



“Challenging People to Shape
a Better Future Now”

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Ebola Mirrors HIV/AIDS Pandemic

A high school friend of my wife was one of the earliest victims of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. He was a flight attendant, who was stricken and died quickly. When he died they still had not come up with a name for the pandemic. But then others became sick and died and suddenly the public knew that something deadly was unfolding.

In the beginning of the pandemic there were different ways that it was characterized. The media and the “street” would talk about the “gay cancer” or the “disease” that afflicted Haitians, homosexuals and hemophiliacs. There were those who suggested locking up entire populations. No one seemed to know whether you could hug and kiss someone with what later came to be called HIV/AIDS. There was panic. While the science was ignored, there was a demand for a cure. All sorts of theories circulated as to how and why HIV/AIDS emerged.

It was through the work of groups such as Gay Men’s Health Crisis, ACT UP and others that the crisis was confronted at the level of public health and justice. They and similar such formations mobi-



TRANS AFRICA

Bill Fletcher Jr.

lized against the demonization of the HIV/AIDS infected. Slowly the tide began to turn and attitudes started to shift. That said, it feels, in the midst of the Ebola crisis, that we are back

medical personnel to help to confront the tragedy. They seem to think that they can put Australia in some sort of bubble and keep it healthy. I hate to break it to them but in this age of globalization, it does not work that way.

Yet, in the U.S. there are many people with the same impulses. In a country of more than 300 million people there have been nine victims of Ebola. Nine. Yet the actions by some politicians would make you think that thousands of people had crossed the Atlantic and were infecting the population. Worse, there are politicians who

the Gay Men’s Health Crisis and ACT UP. There needs to be a broad-based discussion about Ebola and I would argue that the African American community and African immigrants must take the lead because this pandemic is painted with “race” by all sorts of charlatans. Much as HIV/AIDS became another reason to dehumanize gays, Ebola has become yet another reason to condemn the African World.

Panic and irrational responses are not stopped through pleading, and are frequently not stopped through common sense. You sometimes need a strong force that, through its actions, mobilizations, publicity, etc., shatters the panic and actually forces the larger public to consider reality.

That time has arrived.

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Much as HIV/AIDS became another reason to dehumanize gays, Ebola has become yet another reason to condemn the African World

to ground zero. Science is being ignored. The Australian government has cut off visas to West African countries afflicted by the outbreak and has refused to deploy

are pinning this crisis on President Obama as a way of motivating their base to vote for conservatives.

It is time for something akin to

Charles Barkley: Dishonoring Success

If you want a provocative comment about the Black community, turn to Charles Barkley. The NBA Hall of Famer made headlines last week when he addressed comments about Seattle Seahawks Quarterback Russell Wilson not being Black enough for his teammates. He said that African Americans are too concerned with street cred than true success and that’s holding the community back.

Whether he knew it or not, Barkley’s observations would also apply to the Hip Hop dilemma, which can be defined as the common distasteful physical emotional and/or mental trauma people experience when coming in contact with the Hip Hop Community.

While I agree with some of Barkley’s statement, I don’t believe this is a conversation that should target only at the uneducated, unsuccessful and unintelligent Blacks. It gives everybody with a college degree and some success under their belt a pass to point their fingers at the less fortunate in the community without taking a look at what part they play.

Let’s be honest, Russell Wilson is White America’s Black role model, rightfully so. Russell came in as a young, mixed race, quiet second-year quarterback and won the Super Bowl. He showed White America he knows how to play their game and he is good at it. Like Barkley, he had a White wife.

Naturally, the Black community generates hate for those type of achievements, which Barkley was referring to when he said, “We as black people are never going to be successful, not because of you white people, but because of other



HIP HOP UNION

Jineea Butler

black people. When you are black, you have to deal with so much crap in your life from other black people. It’s a dirty, dark secret; I’m glad it’s coming out.”

Me, too. But let’s get it all out while we are on this topic. Unless

thing of themselves. Another group of Black people who most likely grew up with two parents in a predominantly White area, like Russell Wilson, and achieved success by following the rules to the American Dream. And you have a group of Blacks, like Colin Powell, who were raised during the Civil Rights Era and were taught it is their duty to succeed. And you have another group of Black people who are average achievers from humble beginnings and fake it till they make it (You know a lot of people like that). Lastly, you have a group of Black people, like

This mass confusion is further amplified by White people who think there is only one decent Black person in each category that they can trust except for successful athletes, entertainers and those who were raised under their regime. The problem arises when the Black person the White person decides to trust is given the power to oversee the progression of other Black people and ends up abusing the power in all areas. This mimics the slave plantation as it is centuries of mental torment that still dictate our actions.

The dark secret is the war that’s going on within the ranks of Black folks. Most Blacks are brainwashed into thinking the type of Black person they are is the only type of Black person there should be.

The ‘Fake it till you make it’ types are the biggest group and most dangerous ones because they live under a ‘Willie Lynch’ mentality. They take the role of representative for the group and act as an agent for other Blacks who feel they need an invitation to success.

The ‘civil rights’ type keeps everything in the Black community together by staying aware and recognizing past gimmicks that are passed over as new agendas. They never stopped marching and they never stopped protesting. They still carry the torch firmly and stand their ground on issues of race and inequality in America.

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‘When you are black, you have to deal with so much crap in your life from other black people. It’s a dirty, dark secret; I’m glad it’s coming out’

the players on the Seattle Seahawks were drafted out of high school, they are college educated. It is so easy for us to generalize and say if you are a thug, an idiot or someone who breaks the law, you suffer from the crabs in the barrel syndrome. This is the Hip Hop dilemma. Blaming everything on people who look like the problem. Black people have a problem no matter what level they are on. And some of it is White America’s fault. And some of it is ours.

You have one group of Black people who climbed the success ladder from horrible living conditions, like Charles Barkley, but were determined to make some-

Lil Wayne, whose trust and basic living needs were so terribly violated they only understand the rules to survival.

Every group is different and has its own set of values, essentially want the same things but were taught different ways to achieve them. There is so much caged energy and tension bottled up in the pursuit to become a successful earner in our community, because we think there is no blueprint or guarantee that success is inevitable so it becomes a dog-eat-dog competition among everyone. Most people are willing to sacrifice someone else for the sake of their own ascension and that is what is holding us back.