

Vantage Point

By Ron Daniels

Police Terror Is Not New In Black Communities

The vicious police beating of Rodney King, an African American who was stopped by members of the Los Angeles Police Department for allegedly speeding, has been the subject of major national attention. A white amateur photographer was able to capture the brutal event with a video camera. The dramatic footage continues to be run repeatedly on national television. The nation seems to be shocked that these "men in blue" could do such a thing. Even the Attorney General of the United States, Richard Thornburgh, was moved to order an investigation of the more than 15,000 reported and recorded complaints of police brutality that have been filed across the country in recent years (no one dare guess how many incidents of police brutality go unreported or unrecorded). The Attorney General wants to know whether these complaints reveal a "pattern" of police mis-conduct.

While America pretended to be in shock, Black America was not shocked at all. African Americans already knew the answer to Mr. Thornburgh's inquiry on the "pattern" question. The attack on Rodney King is a part of the historical pattern of violent oppression of Africans in America which has been visited upon our people ever since we arrived here in a condition of involuntary servitude. Black people in general and black men in particular have always been the target of white "authorities" who have often seen it as their self appointed duty to "Keep the niggers in their place."

When I was a youngster growing up in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, we

always knew that we were subject to be stopped and assaulted by the white cops at any time. Life in the Hill District was certainly not unique in that regard. In every ghetto in the United States the experiences and anxieties were exactly the same. In fact it was in response to the pattern of police violence that the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense was formed in Oakland, California in the 60's. Because a similar pattern existed in urban ghettos everywhere, the Panthers found fertile ground for organizing throughout the country. Indeed, most of the rebellions (so called riots) in the 60's were revolts that were sparked by incidents of police abuse almost without exception. If the general public suffers from the impression that the kind of police terrorism which sparked the rebellions in the 60's has vanished, it is because there has been a virtual news white-out of the pattern of police violence since the 60's. One of the conclusions which the authorities made about the rebellions in the 60's is that the media coverage of the revolts caused the rebellions to spread like a chain reaction. Therefore, though the incidents of police violence against Black people have continued unabated, reports about police brutality seldom reach beyond a local market.

Only in rare instances has the nation been exposed to a glimpse of the pattern of police violence that is a persistent fact of life for Black America. Police abuses provoked rebellions in Miami, Chattanooga, Tennessee and most recently in Vineland, New Jersey. Certain cities like Houston, Chicago and New York have also received at-

attention because of chronic allegations about police brutality. And the Rodney King incident is but the most recent in a series of incidents making news out of Los Angeles.

Over the last five years, the "War on Drugs" has also exacerbated tension between Black communities and the police. Embattled Black communities are calling for more effective law enforcement to contain the epidemic of drug trafficking and violence in the Black communities. That same call, however, has become a legitimizing license for racist cops to harass, harm and kill black people, particularly young Black males. At a conference which I attended in Washington D.C. recently, a young brother reported that he had been stopped by the police seven times in one month. In each instance the police searched his car and frisked him down, apparently looking for drugs. Every Black male on the streets has become a suspect.

So yes there is a pattern of police harassment, brutality and terror in the Black community. The Rodney King incident was caught on camera. Countless thousands of police attacks against Black people go untelevised, unreported and unrecorded. The pattern is not new. The pattern is as old as the individual and institutional racism and the economic exploitation and injustice which have been heaped on African Americans since we were forced to come to the United States. And the pattern will continue until the racist culture of America and the institutions of racial oppression and economic exploitation which are rooted in that culture are destroyed.

Exempt Parents Should File Income Tax Returns

Working parents who are exempt from filing income tax returns because their income is near or below taxable level should file them anyway—they may be eligible to receive up to \$953 through the earned income credit, according to Sen. Jane Cease, D-Portland.

Although more than 115,000 Oregonians got \$60 million from the federal tax credit in 1988, thousands more who are eligible don't know about the "negative" income tax provision.

Sen. Cease said, "There are many people who could really benefit from this. Those who know about it should tell any of their friends or relatives who might qualify to get the forms and then encourage them to file."

For the 1990 tax year, the range of incomes for which no federal income tax is due is from \$8,850 for a single parent with one child to \$15,700 for two parents with three children. A single

mother with one child working at minimum wage earns a gross income of just under \$10,000.

For the 1991 tax year, the program has broader income limits, increased payments, and a new payment for families who pay health insurance premiums. The maximum benefit this year is \$1,192 for a family with one child or \$1,235 for a family with two or more children.

Those qualifying can receive their credit through the year in their paychecks or as a refund at the end of the year. To get the credit, employees must file a W-5 form with their employers. Eligible workers can get free tax return preparation assistance at the Tax Aid sites in many Oregon communities. The sites are a joint project of the Oregon Department of Revenue and the U.S. Internal Revenue Service.

Further information can be obtained

by calling 1-800-TAX-1040.

Local Tax Aid Sites Northeast Portland:

- Albina Branch Library
3605 NE 15th, 221-7701
- Central Northeast Neighbors
5540 NE Sandy Blvd. 243-7357
- Gregory Heights Branch Library
7921 NE Sandy Blvd. 221-7730
- Hollywood Branch Library
3930 NE Hancock St. 221-7725
- Hollywood Senior Center
1820 NE 40th 288-8303
- Montavilla Community Center
8219 NE Glisan 254-4101
- Oregon Human Development
Hispanic Access Program
825 NE 20th, Suite 140 236-9670
- Salvation Army Rose Center
1785 NE Sandy Blvd. 234-0696
- SE Asian Vicariate
5404 NE Alameda Dr. 249-5892



PERSPECTIVES

by Professor McKinley Burt

Blacks In Military: Truth & Racist Responses

The last two articles certainly gained attention, and from both sides of the coin. I didn't expect everyone to be happy with the descriptions of blacks who gained fame in history for incredible military exploits which are still cited today—and used to teach tactics at the academies (though you would not know from media or text that they were black.)

Of course, it is only recently that the lies and slurs heaped upon the fighting abilities of African American soldiers and airmen of World Wars I and II have been put to rest. And in respect to the ancient Africans, we are all aware by now (or should be) that the establishment historians, publishers and media are given to broad, racist self-serving statements; generally to the effect that all of the world's culture and technology began with the GREEKS. No longer do they bother with any documentation or attribution; "These truths are self-evident" (Like Euclid's "Geometries" from whence we have taken this quote—modern mathematics have proven his postulates to be anything but "self-evident"). Now, they tell us, "Homer was illiterate".

A few bones are occasionally thrown to the Chinese, and sometimes to a rather indistinct body referred to as the "Arabs". Worse yet, when honest and meticulous scholars present incontrovertible evidence of African contributions, there is mounted the most vicious of attacks in the media from fearful 'academics' and their cohorts. When their counterclaims are refuted, they never recant and a stigma remains upon

the works and persons of the besmirched (which was what was intended).

A prime example is the famed and revealing book of Dr. Ivan Van Sertima, "They Came Before Columbus". A New York Times book review generated one of the most ugly assaults ever seen in the American press. Today, this black scholar is completely vindicated and his works authenticated and quoted around the world. But the racist tribes of detractors have never recanted. Their familiar names still appear on diatribes submitted to the nations magazines and newspapers whenever an article appears citing the seminal contributions to civilization by Africans or American blacks.

Without doubt, the local contingent of these racist detractors will be quite visible and audible on the coming Town Hall program entitled, "Teaching Truth Or Fiction". The forum is about Portland School District's "African American Baseline Essays" (Sunday, April 7, 6 to 7 p.m. on KATU). We think a rather obvious presupposition and mindset is to be inferred from the title selected. Most of us would be quite ecstatic if the nation-wide publicity and furore generated by these essays meant that their content had actually been incorporated into the local curriculum and lesson plans. Most of us know that this has not happened—and does not seem likely to, except on a happenstance basis. Incidentally, our noted author, Dr. Van Sertima, a friend of mine, was one of the prime contributors to this series of essays and is as disappointed as anyone.

I'll take this opportunity to provide you with an address for obtaining listings and prices of his books and tapes, representing years of noteworthy contributions to the African genre. His "Journal Of African Civilizations" which I cited last week will be found in each issue to contain scholarly, well

documented essays by world-respected black, white and Asian scholars with impeccable credentials. Write Dr. Ivan Van Sertima, African Studies Dept., Beck Hall, Rutgers University, New Brunswick N.J. 08903; Enjoy!

Now, for those two 'older' and priceless resources I gave last week. And these books pertain not only to documentation of black "gods, warriors and citizens of the ancient world" but encompass religion, literature, anthropology, origin of the calendar and other infrastructure of African civilizations, already at a height when Europe was the habitat of late neolithic primitives. Both these authors were intellectual giants of the previous century, thoroughly grounded in the classic languages of Greek, Latin and Arabic, therefore able to FIRST HAND CONDUCT THEIR OWN RESEARCH AND EXAMINATION OF ORIGINAL MATERIEL-ARTIFACTS.

Our own African American giants and researchers of our past were effusive in their unabashed gratitude and citations; W.E.B. Dubois and J.A. Rogers. Copies of these books are very expensive but can be found in some libraries (You can't borrow mine, smiles).

A. Godfrey Higgins: Anaclypsis, An Inquiry Into The Origin of Languages, Nations, and Religions, London, Longman, 1836; Four volumes, Reprints at \$20.00 each, set for \$60.00.

B. Gerald Massey: Book of the Beginnings, Egyptian Origins in the Hebrew Akkado-Assyrian and Maori, African Heritage Classical Studies Series, 1890, Four Volumes, same as above.

Order from (or get latest catalogue) ECA Associates, P.O. Box 15004, Great Bridge Station, Chesapeake, Virginia 23320 (804) 547-5542.

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The Man Loves His Sax

Call it the end of summer jam if you will, but the performance put on by Dennis Springer last week at the Harborside/KINK-FM concert series should warm your heart well into fall. That's because his recently released LP ("Rio") is now available at local record stores. It doesn't have to end with summer.

Springer, a native Portlander and 1960-something graduate of Parkrose High School is also thirty-something. According to Springer, he has been around the blocks a few times and most of the time his sax was with him. Springer, along with drummer Carlton Jackson of Tom Grant, Mike Klingler (piano/keyboards), bassist Kris Kent, and Caton Lyles, who has to be one of the best percussionists on the West Coast, put on a wonderful show. Jackson is an excellent drummer too.

Many of the people in the crowd had never heard of Springer, but they left the concert with a compact disc or cassette sold at the Nu Vision Records table set up on location. At this stage of his career, Springer is pleased with the new album and happy to be making music. He has seen a lot of people come and go in the business. There have been times where Springer even wondered if he was on the right track, but his faith in his ability and belief in God pulled him through some dark moments.

Portland Observer - People think that you are some new overnight sensation, but the fact is that you have been

around for a long time, haven't you?

Springer - "You're right. I have been around a very long time. Actually, I've been playing since I was fifteen years old. I started off at the old Cotton Club on North Vancouver Avenue and I used to have to go in the dressing room during breaks just to have a Seven-Up. When I turned twenty-one, I started drinking coffee nudes on the breaks. I use to play with the Soul masters and Pleasure also. With Pleasure, we toured all over the United States and we played with some really great people. I can recall going to Philadelphia once and Grover Washington would join us on stage. In fact, he sat in with us a couple of times. I always looked forward to going out on the road because I met people who inspired me. Guys like Dexter Gordon and Freddie Hubbard."

Portland Observer - Why so long for your first album, you've been away from your last National group for some time now?

Springer - "I don't really know to be honest. I think that there are several factors as to why I haven't. I've had material for a long time, but wasn't until Marlon McClain and Mike Mavrolas (Darkhorse entertainment/Nu Vision records) approached me to do this project ("Rio") with their game plan that it happened. The tunes that I write are more straight ahead and the one they wanted to do was more like urban contemporary or cross over material."

Portland Observer - How do you feel day job. I hope this album can get me to the point where I can do music full-time.

That's what I'm hoping for."

Portland Observer - What advice do you offer the youngster who has designs on being the next Dennis Springer, Grover Washington, or Najee?

Springer - "I would say just practice hard and learn as much as you can about your instrument. Also, the business element of the music industry is becoming very important. There are books out that can help a young person out in that area. I heard about a book the other day called 'Hit Men'. It talked about the industry itself and how people make it, get air play, pay-offs, and all types of talent. That's real sad. In the era I came up in, I had to really learn how to play it in order to be considered a professional. Now days, there are so many people out there picking up instruments and calling themselves artists, but they don't spend the time it takes to be a true professional. That's the difference today."

Portland Observer - What do you want people to know about Dennis Springer?

Springer - "Well, I want them to know that I'm real serious about my music and I'm going to keep on keeping on, no matter what. I will always continue to play and grow as a professional. I won't stay in the same space. I want my music to always stay fresh."

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The Black Press believes that America can best lead the world away from social and national antagonisms when it accords to every person, regardless of race, color, or creed, full human and legal rights. Hating no person, fearing no person, the Black Press strives to help every person in the firm belief that all are hurt as long as anyone is held back.

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Just In Case You Missed It!

The Irving Park Community Tennis Association will have its second meeting on Monday, April 8th, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. at the Augustana Lutheran Church, 2710 NE 14th Place.

If you were unable to attend our initial meeting to discuss the formation of the Irving Park Community Tennis Association, then here's a second chance for you to help with the formation of a non-profit community oriented tennis organization.

Individuals who are interested in taking a greater part with tennis related activities are invited to attend. However, we are encouraging the residents of Northeast Portland, and the community members of Woodlawn Park, Albina, Irvington, Alberta, and University Park to attend. Community Tennis Associations are community tennis chapters of the United States Tennis Association the governing body for all nationally sanctioned CTAs'. CTAs' are designed to help kids, adults, and seniors from community programs, tennis leagues, and sponsor special tennis related activities, (e.g. schools programs). Members of CTAs' also act as advocates for summer tennis camps, utilization of Portland parks for community activities and utilization of the Portland Tennis Center.

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"Reinvestments in the Community" is a weekly column appearing in API publications throughout the USA.