

EDITORIAL

The Portland Observer

Letter To The Editor: Men And Women Working Together

With the recent murder charges against O.J. Simpson, domestic violence has been getting a great deal of attention in the media of late.

One of the main providers of domestic violence treatment for men in the country is located here in Portland -- the Men's Resource Center. We presently offer 19 men's domestic violence groups at our Portland and Oregon City offices, treating over 200 men at any given time for violence problems. In addition, through Women's Agenda Counseling Center we offer 4 women's recovery groups for women who have been the victims of domestic violence as well as 2 women's anger management groups. Finally, we offer a group for couples in which the man has successfully completed the domestic violence group. As should be evident, we have extensive knowledge and experience in addressing issues of domestic violence and anger management. Several therapists here, including licensed psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, and other masters level therapists are available for interviews or as sources of information on these issues. We can also arrange to have men interviewed who have committed domestic violence and have successfully completed our program or who are currently in a group.

We also offer general men's therapy groups, groups for men who were sexually abused as children, and a group for non-violent men who have been the victims of domestic violence. In addition, we offer individual therapy for variety of issues including depression, anxiety, adult survivors of sexual abuse, alcohol and drug abuse, major mental illness such as schizophrenia and manic-depression, and eating disorders. We consider ourselves as a staff to be feminist in orientation and gay sensitive. We offer counseling at a variety of times including evenings and weekends, however we answer the phone between 9:00 and 3:00 Monday through Friday. We check messages frequently and those left by the media will be returned promptly.

Feel free to contact us if we can be of any assistance in providing information concerning domestic violence issues or any other mental health issues.

Send your letters to the Editor to: Editor, PO Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208

Civil Rights Journal: Images, Violence and Youth

BY BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

The hero drives an expensive car and brandishes a gun.

Perhaps he implies that he sells drugs and he calls women "hos and bitches". He's a gangsta rap video star and he's listened to by millions of children and young people.

Day after day we see stories of the violence engulfing our cities. Some of us even live those stories. Violence is destroying a whole generation of young people. Violence is enslaving not only those young people who are the victims or the killers, but those who are afraid to leave their homes after dark and even mothers who are said to put their babies to sleep in bathtubs in the hope that stray bullets cannot reach them.

Violence is enslaving those who live miles away in suburban communities remote from the inner cities of America. Because the reality is that children in suburban communities are caught up in the fervor of violence as well. Because the reality is that more and more tax dollars are being used to incarcerate the perpetrators of violence and to pay the astronomical health costs of many of its victims. The reality is that every American is enslaved by violence in

NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

The Supremes Are At It Again

High Court puts limits on the Voting Rights Act 'Stop In The Name of Love'

There's an old proverb that says, "A journey of a 1,000 miles begins with a single step." Ancients sometimes killed, punished or drove mad another human being by allowing a single drop of water to drip continuously on their adversaries head. Neither the "step" nor the "drop" were cataclysmic in and of themselves, but over time both achieved their purpose.

That is what we are facing with the various decisions coming forth from the Supreme Court around the Voting Rights Act -- small but consistent interpretations that are chipping away at the effectiveness, and to some extent even the validity, of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Exactly one year to the day after the Shaw v. Reno decision redistricted a North Carolina redistricting plan designed to give African American voters their first congressional representatives since Reconstruction -- the Court struck again. In two separate opinions, a Florida case, Johnson v. De Grandy, and a Georgia case, Holder v. Hall, the Court sought to limit a broad interpretation of Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. Section 2 outlaws "all

forms" of voter discrimination. Congress intended a broad interpretation so as to be able to address the various and subtle forms of voter denial, but the Court appears increasingly to want the narrowest and most limiting of interpretations. As the New York Times Editorial said, "... the Court was driven by a core of justices who evince no respect for Congress." The lead singers in the voting right cabal are Supremes Clarence Thomas and Antonin Scalia.

The Florida case was brought by Republicans and conservative Latino politicians against the Legislature's Democratic leadership. The issue was whether a District Court's order to redraw state legislative districts so as to increase from 9 to 11 the numbers of Hispanic districts in Dade County was constitutional. The Court said it was not. The Florida map stands. While on the surface nothing appears to change with this decision, by ruling that legislatures are not required to increase minority representation, the issue is whether the Court has sent a political signal for lax enforcement of the Voting Rights Act; or even that the Court is backing away from the act's dictates.

In the Georgia case the issue was whether a 1912 created One Member county commission in Bleckley County, currently a 22% Black county, was racially discriminatory. Only 11 counties in the U.S., all in Georgia,

have such an unusual system. By a 5-to-4 decision the Court ruled that the size of a governing body cannot be challenged under the Voting Rights Act as diluting the influence of minority voters because no standard exists for determining what would be a fair number of commissioners. Again, the New York Times said in its editorial, "This is historic myopia... The act was created precisely to counter such Southern tricks as restricting the number of offices to hold down black participation."

Supremes Thomas and Scalia went beyond the majority opinions to challenge some of the very substance of the Voting Rights Act in 1970, 1975 and 1982 with the clear meaning and an understanding that the Act was being used in redistricting cases -- that the Voting Rights Act did not apply to reapportionment cases like those in Florida and Georgia.

The big issue of the Shaw v. Reno and the five Southern congressional districts being challenged is still outstanding. Pending the obvious danger of a large setback, the importance of these cases is a subtle danger -- that the political fallout of the Courts' rejection of a broad interpretation of the Voting Rights Act will have a chilling effect for voting rights interpretation and enforcement in the future.

THIS WAY FOR BLACK EMPOWERMENT Which Coalitional Politics?

BY DR. LENORA FULANI

The three day African American Leadership Summit hosted in June by the NAACP in Baltimore was the most diverse, and perhaps the most important, single gathering of Black leaders in 20 years.

The summit, in which I was proud to participate, was an important demonstration of the growing unity of African American leadership during this period of increasing economic disparity and social crisis. It showed that despite our differences, and despite pressure from the white establishment, we can all sit down and talk to each other. Through the summit we were better able to clarify our common ground - and to see where and how our tactics for Black empowerment diverge.

The white corporate press is, of course, typing to opportunist off our differences. A few days after the summit, Jack Newfield, a columnist in the New York Post, wrote, "What most observers didn't seem to notice is that NAACP Executive Director Ben Chavis allied himself with Louis Farrakhan and Lenora Fulani of the crackpot New Alliance Party." On what are we allied? According to Newfield and Joe Conason, another white liberal writing in the New York Observer, we are "hatemongering separatists," opposed to the coalition politics of the Rev. Jesse Jackson, the Rev. Al Sharpton and Princeton University professor Cornell West.

The charge that Dr. Chavis and I are opposed to working in coalition with white people is, on the face of it, absurd - we are both leaders of multi-racial organizations. And Minister Farrakhan's long history as a principled Black na-

tionalist has not prevented him in recent years from reaching out to other communities - including the Jewish American community - in an effort to build bridges based on respect for the Black community and the Black agenda.

The fact is that everyone attending the summit recognizes the political necessity of coalitional politics. We share a common understanding that Black unity is based simultaneously on the Black experience and on living in America. As people of African descent living in America, the issues isn't whether or not we work with white folks. The issues is which white folks we work with and what the objectives and terms of coalitions with them must be.

The identification of these two differing approaches to coalition building is, in my opinion, one of the most important things to come out of the Baltimore summit.

some way and we'd all better get busy doing something about it.

Several African American women in Congress are doing just that -- they are getting busy and doing something about the violence and negative images found in gangsta rap music. In the process they are taking on the multi-billion dollar entertainment industry and beginning an important public debate.

Both Congresswoman Cardiss Collins and Senator Carol Moseley-Braun have sponsored hearings on violent and demeaning images found in popular music today. Not surprisingly, they found that many are demeaning to women. Not surprisingly, they found that the addiction to violence found in all of American society is a part of rap music culture as well. "We are a society infatuated with violence in a clinically obsessive way," testified a representative of the American Psychiatric Association. Not surprisingly, they found that there is a relationship between exposure to violence and childhood development.

A symposium held recently by Congressman Tom Lantos of California on violence and video games heard many of the same kinds of testimonies. Indeed, those middle-class suburban parents who think their children are escaping the violence need only to look at some of the

video games their children play. Games where women are hunted and hung on meat hooks. Games where captives are beheaded or have their hearts ripped out.

Both the hearings on violence and gangsta rap and those on violence and video games have focused attention on the entertainment business and the epidemic of violence this nation is suffering. It is estimated that the video game industry earns \$10 billion a year worldwide and that hip hop music, including gangsta rap, generates nearly \$1 billion, or close to 10 percent of the total U.S. music market every year. Without counting the movie industry or the television industry's revenues from movies featuring violence, violence is big business in America.

Some are beginning to talk with parents to try to make them more aware of the content of the music their children listen to constantly or of the video games they play everyday. But far too many parents remain ignorant or just don't care about what their children watch or hear.

Finally, the hearings are raising important questions about how music reflects the culture in which it is created. The reality is that as awful, as demeaning, as frightening as the lyrics of gangsta rap music may be, they are only reflec-

tive of the economic and social breakdown of the cities in which these young people live.

Music critic and author Nelson George testified at Congresswoman Collins' hearing that this music is a consequence of the long-term lack of employment, the isolation from middle class values and the concomitant adopting of street values, the contempt for authority, the celebration of male bonding and the rampant consumerism of all of U.S. society.

Congresswoman Maxine Waters testified at Senator Moseley-Braun's hearings that gangsta rap was born of the frustration and hopelessness, the raw energy and alienation among inner city youth. She challenged America to listen to the message of these young people, who have been isolated and alienated.

Clearly we must find ways to end the violence in our communities. We must get rid of the guns, we must get rid of lyrics, music videos and video games which glamorize violence and destimize our children to it. We must find ways to give young people hope -- hope that they can get jobs, hope that they are valued by society, hope in the future. There are no fast and easy answers or quick fix solutions.

perspectives Television Murder, Violence and Rape Not New: Try Grimm's Fairy Tales

For those of you who have been so terribly concerned about the impact of television mayhem upon our children, perhaps you can take heart from the fact that my generation survived similar immersion into blood and gore; at home, school and day care (and try Walt Disney).

Many remember that Snow White's stepmother arranges the murder of her stepdaughter, that doves peck out the eyes of Cinderella's stepsister, that Briar Rose's suitors bleed to death on the hedge surrounding her castle and that a mad rage drives Rumpelstiltskin to tear himself in two. Murder, mutilation, cannibalism, infanticide and incest grace almost every page of one of the all-time best selling books in European cultural history: "Nursery And Household Tales", by the Brothers Grimm (commonly called "Grimm's Fairy Tales").

One of the two brothers, Wilhelm, was surely blessed with a rather macabre sense of humor, for in his preface to the book he had this to say, "These stories are suffused with the same purity that makes children appear so marvelous and blessed." Al-



By
Professor
McKinley
Burt

most immediately, one is plunged into the sweetness and light of the "Juniper Tree"; a woman decapitates her stepson, chops his corpse into small pieces, and cooks him in a stew that her husband devours with obvious gusto. We wonder if this tale was on Jeffrey Dahmers' "Top Ten" reading list (The Minneapolis Cannibal).

So far, television's entertainment gurus haven't put forward Grimm's Fairy Tales as a defense in their testimony before various House and Senate committees investigating the gratuitous and senseless violence that permeates the airwaves. Congress persons who are sympathetic to the fears and concerns of millions of parents are finding themselves the targets of well-heeled lobbying efforts (and promises) by the networks.

"Art imitates life," it is said. It is interesting that these tales collected by the Grimm brothers in the late eighteenth century mirror much of European culture at the time. We are witness to standards of behavior, folkways, mores, traditions, fear phobias, manners, civilities and all other social relationships. And for those of us who have had further readings into the history of the times, there are specific insights into the politics and economics of the era. Much of this speaks generally to the northern European states, though most of the tales are from German folklore (The birthplace of the brothers, Grimm).

The modern mind and temperament takes pause at a statement by the brothers such as "These stories will be seen to instill excellent virtues and modes of good conduct in children at a very early age." Especially when one might be taken to a passage like this in "Hand My Hedgehog": "When they had distanced themselves a bit from the city, Hans My Hedgehog took off her clothes and stuck her with his quills until she was bloody, and said: 'That's your reward for being false. Go away, I don't want you.' Then he made her go back home, and she was disgraced."

Cold? Cruel, unforgivable conduct? But this was 'art imitating life in Europe at the time, and life was not a very pleasant enterprise. Note the considerable amount of reference to "step-members" of families. It is hard to say whose lot was worse; children who has lost one or both parents and were adopted into an existing family -- or orphans left to run the streets on their own or were exploited by cruel taskmasters as thieves, child labor or prostitutes (see stories by Charles Dickens).

There are a number of comprehensive studies on the Grimms in English as well as German: Bruno Bettelheim, "The Uses Of Enchantment: The Meaning And Importance Of Fairy Tales", N.Y., Random House, 1977 (Classic Psychoanalytic study); For quicker and easier reading see, Maria Tartar, "The Hard Facts Of The Grimms Fairy Tales", N.J. Princeton University Press, 1987, 277pp. If needing a really in-depth bibliography call me at (503) 284-7080 or Fax at (503) 284-0484.

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