

# EDITORIAL

The Portland Observer

## perspectives From Fairie Tales To Television, II

# NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

### NRC To ABC's "20/20: Focus On "Primetime", "Nightline" And "This Week"

[The following article appeared in the Style Section of the Washington Post on Saturday, July 9.]

"Some of ABC's highest-paid correspondents are protesting the new network policy barring them from speaking for pay to corporations and trade associations.

"Sources say that David Brinkley, Sam Donaldson, Cokie Roberts, 'Nightline' correspondent Jeff Greenfield and White House reporters Brit Hume and Ann Compton are among those who have signed a letter objecting to the ban. The letter went to Senior Vice President Richard Wald, who decreed in a memo that such moonlighting often amounted to "a second high-income job" and created an appearance problem for ABC. Wald, who has agreed to meet with the dissidents, declined to comment. Hefty fees are at stake. Donaldson has given a \$30,000 speech to an insurance group; Roberts spoke to the Group Health Association of America but decided to donate her fee, usually \$20,000 to charity. One ABC insider called the prac-

ture 'outrageous,' saying, 'For them to look like they're compromising themselves takes away the value of what they do as professionals.'

"But Greenfield said the issue is more complicated. 'The whole idea of avoiding conflicts of interest is exactly right,' he said. 'When you start trying to figure out what is and what isn't, it gets really tricky. You can speak to nonprofit groups--they don't have a legislative agenda? They lobby all the time. We're just trying to get a policy that makes sense' (or is it 'CENTS')."

[Speaking of journalistic integrity, we're waiting for '20/20' and 'Nightline' to do a hardhitting investigative report on this issue. Western Regional Director, Eddie Wong, is spearheading the Fairness in Media Commission for the Rainbow. If you are interested in getting involved contact Eddie at 510-465-0120.]

#### THE GREAT FLOOD OF 1994

Thousands of flood victims have been left penniless, homeless, jobless and even in a state of

mourning. Rev. C.M. Alexander, President of the General Missionary Baptist Convention of Georgia, is spearheading a relief effort for flood victims. Beginning Friday, July 8, the Baptist convention has been able to distribute an average of 10 tons of nonperishable items throughout middle and south Georgia.

On July 13th, Rev. C.M. Alexander and Mr. Joseph Beasley, the Southern Regional Director of the National Rainbow Coalition, made a visit to the disaster areas to further assess the needs of its citizens and meet with American Red Cross, ministerial and local civic leaders to coordinate efforts and to insure that information and resources are available to all victims.

Individuals and organizations interested in assisting with this relief effort (e.f., financial contributions or any other support services) can contact Mr. Joseph Beasley at 404-755-5685.

Fast week, we opened this dialogue with a survey of the violence and bloodshed found in the classic fairy tales as exemplified in the works of the brothers "Grimm". Some readers swore that they had never evaluated these "virtue instilling" tales for children in such a light.

Well, neither had I until such thoughts struck me about the same time that my attention was engaged several years ago by congressional hearings on movie and television violence. As I have remarked, "So far, television's entertainment gurus haven't put forward Grimm's Fairy Tales as a defense" - being as traditionally American as "mother and apple pie". However, during the recent Federal Communications Commission hearings on "children's television", even more fatuous arguments were offered up in defense of video mayhem -- or at least the broadcasters argued beside the following point.

Being well aware that "The Childrens Television Act," passed in 1990 was supposed to encourage the people who own networks and/or stations to put more "educational shows" on for kids, nevertheless some stations were getting around the act by invoking some rather contemptible plays; for instance calling "The Jetsons" science programming. This crap from the media giants who are to play a key role developing America's

educational structure for the world stage by year 2000, unbelievable!

Linda Ellerbee, a columnist for King Features Syndicate Inc., has had some pertinent comments on the matter (she moderated the hearings at the request of the FCC). "Neither the Children's Television Act nor the FCC went so far as to say how much educational programming a network or station must put on the air...broadcasters have not been eager to load their schedules with educational children's programming for the simple reason that commercial broadcasting in America is just that -- commercial!" We know; advertisers pay for high ratings.

And, of course, there is the other matter -- that of gratuitous violence, with networks and writers seeming to accelerate their fierce efforts to command attention and ratings with on around-the-clock orgy of blood-letting. The public seems to have been so paralyzed by media accounts of how many thousand murder, assaults and rapes each child will see in a year that they no longer have the will or energy for effective protest (do you?)

Here, we have that long-ongoing and contentious argument between the industry, congress and the public -- "turn it off....monitor the programs...control and censor the product with strict codes." Of course, nothing is ever resolved and the rivers of videotaped blood flow on and children quite obviously become inured to the concepts of killing, pain and

human tragedy, while the gangs recruit them in ever-increasing numbers.

There is not much surcease from our pain and worry as concerned parents and grandparents, even when we consult the myriad psychiatrists, counselors, psychologists, behaviorist, criminal justice and others who seem to have so much to say on this subject. If only they had solutions in proportion to me it seems that the only effective instrumentality for the development of workable solutions is the U.S. Congress, and of course that means we-the-people have to get that body in gear -- hopefully before our civilization collapse around us (quite like Rome). I know, they mostly pasture, don't they?

Those of us from other generations look back and try to determine the sources and influences that structured our own socialization and maturation. We assess early T.V. and radio of past times, search our memories, trying to recall the heroes and villains of early dramas and now these actors went about their business of portraying reality (?).

And of course, in the final analysis, did these popular arts motivate us, influence our ambitions, govern our role-playing, and to what extent? After all Shakespeare had it, "the play is the thing".

Is it possible to analyze one's self in a fair and unprejudiced manner? Was the European fairy tale account of "unrestrained murder mutilation, cannibalism, infanticide, and incest" a case of "art imitating life, or life imitating art? And which is it in the case of modern day television?

## Letter To The Editor

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

# Vantage Point

## Black America Should Rally Around Ben Chavis

**WHEN THE NAACP SELECTED DR. BENJAMIN F. CHAVIS AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR A WAVE OF OPTIMISM AND EXPECTANCY SWEEPED BLACK AMERICA.**

Black people were looking for a new direction for the NAACP. Dr. Chavis has not disappointed. He immediately set the tone for his administration by going directly to the "hood" in South Central Los Angeles to await the verdict in the second Rodney King beating trial. He has been a major inspiration for the Urban Peace Movement which is working to end the fratricide fueled by gangs in Black communities across the nation. Indeed, the crisis of Black youth had become a major focus for the NAACP. The struggle for "economic democracy" has also been intensified as Dr. Chavis scored a milestone victory by signing a \$50 million Fair Share Agreement with the Denny's corporation.

But perhaps the most important dimension of the dynamic new direction set by Dr. Chavis has been a new openness to reaching out to all sectors of the National African American Community. Given the massive crisis ripping at the very fabric of Black life in our communities Dr. Chavis has prioritized creating greater unity among the various leaders, organizations and constituencies in our communities. Dr. Chavis has prioritized creating greater unity among the various leaders, organizations and constituencies in the Black community. Black America watched with great satisfaction as Dr. Chavis participated in a nationally televised Unity Forum convened by Cong. Kwesi Mfume, Chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus. The new Executive Director of NAACP stood on the same platform with Jesse Jackson, Maxine Waters and Minister Louis Farrakhan and entered into a covenant to advance the struggle for justice for Black people. And, the masses of Black people beamed with enormous pride when Dr. Chavis refused to break the Covenant with Minister Farrakhan over the Khalid

Muhammad affair. Refusing to buckle to outside pressure (as many Black leaders did), Dr. Chavis courageously called for a Black Leadership Summit conference to discuss and agenda and unified approach to solving the crises afflicting the Black community. Dr. Chavis made it clear that Minister Farrakhan would be included in the Summit.

Most recently, Dr. Chavis took another bold step in his campaign to promote unity in the Black community by convening a meeting of nationalist, pan-africanist and progressive leaders. Hosted by the 50,000 member Detroit branch of the NAACP (the largest branch in the Association), among those attending this historic meeting were: Dr. Conrad Worrill, Chairman of the National Black United Front, Charlene Mitchell, Co-Chairperson of the National Alliance Against Racism and Political Repression, Dr. Maulana Karenga, Chairman of the US Organization and the creator of Kwanzaa, Cornel West, Vice Chairman, Democratic Socialist of America, Gwen Patton, Director, Southern Rainbow Education Project, Adjoa Aiyetoro, Director, National Conference of Black Lawyers and Dr. Leonard Jeffries, Chairman of the Black Studies Dept. at CUNY.

The meeting was an overwhelming success. It is a tribute to the leadership of Dr. Chavis that leaders who would not have come to a meeting convened by the NAACP a year ago sat around the table together to discuss ways and means of working collaboratively to cope with the crisis in the Black community. Black leaders who in some cases had serious differences with each other agreed to set aside their differences to explore creating operational unity for the sake of the greater good of the Black Nation.

It has been this kind of new direction and bold new leadership which has been like a breath of fresh air revitalizing our oldest and largest civil rights organization. During the last year the membership of the NAACP dramatically increased from 490,000 to 650,000 as Black people from across the nation have taken a

new look at the NAACP. More than 60% of these new NAACP members are under 30 years old. Dr. Chavis's tenure at the helm has not been without difficulties, however.

Some within the NAACP who were/are comfortable with the old NAACP have consistently resisted the new direction charted by Dr. Chavis. And certain elements of the media, particularly the New York Times, have been severely critical of Dr. Chavis in an obvious attempt to discredit him and his top associates. Dr. Chavis's refusal to distance himself from Farrakhan and the Detroit meeting with nationalist, pan-africanist and progressives are particularly troublesome to his detractors inside and outside of the NAACP. Joe Madison, a board member who has emerged as a major critic of Dr. Chavis, described the inclusion of Farrakhan in the call for the Summit as an "extreme move" and labeled the leaders who attended the Detroit meeting as a group of "washed up radicals from the past." Indeed, the Detroit meeting has caused such concern among some of the Board members that Dr. Chavis may be in serious jeopardy.

From my vantage point, as a lifetime member of NAACP, its time to Rally Around Ben Chavis! Too many Black leaders who have had the courage to stand up for Black people have fallen prey to forces external to the Black community and their apologists inside the Black community. Black America should not forget that no less a personage than W.E.B. DuBois was run out of the NAACP. All too often the Black masses apathetically watch as courageous Black leaders are cut down. Ben Chavis should not become a victim of our apathy and inaction. The voice of the masses of Black people needs to be heard in a ringing endorsement for the new leadership and new direction of the NAACP. Without our support Ben Chavis and the new direction he has blazed may be in danger.

Persons interested in working to support Dr. Chavis and his new direction for NAACP should call the national office: 410-486-9100.



BY LOUISE L. JAMES

**When The House voted 216-214 to ban 19 types of assault weapons, members apparently were suggesting that weapons left unbanned would not cause further crime, or make people feel less threatened. Who's kidding who?**

All guns are assault weapons. As assault simply means attack, every person hit by a bullet has been assaulted/attacked by that bullet. To ban 19 and leave thousands in circulation, is to operate on a person with cancer and arbitrarily cut only part of it out. What's left, obviously, will kill as surely as that which was cut away. Ergo, all guns should be banned. They are the one thing in this society that we do not need. And when the system is done telling us how cops have to have them, and how are we going to defend ourselves against others who are carrying them, this will not have changed.

If there are no guns, where will the "Others" get them from? As for

cops, they don't need them either. Let them rely on their sticks as the "Bobbies" in London once did. Their jobs will be made easier and their own lives less endangered, because where there are no guns, they'll not be available to rob banks, armored trucks, stick people up; thus cutting out any possibility of them, (the cops) being shot when attempting to stop a robbery. More importantly, since blacks, (in particular black men) are routinely shot to death in far greater number than cops, by cops, eliminating the gun will put these trigger-happy cops out of the trigger-pulling business!

In addition, disgruntled workers could no longer go on shooting sprees, irate husbands/wives couldn't shoot each other. All those people we read about, who get up in the middle of the night and wipe out their entire family... it all stops!

In the absence of the gun 13-year-olds wouldn't be killing other 13-year-olds, three year olds wouldn't blow themselves away because they got hold of the gun their parents thought was "Well out of their reach,"

and Colin Ferguson, no matter how messed up in his head, would not have been able to go on that shooting rampage on the Long Island train last December; a shooting that left six people dead, and 19 wounded. In addition to which all those other bodies lowered into the ground because somebody had a gun... it all wouldn't be there.

In point of fact, so long as guns are in our midst, we are all vulnerable. Besides those whose names and faces we do not know, Medgar Evers is proof of this, so is Malcolm and Dr. King. The brothers, one a president, the other a senator, John and Robert Kennedy respectively, are proof of how vulnerable we are. And there are thousands upon thousands left maimed, crippled, hopelessly paraplegic as living testament to our vulnerability. Lives are not made safer where guns exist, lives are made safer where guns do not exist!

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## The Portland Observer

(USPS 959-680)  
OREGON'S OLDEST AFRICAN AMERICAN PUBLICATION  
Established in 1970 by Alfred L. Henderson

Joyce Washington  
Publisher

The PORTLAND OBSERVER is located at  
4747 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.  
Portland, Oregon 97211  
503-288-0033 \* Fax 503-288-0015

**Deadline for all submitted materials:**  
Articles: Friday, 5:00 pm Ads: Monday Noon

POSTMASTER: Send Address Changes to: Portland Observer,  
P.O. Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208.

Second Class postage paid at Portland, Oregon.

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Subscriptions: \$30.00 per year.

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