

EDITORIAL

"Our country must abandon all of the habits of racism, because we cannot carry the message of freedom and the baggage of bigotry at the same time."
President George Walker Bush

WE MUST UNDERSTAND: Voting Affirms Actions

Since 1960s' Black America's affirmative action's first mandate was "community control of schools" was never fully addressed, the state of 2007 America's public education system should give one cause to pause and ponder whether, or not, this great nation ever had any intentions, whatsoever, of educating a vast diversity of minority citizens' offspring to compete with the privileged children of made in America European America's ruling class. Surely, Black America's intelligentsia will interpret **African American News & Issues'** slightest inference to the Supreme Court's historic *Brown vs. Board* ruling being an intellectual Trojan horse as blasphemy. Even so, we're obligated to tell it like it is.

We Must Understand, conscious citizens realize that public education domesticates, rather than educate the poor, tired, huddled masses indigenous to the underserved urban jungles in the land of the free (FYI: The secret of American schooling is that it doesn't teach the way children learn -nor is it supposed to. Schools were conceived to serve the economy and the social order rather than kids and families--that is why it is compulsory. As a consequence, the school can not help anybody grow up, because its prime directive is to retard maturity. It does that by teaching that everything is difficult, that other people run our lives, that our neighbors are untrustworthy even dangerous. School is the first impression children get of society. Because first impressions are often the decisive ones, school imprints kids with fear, suspicion of one another, and certain addic-

tions for life.

"It ambushes natural intuition, faith, and love of adventure, wiping these out in favor of a gospel of rational procedure and rational management. -*The Underground History of American Education*, by John Taylor Gatto.) Surely, that little tidbit of intelligence got your attention, but it was only used to set our editorial's tone, rather than debate the catch-22 educational woes bedeviling today's kids. Truth is, we're more concerned about getting into the heads of clueless Black leaders, e.g., parents, pastors, principals and publishers, who just don't seem to get the bigger picture of how education's Trojan horse is used to destroy our neighborhoods. Surely, it might appear that we are attacking many of our leaders here. But put that thought on hold for now, because we definitely "ain't going there."

We Must Understand, descendants of slaves ideally had more control over their schools when they were first freed than they do today. Although we tend to use examples of what's occurring in Houston, Texas (our corporate headquarters), it quickly becomes evident (when engaging in conversation with pre-integration made in America Africans' high school alumni from any southern state) that when it's *A Rainy Night in Georgia*, it's raining all over Black folks' world. Clever song references aside, what we're saying is that "back in the day," although America's movers and shakers facilitated public schools in our community, they had little concern about how kids in underserved public schools indigenous to impoverished minor-

ity neighborhoods were taught.

History records that White America's social engineers truly believed that people of African heritage were sub-human. Accordingly, after civil rights legislature (i.e., *Brown v. Board*, affirmative action, etc., forced their children to compete with our children one-on-one), they grudgingly pondered if they were dealing with a superior, rather than an inferior people. Unfortunately, African America's leaders still suffer from the residual effects of Willie Lynch's *How to Make a Slave* indoctrination. Dividing and confusing aside, when State Rep. Harold V. Dutton initiated an attack against HSD's \$805 million bond proposal, the delusional publisher of "Houston's Leading Black Newspaper" responded: "We'd rather have an old school than no school," Dutton said.

"HISD officials, however, contend that a total enrollment decline of 300 students in the last five years makes the schools too small to operate efficiently. 'Not that we're taking the district's side in the matter. But we do question whether campaigning to defeat the entire bond package is the right thing to do. There are other students throughout the district who will benefit from the money.' Perish the thought we're dissing her, but evidently she fails to grasp the concept that closing a school puts another nail in a dying community's coffin. Nor do Black leaders seem to understand that Democracy's weapon of mass destruction against racism and/or discriminations is our vote. Thus, our future editorials will further explain why **Voting Affirms Actions.**"

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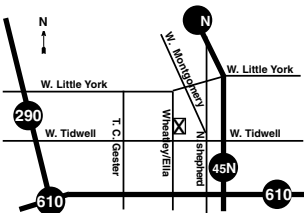
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PUBLISHER'S NEWS ANALYSIS

Racist Rhetoric's Reality

Roy Douglas Malonson

It's almost impossible for moderately conscious citizens to go about their daily activities in public venues without picking up fragments of news and/or issues that the nation's gossipy media has made a hot topic. Therefore, unless one is plugged into another universe (via iPods, or Bluetooth cell phone apparatus), sooner or later he or she will hear racist rhetoric. Especially, in predominately Black neighborhoods. And when I think about it, even the spaced out cell phone addicts could be talking about the same things that are heated topics on radio talk shows. It doesn't seem to make any difference if the topic is the Iraq war, or "nappy headed" basketball players, you can be sure that the proverbial academic question about race will be asked.

Race card notwithstanding, that academic question is, "if she was White?" is being asked as Texas Southern University's disgraced ex-president gets her day in court. Then again, since an academic question is defined as "a query which has an interesting answer, but is of no practical use or importance," perhaps we should use its B-clause: rhetorical question, instead. I say this because Webster defines rhetorical question as "one that requires no answer because the answer is obvious and doesn't need to be stated. The speaker (of the rhetorical question) is not looking for an answer, but is making some kind of a point, as in an argument." On the other hand, there's a growing number of African Americans wanting to profess that "we're not a monolithic people who all think alike," that rejects the notion that "the White man" can be blamed for

all of our problems.

Ta-Nehisi Coates, a New York columnist addressed both ideologies in the Village Voice: "African Americans have entered into an epoch of history where, for the first time, Bull Connor racism is the least of our problems. And yet 'the problem of the color-line' still lingers. A gaggle of brilliant scholars from Robin Kelley to Cornel West to William Julius Wilson have sought to articulate this new world where race intermingles with all manner of societal problems to wreak havoc on Black communities," Coates says. But no one has yet coined a language that describes this new reality in the way W.E.B. Du Bois did in *The Souls of Black Folk*. Du Bois essentially defined Black America in the 20th century with his notion of 'double consciousness--the idea that African Americans experience everything in this world both as Americans and as black people.

"Scholars have come up shaky in their efforts to update Du Bois's simple, but ingenious formula. In her new book, *The End of Blackness*, Debra Dickerson has a solution for our lexiconal conundrum--throw the entire damn dictionary of race out the window. Dickerson asserts: 'This book will both prove and promote the idea that the concept of 'blackness', as it has come to be understood, is rapidly losing its ability to describe, let alone predict or manipulate, the political and



Ta-Nehisi Coates

BUD'S EYEVUE
ON: Retiring Lies
Bud Johnson: The Old African Warrior

Woebeit I'm well aware that pious brothers and sisters mentally queue *The Twilight Zone* theme when I venture into *The Outer Limits* of blasphemy. But I grasp the biblical concept: "God is not mocked," that the late John Peavy Sr. taught me in Pleasant Hill Baptist Church's Sunday school when I was a wee lad growing up in Houston, Texas' Fifth Ward 'hood. Thus, "I am" not cracking, but facting when I purport an ardent belief in signs from the great I AM.

Surely, naysayers think (in spite of spending more time than I enjoyed with my paternal Paw Paw, Rev. William Paul Fonteno), my Christian ethics are dubious. Especially, when they're compared to Bible thumping, born-again believers in Jesus the Christ. Yet, I tend to take His elucidation to worship in spirit and truth literally.

Ergo, I've learned to wait for signs before making major decisions. And if truth be told, albeit my contract with God is in its option year, a routine medical procedure that morphed into a near death experience gave me cause to pause and ponder whether or not, it was time to think retirement. Hey, when I launched my professional career as a paid, i.e., professional journalist, in the second

week of September 1953, I wasn't volunteering to be the rock that cries out God's truth.

Square business, I was too spiritually naive to consider that the good Lord was putting me on a path to utilize the talents he had bestowed on an urchin in Da' Big Nickel. In fact, I was as unlikely a candidate to be chosen by God to be an editorial prophet for my people as David was to rule Israel. So I sho' nuff thanked God for his small blessings and tender mercies, but my intent was to put in a reasonable amount of time using my writing skills to become the best sportswriter in the known civilized universe and retire to finish an autobiography that I started writing while languishing in the U.S. Army's stockade in 1954 in Pusan, Korea.

In fact, I made my intentions known when I retired for the first time on Bud Johnson Day in 1985. Obviously I lied. Even so, I certainly wouldn't be talking 54 years of intellectual warfare with evil in high places, as we speak, if my spirit wasn't constantly renewed by (real or imagined) signs from the good Lord. Ergo, instead of telling myself lies to retire, I start looking for signs.

Burning bushes notwithstanding-

social behavior of African Americans. The idea that race has little social or political meaning is not a new line of reasoning in the debate around Black America. But it's usually employed by conservatives-of all races-attempting to downplay the impact of racism, or black people cynically seeking to absolve themselves of social responsibility. "White people, according to Dickerson, are victims of 'aversion therapy,' in that they refuse to see their

own complicity in racism. Furthermore, Whites 'assume their perfection' and exhibit 'a continued refusal to see America as inherently, organically multiracial and multicultural.' White narcissism, for Dickerson, is only one leg in a historical conspiracy. Simply put, she writes. 'Whites held hands across generations to hold Blacks down long enough to ensure that their own heirs would ascend to as much privilege as possible while simulta-

ing, God uses more subtle signs today. Yet, His message to Pharaoh, "Let my people go," is the same for his anointed deliverers in 2007 America as it was for Moses on the mount. Admittedly, I felt a discouraged Moses's pain in that Methodist Hospital bed reflecting on my "moonwalking" brothers and sisters' WMIC's mindset.

But, as usual, I sought spiritual comfort in my Daily Bread booklet, and an out of order page's topic: "Distressed Travelers" zapped me with: "After a long journey from Hong Kong, we missed the last flight to Grand Rapids, our final destination, by just 20 minutes. The airline arranged hotel rooms for us, and we took a shuttle for a short night's rest. We were a pretty sorry sight to the hotel staff. One of them looked at us, shook his head, and simply said, 'Distressed travelers.' "That experience was something of a metaphor for life. We're pilgrims in this world, traveling to a heavenly home that will be beyond description. Along the way, however, the cares and burdens of the journey can rob us of our hope and joy. We become distressed travelers in desperate need of encouragement and refreshment."

And nothing was more refreshing for me than phone calls from concerned friends, e.g., young warriors like Kofi, Quanell X, D-X, et al encouraging me to keep on keeping on. Accordingly, I reassured them not to believe my Retiring Lies. **I wonder if anybody knows where I'm coming from?**

neously keeping their hands clean." All I can say to that is AMEN! Even so, **Racist Rhetoric's Reality** dictates that public schools have put our children in a catch-22 situation. Accordingly, we must use the only weapon we have to defend them and vote. In essence, we can't blame White men for passing bonds that close schools and destroy our neighborhood if we don't go to the polls and vote in the best interests of our children on Nov. 6, 2007. ★