



“Challenging People to Shape a Better Future Now”

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A Shocking Observation on Blacks

By James Clingman
NNPA Columnist

“America leads the world in shocks.” Those immortal words were spoken by the late Gil Scott-Heron during the Nixon “H2O Gate” era. Forty years later, Black people lead the world in shocks. We are shocked every time a Black person gets killed or abused by a police officer; we are shocked at the absence of indictments and convictions for those acts; we are shocked that our government will only give these acts lip-service; and we are shocked by the endless rhetoric, excuse-making, and rationales put forth as a response to Black lives being treated like they don’t matter.

We are so shocked that we continue to roll out the same old tactics, chant the same phrases, and make idle threats that we know we will not fulfill. We are shocked that society will not change this endless parade to the graveyard for Black men especially. We are also shocked at the rate of our deaths and the nonchalant attitudes of those who kill us. And we are shocked by the fact that even though these killings are caught on cameras, there is still no punishment for the perpetrator.

Rodney King’s butt-whuppin’ was caught on camera in 1992, and so was Nathaniel Jones killing in Cincinnati, Ohio in 2003. Heck, White folks photographed the lynching and burning of many Blacks over 100 years ago. Why are we so shocked now? I have



BLACKONOMICS

James Clingman

come to the conclusion that we just like to be shocked. It’s like the old tale of a boy constantly hitting himself in the head with a hammer. When asked why he did that, he replied, “Because it feels so good when I stop.”

Do we really want this lunacy, this evil, this abuse to stop just so

the others I could name.

Let me try this again, after so many years of saying the same thing. The vast majority of the problems Black people face in this nation can be solved through the utilization of economic power. That’s what runs this country and, therefore, that’s what gets desired outcomes. The lack of economic power results in a perverse weakness and subordination of any group of people. Thus, Black folks are always shocked at our position, our mistreatment, and our dependency on the very political entities that care very little, if at all, about us. That’s backward and wrong-headed thinking.

If Black folks in Baltimore or

The Fraser Institute released an article titled, “External shocks and political parties’ attempts to ‘buy’ votes can affect levels of economic freedom,” that noted, “Economic freedom is one of the main drivers of prosperity, resulting in improved wealth, health, and education for individuals and their families.” said Herbert Grubel.

“...external shocks (think wars and revolutions, economic depressions or recessions) prompt the public to gravitate to political parties promising change and dramatic new directions... Changing public views allow progressive politicians to buy votes by creating a narrative that government is better at looking after citizens than citizens are at looking after themselves. That inevitably leads to larger government, more regulation, higher taxes, and crony capitalism,” Grubel said.

Extrapolating from that article, I would say that Black folks have come to depend on politicians for so long now that even when our people are killed by police, we run to them to solve the problem. It’s not going to happen until we wield power with our dollars and our votes. The “external shock” necessary to prompt political parties to appropriately respond to our needs must be felt by them rather than by us. That shock must be one that reverberates throughout the corporate board rooms, the halls of Congress, and 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue: No more business as usual!

We are also shocked at the rate of our deaths and the nonchalant attitudes of those who kill us

we can catch our breath for a little while, and then return to business as usual? One thing for sure is that it will not stop simply because it ought to, as folks always imply when the news reporter poses the question, “What you think about the latest incident of police abuse?” Inevitably, as was the case in the latest abuse in Baltimore, a sister said, “It’s got to stop.” Others chimed in and said the same thing, as was said in the case of Eric Garner, John Crawford, Ezell Ford, Oscar Grant, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, and many of

anywhere else want to be empowered to the degree that politicians finally move beyond merely saying what they think we want to hear, to doing what we need done for our security and progress, we must make drastic changes in our behavior. Our reactions to all the killings and beat-downs have been so predictable, so much so that the authorities know they just need to wait us out for a while, like the Eric Garner case, and we will go away. They know the shock value of their actions is impotent and only temporary.

Child Watch Clamoring to Enter Poor Door

More than 88,000 people have applied to enter the “poor door” at a new luxury condominium tower on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. Only one in 1,600 will win the lottery to live there.

Some months ago a New York developer made headlines with the plans for this building, which takes advantage of zoning rules encouraging affordable housing by including some low-priced rental units along with the luxury condos for sale. A separate entrance for the people living in the low-income apartments continues with segregated living inside. Low-income tenants won’t be allowed to use the pool, gym, private theater, or any of the other amenities reserved for the wealthy owners.

Critics immediately pounced on this design as a modern-day form of Jim Crow. But the need for affordable housing is so overwhelming that when the deadline came this month to participate in a lottery for the spots behind the “poor door,” tens of thousands applied. Meanwhile, *The New York Times* reports that most of the 219 luxury condos on the other side of the building have sold, some for more than \$25 million.

The contrast between the haves and have-nots might be especially stark at that New York building, but millions of families across the country are finding themselves on the wrong side of the poor door.



CHILD WATCH

Marian Wright Edelman

Housing is the single largest expense for most families and for far too many is growing increasingly out of reach. The number of families with worst-case housing

hungry because he’d made his younger siblings something to eat but there wasn’t enough food left for him to eat, too. Through it all Ayriq stayed committed to excelling in school and winning an academic scholarship to Ohio State University. But even this year, his senior year in high school and on his way to college, he found himself homeless again. Ayriq says: “I don’t want to be homeless again. I don’t want that to be who I am.”

The Children’s Defense Fund honored Ayriq with a scholarship

Republican House and Senate budgets are proposing severe cuts to already inadequate and desperately needed housing subsidies. The White House estimates that compared to the president’s budget proposal, the Republican House budget would cut housing vouchers for 133,000 families and housing assistance for 20,000 rural families. This is on top of the 2013 sequestration cuts that led to 100,000 fewer families receiving assistance by June 2014.

The Urban Institute found that providing enough housing subsidies to serve eligible families would reduce child poverty by 20.8 percent and lift 2.3 million children out of poverty. More than 2.5 million more households would receive a subsidy, worth an average of \$9,435. We could easily pay for this housing subsidy expansion by making fairer and common sense reforms to close corporate accounting tax loopholes, saving \$58 billion a year. Or if we had more responsible and more just members of Congress on both sides of the aisle, instead of repealing the estate tax which amounts to a \$27 billion a year giveaway to the 5,400 ultra-wealthy estates worth over \$5.4 million — in the top two-tenths of 1 percent — as the Senate and House both voted to do, we could invest the \$24 billion a year needed to ensure poor and near-poor children a chance to grow up in a stable place to call home.

Because of funding limitations only about 1 in 4 needy families with children receives assistance

needs increased from 6 million in 2007 to 8.5 million in 2011, including 3.2 million families with children, and the number of homeless public school students was 85 percent higher in 2012-2013 than before the recession.

Ayriq Sims has been one of those students. He and his siblings spent their childhood bouncing between unstable living arrangements, extended stays at relatives’ homes, and homeless shelters. Even when Ayriq’s family had somewhere to stay, he remembers all the times their lights and water were turned off, or when he went

for overcoming tremendous odds. Homelessness and housing instability can have serious, negative consequences on children’s emotional, cognitive, and physical development, academic achievement, and success as adults. Federal rental assistance, including public housing and vouchers for private rentals, helps about 5 million of the neediest low-income households afford a place to live. But because of funding limitations only about 1 in 4 needy families with children receives assistance.

To add insult to injury, the