

Where Africa and America meet

by Nathaniel Scott

The motherland and an adopted country meet on a distant continent.

The motherland, Africa; the adopted country, America; the meeting: Claudia Asihene.

Claudia Asihene was born in Los Angeles, California, nineteen years ago and spent seven of those years in Ghana, Africa, the rightful birth place of her Ghanaian father, a UCLA graduate with a PhD in Geology.

Ms. Asihene has two sisters and one brother in Portland and the rest of her thirteen brothers and sisters reside in Ghana, with their father.

A third term student at Portland Community College, she enjoys music, traveling, sight-seeing, most organized sports and conversing.

She said, "Socially, Ghana is about the same as America, although it's quite hidden. You won't see boys and girls walking the streets holding hands, kissing, and things of that nature, like you do in America."

Socially, Ghana and America (what she has seen of it) are about the same, but, educationally, the difference is broad and easily discernible," she said. "School in Ghana is much harder than here. When you start school there (Ghana) you have to pay through the 12th grade, (called form 5) after

you complete your 0 level. Normally for those who do well, the government pays for your A level, which is college and/or University."

While attending school Ms. Asihene works at the hospital at the University of Oregon Health Sciences Center, a practice that's not done in Ghana. She said, "Students are not allowed to work while attending school." Her contention is, "You actually learn how to study because you either pass or fail, and once you fail you either try again or you stay down in society because you never get anywhere."

She spoke of customs, feuds, prejudice, and petty differences that have spanned a great body of water to rest upon these shores by students from the motherland. And of those born here, who should be students. She continued: "I've noticed here in Portland, that young Blacks, (mostly teenage boys) who could be more constructive are walking around playing cassettes and radios and games all day, (thinking life is all fun and games) could be going to school and hopefully, one day, become great Black men."

That thorn migrating to the downtown sector is casting its shadow upon many, and while some may not understand its implication, until the manure hits the fan, Asihene joins the voices before her, and denounces its need. "Some of them approach me (young Blacks)



CLAUDIA ASIHENE

(Photo: Thomas G. Golden)

either drunk or full of some other kind of drug and they are very disrespectful. If there were more places for recreation and entertainment in the Black community, we wouldn't have these young Blacks disrespecting people and the Black community

at the same time. It is time for us to come together and make our big Black world a better place to live in."

Claudia Asihene, a Black woman working for the betterment of the whole.



Sports Talk

By Ron Sykes, Sports Editor

A few years ago, a well known blues singer made a tune called "Payback." The Philadelphia 76ers borrowed a theme from this famous singer after losing to Portland in the 76-77 season and promised their fans that their loss to Portland was a fluke and that they would certainly pay them back the next year.

But with their loss to Boston Sunday Afternoon, the debt probably won't be paid this decade. The Sixers held a commanding 3-1 lead only to "choke" in the next three, to once again prove that they lack the little extra that it takes to win the big one.

There's many reasons why one team wins and another loses, and many living room coaches will give their analysis. But one that commonly surfaces is, "how good is Billy Cunningham as a coach." After Sunday's flop, Cunningham was severely criticized by fans from Cleo's Social Club. Viewers there agreed that Cunningham is the world's worst coach.

Geneva's fans blamed the referees. Two different views from two different groups. Let's examine both sides.

Billy Cunningham, it was said, knew nothing about coaching and that his record was good only because he was given great talent. Most at Cleo's were upset that Julius Erving was left sitting on

Cunningham's bench for seven crucial minutes while the Sixers lead disappeared in that crucial third period. Adrien Hampton, longtime basketball buff and former amateur player, believes Cunningham made a mistake by trying to coach the playoff series the same as an eighty-two game schedule. And Mr. Hampton was probably right because Dr. J., can rest now until early September. Just how much do these young, healthy athletes need anyway?

I would have a tendency to dispel the idea that the referees stole this one for Boston. Although it is a fact that Philadelphia never shot a bonus free throw in the final game, and it is a fact that Philly was whistled for more infractions than Boston. But the bottom line should show that these were two great teams battling it out and neither one could easily be ashamed.

This series did wonders for the NBA. It was action packed throughout and was a showcase for both the athletes and the NBA. All in all, it was fine basketball with a few dull moments. Philadelphia lost the last three games by a total of five points. It was truly an enjoyable series.

Now comes the East vs. West confrontation and it's doubtful if Moses Malone can carry the Rockets across the water. Sure,

Moses can walk water but his brothers just may be too heavy, and while Larry Bird drew all the praise...remember that Boston would surely crumble without the excellence of Tiny Archibald. Tiny is the glue. Without his penetration and outside shooting, Mr. Bird would be on his way back to Indiana for a long rest. Boston should win in five.

Remember Cazzie Russell, the former Michigan All-American, and former New York Knick and L.A. Laker forward? Wil, Cazzie is alive and well while playing in the Continental League. At 36, Russell is reportedly still doing great things.

Trivia Time: What college landed the most players on the 1980-81 NBA All-Stars? UCLA placed three players: Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Marques Johnson and Jamaal Wilkes. Kareem being selected on the first team, while Johnson and Wilkes gained second team acclaim. Boston's Larry Bird beat Johnson by a mere six votes.

Dennis Johnson, Phoenix; George Gervin, San Antonio and Julius Erving, all joined Jabbar and Bird on the first team. Erving was picked as the NBA's best, and my vote went to Houston's Moses Malone. Erving is good but just can't influence a game as Moses does. Malone is simply awesome.

Cell Talk

By Asmar Abdul Seifullah aka Joe West # 40404

Today David Howard will be sentenced. Somehow he must find the strength to stand before the court and accept his medicine. He doesn't know where he will find it but he knows he must. Justice demands that David be punished for his crime and there is no power on earth that can prevent or postpone the event.

Last month David sat through his trial in a maze of confusion. He didn't understand a word that was said. His lawyer seemed to be glued to his chair -- the only time he rose was to leave the courtroom. The District Attorney was young and energetic, he did an excellent job of painting David as public enemy number one. He told the jury that David was guilty and that it was their sworn duty to find him guilty and that if they didn't, the streets of Portland wouldn't be safe as long as David was free. He pleaded. He preached; exhorted to the jury until the only verdict left to them was guilty. True to form, David's lawyer remained seated; his silence was disgusting. The judge went to sleep and the jury returned with a guilty verdict.

David stands before the court; he is alone, he is afraid. His fear is total, absolute, beyond reason. It has taken control of him; it is distinct, it has a smell, taste, flavor

or bitter salt in his mouth. David's hands perspire, his eyes are out of focus, he looks at the judge and sees only the black robe and gavel.

David is certain that doom is upon him. His whole life races before his eyes and his throat is constricted with fear. His ears fail him -- the courtroom is silent -- he can't speak, see or hear a thing as the fog of his destruction rolls around him. The lid of his coffin slowly descends; David watches it with disbelief and his mind screams "don't bury me! I'm alive! I'm still alive!" But bam! It closes.

The judge rises and exits thru a door that appears from nowhere. David feels rather than hears his jailer urging him out of the courtroom. He walks down a endless corridor, his feet are lead, they move by their own volition. As David walks his sanity returns. He feels the leg irons biting into his ankles and he sees people staring at him as he passes. Just before he reaches the jail elevator, he passes a window and looks down upon Portland. He is able to see the buses, cars and people below as they move like ants on a concrete playground. They don't know David is watching and he has the urge to shout "Hey! I'm up here!" But he still can't

speak -- he sees, hears and smells but he can't speak.

David's jailer is a short fat man whose hair is thinning on top. He has made this walk a thousand times and he strikes up a conversation with David. "Don't take it so hard kid, twenty years ain't forever. Why you'll be out in no time if you keep your nose clean." David's mind focuses on twenty years. It shouts, echos and screams "twenty years! Twenty years! For what? I ain't killed nobody! Twenty dollars -- twenty years -- I'm only nineteen!"

Oregon State Penitentiary is full of David Howards. It is bursting with young, old and middle aged David Howards. They come here filled with hate, they are angry, bitter, cold and lonely. Sometime between their imprisonment and release they learn all the dirty tricks. They learn that they are not important, that there is always someone with more time and a bigger crime. They learn that there isn't anybody in the world that cares whether they live or die. They watch their youth evaporate, they see death, they kill themselves with hate. Their pain is time and the time eats them up.

"Year after year one question burns in their minds. Why am I here? I don't deserve this. Where is the help the judge promised me and what will I do when I get out?"

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