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The L.A.

The Crime... The Victim...
The Accused... & The Verdict!

STORY

Equal Justice Under Law Must Be Blind To Race

The King Verdict and the Los Angeles riot expose the Problem Of Racism In Our System Of Justice. Taken from USA Today, May 1, 1992.



To treat the Rodney King case as an isolated incident would be a tragedy. It must be seen as a symptom of an illness that runs through the nation.

The charge that created the explosion in Los Angeles was planted by a society unable to bridge its racial division.

That division is economic, with black males earning only 57% as much as white males. And it includes a vile system of unequal justice.

A quarter of black males ages 20-29 are under the supervision of the criminal justice system. That compares with a 6.2% rate for whites. Why?

It comes down to on whom we focus our crime fighting.

Federal studies show whites constitute 80% of the USA's drug users; Afri-

can-Americans, 12%. Yet 43% of those convicted of drug trafficking are black.

And not only conviction rates but penalties differ, too.

In New York in 1989, 92% of those arrested for drug offenses were minorities. Yet whites, who accounted for only 7% of the offenders, took up 47% of state-funded drug treatment slots.

That's not equal justice under the law.

Neither is it equal justice when a black who murders a white is likely to get the death penalty, while a black who murders a black, or a white who murders a black, is not.

President Bush promises to pursue justice in the King beating, possibly through prosecution of potential civil rights violations by the officers.

But he must not miss the reality that a nearly all-white jury's acquittal of white police officers represents soft justice for whites vs. harsh justice for blacks.

The nation can put the Los Angeles riot in perspective by looking at its system of justice through the eyes of blacks.

The president and Congress must completely review how police, courts and laws deal with minorities in order to fix the inequities that so frustrate and anger minorities.

That's the only way this nation can ever deliver on its fundamental promise of justice for all.

Don't Believe Your Eyes The Rodney King Travesty

BY JIMI JOHNSON

On March 3rd, 1991 Rodney King, a 25 year old African American male was pursued and stopped by the Los Angeles Police. What followed in the aftermath made National and World-wide news.

When King stopped his car and got out he was viciously assaulted by several L.A. "Peace" officers. This outrageous beating was captured on film by a freelance photographer without the knowledge of the officers administering the beating. In a matter of hours this inhumane beating of Rodney King was seen around the world.

Many United States citizens watched in horror as officers of the law repeatedly beat an unarmed man with night sticks and stunned him with electric "Cattle Prods". According to reports, Rodney King was struck over 50 times. He was hospitalized with numerous fractures and lacerations, including a broken eye socket. Citizens from across the Nation began asking for the resignation of Los Angeles Police Chief Daryl Gates. Gates refused to quit, stating that the king beating was an "aberration" not the norm in the L.A. Police department. However, it is a well documented fact that Los Angeles has one of the most racist police departments in the nation.

Since Daryl Gates has become Police Chief some 14 years ago, the city of Los Angeles has paid out millions of dollars in settlement claims for police brutality. The majority of this brutality has been perpetrated against people of color.


As internal investigations began to look into the King beating four officers including one sergeant were indicted for assault by the Los Angeles Grand Jury.

'A nation was stunned, and the African American community was told once again that Human Rights are not for you.'


They would later have a trial of their "peers" in Semi Valley, California. But if a picture is worth a thousand words, there was really no need for a trial because the video tape of the beating showed Rodney King getting hit 56 times. That Video Tape Is Worth 56 Thousand Words! The video showed the world blatant police brutality against an African American by white "Peace Officers". A scene repeated far too often in the United States of America.

One thing was sure however, we had captured this racist act of brutality on video tape. The police officers were "busted" in front of a nation of eye witnesses. For years African Americans and other peoples of color have complained of police brutality but the com-


No Remorse?




COON
...Police Bureau recommit itself to becoming accountable for all it does'...



BRISENO
One thing was sure....we had captured this racist act of brutality on video tape.



POWELL
Will the bloody riots change a sick America?



WIND

'Read about it in the book'

Declined to comment

'I know I'm innocent'

Too many feelings' to express

Civic Leaders Outraged

Civic Leaders Unite With Community In The Aftermath Of Rodney King Verdict

As a police professional I was both angered and embarrassed by the jury's decision. The actions of those police officers reflect on all police. The Rodney King beating will be a landmark for police in America, and is causing many communities, including Portland, to examine police policies, practices, and the overriding issue of police accountability.

-Chief Potter

As that relationship strengthens, we are increasing the training out officers receive in such areas as cultural sensitivity and responsible use of force, including the use of tactics that defuse situations and minimize the need to use force.

-Mayor Clark

If we allow this opportunity to pass, the entire incident--the beating, the trial, and the bloody aftermath--will only serve to widen the gulf between African-Americans and white Americans, not just in Los Angeles but in Portland and cities all across America.

-Commissioner Bogle



Chief Potter, Mayor Clark



Chief Potter, Commissioner Bogle and Commissioner Blumenauer



Uniformed Savages Acquitted In Televised Rodney King Beating:

Many Feel Tone was Set in 1988 by Bush Administration's Willie Horton Election Ploy

BY PROF. MCKINLEY BURT

Effective law enforcement in America has been dealt a terrible blow. The police departments of this nation have suffered a major deterioration of that mantle of respect, influence and authority necessary to the maintenance of law and order in a civilized society. The prime culprit in this debacle, L.A. Chief of Police Darrell Gates, quite rightly (and deliberately) predicted both the verdicts of "not guilty" and the resulting riots.

As the officials, leaders and politicians of this mortally wounded city gather to assess, plan and plain commiserate (along with the rest of the nation), it is of critical importance that they realize one salient fact. This incredible verdict of acquittal and the ensuing rage of the populace that provoked massive civil disorder must be examined within a context that encompasses far more than the immediate events.

A rational and meaningful inquiry must take us beyond the fact that the deliberately orchestrated CHANGE OF VENUE placed the trial in a suburban community, Simi Valley, which is fondly known as the RETIREMENT VILLAGE FOR LOS ANGELES POLICE OFFICERS. It is also known as a prime direct mail target for scores of propagandizing right wing organizations ranging from the John Birch Society and typical Nazi-leaning groups to arms dealers, soldiers-of-fortune recruiters (South Africa), and the National Rifle Association.

I am sure that the readers of the Portland Observer remember the article I wrote when the Rodney King beating took place. I described a period, 1954-1964, when I was on the streets and freeways of Los Angeles almost daily, making the rounds of my public accountant clients. I assure you that the traumatic social conditions and events of today are not one bit different than

were experienced at that time. I left just one year before the Watt's Riots, which centered in the very same section of town as this conflagration. Ironically, that fierce civil disturbance was also triggered by renegade police who, again, assaulted a black motorist in a barbaric fashion. Twentieth century lynchings begin in the fast lane.

I described, too, an incident that occurred there when I was a member of



Prof. McKinley Burt

Twentieth century lynchings begin the fast lane.

the NAACP when a black maid at an "El Rey Hotel" on East Sixth Street (downtown) alerted several of us to the suspicious occupant of the third-rate hostelry. By means not to be noted here, several of us gained access to this character's room while he was on a business trip--contacting police departments and unions in several outlying counties. An inspection of the room and its paraphernalia proved to be my first encounter with the despicable Right Wing purveyors of hate and violence who prey upon and recruit within the major police departments of this country (my last was at Portland State University where my offices in the Urban Studies Department were directly beneath the classrooms for the Criminal Justice Programs attended primarily by Portland Police and Multnomah County Sheriffs).

This man was a sales representative for several small arms manufacturers, suppliers of handcuffs and other restraints. But the chilling factors were the stacks of hate magazines and sub-

scription forms--the typical Nazi diatribes against blacks, Jews, Latinos, and Asians. There were lists of possible and vulnerable organizations and instructions on infiltration and recruitment. These revelations proved not to be of much avail when used by citizen groups and Human Relation groups. Nor have they since as witness the recent Rodney King affair. The system was, and is, too entrenched. Will the bloody riots change a sick America?

I mentioned Portland State University Administration of Justice Program because, interestingly, Dr. Lee Brown, the foremost black law enforcement officer in the country, was chairman of the program at the time (also the Sheriff of Multnomah County, and now, Chief of Police for the City of New York). I doubt if even he could have had any influence over the white officers with the prejudiced mind set of several I had in my class on the Economic Experience of Urban African Americans. Some made childish faces, others scrawled racist insults across their term papers. The CIVILIZED ONES had no influence.

I took the time and space to cite this very serious problem in law enforcement because, as I expected, the nation's media is not dealing with it at all. It will have to be faced if the first line purveyors of civil peace and justice are to be enabled to interact effectively with the citizenry--if the concept of COMMUNITY POLICING has any chance of implementation. There is no doubt that there is some degree of that type of overt racism going on within the Portland force today--it needs to be dealt with. The brainwashed element needs to be removed, not reprimanded, and the UNION cannot be allowed to interfere.

We should hope, too, that the City of Portland and Metro will see the handwriting on the wall and deliver us a functioning, working Human Relation

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