



We see the world
through Black eyes

An American success

Bert Lance is a good example of a man who lived the "American Way of Life" and lost. Lance did all the things that are expected of a big businessman caught up in the capitalist system. He wheeled and dealt and took advantage of the loop holes and the nuances of the law.

An American is expected to make money -- continuously increase his capital. He is expected to use the systems and patterns set up and to stay on the edge of the law.

Lance did these things and he was a successful businessman -- though under the microscope some of his methods might look questionable.

The one thing Lance did that most striving business men do not do, he helped others. While building his own kingdom he developed a bank, helped a town grow, helped the small businessmen and farmers through a liberal loan policy, and used the bank for the benefit of the community. That aspect of his life might be unusual.

Lance is a highly respected man, one who is honored by those who know him. He just got caught up in the system we are all supposed to emulate.

He served well

As the Observer goes to press we have learned of the death of Dr. DeNorville Unthank. Dr. Unthank who came to Portland as a young doctor in 1929, served his people well. Unthank not only looked after the health needs of the community -- Black and white -- but he worked to improve the social and economic life through activity in the civil rights movement.

Dr. Unthank will be long remembered for his dedication and for the doors he opened.

Unity: The godfather of Black progress

by Herb L. Cawthorne

No one in this community would likely disagree with the statement, "Unity is strength." Yet, when meshing the private dreams and personal needs of individuals into the practice of this ideal, it becomes clear that the consensus does not go too far beneath the surface.

"Unity" -- the calling card of progress for Black people. The impact of a spirit of oneness and a will to allow no small matters to force wedges between our locked arms is truly exemplified in the magnificent achievements of the recent stage of the Civil Rights Movement. Those who in their blind bitterness scoff at the recent gains of nonviolent direct action somehow overlook the great wave of commitment, determination, and togetherness which made its achievements possible.

The Civil Rights Movement helped Black Americans learn the value of unified action. Even to this day, the thought of the nonviolent resisters in the South is enough to send chills of pride up the spine and back down again. Stop and think a moment.

The image of rows and rows of Black people, together with courageous white supporters, all seated strategically on a crowded Southern freeway, refusing to allow traffic to proceed until the magnitude of their grievances had been noted in the national conscience; Martin Luther King, Jr., standing with his brothers and sisters, arms interlocked, singing and chanting together, marching against the hostile threats of billy clubs, vicious dogs, imprisonment, and personal harassment;

and the outspoken leadership of numerous student activists each compelled to lead hundreds to new horizons of dignity -- these are the images of unity. In this unity is our strength.

The ability to weld together over common needs has been the godfather of Black progress and development in America. Anyone hoping to maintain an oppressive position or condition knows this fact, and acts accordingly. The slave society, for instance, went to drastic measures to weaken the potential for cohesiveness among the Black Africans in this country. It destroyed common languages, restricted movement, and promoted "Nigger English," all in the effort to limit communication and undermine the reality of togetherness.

In modern times, the FBI has made it a consistent practice to disrupt organizations in the Black community. Is there anyone who seriously doubts that there are certain aspects of the news media which, like vultures looking for easy prey, invite opportunities to unravel the fabric of unity in Afro-American communities?

Unity is critical, essential. It is something of the vitamin E in our struggle to advance this race in America. Certainly if others will go to great length to undermine the spirit of brotherhood among us, then in this alone we have sufficient reason for each of us to go to great length to maintain the unity so critical and essential to our progress.

There is a mood creeping slowly over the Black people in this community. This mood may be the one that alters the traditional "I-am-better-than-my-brother" attitude that seems to prevail among

A difference in color?

Now the Port of Portland has its problems -- embezzlement by its employees. The FBI is looking into a scheme that might involve a large number of Port employees.

No one is accusing Lloyd Anderson, director of the Port of Portland, of crime or even neglect of duty. This is just one of those things that happens in a large operation handling millions of dollars. The FBI will get to the bottom of it but the leaders will be untarnished. You will not read in your daily papers that Anderson should be held responsible for his employees' conduct much less that he is a common crook.

In the last two or three years we have seen the County and the City come up short -- computer errors. The Secretary of State's office was found to be somewhat deficient in its accounting practices and the books of one large state agency were in such a mess that they couldn't be audited. The list goes on and on.

One thing is missing -- nobody accused the Mayor, the County Chairman or the Governor of crime.

Only in the case of a Black director did the possibility of crime come to mind. When PMSC was found to have accounting errors and sloppy book-keeping practices, these were quickly translated into criminal activity and misappropriation of funds. There is still talk of \$500,000 to \$600,000 in missing money, like it was somewhere in someone's pocket. The fact that the "missing" money will all be found and accounted for will somehow miss the attention of the public.

Doesn't it seem strange that one man is accused of crime and theft, yet no one would cast a doubt on the integrity of the other responsible officials whose programs also occasionally have "missing" money,

some Black Portlanders. It is a mood of strength and unity, one that is tired of Black leaders serving themselves more often than anyone else. And Portland may never be the same.

Even here in Portland, as we struggle to change the Board of Education, as we struggle for employment, as we struggle for greater political recognition, the grand vision of Martin Luther King, Jr., is appropriate:

"When the history books are written in future generations, the historians will have to pause and say, 'There lived a great people -- a Black people -- who injected new meaning and dignity into the veins of civilization.' This is our challenge and our overwhelming responsibility."

In Portland, will Black people come forward to provide the loving, but persistent, criticism which can revive some of our anemic organizations and leaders? Why should we not have the highest of expectations, and demand that we attain them? In an atmosphere of unity, the strength of critical analysis pushes us forward, on to better conditions, and never allows us the false comfort of a forgotten past.

In this period, we could all fall asleep, dreaming that our problems have been solved and that we are but one generation from the Promised Land.

There is no promised land -- except as we create one through the struggle to better our political, economic, social, intellectual, and artistic position in this world. And that struggle, to be successful, must be marked as the daily translation of our belief in the truism: "Unity is our strength."

Letters to the Editor

He doesn't belong here

To the Editor:

"The weak perish, and the strong survive." That law holds true, throughout the beginning of time. And it's clearly visible inside the walls of Oregon State Penitentiary. Within these walls you can find people from all walks of life, the best of the best and the worst of degenerates alive. It's the strangest conglomeration of the species called man ever placed under one roof.

These walls confine the dreams, hopes, tears, laughter, anger and pain of those duly found guilty of crimes against the State. And for their crimes, these men must pay, suffer the most dehumanizing experience in the history of mans inhumanity to man. All compassion is lost, love, a shameful word to be spoken.

Prison is the den of the guilty, the foolhardy and impulsive ones. And it is also the travesty of a criminal justice system that condemns and confines the innocent.

I write these lines with one such person in mind. You can't call it flag waving because I'm not patriotic, it is simply a statement of fact. The public is constantly screaming for stiffer punishments for law breakers, but what about those unfortunate innocent men caught in the net. Sure I've heard of appeal, but what about the time lost, the pain, loneliness and humiliation endured. "Who gives that back, huh? Who gives back the lost

respect?"

James Babe Wilson, is one of those men confined in this cesspool. It's tough doing time, and it's a bitch if you're a "Babe Wilson". I'm a prisoner myself and I've never felt the need to speak in behalf of any other inmate, but this brother's situation is so foul so funk filled that I too must join the ranks of those dedicated to obtaining his freedom.

March 21, 1977, I watched Babe hit the big yard. I heard the greetings pass, the ritual dance was danced, since he isn't a stranger to most of the Brothers, palms were slapped, right-ons were in abundance. Niggah's was highfiving and fat dadding for the brother's benefit. But he wasn't up to the occasion, he had a bewildered look in his eyes that temporarily shadowed the defiance and anger inside of him. It was as if he hadn't fully realized he was locked up. As though he were dreaming and was just waiting to be told, it was just another nightmare. Around him the zombies waited to take him into the fold, "the fraternity of the dead".

Since that first day Babe, has maintained his innocence. And it's common knowledge around the yard that, "The brother was framed." It's because of this knowledge that I crusade for his freedom. I knew him in the life of the scrambling hustler. And I'm aware of the transition he made from the plastic madness, to a life of substance and meaning. Babe, is a

living example that we can overcome. That a junkie and a con can be a productive person. Being around him instills in me the confidence that I too can change. Babe beat the odds, he met the challenge and came out a winner.

How ironic it is that he should now be confined in the filth and death he fought so hard to avoid.

James Babe Wilson, is a survivor, he will return one day to a real world. I'm sure that the chains that bind him now, won't contain the spirit of his Blackness. He has won the battle against drugs and the big money dreams. He will also be victorious against the system that has wrongfully condemned him.

All I ask is that you the people extend a helping hand. Babe, needs your help and we the confined need to see that the world we left is worth coming back to. That good triumphs over evil, and that it isn't a crime to be a Black junkie ex-con. Right the wrong, that the might of your silent voices be felt. Support the Babe Wilson Defense Fund. Give a dollar or a dime because that's all the system recognizes.

Thank you for reading these lines and line up for the freedom of James Babe Wilson. Send all donations to: James Babe Wilson Defense Fund, P.O. Box 10681, Portland, Oregon, 97210.

Sincerely,
Joe "West Wind" West

Questions Cawthorne's motives

To the Editor:

This letter is written as my individual response to Mr. Herb Cawthorne's article in the *Portland Observer*, September 15, 1977 entitled "Hartzog and Staff Motivation Questioned." By no means should this letter be construed as a defense statement for Dr. Hartzog or Gladys McCoy, who was also recently criticized publicly by Mr. Cawthorne. These two individuals in my opinion, are more than capable of making their own defense, should they feel it necessary to do so.

My letter is one of inquiry regarding Mr. Cawthorne's motivations and style of communication. Specifically:

1. Why is Mr. Cawthorne using the media to publicly criticize and raise doubts about the integrity of other Blacks? (A practice reminiscent of the "Divide and Conquer" strategy histori-

cally and expertly used on minorities.)

2. Why did Mr. Cawthorne find it necessary to use four paragraphs and two sub-paragraphs (approximately one-third of the article) before he began his attack on Dr. Hartzog and other School District staff? Was it for anesthetizing purposes perhaps?

In his article why did Mr. Cawthorne question the presence of School District staff at the Coalition meetings stating "Have they come to participate" etc. when he heard with his own ears the Coalition membership emphatically state that they did not want School District staff actively participating?

The preceding questions deal with Mr. Cawthorne's style of public communication and based upon my individual perception of his article, I find myself caught in a dilemma, specifically, I cannot find fault in the application of wisdom if I

doubt its presence.

Again, as an individual, I feel that the Desegregation Coalition should address itself to and raise questions concerning: why is it that with cities, school boards and staffs all over the nation under fire for their failure to implement desegregation operations, that the Portland School Board and staff are under fire for their attempt to implement voluntary desegregation operations; why are the time, efforts, and energies of the Coalition, after only three meetings, being somewhat hysterically turned from the important issues and focused upon the undignified activity of personality castigation; and finally, is there some particular force of personality who might be grinding the organ for Mr. Cawthorne?

Clifford J. Campbell, Jr.

They'll take us one by one

To the Editor:

Back in June, after I was sentenced to four months in S&I (the hole) the Warden, Mr. H.C. Cupp, stood in front of my cell and told me, quote: "If you don't learn to keep your mouth shut I am going to bury you down here, just like I am doing to Williams, I run this joint." unquote.

When I complained about the conditions, injustices and discriminatory practices of this institution and its staff they brought new charges against me. The charges are: Disruptive Behavior, Conspiracy, False Statement to Staff, and Attempted False Statement to Staff. All of which are unfounded! On the charge of Disruptive Behavior, the Disciplinary Committee gave me four days isolation (I had already spent five days in isolation) but when the committee took their decision before Mr. Cupp to be amended he gave me ninety days more running consecutive with the time I am now serving in the hole. He has yet to amend the Conspiracy and its surrounding charges. On the Conspiracy, the committee gave me a loss of 30 days good time, suspended for 30 days.

It appeared to me that Mr. Cupp is now going to make good his threat! I had made up my mind to stop bumping heads with them (the administration) but in view of their most recent attack on me, I feel that if I must go down I'll go down fighting!! I am guilty of being a "Black Man".... Therefore:

Persecution for Truth.

Brothers and sisters in the free world -- and brothers and sisters in prisons all over this country, if they do it to me they will do it to you!!

If you don't know where you come from; if you are unaware of who or where you are; "How in the hell can you possibly know where you are going?!"

George Jackson said, "There are no healthy brothers, none at all." Brother Malcolm X preached separatism and after his trip to the Holy Land of Mecca he spoke of the brotherhood of "Man" and mankind.

There is always of course, more to any picture than can speedily be perceived and in all of this -- groaning and moaning, watching, calculating, clowning, surviving and outwitting, some tremendous strength was nevertheless being forged, which is part of our legacy today. But, that particular aspect of our journey now begins to be behind us. The secret is out: we are "Men"!!

But the blunt, open articulation of this secret has frightened the nation to death. I wish I could say "to life" but that is too much to demand of a desperate collection of displaced people still cowering in their wagon trains and singing, "Onward Christian Soldiers."

We know that a baby does not come into the world merely to be the instrument of someone else's profit. We know that democracy does not mean the coercion of all into a deadly -- and finally, wicked-mediocrity but the liberty for all,

to aspire to the best that is in him, or that has ever been.

We know that, we, the Blacks, and not only the Blacks have been, and are, the victims of a system whose only fuel is greed, whose only God is profit. We know that the fruits of this system have been ignorance, despair and death, and we know that the system is doomed because the world can no longer afford it -- if indeed it ever could have. And we know that for the perpetuation of this system, we have all been mercilessly brutalized and have been told nothing but lies, lies about ourselves and our kinsmen, our pals, about love, life and death so that both soul and body have been bound in hell.

Some of us, Black and White, know how great a price has already been paid to bring into existence a new consciousness, a new people, an unprecedented nation. If we know and do nothing we are worse than the murderers hired in our name! If we know then we must fight, for your life as though it were our own -- which it is -- and render impassable with our bodies the corridor to the gas chamber. For if they take you in the morning, they will be coming for us that night!

And believe me brothers and sisters if we don't make a stand we will all be taken!!

Johnny Lamar Polite
Box 38555 S&I, O.S.P.



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