother's slow and painful death from heroin abuse as a precipitated form of suicide.

DeSoto, TX pastor of Lifeway Church, Dr. Karen Hollie discusses the stereotype regarding suicide among Blacks as well as the way Blacks deal with pain.

"There are some stigmas involved. We particularly don't engage in that kind of thing," said Dr. Hollie, who was a practicing psychological therapist and counselor for 25 years.

"We have a different set of coping skills that we employ for a lot of things," Hollie said. "The helplessness and the hopelessness is not the same. We seem to have some other avenues that we employ and some just say we have some economic implications for it that makes a difference. We generally just don't fall into that."

According to an article published in the *Journal of Black Psychology*, Felicia Griffin-Fennell and Michelle Williams attribute the reluctance of Blacks and women to kill themselves to their religious convictions, turning to

God for help in times of distress and believing that He has full authority over life and death. Many cite the fear of eternal damnation as a reason for their reluctance to attempt or complete suicide.

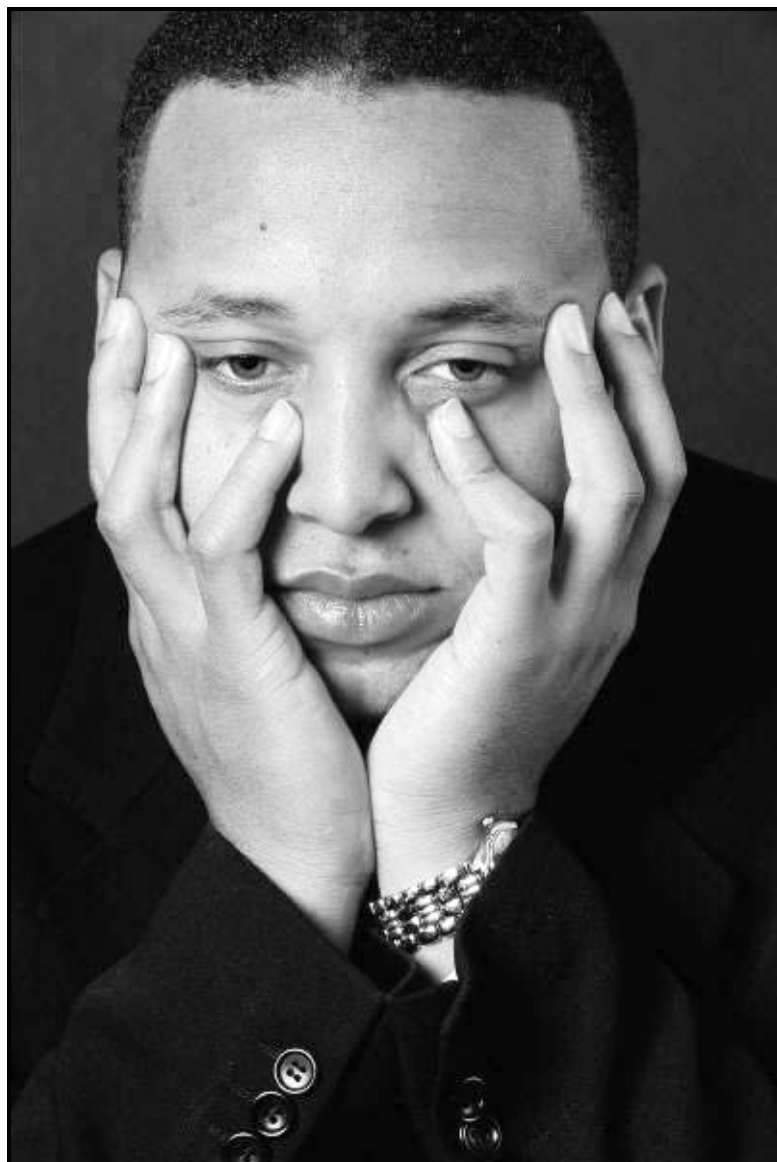
Statistics from the Centers for Disease Control suggests that from 1988 to 1992, White males were 12 times more likely to kill themselves than Black males and White women more than 15 times more likely than Black women. Authors of *Racial Differences in Hopelessness as a Risk Factor for a Nearly Lethal Suicide Attempt*, in the Aug. 1, 2006 issue of the *Journal of Black Psychology*, say that suicide is about hopelessness, adding that a better understanding of racial differences in hopelessness and suicide may result in more effective interventions to slow the increasing Black American suicide rate.

According to a 2003 report by the National Institute of Health, "On an average day in the United States, one African American dies by suicide every 4.5 hours."

Poussaint stated the birth, growth and adopting of blues music as an example of how many Blacks just learned to deal with their oppressing and depressing times.

Still suffering from the vestiges of slavery and still targets of institutionalized racism and discrimination today, with health and economic disparities in their disfavor in almost all societal categories, Blacks are the first group of people who need to seek help for possible mental illness and depression, yet the last ones to get it. That is compounded by the fact that Blacks still make up only about 2.3 percent of all psychiatrists in the industry, making it more difficult to receive culturally sensitive consultation and treatment.

According to the Violence Policy Center, through their review of the report *American Roulette: Murder-Suicide in the United States*, Florida, California and Texas led the nation in murder-suicides. More than 10 murder-suicides, almost all by gun, occur each week in the United States. The Shaws' case appears to be consistent with the study.



The study stated that 90.4 percent of the offenders were male. According to another study, *The Epidemiology of Murder-Suicide* in *Journal of the American Medical Association* which reviewed only couples, more than 90 percent of these acts were perpetrated by men. Additionally, according to the VPC report, when women are the perpetrators, the victims tend to be their children, not their intimate partner. The men, according to the report, tend to be older than their victims. VPC also reports that they usually occur in the home, and most frequently involve intimate partners, where the male is usually older.

Additionally, according to a study by the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, the overwhelming majority of male perpetrators of murder-suicide were depressed.

According to a close friend, in his last days, Rufus rarely left the house and became increasingly agitated - both signs of depres-

sion.

The study by the VPC, based on a national news clipping service and Internet survey taken from January 1, 2005, through June 30, 2005, is considered by VPC as one of the largest and most comprehensive studies ever conducted on murder-suicide. During this six-month period, at least 591 Americans died in 264 murder-suicides, and almost all murder-suicides (92 percent) involved a firearm. Using these figures, the VPC estimates that nearly 1,200 Americans die each year in murder-suicides.

The racial makeup of those cases was not reported in the study.

Emphasizing that she was looking at the case as an outsider, Hollie assessed, given both of the Shaws' commitment to service in the Black community, theirs might have been an "altruistic" suicide, similar to cases involving people in the military. "It involved an excessive sense of duty," she said.

"Because they were somewhat activists and recognized people in the community - that weighed on them heavily. The more, in fact, that they were self-sacrificing is what defines it. That's probably what they had more than any other kind of suicide."

Hollie further stated the Shaws would have had to meet four strong indicators: their social situation, their emotional status, behavioral patterns and verbal statements expressing their wish to be dead. Seeing how one could have completed all four indicators, she assessed, however, for both to have completed them at the exact same time is extremely remote.

"People don't usually fit the same indicators at the same time ... that's a bit more rare," said Hollie. "With the [alleged] suicide pact, both would have had to possess that desire strong enough. Generally, what you have is one at a different state than the other, who is trying to coax the other one through."

According to Dr. Donna Holland Barnes, President and CEO of National Organization for People of Color Against Suicide, none of these behaviors were inconsistent with suicide. Barnes explains that people who contemplate suicide are often ambivalent to the end, part of them wanting to live, the other part wishing to die.

In the final analysis, the Shaws' death at least suggests the need for Blacks in Dallas to depend on their already strong spiritual roots and strong community bond to help each other admit weakening states due to the constant pressures of being Black in America and not be afraid to seek help.

If you or someone you know are contemplating suicide, contact NOPACS. NOPACS is a 501c(3) not-for-profit organization founded by three African American suicide survivors. For more information about suicide among Blacks, or support, visit www.nopacs.com or contact the organization at 202-549-6039.

Tuala Williams contributed to this story.

In The Spirit

Love'em or Leave'em?



Xxavier T
Data Columnist

to go all the way. I'm from the old school. I feel that one man is truly enough to satisfy me. There is a lot of turmoil in the relationship since this bubbled over. In hindsight, it was probably a set up to see where my head was. So I need to know what's up?

The Script is Flipped

Dear Flipped,

Your story is a prime example of why it is important to stay true to your authentic self. Being empowered to express who you are is one of the best feelings you can have inside of a relationship. You pretended to be something you were not in an attempt to please someone else, and it blew up in your face. Back peddling makes you sound like a liar. Now, you're losing credibility with your man.

Fortunately, you have been together long enough. He should know the true essence of what you represent. I don't believe he would have stayed around for 8 years, if he believed you were the kind of woman who would do one of his friends.

He's just jealous and feeling insecure. You're going to need to build him back up. Create a romantic setting. Tell him you are concerned about the future of your relationship and reassure him that he is all the man you will ever want or need.

LOL

Xxavier T. is the author of Treat Your Man Like A V.I.P. available at Community Book Center and Amazon.com. She is also the host of Love'em or Leave'em? every Friday on WBOK 1230AM. Email questions to askxxavier@gmail.com or visit Xxavier on the web at xxaviert.com

X,

I've been in this long term relationship for 8 years. Here is the dilemma. He's been asking for every man's fantasy ... yep ... a threesome! I said hell to the no, especially if it's with another woman. Just can't get down with that. So he flipped the script and said what about another man? (Ok ... mind starts to say hummm. Maybe?) This is where the problem comes in.

He thinks I have a crush on one of his friends. (Granted he's cute and he's fineeeeeee.) However, there is a line you don't cross, especially if you are a real woman, a line that's off limits ... his friends and your friends. He has convinced himself that I would like to have a threesome with this particular man. I did jokingly say, "Yeah set it up.", but I laughed the entire time. I never gave him a firm answer, nor did I really consider going through with this act.

Now I feel as though Pandora's Box is open slightly. My man has it in his head that I'm digging his friend and would like

Opinion

Another Day of Infamy: MLK, Jr. Assassinated April 4, 1968

By. Dr. Clint Wilson

A little more than a quarter century earlier, a somber President Franklin D. Roosevelt had proclaimed the day of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor "a day that will live in infamy" in the hearts of Americans. But to a generation of African Americans April 4th was tragic because Martin Luther King, Jr. - the nonviolent civil rights leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner - was assassinated as he stood on the balcony of a Memphis motel.

People would forever recall where they were and what they were doing when they heard the horrible news: Martin Luther King, Jr. was dead.

And while the "mainstream" news media brought their newspaper columns and on-air resources to bear on one of history's biggest stories, the nation's Black citizens in their grief instinctively turned to their own press for some sense of perspective, explanation and emotional expression.

For in a real sense, King belonged to them and his death was a personal and tragic loss. They needed the Black Press to tell them the story.

This week, on the 40th anniversary of the King assassination let us observe how the Chicago Defender answered the call in the immediate aftermath of the assassination before more accurate details concerning the triggerman became known.

KING MURDERED!

MEMPHIS - He lived a life of nonviolent protest to injustice, but was killed in the most violent way possible.

Dr. Martin Luther King, whose peaceful efforts to win equality for black Americans won him world renown, was shot down by an unknown white man as he was preparing to meet the greatest challenge of his civil rights career.

Earlier in the week Dr. King had vowed to stage a peaceful demonstration in support of black garbage collectors, who had gone out on strike for a bigger piece of the economic pie in the Mississippi River metropolis.

But the plan was abruptly halted when a well dressed white man shot Dr. King as he sat in a car outside the hotel that had become headquarters in the Memphis effort.

The Memphis plan had been Dr. King's primary challenge over the past week. The violence that marred the march last Thursday had put a shadow over his ability to pursue his mission of finding equality nonviolently.

Police issued a bulletin for a young white man who darted out of a building across the street from the hotel.

There were reports that police - and civilian cars - were pursuing and firing upon a car carrying three white men that sped out of the city.

Police also hustled two young white men into the police station. It was not immediately known if there was any connection with King's death.

"I and all citizens of Memphis deeply regret the murder today of Dr. Martin Luther King," said Police Chief Frank Holloman.

King was rushed to the hospital emergency room with a bullet wound in the neck.

Mayor Henry Loeb immediately reinstated the dusk to dawn curfew in the city for fear King's slaying would spark street violence. Police cordoned off a five block area around the Lorraine Hotel, where King was shot.

The Rev. Andrew Young, King's top lieutenant, said the Nobel Peace Prize winner was standing on the balcony outside his room when he fell with a wound in the neck. Young said he and other aides were in the room at the time.

Paul Hess, assistant administrator of St. Joseph's Hospital said:

"At 7 p.m. (CST) Dr. Martin Luther King expired in the emergency room as a result of a gunshot wound in the neck." Other details will have to come from the coroner's office.

In Atlanta, Mayor Ivan Allen rushed to King's home and drove his wife to the airport. She was in the terminal awaiting a flight to Memphis when she was told her husband was dead.

King returned to Memphis Wednesday to try to prove he could lead a massive march peacefully. He was at the head of the march last Thursday that erupted into violence that left one dead and 62 injured.

His critics immediately stepped up attacks on his planned "Poor People's campaign" on Washington this month, claiming he could not keep the massive demonstration from turning to violence.

King's aides said he felt he had to lead another demonstration here - and keep it nonviolent - to prove them wrong. The march - with 6,000 persons, many of them labor leaders and union men - was planned for Monday.

King had vowed to defy a Federal Court injunction banning the march if he could not get the judge to lift it.

King died in the same emergency room where James Meredith was rushed in June, 1965, after he was shot down in an ambush a few miles south of here at Hernando, Miss. Meredith, however, was not seriously injured.

King was the first major civil rights leader to be slain since the ambush killing of Medgar Evers outside his home in Jackson, Miss., in 1962.

- Chicago Defender, April 5, 1968

Dr. Clint Wilson, is author of "A History of the Black Press" and is on the faculty of the Howard University School of Communications.

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Open Mouth, Insert Foot!

Or, What is wrong with Condoleezza Rice?



Cheryl Mainor
Data Columnist

Why is it that every time Sec. of State Condoleezza Rice attempts to make a comment regarding her race, or an issue having to do with Black people, she manages to get it so wrong? Remember, this is the same woman, who during a Katrina press conference told us that she is an “African-American from Birmingham”, and assuring us all that race had nothing to do with the response from Bush, or FEMA, or “Heck of a good job Brownie” while our families lay dead floating in the streets for days on end.

In an interview last week with the Washington Times on the subject of Race and Rev. Jeremiah Wright, Secretary Rice had this to say:

“The United States still has trouble dealing with race because of a national “birth defect” that denied black Americans the opportunities given to whites at the country’s very founding.”

“Black Americans were a founding population,” she said. “Africans and Europeans came here and founded this country together — Europeans by choice and Africans in chains. That’s not a very pretty

reality of our founding.”

WHAT?

She asserts some very big theories in her statement, but do the facts of this Nation’s founding match her version of history? Could the complexities of race relations in this nation, past, present and future be summed up as being the result of a “national birth defect”, and if so, what exactly was the defect she is referencing? Her next sentence clarifies her point a bit; “As a result, [of these birth defects] descendants of slaves did not get much of a head start, and I think you continue to see some of the effects of that.” She told reporters.

We need to define “birth defect” before we can analyze her statement however. In researching the definition, the most lenient I could find, for her interpretation was this from yourdictionary.com, which says; Birth defect: Any of various mental, physical, or biochemical defects present in a baby at birth. Okay, with that done, now we can ask her, what are you talking about?

Does she mean that Slavery was a birth defect, as by chance as a chromosomal mix-up, purely happenstance like the nation’s DNA was accidentally screwed up? Or, by birth defect, does she mean that there was something sinister, perhaps even genetic in the makeup of the White founders, which caused them to inflict terror on those they came upon, and to cast a race of people, stolen from their land, into a role of complete oppression for over 400 years? Is that the birth defect she speaks of? Can we really use that as the reason, for the unspeakable acts perpetrated by the White founders? I say White founders; fully understanding the fact that they neither found nor discovered this land, called America, it was not

lost, and it’s indigenous people will agree with me. But I merely use her words. If she means the latter description, then I would agree with her sort of, but I don’t believe that is what she meant.

In order to understand her true meaning, we must look deeper into her statement, “Africans and Europeans came here and founded this country together — Europeans by choice and Africans in chains. This is not an accurate statement as Africans were not founders, rather we were the builders, the labor, that does not link us, nor make us complicit in the sins of her “founding.” I reject that statement. If Africans were in fact “founders” then the descendants should have been able to partake of her fruits, fully as a partner. No, Africans were not founders, we were slaves! That fact is not refutable. Not even by a Black PhD in Russian Studies. You cannot have it both ways, and when we make demands for reparations, we are clearly told “NO” we have no claims on the wealth of this nation. And which opportunities were “given”. A more accurate description would be taken, not given. Opportunities taken by the White founders were not extended to their African Slaves.

Which leads me to her next point:

“As a result, [of these birth defects] descendants of slaves did not get much of a head start, and I think you continue to see some of the effects of that.”

Much of a Head Start? Let’s put it this way, 400+ years of work from day one, with no pay whatsoever. No land, no house, no equity, no field, no mule, no bank account, no money, no inheritance, no savings, NOTHING, not one dime for over 400 years followed by 100 more years of Jim

Crow. The freed descendants of slaves had nothing to have a ‘head start’ with. Those 40 acres and that mule never came. I guess she missed that day in her history class. Rice says, “Not much of a head start”, how about no head start, nothing! Meanwhile down on Twelve Oaks, Massa O’Hara, was building up his cotton crops, cashing in, sending their white kids to colleges, building banks, businesses, towns and museums, and let’s not forget governments. Oh and did I mention they paid NOTHING for Labor! Now that’s a head start!

In closing, she stated: “That this particular birth defect makes it hard for us to confront it, hard for us to talk about it, and hard for us to realize that it has continuing relevance for who we are today,” she said. I assume us, she means American’s but in truth, Black Americans face it and confront it everyday. Just as we have everyday for over 400 years. She is so worried that she might offend the White American’s that she won’t even say what she is saying! Instead, she casts a big net, and brings us all into the denial game and calls us all reluctant. I believe she is dead wrong and her attitude is problematic for us.

The problem for us is that she is “An African American” with a broad canvas to paint this rubbish on. To those undereducated Americans and under-interested folk around the world, she represents US. And I don’t mean the United States, I mean us Black Americans. Shouldn’t we be counting down her days just like G.W. Bush?

Visit www.cherylmajorsays.wordpress.com to join the discussion on the topic.

Cover Story, Part 3, Continued from page 3.

this week also encourage Americans to dislodge themselves from immobility.

“The Promised Land that Dr. King saw during his last days is still more of a hope than a reality for many in this country,” declares the statement from the Black economists which includes Pitts of UCLA at Berkeley, Spriggs of Howard University, Julianne Malveaux, president of Bennett College for Women, and Gregory Price of Morehouse College. “In order to reduce poverty and improve the fate of low-wage workers in the labor market, we believe that public policies must be enacted that attack racial discrimination and increase the prospects for workers who do not earn a living wage.”

A synopsis of policy and action suggestions from the three states, “The Unrealized Dream”, “Beyond the Mountaintop” and the “Black Economists Statement” are

as follows:

- Ensure a debt-free higher education to first-generation and low-income college students. (IPS)
- Expand homeownership through various first-time homeowner mechanisms, such as soft-second mortgages and subsidized interest rates. (IPS)
- Strengthen federal investment in wealth development for asset-poor Americans. (IPS)
- Create a “green” urban infrastructure and job development fund. (IPS)
- Provide and a universal and more comprehensive health care plan for all Americans. (IPS)
- Generate full employment, even focusing on the ‘unemployable’. (Beyond...)
- Fight discrimination by providing opportunities for good jobs. (Beyond...)
- Protect workers’ freedom of association

and right to join a union. (Beyond...)

- Raise the minimum wage so that it regains its 1968 value and index it so that it rises as prices rise. (Beyond...)
- Insure a fair and progressive tax system, which would include the Earned Income tax Credit. (Economists...)
- Open opportunities for men, women and youth who are traditionally blocked from good jobs. (Economists...)
- Restore and enforce basic labor market standards. (Economists...)

“The 2008 Presidential election is full of talk of ‘change’”, concludes the IPS report, “The Unrealized American Dream”. It continues, “It is our hope that this report can help catalyze our national will to make real change in the area of racial inequalities – a divide that still tarnishes the land of Dr. King’s dream.”

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The Audacity of Corporate New Orleans; Name Change an insult to memory of Mayor Ernest N. Morial



Vincent Sylvain
The New Orleans Agenda

Last year when I received word that officials at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center were considering changing the name its name I was assured by the communication department that my information was incorrect and was assured that no such discussions were being entertained. To my disbelief it was announced this week that the "Convention Center has been renamed in promotional and advertising material in an attempt to better market it in an increasingly competitive environment center will now be called the New Orleans Morial Convention Center in brochures, pamphlets and on the uniforms and badges of employees, among other places."

The Times-Picayune 3/26/2008 article, Convention Center gets new name for marketing purposes adds "however, the convention center's legal name, the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center-New Orleans, which appears on contracts and in audited financial reports, will not change." Are we to now take solace in that assurance? The audacity of 'Corporate New Orleans.'

On the eve of the 30th Anniversary of his inauguration as the city's first African American mayor, removing Morial's full name from the Convention Center is the ultimate insult to Dutch's many contribution to New Orleans. It is a continuation of the 1992 conflict surrounding naming the building in his honor.

Robert D. Bullard is the Director of the Environmental Justice Resource Center at Clark Atlanta University touch upon the importance of culture in his report; KATRINA AND THE SECOND DISASTER: A Twenty-Point Plan to Destroy Black New Orleans with point #16. He suggested that a part of "corporate New Orleans" plan was to "Downplay the Black Cultural Heritage of New Orleans. Promote rebuilding and the vision of a "new" New Orleans as if the rich Black Culture did not matter or act as if it can be replaced or replicated in a "theme park" type redevelopment scenario. Developers should capture and market the "black essence" of New Orleans without including black people."

The Convention Center Authority is composed of a 12-member board of commissioners, nine appointed by the Governor of Louisiana, and three appointed by the Mayor of New Orleans. The gubernatorial appointees serve at the pleasure of the Governor, while the Mayor's appointees serve four-year terms. According to NOMCC's website, as one of America's leading destinations for conventions and tradeshow, NOMCC event activity has produced \$37.86 billion in economic impact since its 1985 opening, including \$2.09 billion in new tax revenue.

While recognizing the need to re-establish New Orleans in the market, the success of recent events such as the NBA All-Star Game, the NCAA Football title game, the return of Essence Festival, and a host of other major events at the Center suggest that people are finding their way to New Orleans in spite of the Convention Center's false claims of being at a competitive disadvantage in trying to promote New Orleans because of the name of the facility.

Those very same arguments were advanced by the late Dr. Merv Trail on behalf of the business community during the initial debate about naming the building in honor of Dutch. It was pointed out then that the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in New York, McCormick Place in Chicago, and the Staples Center in Los Angeles among others all seem to overcome the challenge of having its facilities named in honor of humans or corporate sponsors.

In 1992 the Louisiana Legislature past legislation which officially authorized the legal named of the Exhibition Hall Authority to honor the memory and contributions of the late Ernest N. "Dutch" Morial, New Orleans' first African American mayor. That fact was historic enough, but the legislature believed that this was an appropriate designation particularly because of Dutch's role is assuring that the Center would be constructed.

A review of recent history reflects that while most community leaders supported the initial efforts to dedicate the facility in honor of Morial, there was some opposition from certain members of corporate New Orleans. A December 8, 1992 letter written by Warren Reuther to Mrs. Sybil Morial and then Senator Marc Morial seems to document that debate.

Reuther wrote, "When the idea of changing the name first came before the New Orleans Exhibition Hall Authority, the Board had discussed how many fine people were involved in making the Hall a reality.

After looking into and better understanding exactly what Dutch had to personally do in order for the Convention Center to be built, I now realize that the name that is now on the building is the name that

should be on the building. The Convention Center in New Orleans is most deserving of his name."

The Louisiana Legislature appropriately recognized Morial's accomplishments and this week's announcement to alter the name without even going before the legislature is a replay of that initial debate under the disguised of marketing and branding the New Orleans name.

"For us to get New Orleans into the title is a positive thing," said Melvin Rodrigue, newly named president of the Ernest N. Morial New Orleans Exhibition Authority, the board that runs the convention center. "New Orleans is what most people associate with."

This battle may also be an extension of the battle to re-make New Orleans following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina.

Christopher Cooper, staff report of The Wall Street Journal in his September 8, 2005 article quoted James Reiss, chairman of

reduce both the influence and numbers of Blacks living in its community; creating barriers for Katrina survivors to cast a ballot during election; the attempt to rename schools honoring African Americans heroes; the demolishing of public and affordable housing; the continuing debate over the future of Charity Hospital which served low income citizens; attempts not to rebuild the city east of the Industrial Canal (Lower 9th Ward and East New Orleans, predominately African American communities) based on the suggestion of plans proposed by the Urban Land Institute and some members of the Bring New Orleans Back Commission; the firing of 7000 teachers and para-professionals and takeover of the public school system; merging and elimination of offices held by Black officials and the list continues; rumblings of moving to a system of merit appointed judges; and the insensitive design of the Louisiana Road Home program which was created to aid

homeowners in the recovery of their homes.

In the Wall Street Journal interview Mr. Reiss added that "The power elite of New Orleans - whether they are still in the city or have moved temporarily to enclaves such as Destin, Fla., and Vail, Colo. -



the Regional Transportation Authority and a descendent of an old-line Uptown family as saying, "The new city must be something very different, ... with better services and fewer poor people. "Those who want to see this city rebuilt want to see it done in a completely different way: demographically, geographically and politically," he says. "I'm not just speaking for myself here. The way we've been living is not going to happen again, or we're out.

He says he has been in contact with about 40 other New Orleans business leaders since the storm. Tomorrow, he says, he and some of those leaders plan to be in Dallas, meeting with Mr. Nagin to begin mapping out a future for the city." To date there has been no public disclosure of what was discussed or of who attended that Dallas meeting but the implications seems to indicate a reversal of New Orleans racial mix.

Since the Dallas meeting, New Orleans have witnessed attacks on many fronts to

insist the remade city won't simply restore the old order.

In human rights lawyer and law professor Bill Quigley's Lesson From Katrina: How to Destroy an African American City in 33 Steps, he could have added step 34, attack Black New Orleans's symbol of hope. Who is next, the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport, Mahalia Jackson Theatre of Performing Arts?

On March 27, 2008, newly elected Governor Bobby Jindal announced his new appointments to the Center's governing board. They are Melvin Rodrigue, who has served on the Convention Center's board since 2005, was appointed president. The governor's appointees also include: Jay H. Banks, James "Jim" Besselman, Klara B. Cvitanovich, Anthony Dileo, J.D., Edward D. Markle, Frederick W. Sawyers III, Carroll Wilson Suggs, and James Bryan Wagner.

Talking Strategy as Obama Gets Closer

By: Ron Walters

With the Obama Campaign so close to winning the Democratic nomination, strategy means virtually everything when the course is peppered with thorny problems that must be handled correctly. So, let me throw a few ideas out that might smooth the way.

First I want to acknowledge the fact that Barack Obama's campaign played a masterful hand in confronting the problem of the re-vote in Florida and Michigan by doing absolutely nothing. My fear was that it would yield to the proposal in Florida for an election re-vote or a mail-in balloting scenario just to appear to be fair to the delegates.

Similarly in Michigan, the proposal to re-schedule a vote found Hillary Clinton in the state criticizing the Obama campaign for duplicity in not joining with them, in effect, to cut it's own throat.

In the end, the Obama campaign did not come to the table and both proposals crashed and burned, leaving only the option

of seating both delegations, but dividing them equally so as not to affect the existing distribution of delegates.

Second, assume that the video showing Rev. Jeremiah Wright preaching will continue, since it not be eliminated by the marvelous speech that Obama made in his defense, because the media obsession will remain and it will be regurgitated by either Hillary Clinton or John McCain.

Just check the snide reference of Bill Clinton that it would be wonderful to have "two people who love the country" like Hillary and John McCain running, as an example. So, there must be an offensive move found to take the venom from Rev. Wright by elevating his life in a manner that exposes a positive parallel narrative that competes with it. This cannot be done, however, by the Obama campaign, in my judgment, but by those in the religious community who understand Rev. Wright's contribution better than others.

Third, the Obama campaign desperately needs to craft a pow-

erful populist message to accompany the speech on race, showing that poor blacks and poor whites have more in common in practical terms than they do differences. That would enrich the substance of the challenge to move beyond race (racism) that was contained in his speech to achieve higher economic common ground.

So, Obama should go into the Pennsylvania blue-collar ghettos, but also into North Carolina and beyond with a theory and a program to challenge age-old cross-racial resentments part of which is founded on economic disadvantage.

Fourth, the campaign should refer repeated to the double standard in the media that does not repeatedly air the fact Sen. John McCain sought the endorsement of Rev. John Hagee of Texas who has called the Catholic Church "the great whore" and "a false cult system." Video clips of his sermons exist at (<http://www.jhm.org/ME2/Default.asp>) but none of these statements have been shown. Neither has the major

media shown the video of Rev. Rod Parsely of Ohio, who McCain once referred to as a "spiritual guide" and who referred to Islam as an "anti-Christ religion" and Europe as a "Godless pit" on video clips distributed on You Tube.

McCain has not been dogged by the media to separate himself from or to repudiate these individuals or to explain his relationships.

Fifth, the campaign should project to the Super delegates the notion that moving forward into the general election campaign, one of the most salient facts in their selection of a nominee should be the viability of each campaign's capacity to raise and utilize money.

As of the last quarter, the Clinton campaign has raised 30 million, but has only \$3 million on hand and \$8 million in debts. By comparison, the Obama campaign raised \$50 million and has \$31 million on hand and virtually no debt. This means that Obama is in a better position to compete the rest of the way and to raise funds rather easily for a general election

contest, while the difficulty the Clinton campaign has had with both raising money and spending it wisely should be alarming. Which one would you choose?

The recent news that Obama's passport file has been breached by contract workers tells us that someone is using every means at their disposal to craft an opposition strategy against him, so his must be top notch. More about that later.

Dr. Ron Walters is the Distinguished Leadership Scholar, Director of the African American Leadership Center and Professor of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland College Park. One of his most recent books is: *Freedom Is Not Enough: Black Voters, Black Candidates and American Presidential Politics* (Rowman and Littlefield Press).

Cover Story, Part 1, continued from page 6.

into Denver divided because if we go in divided, we'll come out divided," he says.

Super delegates, including Clyburn, are party leaders who can vote any way that they perceive is best. Technically, they could throw their vote to Clinton even if Obama has won the most pledged delegates based on primaries and caucuses. He leads by 157 pledged delegates.

The next primary is April 22 in Pennsylvania, where 158 delegates are up for grabs. North Carolina, which votes May 6, offers 115 delegates. The final contests are in Montana and South Dakota on June 3. But, it is mathematically impossible for either candidate to win the 2,024 pledged delegates before the August 25-28 convention.

Meanwhile, normally apathetic constituents have attended debate parties, hastened to watch post-primary "election-bowl" reports, and attended rallies from city to city. Political observers and issue advocates are now wrestling with ways to maintain the record

enthusiasm, voter registration and overwhelming turnouts with hopes to impact local and state elections as well as issues beyond the November 4 election.

"You've got people registering to vote without even encouragement. You've got people going on their own registering to vote. People want to participate. So, you've got an upsurge in registration and upsurge in turnout," says Melanie Campbell, president and CEO of the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation. "I don't have a crystal ball or the historical perspective to say I know exactly what's going to happen in the fall because we've never seen anything like this; especially for African-Americans, who've only had unfettered access to the ballot for a little more than 40 years."

The mission of Campbell's Coalition is to keep the Black electorate engaged, particularly at the grassroots level. The bottom line is that the battle between Democratic contenders Sens. Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton and Republican John McCain have sen-

sitized people to issues that they know realistically impact them, she says.

Political scientists speculate that the number of youth voters make up the largest turn out at the polls.

"Something has happened that more people are attuned and seeing this thing as something viable and impactful for their lives," says Campbell. "In Alabama, we've got 200 young people who've asked, 'How do I stay involved?' So, what we're doing is going back into Alabama and trying to get people involved in Black Youth Vote," the youth activism arm of the coalition.

Campbell says the Coalition is building a data base of young Black activists who want to be involved in civic engagement.

"It allows for us to communicate with people beyond just the election cycle to get them involved. Where ever we have an affiliate, we're sharing this with our membership. Young people are blogging and utilizing the technology. We also encourage people to vol-

unteer for other organizations."

Fueling the interest is the possibility of Clinton, the first woman, or Obama, becoming the first African-American to receive the Democratic nomination for president. But, issues such as health care, education, the war in Iraq and the economy are also causing people of all ages to be anxious about the future.

Gary Flowers, executive director of the Black Leadership Forum says civics must be reincorporated into mandatory school curricula in order to maintain educated engagement from elementary school to college.

"In other words, we must make civic education cool again. And the candidates this year have given us a good head start on that journey," Flowers says. "If we are to continue the excitement around election 2008, we must do so with an informed citizenry."

Ron Daniels, president of the Institute of the Black World - 21st Century, a New York-based organization, says the real challenge will be maintaining the momen-

tum of excitement through the election. Daniels echoed Clyburn's sentiments.

"If in fact somehow there's a sense that Barack Obama has been treated unfairly by these super delegates, then there's going to be a lot of these young people who are going to be discouraged and they're just going to drop out," says Daniels. "But, beyond the election, we don't have many structures in place to capture that excitement into order to maintain the pressure. My view is that no matter who is elected, we can't just sort of relax. We have to say, there is still an agenda here and a progressive agenda that we need to continue to push forward."

Clyburn concludes that maintaining the groundswell of voters will be contingent upon much more than just enthusiasm.

"It all depends on the degree of success that we have between now and November," he says. "I would hate to say what the strategy should be at this point because we just don't know what the results are going to be."

Exclusive Interview with Prosecutor of Kwame Kilpatrick: "Mayor Will Have Jury of His Peers"

By. Bankole Thompson

DETROIT (NNPA) - Following her announcement of 12-count complaint against Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick and his former chief of staff, Christine Beatty, Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy sat down with Chronicle senior editor Bankole Thompson for a one-on-one exclusive interview.

Michigan Chronicle: Twelve counts of felony charges. Was this a difficult decision?

Kym Worthy: Well, I would say deliberate more than difficult. All of our cases are hard to do. We make difficult decisions all the time. So no more than anything else. I think when you let the facts (be) your measuring stick for everything, once you do that you don't let outside influences affect you.

MC: Is this the biggest case you've handled?

KW: It's too early to tell. I think, like I said before, time will tell if this is the biggest case. I'm not sure what that means. Does it mean exposure?

MC: I mean given the high profile and the media anticipation.

KW: I've been on other cases that were extremely high profile. I think the Nevers-Budzyn (trial) was probably the highest profile case. But there has been others. I think time would have to make a mark on that.

MC: The mayor's lawyer, Dan Webb, in a press conference said in his understanding (experience), perhaps the usual thing to do is that normally defense lawyers are allowed to state their case (well before charges are announced). But he said in this case that was not the case.

KW: Maybe that's how they do things in Chicago but that's not done here. I understand that's how they sometimes do things in the federal system. I think what he's talking about is that he wants to meet with me personally prior to our investigation being concluded. And I still think that's the wrong thing to do. I've never done it for any of the defendants since I've been here since 2004. I'm not going to start now. I think when you do an investigation it has to be impartial and fair and, frankly, I don't need the intercession of

the defendant's lawyer to try to make our decision. I just think this is the fairest way to proceed as possible. If you do it the other way I think it just looks bad. And I think it has the taint of not being fair as well.

MC: He (Webb) said the charges are emanating from a civil case. He indicated that not once has your office prosecuted perjury charge emanating from a civil case instead of a criminal case. What is your response?

KW: Well, we prosecute for what we know about. But really the more important question is this: Is it OK to then perjure yourself in a civil case, but not a criminal case? So I'm not sure what that means. What you have to really look at is the intent of the perjury charge. It's perjury when you raise your hand and swear to a notary public and you are misrepresenting yourself. That's perjury. And that's not a trial in and of itself. So I don't understand that at all.

MC: So when he (Dan Webb) says it's selective prosecution, that's not the case with the office of the Wayne County prosecutor?

KW: Not at all. There've been 8.4 million reasons as to why we charge in this case, and I think I laid everything out clearly, like this was not a case just about sex. Absolutely not. There's so much more than that. People's lives were ruined. Their (whistleblower offices) finances were destroyed. Their careers were ruined. They were very much victims. And so I don't think we can ignore that as well. Dollars were spent unlawfully and the public trust was compromised. Those are very good reasons why charges are filed. This is not selective at all. I don't think they will be successful in that charge.

MC: So you are confident that this office will be able to prosecute and win on all the charges?

KW: I am confident that we charged what we felt we could prove beyond reasonable doubt. Yes.

MC: This issue is part of the hallmark of your rise to the office of the Wayne County prosecutor. A lot of people believe Recorder's Court was taken away because of your prosecution of White police officers Walter Budzyn and Larry Nevers for the killing of African American Malice Green.



Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick faces prosecution for perjury and lying under oath.

KW: And I would agree with that.

MC: Now (since Recorder's Court has been taken away) can the mayor get a jury of his peers?

KW: I think he can. Ultimately it's up to us in the justice system to picture everything to be fair. He (the mayor) has very competent lawyers on his team and we have very competent lawyers, obviously. We have challenges we can use and they have challenges they can use. So it's up to us to pick that fair and impartial jury.

MC: So you believe he will get a jury of his peers?

KW: I do.

MC: So what was at the back of your mind when this case came up and people said it's the prosecutor who has to deal with this?

KW: You know, I really didn't think about it that much because it happened in my jurisdiction. There wasn't a reason why I shouldn't look at it. There was no conflict of interest. No legal reason why I shouldn't investigate it within my jurisdiction. It's very important when we accept these roles. We choose to run for office and we're elected to this office. We really ought to be up to what we are supposed to do. And that doesn't mean if a case is con-

ceived as being a "hot potato," we dock those and we do the ones that are supposed to be "not hot potatoes." That's irresponsible.

MC: You know, the general opinion Blacks have about the criminal justice system is not impressive when it comes to disproportionate sentencing. Is it a comfortable place to be in for an African American prosecutor to charge the mayor of a powerful, overwhelmingly Black city like Detroit?

KW: Well, here's the point. In this case that wasn't an issue for me. The three victims whose lives were ruined, three police officers simply doing their jobs are all African Americans, a lot of the witnesses we talked to are African Americans. Just about everybody involved in this case is African American. I don't see that as an issue in this case. And I understand what you are asking me. I understand why you are asking about the mistrust of the judicial system. Which is why you may understand this better than most. I think that the most significant case, if it were measured today, that I've ever done was Budzyn and Nevers. I think in terms of significance it gave people of color hope in the justice system. So

no, I do not think that race played a part in our decision making.

MC: Well, there are a lot of people who say this issue was driven and the drumbeaten by the mainstream media, which is basically the White media.

KW: Well, what I can say is if the Michigan Chronicle went and unearthed the text messages against a suburban mayor, and happened to be a European, our approach would have been exactly the same.

MC: Your office has come under criticisms recently for not prosecuting cases in Detroit, but in the suburbs. Your critics ask if there are any re-election motives in you doing this. Does that have any bearing in this case?

KW: Well, it's interesting because people may be talking about the few cases that we hear about in the press, but not about the thousands of cases we deal with every day. Another thing is, what about the Black (perpetrators) that we prosecute every day? We do all sorts of cases. We do 18,000 cases a year. You may hear about three or four in the press every year. Let me just tell you. I take this role very seriously. I think the most important function a prosecutor has is to be gatekeeper to the criminal justice system. And there's always going to be people who don't like what we do. We may get a few complaints here about cases we should have charged. Or people may criticize us in a few other things, not many.

MC: When you leave this office heading home, you are Kym Worthy, an African American. Are you concerned about any political fallout this case will have in the Black community?

KW: Again, I don't worry about it. I really don't. At the end of the day if I have done the right thing considered the facts and evidence to guide us, then I have done the right thing from there. I can't worry about it. It's when you don't do the right thing, that's when you worry about it. I really can't worry about how someone is going to feel about a case before I charge. I can't worry about it if this or that segment is not going to like me, or women are not going to like me or men. I can't worry about that.

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