

# CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

By Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

Civil Rights Journal #566

## Stop The Violence In The U.S.A

The fatal shooting of seven year old Dantrell Davis as he walked to school through Chicago's Cabrini-Green housing project has stirred a renewed demand to stop the spiral of death and violence that has increasingly engulfed many of the centers of urban America. Some of the violence is gang related. Some of the violence comes as a result of the drug epidemic. Yet, some of the violence finds innocent victims being caught in the crossfires of this nation's economic exploitation and social neglect.

The fact that there are many contributing factors to the violent social condition of the United States is in itself no excuse for local, regional and national leaders to avoid addressing this critical issue. The new national focus on violence in public housing projects like Cabrini-Green is necessary and long overdue. But we believe it would be a mistake to see the tragic death of little Dantrell Davis as an isolated incident that is only pertinent to the infamous public housing projects in the city of Chicago.

Chicago's Mayor, Richard M. Daley, views the situation as needing primarily a law enforcement solution. Mayor Daley quickly ordered a massive police search and seizure operation in the 7,000-person housing complex. The resident population in Cabrini-Green is nearly 100 percent African American. The man arrested as the confessed sniper in the senseless shooting of Davis should be swiftly tried and sentenced for his

awful criminal act.

We believe, however, that to view the urban crisis solely as an issue of law and order is grossly insufficient and irresponsible. Until the social and economic conditions that drive persons to crime and violence are changed the tragic murders of our children in the streets of America will continue to increase.

How is it in a racially diverse large city like Chicago that a 7,000-person public housing project has only African American residents? Residential segregation by race and socioeconomic condition has not been challenged to any tangible degree during the last 40 years. In fact, racial segregation in housing is worst in 1992 than it was in 1952 throughout the country.

In Philadelphia, Newark, Detroit, Kansas City and in many other cities the violence in public housing projects replicates the situation in Chicago. But the problem is not the existence of public housing; the problem is the absence of adequate public housing, the absence of employment, the absence of a community economic empowerment for people of color communities, and the absence of show of priority concern for the plight of urban America by the federal government during the last 12 years.

In particular the federal retreat from helping to finance public housing has both expanded the ranks of the homeless and deteriorated the physical and human conditions of the existing units

of public housing. The devastating rise in violence is symptomatic of the deeper problem of racism and this nation's reluctance to demand equal access to employment, education, health care and overall economic empowerment.

As the international community has correctly focused worldwide attention to the violence and injustice of places such as Bosnia and Herzegovina or in south Africa, the violence of the socioeconomic and racial condition of the United States also needs more international scrutiny. Yes we are saying that the United Nations Commission on Human Rights needs to urgently review the systemic violations of human rights in the United States.

Again the current 1992 Presidential Campaign has all but ignored the spiral of violence and social disintegration sweeping the country. One way to begin to stop the violence is to stop ignoring its existence and stop denying the causative factors. Traditionally, the sole strategy of "law and order" only justifies and blames the victims for their victimization.

Poverty is violence. Racism is violence. Unemployment is violence. And as these types of violence are forced together into the crucibles of urban America this will produce nothing more than a greater intensity of homicide and hopelessness. For the sake of the thousands of children like Dantrell Davis who are killed senselessly, it is imperative that we work harder to stop the violence.

# perspectives

by Professor McKinley Burt

## The Thrill Is Gone, Part II

As I suggested last week, several readers became quite angry that I would state that in the case of the black middle-class it wasn't "be all you can be". But on the other hand there were many readers like the one who became a statistician: "In Portland, can you believe over 2000 years of education beyond high school which translates into over 60,000 credit hours of "advanced education" for a select group of our middle class African Americans?" (300). "Where's the beef?", this black woman asked.

The lady raved on, extrapolating these figures to "national" parameters that defined the black middle class in 20 key Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas where the urban black population is concentrated. The tens of millions of university "credit hours were simply mind-boggling and this education went to make her case as I have often done--questioning the "cost-effectiveness" of all that incredible sacrifice by so many black parents. This is the same data base I employed in the latter half of my book, *Black Inventors of America*, where I made hopeful projections of the future of African Americans in technology.

Since twenty years or more have passed since the book was written (1969)--and about as long since the "Great Society" with all its new educational and economic opportunities for minorities got in high gear--some very serious questions about the precarious situation of millions of black people are being raised in many quarters other than here. Some of these issues were highlighted last week when I noted that

you can "flip through Jet and Ebony magazines on a regular basis" and note all those mid-level black corporate executives on "Soft Money". It should be obvious to anyone at all knowledgeable about business that this is no progress at all for these "staff" people will be the first laid off in any economic downturn. But in the meantime they have been role models.

Earlier this year a columnist in a Milwaukee black news-paper commented that "the editors should be ashamed to portray these naive new additions to the middle class as having [made it], and often posing them before quarter-million dollar homes and fifty thousand dollar cars, with a glass of Johnny Walker Red in their hand...white folks think we're crazy." That's the point Tony Brown is making when I quoted him questioning leadership by people who build no economic institutions (relying on the feds, but "spend tens of millions on hundreds of conventions, related travel, lodging and entertainment, scotch and chicken wings."

What was ironic last week (or pitiful), the major black publisher's group put in a special color insert into most black newspapers in this country, "Exclusive 1993 Auto Preview." The cover featured an inset showing two expensively dressed, partying black males with glasses of liquor in their hands. Naturally, the autos shown are not the cheapest and opposite a full page ad for cigarettes we have some "encouraging(?)" statistics, "Blacks spend annually for all vehicles 12.6 billion; for new cars 4.1 billion; for

new trucks 1.3 billion." I don't get the point...are we supposed to have an orgasm or what? Are we supposed to get off, being reminded that a ridiculous amount of our income goes for liquor, tobacco and overpriced automobiles as opposed to investments, business enterprise and economic organizations owned and operated by African Americans rather than the federal government?

There is nothing new at all about these "Role Model Specials" directed at both young and older blacks which are designed to shape and manipulate that African American middle class--"quite successful", wouldn't you say? As I pointed out years ago in my "Black Economic Experience" class at Portland State University, the tobacco, liquor and automobile companies launched their frightening campaign to capture and control the black middle class. Do you wish to argue about the measure of success that they have had?...as each week you see black leaders of our organizations accepting huge checks from these companies (usually 4x3 feet for effect). They began with contributions (of our money) to educational and youth organizations. Now I see the "churches" in the act.

Next week, "where it all began in Los Angeles", promoted by the "Black Market Men," black economists and psychologists who went to these companies and said "we've got a winner." I saw it all happen in the 1950's...what do we tell "gang youth" about role models? What leadership should they expect from the black middle class? What about Portland?

## Guest Editorial No On 5 & 6

It wasn't too long ago that there was a surplus of low-cost power in the Pacific Northwest. Those days are now gone, and we are faced with increasing demands for electricity to meet the needs of our state and region. This is evidenced by the Bonneville Power Administration's recent announcement that it was forced to cut the amount of power it sells to 14 of its largest industrial customers by 25 percent because of the drought and lack of surplus power. And the future availability of hydropower remains uncertain as the drought continues and we face measures to protect endangered salmon runs on the Columbia River.

And now, at a time that we need all of our electric generating resources, there are two measures on November's ballot calling for an immediate shutdown of the Trojan plant. At a time of energy deficits, the actions of the sponsors of these measures are totally irresponsible. That is why tens of thousands of Oregon employers, academic

and civic leaders, environmentalists, and other citizens have come together as the No on 5 & 6 Committee to stop the drastic, immediate shutdown of Trojan.

We support Portland General Electric co.'s (PGE) four-year phaseout plan for Trojan. The utility's plan recognizes the needs of Oregonians to have low-cost, reliable power in place before the plant goes off-line for the last time. We also understand the need for a transition time to help displaced workers and the economy of Columbia County and our state.

PGE's plan allows four years to develop alternative power resources. With new cost-effective and reliable generating sources in place, the region is much less likely to face the threat of brownouts or blackouts in the interim when Trojan finally shuts down.

Under Oregon's Least Cost Planning Process, it was found that an immediate shutdown of Trojan would cost Oregonians nearly \$500 million

more than running Trojan until 1996. Increased power costs along with the loss of jobs for more than 1,000 men and women at Trojan is a high price to pay just to meet the political agenda of Trojan's opponents.

We have seen the direct and ripple effects of plant shutdowns in Oregon. It is devastating! Four years certainly gives needed time to lessen the impact on employees, their families, and local economies.

The millions of dollars in higher electric bills along with the potential for increased taxes to compensate Trojan's owners for the taking of their property comes at a time when we can least afford it.

It is time that we work together for a sane and reliable energy future. There is no justification for the drastic steps called for by Ballot Measures 5 & 6. Please join us in voting No on both Measures 5 and 6 to stop the drastic, immediate shutdown of Trojan.

## Are Portland Blacks Different?

BY JAMES L. POSEY

You can bet your boots they are different! It doesn't take long for other Blacks who arrive on the scene to discover that there are special characteristics akin to the average Black who is born in Portland or is a long-time resident. Time and time again Blacks who visit our city from such places as Atlanta, Chicago, Memphis, New York, Dallas and D.C., can't help but comment about how differently Blacks seem to operate in this city. These visiting Blacks are quick to make the contrast between the beauty of the city and what they find to be a disgusting lack of Black consciousness and progressive Black activism. One historian describes Portland and Oregon, as far as Blacks are concerned, as a "peculiar paradise." Some say Portland Blacks simply see themselves as better off than Blacks in the rest of the country. Therefore, there is no need to rock the boat in this land of milk and honey.

Somehow Portland Blacks are viewed as being more complacent, more apathetic, etc., than Blacks in other parts of the country. In other words, Portland Blacks have a reputation for consenting rather than demanding to live as equals in this "paradise." What is probably more accurate is the accusation that, in contrast to Seattle, Oakland or San Francisco, Portland Blacks are relatively more content to accept the products of racism and oppression. Even worse is the opinion that there seems to be a less cohesive energy to improve the existence of Blacks in this town. That is why it is hard to attract progressive Blacks to Portland and why many talented African-Americans have left for cities that are more economically, cul-

turally and socially appealing.

Who can explain why there is this perception? Aside from the fact that there are relatively few numbers of Blacks, some theorize that Portland is geographically isolated, more so than even Seattle. Nestled between Seattle and San Francisco on the conservative northwest coastline, there is virtually no Black cultural roots to hold on to. Nearly everything is Euro-centric, which brushes aside any notion of an Afro-centric community. And, because there is no critical mass of Afro-centric minded Blacks here, Blacks themselves are often the agents of Afro-centric cleansing. Portland-born Blacks are used to running Afro-centric Blacks out of town. A prime example is Useni Perkins, the former executive director of the Urban League. And don't forget Derrick Bell, a Black activist to the bone and the former University of Oregon Law School dean. In my judgement, Blacks are responsible for letting him get away. These Black men brought more than their skills and talent to their positions; they brought an African-American presence of strength, history, culture and self-respect. Albeit they were not perfect, they were real role models and a stark contrast to the grinning, conceding "Toms," who say they represent Blacks in this town today and who, by the way, do more damage to the African-American cause than any Neo-Nazi or KKK organization could ever hope to do.

Why is this issue important? It's important because it predetermines how Portland Blacks will solve their problems. And, it foretells the future welfare of the Black community. For example, Blacks with a strong Afro-cen-

tric mind-set realize that Black people must be responsible for solving their own problems. In contrast to Euro-centric Blacks, Afro-centric Blacks won't spend a lot of time worrying about other minorities but will be focused on Black issues. Afro-centric Blacks will understand the logic of this reasoning. They know that if you improve the Black condition, the condition of other oppressed people will be likewise and proportionally improved. It doesn't take a genius to know that in American society, African-Americans act as a bellwether group for social/economic conditions. We are the barometer, the baseline, the lowest common denominator. If Blacks are doing OK, other minorities will be doing well, and the rest of the world will be doing great!

Of course, Blacks can't do it all entirely by themselves. There is a strong need for partnerships, coalitions and the likes. History has proven that Blacks in Portland are particularly good at stoking the fires for change to benefit everyone, only to be left out in the cold themselves. Just look at who is really benefiting from the activism of Blacks in this town. The answer: (1) the few institutionalized "TOMS" who try to act as relief valves when the pressure is on; (2) women; (3) other minorities; and (4) Blacks. You guessed it, Blacks get what's left.

The issue about whether Blacks in Portland are different is not just about who gets what. It's about pride, respect, appreciation and love of Black people for the sake of being African-American, and all that it denotes.

James Posey is a local, small business owner with a background in social work and community activism.

ant Edmund Heines, who was later to become the lover of Captain Ernst Roehm. The same Roehm whose role in organizing paramilitary formations in post-war Germany was crucial. Pg.31 "The list could be extended to cover hundreds of names. It is by no means difficult to prove that the stamp of the Freikorps was indelibly imprinted on the SS, which inherited from its predecessor the swastika, the German salute, or Heil, the brown shirt, and many other common features". On June 30, 1934 Hitler and Himmler killed Roehm and his officers in a hotel where they were found with naked young boys in what is known as the Roehm Putsch--they had become an embarrassment to the revitalized Nazi party--see "Inside The Third Reich" by Albert Speer.

In the *Washington Blade*, a homosexual newspaper, militant homosexuality appears to have been widespread in several volunteer units. Gerhard Rossback, who founded the Sturmabteilung Rossback, was an open homosexual. On his staff was lieutenant

ed Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* in order to gain insight into political strategy. Pollard, in an article entitled, "Time to give up fascist tactics" says, "The average gay man or woman could not immediately relate to our subversive tactics, drawn largely from the voluminous *Mein Kampf*, which some of us studied as a working model".

If you will recall the Nazi party went into the schools and indoctrinated the children to the point that they even reported the actions of their own parents to the party.

In San Diego California is a homosexual neo-Nazi group called The National Socialist League. The NSL is pro-Nazi and anti-Jewish, but promotes the group as "gay Nazis".

I hope the next time Herr Hinkle and his cohorts, will clean the skeletons out of their own closet before they lay their garbage at the front door of honest God fearing Americans.

William H. Flohr  
Sweet Home

## The Portland Observer

(USPS 959-680)

OREGON'S OLDEST AFRICAN AMERICAN PUBLICATION

Established in 1970

Publisher

Contributing Writers

McKinley Burt  
Dan Bell  
Mattie Ann Callier-Spears  
Bill Council  
John Phillips

Alfred Henderson  
Operations Manager  
Joyce Washington  
Accounting Manager  
Gary Ann Garnett  
Public Relations  
Chuck Washington  
Sales & Promotions  
Tony Washington

Production Staff

Dean Babb  
Gary Ann Garnett  
Rea Washington

The PORTLAND OBSERVER is published weekly by Exlie Publishing Company, Inc. 4747 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. Portland, Oregon 97211 503-288-0033 • Fax 298-0015

Deadline for all submitted materials:

Articles: Monday, 5:00 pm--Ads: Tuesday, noon

POSTMASTER: Send Address Changes to: Portland Observer, P.O. Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208. Second class postage paid at Portland Oregon.

The Portland Observer welcomes freelance submissions. Manuscripts and photographs should be clearly labeled and will be returned if accompanied by a self addressed envelope. All created design display ads become the sole property of the newspaper and can not be used in other publications or personal usage, without the written consent of the general manager, unless the client has purchased the composition of such ad. © 1991 THE PORTLAND OBSERVER. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. REPRODUCTION IN WHOLE OR IN PART WITHOUT PERMISSION IS PROHIBITED.

Subscriptions: \$25.00 per year.

The Portland Observer--Oregon's Oldest African-American Publication--is a member of the National Newspaper Association--Founded in 1885, and The National Advertising Representative Amalgamated Publishers, Inc., New York, NY.

## SUBSCRIBE

The Portland Observer

THE PORTLAND OBSERVER CAN BE SENT DIRECTLY TO YOUR HOME ONLY \$25.00 PER YEAR.

PLEASE FILL OUT, ENCLOSE CHECK OR MONEY ORDER, AND MAIL TO:

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

THE PORTLAND OBSERVER PO Box 3137 PORTLAND, OREGON 97208

Name

Address

City, State

zip code

THANK YOU FOR READING THE PORTLAND OBSERVER