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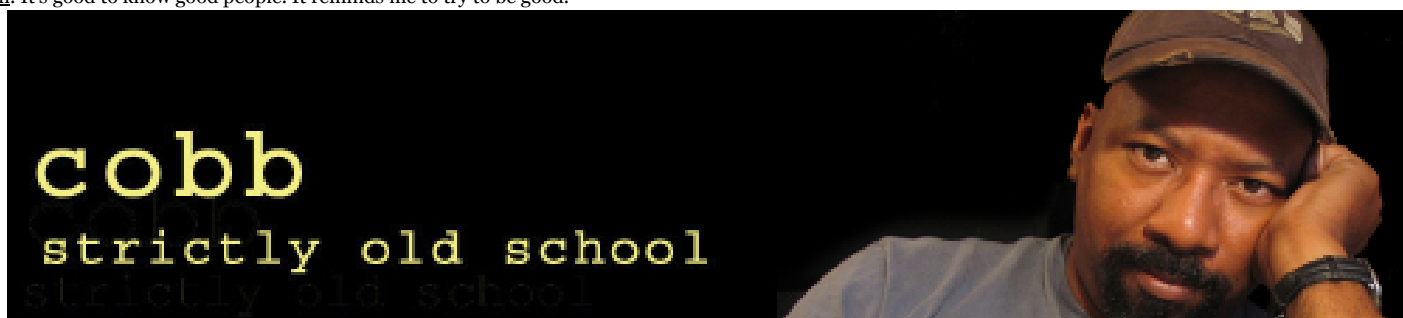
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Keeping It Right

July 11, 2019

When They Reminisce Over You, For Real

I only know the title of this piece sampled from some De La and I can't tell you what the joint was. That's odd for me who generally knows the OG, but not this time. So I listened and it comes sweetly in line with a friendly shout from **Mark Anthony Neal**, a man I knew back in the days of the blogosphere, the blackosphere and all places yonder, now more than a decade gone. There were others of course from back when I remember, first in line Jimi Izrael who got me on NPR with Michel Martin. There were my cadres from the black right, The Conservative Brotherhood, including the most effervescent and flavorful Avery Tooley and the stalwart crew including Baldilocks and the black conservative woman who set the world on fire, Miss LaShawn Barber. Long before there was Candace Owens, Shay Riley at Booker Rising ran down the facts. Prior to that I came with it on the Talented Tenth Progressive flavor at Vision Circle with the celebrated Good Doctor Lester Spence, my old boys Ed Brown, Craig Nulan and others I haven't spoken to or heard from in quite some time. Pshaw. Not long before that, I was all over various places in the pre-blog world including being the FAQ keeper at SCAA in the wild days of Usenet. That's where I met some of the men I call my existential partners - whose footsteps I could be or they could be me depending on how the wind tossed the butterfly. One of them has recently stepped up to legendary status, running the College of Computing at Georgia Tech. It's good to know good people. It reminds me to try to be good.



But I'm impatient, and I don't even suffer my own foolishness very well. As I have for the last 30 years at least, I've tried to live by the code that no concept you hold is valid unless it can be integrated without contradiction into the sum of your experience. Or as Cornel West would put it, your praxis has to have integrity. The code of your life has to compile with no errors, and you should not disregard the many warnings. You stand the risk of running in infinite circles. Somewhere around the end of 2007 when I was trying to help put Microsoft on the EPM map and a toxic green goo of mortgages started eating a hole in the floor of the American economy, I underwent a series of tough revisions that continued through the election of Barack Obama. I came to the slow realization that identity had tipped the scales away from reason, and I had to quit investing any effort in politics. Around the same time, continuing in my mad scramble for the dosh point, aka 'fuck you money' I assumed a bit too much about that realm called 'upper management' as well as that called the 'upper middle class'. I reset and went Stoic. I was fortunate to get a heads down job that I could work at home and enjoyed the blessings of focused technical work, let my face grow shaggy and began my martial education. I became friends with the local first responders, the local gunsmiths, the local FBI agents, the local dojo masters, the local gyms and the art of making brilliant salads. I had high and low points, and one notably on the same day having completed at the age of 57 a grueling ruck. It might be said that this was all part of becoming a military dad, but it was about my own health and getting away from political thrash and trash.

Nowadays, my Stoic journey is mostly complete but I've learned that an attitude of mockery can only get you so far in politics. I can't say that I am entirely done with writing. Even though there's nothing I want to tell and explain to the world, I still need to be a good example. So I think it is time to walk as a man in full, well in the moment, beholden to my own ethics, remaining anti-bullshit, but as open and social as possible. I don't have much more to do to protect my family, and I still have some great stories and good ideas in me. I've made some pretty excellent friends too.

So when I look at that black life, I'm left with very little but the sweet BBQ crust on the grill of my life. There's a flavor that will never disappear, but these days it's more than just pork ribs I'm grilling. It's bulgogi. It's not only Kingsford for the fire, I'm doing it just fine with propane and propane accessories. It's an odd feeling not to want to do anything particularly blackified, but I'm used to it. What I'm not used to is looking like an old black man and I hardly know what to expect of outward expectations. Still, I think like with every other experience down that disciplined road of non-contradictory integration, what I will continue to do is tell the straight story. They say that the human body replaces all but its brain cells every 7 years. It's curious looking back at what I was into 15 years ago. Well, I wrote what I needed to write.

These days, over in Quora where I spend most of my time online, I answer a good percentage of the questions they throw me. It gets me about 200k hits a month, which is better than I ever got on the blog. That's the preferred format for the moment, because I don't have to put stuff out there from my own imagination. People ask me. I like that, and it's a long format. I was surprised to get 6k karma points over a weekend just posting a picture of my parents wedding at Reddit. I mean we are pretty good looking but it's difficult swallowing that one post being the most popular thing I ever did in 20 years online. I continue to write my mostly serious and expository stuff here at Cobb, if only to keep track of where I'm thinking outside of work. And Facebook is for anyone who wants to be a lightweight friend. I have an odd mix of twitter followers @mdcbowen, and I really do hope to increase that and do some more vlogging on YouTube. I'll try to get some kind of hookup with the IDW which is for me right now the most righteous thing on the interwebz.

I'm a traveler, and some might even call me a pioneer. What I know for sure is that if I have a real curiosity, or something to prove, I'm not afraid to go there. I took the test and I'm very high on openness to experience. I did a tally and I have been to 96 of the 150 largest cities in the US. Sounds like me. Speaking of which, it's about time to hit the road. I'll let you know when I get my Porsche.

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July 27, 2016

Pray For Me - An Open Letter from an LAPD Officer

Doc speaks in an open letter to Pops.

Time to speak up. To keep nation from dissolving into civil unrest, I think it is imperative that people of good conscience stand up and loudly counter violent voices stirring for race riots and the death of more cops.

The graffiti on the 5 Freeway just outside of downtown LA, "Kill more cops" is indicative of the tactics violent revolutionaries seek to employ against the people's guardians. You and I both know that there is no American institution that is done more to preserve black lives than the nation's police departments.

The Democratic Party -- with its welfare practices, condom distribution schools, abortion on demand and union-controlled substandard school systems has decimated the black family. Margaret Sanger (Ms Kill-a-Negra-in-da-womb) is a hero of Hillary Clinton and Planned Parenthood locations are smack in the middle of impoverished minority neighborhoods.

It's time to speak up. I'm appalled by the lack of courageous, creative and articulate leadership within our nation's police ranks. Big City Chiefs are largely mum on the deadly threats being posed by militant black terrorist organizations that have emerged. David Clarke is it! But what a powerful force he's become.

I was born for such a times as these. It's my turn to speak up. Later this week my partner and I will be assigned to patrol the BLM protest encampment of LA's City Hall East. The protesters have vowed to remain in place until the Mayor fires Chief Beck for deeming "in policy" the shooting of armed (with knife) female black who charged officers. They were in foot pursuit after she robbed a store.

I've been reading voraciously to equip myself with facts to counter false BLM narrative regarding white cops. Here's one; although blacks comprise just 12% of the population, they are 40% of those who confront cops while armed. Despite this WHITE COPS fire LAST! It's three times more likely to be shot by a non-white. As to the statistics re: unarmed suspects, cops are 18 times more likely to be shot than people who aren't armed are to be by police.

BLM is comprised of interest angry blamers who don't have strategy for reducing black on black homicides. 97% of homicides Black suffers are the hands of blacks. 81% of whites on murdered are killed by blacks. Whites kill each other only 16% of the time. Blacks hate THEMSELVES more than ANYBODY else. [Editor's note: These stats are off. c.f. FBI]

My first few days on assignments I'm just going to smile and wave. Over time I'll lay down my 'ghetto credentials' and gradually educate them on the fallacy of their premise that white cops present an existential threat to them.

Pray for me.

Peace. (Doc)

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January 16, 2016

The Problem With Multiculturalism



The problem with today's multiculturalism is that it is different than pluralism. Pluralism is the proper ethos for America, multiculturalism is not. The difference can be explained simply by assuming Americans can be divided into two tribes:

Ideological Tribe A

We believe that America is at its best when its mainstream is maintained *without regard* to race, creed, color, sexual preference, etc..

Ideological Tribe B

We believe that America is at its best when its mainstream is maintained *with special regard* to race, creed, color, sexual preference, etc.

I could go on at length to describe the nefarious notions that are sustained in the American Culture Wars, begun in the late 50s taking shape in the 60s and blossoming in the 90s, but the distinction above nails it. What's important is that multiculturalism is now clearly showing its philosophical weakness and that ordinary people are

recognizing it.

The weakness of multiculturalism is that its advocates simultaneously emphasize the politics of difference as well as notions of equality, and they try to do so without being judgmental. It is a direct consequence of trying to nail down the precise weight of 'special regard'.

Multiculturalists will assert that Americans must pay attention to the history of X in order to properly understand and respect X-Americans. In this they will assert then, that the same is true of Y-Americans. And of course they consequently assert that we make America better, because the general history of America was neglectful and disrespectful of all of the Xs and Ys and now only today with the new multicultural perspective can true equality become reality (but we still have a long way to go), so they say. So multiculturalists will emphasize all these histories and develop a new 'special regard' which can be communicated through the convoluted narrative of respectful terms, aka politically correct language. Along with this pervasive demand of the general public, multiculturalists also demand special programs of 'inclusion' and 'empowerment' of institutions.

Of course X-Americans don't have to do this diligence or sponsor such regimes because they already know, right? Well, not exactly. Multiculturalism requires that its subjects toe the ideological line in expressing the particular history of the narrative of multiculturalism. This is where the whole ball of yarn unravels, because this requirement of 'authenticity' becomes untenable as soon as you get to a particular level of detail and especially if you happen to be some as of yet unclassified hybrid of X & Y. This particular knot is sending shockwaves through the efforts of the ever more stultifying alphabet soup of the LGBT... 'community' as various identity factions attempt to micromanage the weight of special regard for their distinctions.

Multiculturalists are the enemies of conformity and anonymity. They require that people represent their differences, except of course when they are not supposed to. Confusing? Of course it is. Multiculturalists will highlight the great benefits of 'diversity' but then assert that people just 'happen to be X' and contribute equally with everybody else. The only way this can happen is if all parties in the 'diverse' group accept with precision the special regard for the X person. Multiculturalists would be



profoundly disappointed were people of X distinction refuse to apply for X scholarships, or if people of Y distinctions did not predictably support multicultural rhetoric 'in solidarity' with Y. They would haughtily say such people were working against their own interests. (Because multiculturalism defines those interests! Just read the history!)

Where the friction of this regime expresses the pain of its logical error is at border conditions. IE, hiring, firing, promoting, demoting, and all other sorts of transactions that move individuals from in-group to out-group status. All rationales for discriminations of any sort must now include politically correct rationales, each appropriate to their 'own' groups.

It goes without saying that the aim of multiculturalists is to sustain this politics of difference and to denormalize the normal to which they have attached the prefix of 'cis-'. The mainstream of America of multicultural dreams has a complete and total ontology of race, gender, creed, color, country of origin, sexual preference and religion, each which contributes to the de-emphasis of America's 'majority'. They have succeeded massively in enabling this narrow and particular set of demographic tags to drive analysis of Americans over all other sets. Things like 'years of education' pale in significance to 'race', for example, when looking at socioeconomic indicators. This is true across all media.

The impact is clear. Multiculturalists seek to maintain their success by enabling 'victims' of every stripe (with a meticulously maintained database of stripes) to raise suspicions about the motives and capabilities of every group they are not a part of, and a general assumptions about cultural and political 'authenticity' that maps properly to their regime of special regard. This makes a trainwreck of evenhandedness, undermines common cause for anything outside of the multiculturalist agenda and establishes a never ending crusade against the true spirit of competition, meritocracy and fair play.

Before multiculturalism collapses under the weight of its accumulated deceptions and Orwellian contradiction, it will drown the ambitions of millions and set up millions more for failure in the world where multiculturalism's narratives and machinations does not exist.

January 16, 2016 in [A Punch in the Nose](#), [Domestic Affairs](#), [Keeping It Right](#), [Peasant Theory](#), [Race Man](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(10\)](#)
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August 11, 2015

Misconceptions about Conservatives

I was raised as a Progressive within the 'Talented Tenth' in one of the wealthiest black communities in America. When the black sprinters for the US team were booed at the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, I was shocked that the best in the world were heckled for raising the American flag. It made me reconsider what black men are expected to do and be with regard to patriotism, especially when they are successful. As part of that investigative process, I registered Republican and strove to understand and become a part of the American Right, and so I began a blog which is a journal of that passage. By becoming this 'paradox' a black American Conservative, I witnessed many myths. Here are some of them.

The first myth is that conservatives are white, want to stay white and interpret all racial issues the same way liberals do and because of that, actively oppose Liberals based on racial or racist principles.

In fact Conservatives spend relatively little time thinking about race and in particular have not evolved ways of speaking different 'racial languages' to different racial constituencies. The myth is that Conservatives speak a 'dog whistle' language to whites. The fact is that Conservatives want to be non-racial and speak to other character traits instead of race. This appeals to people who are not concerned with racial identity as central to politics, which does in fact resonate with people who are nominally 'white'.

The second myth is that Conservatives are born and not made.

There is this idea that only if you are raised in a particular kind of Christianity, or live in the South or did not get some crucial education or some other demographic stereotype, that you are likely to be and stay Conservative. Liberals almost always ignore or discount those Americans who grew up liberal or progressive and then thought their way away from those ideologies. I don't know for certain, but I would guess that there are more Progressives who became Conservative than the other way around.

The third myth is that the American Right is just like the Right in other countries.

This is especially annoying when it comes to Germany. Liberals tend to blithely associate Conservatism with Fascism when it comes to the matter of Conservative support of military service and military engagement. Very few would stop to look at the founding principles of the Nazi Party and see why, in principle, it is a Socialist worker's party. Because of this, Liberals assume for example, that nobody who escaped Nazi Germany would become an American Conservative, but in fact there is an entire school of Conservative thought called the Straussian School.

The fourth myth is that Conservatism is monolithic.

Liberals mistake conservative political philosophies for a dictionary definition of 'conservative' like 'lack of nerve' or 'unwillingness to change'. Few people, including many if not most Republicans, bother to read books by conservative thinkers like Hayek, Oakshott, Strauss or Kirk. Just as few Liberals, including many if not most Democrats, bother to read books by Adorno, Marcuse or Rorty. I think in general this is because Liberals assume that Republicans are true exemplars of Conservative principles and that their policy positions are principled.

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January 05, 2015

Obligatory Seriousness on #BlackLivesMatter

Yes of course. And some matter more than others. Your choice of which lives to call black or representative of black says a great deal about you. In fact, I'll say it says way more about you than it does about black Americans of which there are empty millions. Your mileage may vary, but lots of people get pretty far with their racial theories. Me, I'm not into any of that, I call them as I see them with no respect for being politically correct. Why? Because my dealings with 'black America' isn't political. No agenda serves it, especially no special agenda. That doesn't stop people from trying and yet I digress.

Some time ago when the focus of Cobb ***was*** black political partisanship, I established the category '[Keeping it Right](#)'. That had in mind the old cliché about 'Keeping it Real' and recalls the last hip-hop group that mattered, De La Soul, on the best album they ever put out 'Stakes Is High' in [The Bizness](#). I now repurpose that thread as my contribution to that unique American discussion which remains permanent and like memories of high school and formative cartoons like Johnny Quest, hits me square in the funny bone on occasion. So there it is with less emotion and yet more detail than the hashtag can evoke. Keeping it Right is my take on which black lives matter to me.

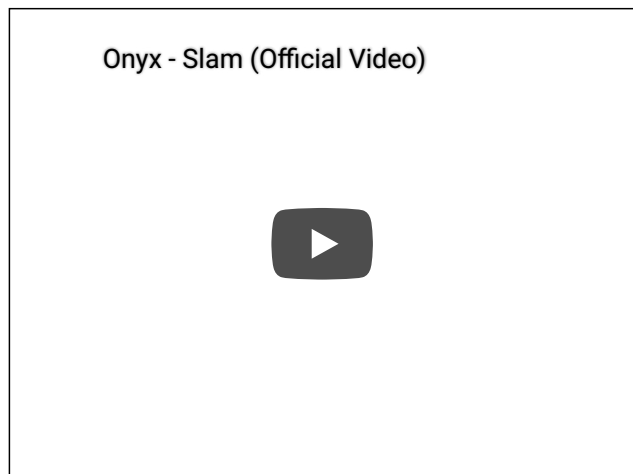
That said, I suppose I owe a top ten now that I think of it. It shouldn't be hard, but it's also not so deep. (So I say before I write it - but let's see what I come up with.) OK. The first one is not in the top ten, but it is the reason why I have revitalized this thread.

Omar Hakim.

When I was living in Brooklyn, back in the early 90s, before Jurassic Park and Janet's massive album, I purchased Omar Hakim's solo album. And as the classy young man I was, I thought it was appropriate to my style. I therefore spent a lot of time being angry in a particular way that aesthetes get angry, that dudes like [Onyx were making money](#). Nowadays that's called being a hater. I didn't hate Onyx, but I had minimal respect for them. Like Criss Cross. I happened across Omar's album in my collection today and paused for a moment of sadness in that Omar didn't become the star I thought he deserved to be, especially considering the [huge sensation he made in Sting's world massive Bring on the Night concert](#). So who matters to me? Well, both Onyx and Omar Hakim made me think about music and culture, but Hakim matters more.

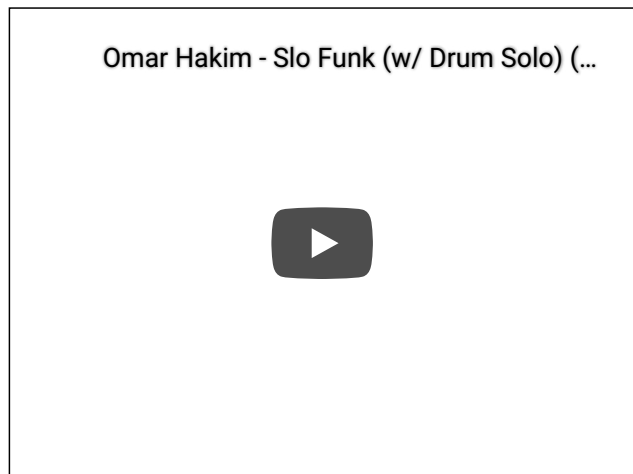
Top Ten Black folks... alright this is silly but .. nevermind. It's too silly to even contemplate. I will re-awaken the topic Keeping It Right. That is all.

Still. Onyx. Extra double dumb.



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Omar Hakim



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November 18, 2014

Because Winston Churchill

Not because Colonel Blimp. But as my father used to love to say "y'all forget".

I am in receipt of a missive from some joint called 'CodeSwitch' which is a quite 1991 term, but y'all forget. It occurred to me that we have gone 20 years beyond the point at which there was actually something new to learn from the vanguard of multiculturalism in the Identity Wars which were really best exemplified in the very first movie

I bought on DVD - [Strange Days](#). In case you forget, which I know you do, Strange Days can be summarized like this...

A washed up ex- something or other white dude stumbles across a tape of the murder-by-cop of the world's greatest political rap star on the verge of Y2K. Except the tape is no ordinary tape, but a Vulcan mind-meld tape so that you can experience exactly what other people experience. It features pre-apocalyptic Los Angeles, complete with sleazy dangerous night club owners, plucky prostitutes, poker-face middle aged powerbroker suits, douchebag Japanese millionaires, a Gibsonian tech geek selling hot warez, a double crossing psychopathic murderer / best friend, the most fatal femme torch singer on the planet and her perky tits, and a strong black mother keeping shit real in the middle of the overflow of decadence who ultimately saves the day.

As you can imagine it was one of the greatest movies of all time. That's not the point, so much as the point is that it was done in 1995, and people are still trying to make all that vanguard identity narrative work its way like so many ear-boring beetles at the hands of Khan, into the psyche of the next generation. To wit: CodeSwitch:

NPR this mornin':

"The straight white men of *Straight White Men* aren't what you might expect. Near the beginning of the new off-Broadway play, two adult brothers play a homemade, family board game, refashioned out of an old Monopoly set. Because the family is liberal and progressive, it's called "Privilege." It makes fun of their own straight-white-male privilege.

"Ah, 'excuses' card!" one of the brothers exclaims. The other reads it aloud. "What I just said wasn't racist/sextist/homophobic because I was joking," he deadpans. "Pay \$50 to an LGBT organization."

The playwright, 40-year-old Young Jean Lee, is arguably one of the hottest playwrights in America right now. Her work revels in subverting stereotypes. With *Straight White Men*, Lee was interested in exploring a problem: What do you do when you've got privilege — and you don't want to abuse it? Lee, who is Korean-American, wanted to create straight white men on stage who think about these things.

"I know they're out there," she says. "I mean, I know them personally. Men are changing."

Lee writes about *everybody*. Straight white men. Native Americans. Asians. She even wrote a play actually called *The Untitled Feminist Show*. And in a play from 2008 called *The Shipment*, she did something that's hard for a nonblack writer to do. It's partly an absurdist sendup of African-American stereotypes seen over and over in movies and on TV. The first half of the play is an over-the-top compendium of clichés. Lee's process is to write plays using her cast to improvise scenes and ideas, and she developed this one with a group of five black actors.

There's also a twist in *The Shipment* that it would be unfair to reveal, and that captivated *New Yorker* theater critic Hilton Als.

"Black and white people were confused," he observes. "It was amazing. She was doing something very profound in terms of the ways in which we listen to 'ethnic speech' and 'regular speech.'"

Young Jean Lee writes by listening. When she started working on *Straight White Men*, she took advantage of being a playwright in residence at Brown University.

"I asked a roomful of women, queer people and minorities, 'What do you want straight men to do? And what do you want them to be like?' " she recalls.

Lee wrote down all of the answers. It boiled down to this: They wanted the straight white male character to sit down and shut up.

"When you hear that around the table, you just feel yourself sinking slowly into the chair," remembers James Stanley, who plays the character created from the list. The character, named Matt, is a sort of idealized straight white male. He works for a not-for-profit and is guided by a sense of trying not to — in his words — "make things worse." Lee and Stanley workshopped the character in front of the students. Who hated him.

"Hated him," Lee said, clearly still surprised. "And I realized that the reason why they hated him was — despite all their commitment to social justice — what they believed in most was not being a loser. [Matt] is exhibiting behavior that gets attributed to people of color: not being assertive, not standing up for himself, always being in a service position."

It's an existential dilemma, Lee says. She had one of her own while working on *Straight White Men* in the largely white-run world of American theater.

"I can always say, 'Oh, well I'm just pursuing my own ambition, but I'm making the world a better place,' " she says. "Because now there's this Asian female playwright who can be a role model for other artists of color, and I'm helping with diversity. And so I can do whatever I want and sort of get on the good-person list. And it occurred to me as I was doing the show, and listening to people talk about straight white men — straight white men don't really have that option."

Which is not to say that playwright Young Jean Lee thinks straight white men are categorically oppressed. But she likes using theater as a tool to reveal and dismantle our perceptions — of each other and of ourselves. For her, it's a place to check complacency at the door."

I know people keep having 'existential dilemmas', especially so-called 'white males'. It's rather sad that so many people think of themselves that way, but you know we black Americans made you into that. Didn't you know or did you forget? Here let me remind you as I did in Quora recently.

America's most powerfully dangerous minority made it race and ethnicity because we said so. But it wasn't about race and ethnicity, it was about us and what we wanted. Because the NAACP is not about 'people of color' it's about black Americans. And we won. And we dictated the terms of how people talk about race and ethnicity in America. And it's going to continue to be that way until nobody (meaning black Americans) cares any longer, about halfway through the next black President's term.

Now there happens to be a movie called 'Fury' that's around these days and you ought to watch it because ideals are peaceful but history is violent. A lot of people stuck in their identity crises remain there because they never face danger. They don't face the do or die moment which is the only real existential crisis there is. But we managed to redefine 'existential' somewhere along the way and so inflate the idiot problem explored within the semantic and semiotic swamp that is the stuff of CodeSwitch and that there ilk.

What am I saying? I'm saying that dudes with Node.js and VC money don't make the world a better place, fighting men do. They make it a worse place too, but the point is that they make it and there are no big fat unanswered questions about that which require a seat in a theater on Broadway where some person with an interesting identity has done the thinking for you as you are entertained during your night on the town in fashionable shoes.

Winston Churchill. Douglas MacArthur.

We have a couple examples of the sort of men we could aspire to, who were not merely war makers, but impressive in multiple dimensions. They were none of the characters you might meet in a Broadway play or Hollywood film, and perhaps that's why young American men these days plop so easily into the 'white male' bucket. That's all they know. Too bad.

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November 05, 2014

Tim Scott

I don't know much about [Tim Scott](#), but I'm not surprised that he exists. I'm glad he won. [Yay](#). Then again, I told you so at least [ten years ago](#).



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August 13, 2014

Civil Rights & The American Conservative Movement

Just found this via Jonah Goldberg - an essay written in 2008 by [William Voegeli](#). Shrill, naive and or provocative people are always asking for proof that the GOP or Conservatives aren't racist, and they cannot wait to drop a Southern Strategy bomb on the Right. Even though I don't much care these days for defending the American Right, I did spend a lot of time in it and understood there was nothing particularly frightening about that experience, nor was there anything oxymoronic about my position in it.

So here's Voegeli's [scholarly piece](#) stolen whole cloth for the sake of completeness and to debunk the drunken notion that nobody on the Right actually thinks seriously about Civil Rights. I expect you to read the whole thing.

And here is a juicy excerpt:

Viewed from 2008, the movement Buckley led was detached from the civil rights struggle because conservatives, despite frequent and apparently sincere expressions of hope for racial harmony, rarely viewed the fight against pervasive, entrenched, and episodically brutal racial discrimination as a question of great moral urgency. Conservatives were personally opposed to Jim Crow as liberals of a later generation insisted they were personally opposed to abortion. Making the opposition personal was a way to keep the states, in the case of abortion, or the nation, when it came to segregation, from making it governmental.

Buckley did not mention race in his famous publisher's statement in the inaugural issue of *National Review*. The magazine was going to stand athwart history and yell Stop. But it would be yelling at Communists, "jubilant" in the belief they had an "inside track to History," and at liberals "who run this country" and who, having embraced relativism, rejected "fixed postulates...clearly enunciated in the enabling documents of our Republic" in favor of "radical social experimentation."

It was within this framework that *National Review* conservatism addressed the issues raised by the civil rights movement. Integration and black progress were welcomed when they were the result of private actions like the boycotts of segregated buses or lunch counters, which Buckley judged "wholly defensible" and "wholly commendable." He also praised a forerunner to the socially responsible mutual fund, an investment venture started in 1965 to raise capital for racially integrated housing developments, calling it "a project divorced from government that is directed at *doing* something about a concrete situation," one that "depends for its success on the spontaneous support of individual people."

The corollary was that conservatism opposed the civil rights agenda when it called for or depended on Big Government. "We frown on any effort of the Negroes to attain social equality by bending the instrument of the state to their purposes," Buckley wrote in 1960.

But we applaud the efforts to define their rights by the lawful and non-violent use of social and economic sanctions which they choose freely to exert, and to which those against whom they are exerted are free to respond, or not, depending on what is in balance. That way is legitimate, organic progress.

This opposition to Big Government engendered conservative opposition to every milestone achievement of the civil rights movement. *National Review* denounced [Brown v. Board of Education](#) (1954), calling it "an act of judicial usurpation," one that ran "patently counter to the intent of the Constitution" and was "shoddy and illegal in analysis, and invalid as sociology." It opposed the [1964 Civil Rights Act](#) and 1965 Voting Rights Act on similar grounds. A Buckley column dismissed the former as

a federal law, artificially deduced from the Commerce Clause of the Constitution or from the 14th Amendment, whose marginal effect will be to instruct small merchants in the Deep South on how they may conduct their business.

Senator Barry Goldwater used similar reasoning to justify voting against the bill on the eve of his general election contest with Lyndon Johnson. Saying he could find "no constitutional basis for the exercise of Federal regulatory authority" over private employment or public accommodations, Goldwater called the law "a grave threat" to a "constitutional republic in which fifty sovereign states have reserved to themselves and to the people those powers not specifically granted to the central or Federal government." Goldwater arrived at this conclusion, according to Rick Perlstein's book on the 1964 campaign, *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus* (2001), after receiving advice from two young legal advisors, William Rehnquist and Robert Bork.

August 13, 2014 in [Conservatism](#), [Domestic Affairs](#), [Keeping It Right](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(3\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)
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July 31, 2014

Tell Me Less

I was one of the original dudes in Michel Martin's Barbershop. It was great. After about a year, I left for a variety of reasons I may or may not get into - nothing controversial mind you, but recent events, namely the closing of that shop puts me in a mood to talk about it. According to the comments [over here](#), NPR lost money on the show.

Around 2007 I was in what I considered to be a very typical place, underemployed and over talented. I kinda wanted to be rich but not so much that I'd take a big risk. At the top of my career, I had time and energy to burn as a consultant. Since I had always put as much time into writing and reading as other folks presumeably put into their other hobbies, I had lots of ideas and opinions. I put some of that energy to work as a blogger and was rewarded in that universe by thousands of comments and an actual award. So, at the recommendation of my friend Jimi Izrael, I became one of the chairs in the Barbershop. I loved it.

I haven't written as much about my involvement with the show as I thought I had. In the recent runup to its termination, Jimi asked me to put together a string of memories. They were unfortunately brief - some followup I have in this blog under the category of Radio Recap. But as I think about it, there was and surely is some reluctance on my part to becoming famous as a black man. As a member of the group formerly known as The Talented Tenth, I gave up my birthright to be a 'black leader' a long time ago. The quick reason was that I was first overwhelmed by and then finally reconciled to black American diversity. I officially gave up, without rancor, all expectations of black unity somewhere around 1992, which somewhat coincidentally served me quite well to be an independent voice 'of color' 15 years later on Michel Martin's show. What I never gave up is any pride in my own upbringing and what I felt was important to me about being the particular sort of African American I am, and I know very well that in this country, stories such as mine are a very rare commodity indeed, so much so that people still think Barack Obama is a phenomenon. We're the same age, and just like with Eddie Murphy, Spike Lee & Denzel Washington, I grew up with people just like him. I knew who we were before America did. And America still doesn't know. I wonder from time to time if I'm OK with that, and it is in that context that I think about what loss we all sustain from Michel Martin not being front and center with little old me in the wings.

Whoopie Goldberg said something I remember. 'TV is the only place where you can have 1 million friends and be considered a complete failure'. Whoopie was smart enough and focused enough, and popular enough to solve that problem. But it's now Michel's problem and my problem too. I'm not an entertainer. My mother didn't raise me to be one, and if my father thought I was headed down the avenue towards class clownship, he would have marched me off that plank. I suspect that there are at least a million Americans who can relate to exactly that, maybe even five million, probably more quite frankly. However between those millions and men such as myself are arbiters whose eye we have not captured. I think they're called big media producers or some such - it's really not my field of expertise. But I would say part of the miracle was that Martin and her supporting team at NPR were able to get the lot of us together on the air. This is fast becoming a lost art if it is not lost already.

Neil DeGrasse Tyson and Ben Carson are two men I have been pleasantly surprised to have emerged in this post-Ebony media world of black men in the public eye. And I have paid a lot of attention to that world. There is certainly plenty enough elbow room for guys like me to make our way through America - it's not as if people fall over faint when they see me fly first class. A black man *can* have a suitcase (if you can remember that Eddie Murphy joke). But beyond mere token representation there is a certain responsibility we all bear for letting the airwaves get increasingly polluted by ever more lax standards of comportment and content. I for one specifically lament the death of Oakland's Bob Maynard. By God they still make men like him, but I don't see them broadcast anywhere. While I must confess that I don't watch or listen much and my consolation comes from reading, I do feel a twinge when I do look and know that we all could do much better. One of my idols growing up was Charles Ogletree as he moderated the debates put on by Fred Friendly. Likewise, I took great joy listening to William F. Buckley and most recently Christopher Hitchens, all now departed. I cannot be so sure that I am not romanticizing the past, but neither can I be so sure that I am not underestimating the relative deprivation of the present. Dare I say, the depravity of the present?

Michel Martin's show and the feature with which I was associated were small things. I've been told that you never know how your writing might affect someone, and while radio isn't writing and what can fit into a half hour might not be much, it can be a mighty spark. If we are unable or unwilling to light such hot sparks, are we not submitting to darkness? Looks like this is the end, but don't miss our next underdog show. Ahh but where will it be? Where will it be? Heaven forbid public radio loses money. There's always YouTube.

Some days I think about Mike Royko and Andy Rooney. I wonder if I'm as good a writer as they were. I also know that I probably could not be persuaded to jump through the old school hardships they must have put up with in their careers. After all, I studied computer science, not journalism. But as Ishmael Reed said "Writin' is fightin'", and I'm still a writer and I still want to win. Yet I can't help but feel, as I'm sure my colleagues feel, that we're fighting a losing battle when we are coming up empty when it comes to men of a certain persuasion and birth getting a word in edgewise that's not played for a laugh. All due respect but I don't like being less famous than Nipsey Russell, because that's not how I want my country to be represented. Those broadcasts do go out into space, you know. And maybe I'm not as funny as Andy or Mike, but everything is not a joke, and sometimes people who actually think with some diligence and interesting perspectives are required to sound off, not just the professional talking heads who have figured out how to party with the right producers.

What do I know? I'm digital. I think what Amazon's Jeff Bezos is saying makes sense, embroiled as he is with the oligopoly that is Big Publishing. And maybe on the other end of this media madhouse we will find a way to properly fund that which is fit and proper to distribute for the intellectual and ethical betterment of all who can see, hear and read. Maybe that will take a revolution of sorts. I've written literally thousands of essays here on this blog, and I'm still getting better all the time. I'm still growing up. Is there any room for grownups? Anyone?

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October 18, 2012

Obligatory Seriousness on Boy Scouts & Pedophilia

Youth Protection - Welcome to Youth Protection



The worst thing about the Boy Scouts is that they're awfully serious about their programs. And if you are a traveling consultant like I am, there is no amount of assuaging you can do which is up the level of guilt you must bear by half-doing it. You can't just let your kid be a Scout. They pull you in. Nevertheless, I wanted to participate a bit, got certified in Youth Protection, and helped out with my local troop.

Boy Scout Youth Protection certification is onerous. I will say that without question it is more difficult than traffic school which I've done twice. About 40% of the matters and situations you study are somewhat reasonable common sense. The rest gives you an indication of how little, in our everyday lives, we think about the implications of being around child molesters. I can tell you that's what the Scouts are today and have been since I've been involved for about 7 years as a parent.

Clay Shirky snarked a remark today that rubbed me all backwards. But who am I to take tweets seriously? But the upshot of his remark was that one can expect that pedophiles can get away with more in organizations that are homophobic. My retort was that it is amazing how much slander you can get into one tweet. So obviously I take issue with the charge of homophobia. I also disagree with the counter-intuitive argument. But most of all I resent the attitude.

There's not much I can do about my resentment towards anyone's attitude. It unnerves me when intelligent people who are otherwise deserving of respectful consideration have their mental and ethical transmissions pop into neutral and drift into oncoming traffic. So I'm unnerved; I'll get over it.

What to think about the Scouts? Well, an accusation of homophobia is like an accusation of racism. How much is six pounds of homophobia? That's a matter for you and your neighbors to discuss. Despite the fact that we are chockablock with meddlesome people whose mental wellbeing seems to cry out for their every social desire to be legislated, we still haven't turned over the country to such fashion police. I can't say that I'm sanguine about the longer term prospects, but at least we know political correctness when we hear it. Is New Hampshire more homophobic than South Dakota? If you had to scratch your head more than you might about Michigan vs Mississippi then there might be hope for your objectivity yet. That doesn't change the fact that we're already aware of the stereotypes which affect our judgment. My point here is that people generally live in communities where their social expectations are in the median. So if six pounds is enough to cause you outrage, chances are that your neighbors are outraged too. But what does your outrage matter on the national stage?

That should be a matter of objective measurement.

So I would like to know, as a matter of objective measurement, what can be inferred by the number of pedophiles in the general population and their rate of apprehension, vs that in Scouting. I quite clearly recall that when the matter was dealt with in the Catholic Church that the numbers told the tale that the organization fared better in identifying the perpetrators. After which all of the noise became moot, despite the controversy.

I must say in this and in many matters that I have the advantage of indifference which is quite apart from disinterest. I have a Randian distaste for disinterest. I never say it doesn't matter one way or another. It does. But from my point of view, I'd much prefer that we seek an objective standard. Let it be six pounds without question, how you react is your business.

I've twice taken the USADA to task (up to a point of indifference) for what I perceive to be a radical standard of evidence in its dogged pursuit of Lance Armstrong. Considering the amount of power they seem to hold over such matters of the fate of cyclists who break the rules of that sport - to me they seem as much as a civil court - they certainly don't operate in ways that would be acceptable in an actual court of law. The same can be said about the Boy Scouts. The amount of scrutiny we give adults around Scouts at our events is Orwellian. OK let's say six pounds of Big Brother. The fact of the matter is, that it is a clear violation of Scout policy for there to be less than two adults present at any pickup or dropoff point, for example. If an event is over and a parent is late, and there's just one kid left, there had better be two adults present. Think about your kids and how you pick them up and drop them off for school or over a friend's house. I'm sure most families are not up to the Scouting standard, one that is necessary in light of what we know about child predators. I've seen the grated nerves of Scout leaders, personally.

What little I've heard about the news on NPR this evening which might be behind Shirky's reasoning is that the Scouting standard has been responsible for booting suspected gay leaders and suspected pedophiles with a ridiculously tendentious evidentiary standard. Yes, well that's the problem with zero tolerance. We all have that same problem. It is the same problem as zero tolerance of homophobia. The good news is that the Boy Scouts recognize the ambit of their influence and don't go trawling for other people's misdeeds under some inflammatory non-standard. The bad news is others do and so we get unnerved. We'll get over it. The Boy Scouts have defined their six pound weight limits, and you don't get to be a Boy Scout in any way unless you are certified against that standard.

Of course that wasn't always the case. To get fired from the Boy Scouts of America as a suspect of pedophilia is a rather serious indictment and the process is well understood in the here and now. I don't know which other organizations might have publicly disclosed their history, rules and actions to a similar degree aside from the Catholic diocese of various major cities in the US. The stories in the news that I read today gave their egregious examples from the 70s - you remember the 70s don't you? Some standards of those days wouldn't fly today, for that there's no doubt or controversy. But today's Boy Scouts are a strong and proud organization which I defend against flippant charges.

Yes, they are ahead of the law, and when it comes to pedophilia, I think that's a good thing, and so do the people in my neighborhood.

Associated Stuff:

- [Rude Questions About the Catholic Priesthood](#)
- [The Depravity Scale](#)

October 18, 2012 in [Cobb Says, Keeping It Right](#), [Local Deeds](#), [Obligatory Seriousness](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(7\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

January 10, 2012

Utah RepublicanMia Love. Surprised? You shouldn't be.

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September 08, 2011

Key FaithJames Key:

Still, even though the demands of war have put a strain on many families, our troops continue to pull from the same side of the rope as one cohesive body. When Hurricane Irene recently threatened the East Coast, including Washington, D.C., the sentinels at Arlington cemetery's Tomb of the Unknowns refused to leave their posts. Their willingness to look beyond personal comfort for the greater good is something from which we all can learn.

As the U.S. works her way out of today's economic turmoil, our nation's leaders and the public should follow the lead of our men and women in uniform: Attack this challenge head-on, but as one. The unified spirit in the aftermath of 9/11 could guide us through the troubled waters we're navigating today.

Jim and I are frat. He and my brother went to middle school together. He has always been one of the most destiny bound men I have known, never questioning his duty to do good. It's good to know he's out there, fighting the good fight.

September 08, 2011 in [Keeping It Right](#), [Local Deeds](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(5\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#).
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May 10, 2011

Gary May

Congratulations go to Gary May who has just been named Dean of the College of Engineering at Georgia Tech.

Gary and I go way back to undergrad days in the mid 80s. He was NSBE chair one of the years that I was on the National Board. I always knew that he was destined for something like this. Well I've known for about 6 or 7 years. It has been a while since we hung out and it was about 5 years ago when I had a barbecue over at his place. He's an incredibly level-headed guy and methodical as all get-out. What always struck me about Gary was his sense of humility and dedication to the cause. It was a cause he understood, because he always put in the work, the cause of getting people through their studies. You see Gary was the straight A student who never made a big deal about his brains. It seems like it just never occurred to him that he might be something special or entitled to take advantage. He impressed me as somebody who just had a good discipline and ability to get through the maze and he wanted others to do the same.

Obviously he has learned to play politics, and that is his greater and deeper strength, because he is eminently trustworthy, showing no signs of weakness to temptation, but knowing how to work the back end of everything. I can't say that I necessarily like the way he operates. Me, I guess I'm a sucker for someone who confesses an ulterior motive over bourbon, but you'd never get that kind of banter out of Gary. Or Dr. May as I gather he is called now.

I offer my heartiest congratulations. The good guy won. You won't believe where he will be in 10 years.

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December 01, 2010

GWB: Up Close & Personal

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May 25, 2012

Chris Bowen: First Trumpet



Chris Bowen - Senior Recognition - Wind Ensembler 2012

from [Michael David Cobb Bowen](#)

02:12 |

May 25, 2012 in [Cobb's Diary](#), [Keeping It Right](#), [Music](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(3\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

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March 27, 2012

Today's Blackification



Trayvon Martin is a punctuation mark in the book of life. A comma, or perhaps a semicolon. His erasure upsets grammarians, and a bad sentence is a bad sentence, but I'm reading above syntax.

In fact, for blackification purposes, one might be curious to know that one such as myself is not particularly influenced by the fate of random black teenagers in random southern towns. So I swear to you this moment that I don't know the name of the any of the Jena Six and cannot recall the name of Shaquanda Cotton's Texas town. It was Texas, wasn't it? Such snuffed candles do not light my path through history with all due respect to John Donne.

However there are some blackfolks I've been considering of late whose fate seems lost to the hoodie class and their fetish defenders. As I might have mentioned, I'm spending more time thinking about aerospace, rocket science and the long now. A couple weeks ago I bought a 5 disc boxed set of video covering NASA starting with Friendship 7. I recall actually meeting several black astronauts when I was in college when such matters were important to me. But just to remind you where I'm coming from with regard to blackfolks... When I was a freshman, I went to the library and grabbed a copy of Who's Who

Among Black Americans. There were something on the order of 35,000 entries in that book. I basically swore that day that my social involvement was done - if the only black people I met were people from that book, I would be perfectly happy. After all, I did have to get married one day. So I did in fact meet Guy Bluford, Ron McNair and Mae Jemison. And then that was done.

Several others are at Wikipedia which is of course doing a better job of putting such things in front of the public than any of the so-called black leaders. There are 14 who have been in space, 11 more than once. But on any day at any college campus, you'll probably find more professors who can sing the lyrics to Gil Scott Heron's "Whitey on the Moon" than name five black astronauts. Hell, I know the lyrics to Whitey on the Moon and I still haven't memorized the names. But my priorities are straight.

I'm secondarily impressed with the progress of my own family. My son has been accepted into the business program of Cal State Fullerton, which was legendarily run by a woman by the name of Jewel Plummer Cobb. No relation but her biography is no joke. Look it up one day. She too was about the hard sciences. We'll see about Boy, he's recently attracted to economics and Freakonomics in particular. The Scholar is insisting on taking challenging courses for her senior year as she bucks up her already nice GPA, and the Sprite is breaking her own records in track. She's a sprinter, hurdler and long jumper.

But I've come to meet another branch of the family that goes back to the old days in New Haven, who have been doing quite well for themselves for quite some time. I'll call him Uncle Mack because what I've come to know about him leaves me with little doubt that somewhere in one of his many closets is a full length mink coat. Uncle Mack lives one of the most exclusive suburbs in New Jersey in a castle of his own design. So far as I can tell those ceilings are 20 feet above ground and there's at least 6,000 square feet on the first floor. Uncle Mack wears French cuffs at home and reminisces about the days when Atlantic City was newly revitalized and high rollers actually tucked in their shirts. I brought up the Tyson Spinks fight on my iPad.

There used to be a club on Amsterdam Avenue that was all that when I lived in NY. I met Mike Tyson there and found I was a half inch taller. When you go back to those days, when Eddie Murphy filmed 'Boomerang', there wasn't a black American living who didn't have some metaphor of black power that didn't include Mike Tyson. He was the unstoppable force and the inevitable symbol. Uncle Mack loved to see him fight in Vegas and Atlantic City and had good seats, but not as good as some Jamaican drug dealers. There's always a bigger fish, but not always a better flavor. Uncle Mack has done better with his wealth than Iron Mike.

Finally, I've been considering the possibility that Condi Rice might find herself on Romney's short list for Veep. Either way, I listened to an hour long interview through the Hoover Institute and found how easily she grasps the motions of the geopolitical world. She is one of the great women of our time, who stepped up and made her mark. She has returned with passion to Stanford and is certainly the only living Secretary of State who bothers to teach undergraduates. I'd say the future is bright.

I know why it is difficult for some black Americans to keep their eyes on any prize worth having. They have been distracted by those in control of short attention span theatre, who are by definition not interested in knowledge. But I have plenty of confidence that human nature triumphs and that people will unplug from nonsense when the time is right. I'm not on a mission any longer to prove something or even exemplify something about a proper blackness. Like Popeye, I yam what I yam. I am a writer, and this is what I'm thinking about black America today.

Oh yeah, and I hear Tiger had a good game, and I realized that Ron Artest lives in my neighborhood, and I'm feeling Lewis Hamilton not being happy with 3rd place.

March 27, 2012 in [Brain Spew](#), [Cobb's Diary](#), [Keeping It Right](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(24\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

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August 07, 2010

Uncle Clyde

[R.I.P. Clyde Kerr, Jr.](#)



One of the most influential music teachers in New Orleans history passed away yesterday. Like his father before him, Clyde Kerr, Jr. taught several generations of students both the mechanics of music and the spirit behind it. Social networking sites have been buzzing with tributes to the man since word of his death began circulating.

Kerr, Jr. was a trumpet player who had a beautiful tone. He released his first and only album, *This is Now!*, last year. As an instructor at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts his influence goes back at least thirty years when he taught Wynton and Branford Marsalis. In recent years, he counted Troy “Trombone Shorty” Andrews and Christian Scott among his hundreds of students.

Kerr, Jr. grew up in the Tremé neighborhood and his childhood home was like a music school. His father taught a who’s who of an earlier generation of musicians including the great maestro Wardell Quezergue and the saxophonist Alvin “Red” Tyler. Funeral arrangements are incomplete at this time. (photo by Michael DeMocker)

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June 26, 2010

Allen West

[Exactly what I expected.](#)



Lieutenant Colonel Allen West (US Army, Retired) was born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia and is third of four generations of military servicemen in his family. His parents instilled in him a very basic principle, love of God and Country. In 2004, when it was time to retire from more than twenty years of service in the US Army, he brought his wife and two young daughters to Broward County, Florida, where he taught high school for one year. He then returned to Afghanistan as an advisor to the Afghan army, an assignment he finished in November 2007.

Allen West received his Bachelors degree from University of Tennessee and Masters degree from Kansas State University, both in political science. He also holds a Master of Military Arts and Sciences from the US Army Command and General Staff Officer College in political theory and military operations.

“Education is the great equalizer,” he says. “With a good education, any child in America can live his dream.”

Allen West knows that for our children to live their dreams, they need to be safe. He has served in several combat zones: in Operation Desert Storm, in Operation Iraqi Freedom, where he was battalion commander for the Army’s 4th Infantry Division, and in Afghanistan, where he trained Afghan officers to take on the responsibility of securing their own country.

In his Army career, Col. West has been honored many times, including a Bronze Star, three Meritorious Service Medals, three Army Commendation Medals (one with Valor), and a Valorous Unit Award. He received his valor award as a Captain in Desert Shield/Storm, was the US Army ROTC Instructor of the Year in 1993, and was a Distinguished Honor Graduate III Corps Assault School. He proudly wears the Army Master parachutist badge, Air Assault badge, Navy/Marine Corps parachutist insignia, Italian parachutist wings, and German proficiency badge (Bronze award).

Allen is an avid distance runner, a PADI Master certified SCUBA diver, motorcyclist, and attends Community Christian Church in Tamarac Florida.

Excellence is a West family tradition. His wife, Angela, holds an MBA and PhD. and works as a financial planner. His oldest daughter, Aubrey, attends Archbishop McCarthy HS and his youngest daughter, Austen, attends Parkway Christian School.

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February 07, 2010

The Kinsey Collection: First Thoughts

Bernard Kinsey is one of the most influential men I know. He had been a special inspiration to me as I started my career at Xerox. He and the late Dr. Guy Dobbs were the men I thought I would be - when the arc of my ambition was to be on the management team at Xerox. So when I heard his name mentioned in association with an art collection here in Los Angeles, I had to take the invitation. I got way more than I bargained for.

It turns out that Kinsey and his wife Shirley have been collecting some of the [premier artifacts of African American history](#). I'm not just talking about your standard knick knackery, but extraordinarily rare and precious documents. Among the many precious items he has is the original signed decision of the US Supreme Court for the Brown vs Board of Education case. Yes, it's that deep.

The evening's events took place over in my old neighborhood at the Ebony Rep. I didn't know about the [Ebony Rep](#) so much as I did the Ebony Showcase Theatre. It has been a long time and the space has come a very long way. This is a first rate stage in a beautiful building. Even the portrait of Nate Holden, an old pol of extreme repute, looks extra fine and distinguished.

I had no idea what to expect. I thought I was buying tickets to an exhibit; instead I was treated to 90 minute seminar on black history tidbits of delectable and fine provenance. Kinsey, an ex-executive rattles off history in a phrasing that is altogether new and rare. He plays it like Joe Friday - just the facts without interrupting them with the inspirational implications. He has taken the material which has heretofore served as chitlin circuit fodder of Hoteps exploiting black undergraduate club money to a new level of accuracy and responsibility. Does he have an artifact from the slave castle? Hell yes he does. Does he dwell on the emotional impact of it like Whitney and Bobby? Hell no he does not. Kinsey comes correct with an agenda of obsessive love, which is just what you expect from a philanthropic collector. He is not just a dry presenter. Far from it, but he handles the narrative surrounding the meaning of these historical artifacts with the proper respect and responsibility, the right mix of scholarship and passion. He does so without commanding us or insulting our intelligence, and as usually the case for presenters in public buildings on video, he never has enough time.

Kinsey, a classic salesman, tells you what he's going to tell you, tells you, and tells you what he told you. He operates on two basic principles and has a couple ethical rules. It is this framework that channels the same passion he shares with less disciplined and more emotional and racially chauvinistic presenters of similar material. The rules for life are "From whom much is given much is expected", and "Live a life of no regrets". In their presentations they will not call Africans 'slaves' but always say that they were 'enslaved'. Secondly, they always refer to these historical Africans as brothers and sisters. He summarizes his love and solidarity with his brothers and sisters in the present and the past through the parable of the eagle who thought he was a chicken. For Kinsey, the greatest failure is the wasting of time and consequent missing of opportunity.

These driving forces impel the Kinseys to be collectors of evidence and artifacts of stupendous firsts whose existence defy the chickenheaded stereotypes of black underachievement. Kinsey desires to animate the understanding with verbs and emphasize the animism of history. He clearly engages his subjects on many levels and wants his audience to as well. Now he has made the mark in his years of collecting which signifies him as a world class contributor - his collection is going to be featured at the Smithsonian in October of this year.

In 1987, when I was still working at Xerox and engaged in discussions on its black oriented email distribution, one of the constant conflicts I had was with what I perceived to be the limited scope of recognition of black achievement. It was part and parcel of my gripe with the Talented Tenth and it boiled down to a frustration with the narrow set of heroes and role models highlighted for emulation, past and present. The breadth of the Kinsey Collection is satisfying to me as it covers not only those we know, but many others we never heard of or exist vaguely on the borders of our memory. James Forten was presented by Kinsey as a great businessman - whose sailmaking business was the envy of Philadelphia. His funeral was second in size only to that of Benjamin Franklin. Kinsey also reveals the parentage of Benjamin Bannaker. He tells the story of a white woman who purchased the freedom of two black men and married one of them. Her daughter did the same; purchased two black men, married one and that daughter was the mother of Benjamin Bannaker.

There are all sorts of narratives that are supported by the facts of African American history. I'm most interested in that of institution building and institutional failure. For the singular pressing fact of this thread of history to me is how all of these outstanding individuals came to naught. We know of Henry Ossawa Tanner, but where is the Tanner legacy today? If we didn't go to this particular event on this particular night, what would we know of it? After all, the correct premise is that this material is something that isn't taught in schools. It is my judgment that America has failed to take up the lessons of their triumph or that somehow their families crumbled. It is a long-standing bias for me, one whose value I am unsure about. In the context of Black History Month, we are inevitably compared to other ethnics and told there is something we must do that we haven't. Kinsey remarks about the 3 billion dollar cotton industry that was, before the Civil War, 55% of the American GDP. And it was through this wealth that great fortunes, including that of the Lehman Brothers, were begun. Where are the black Lehman Brothers, and where is our old boy network? When Reconstruction placed hundreds of blacks into positions of political power, was their intent to endow us with the NBA? No, of course not. Then why is it that is what we have rather than their legacy? The link was somehow lost, broken, stolen, forgotten. I don't know exactly how to feel about this when I give it any thought. Mostly I accept that within African America we have yet to aggregate to a significant Dosh point. We are insecure in our institutions and too much a part of the public. I often wonder if it could be any other way and I don't know the answer, but I think some part of that answer is in Kinsey's mind.

The California Afro American Museum is famously endowed by the State of California, a state whose bonds are rated slightly above junk and are ever on the edge of default. I can remember writing under the influence of Thomas Sowell about how such an overwhelmingly non-private institution could come to naught. I was there the day Mike Woo and Maxine Waters cut the ribbon to the shiny new place thinking that it was all an Affirmative Action supporting a good idea but with other people's money. In that way I couldn't be proud enough and still await that thing I call Aggregation. Or perhaps I simply don't appreciate quite properly that which already exists. But the fact remains that the Kinseys stand alone, and their collection hasn't yet got a permanent home outside of their basement.

I had my 30 seconds with the man last evening at the premier and asked if there is a university sponsor; an unfair question perhaps. I stand to inherit my father's library, and though my ambition has flagged of late, I have always wanted to do what Kinsey has done. But he has the money and I don't. Somebody has the money that Kinsey doesn't and so where might his treasures fall if he should fail? Surely everyone in the house last night would desire to carry on in their bosom this preservation of African American history, whatever the narrative, but who has the Dosh?

Black Hollywood was much in attendance last evening and as I cruised the room I got the distinct feeling that there were a lot more people in that crowd that I should know. It took me quite a while to put the name with a face I instantly recognized - oh yeah finally it was Bill Duke. I stopped a moment to show an old picture to Ron Karenga - he remembered my father. Kevin Ross, of course was in attendance and proving, once again that he is the man to know in this town. A number of other luminaries I won't bother to namedrop were there as well. One in particular, with whom I am especially fond is also part of Kinsey's project. That is Dennis Haysbert. He, along with Angela Bassett are part of the voice talent who narrate the audio tour of the Kinsey Collection.

So there is success in the rush of blood to the heads of many black Americans who breathe deeply this vein of American history and achievement. For the sake of its own preservation, it is my opinion that private hands are best, and we all might hope that the letters of Zora Neal Hurston and the original copy of Equiano's Slave Narrative stay in the properly directed care that the Kinseys would have for it. That would take the sort of money I would be overjoyed to supply if I had my way in this world - that is the sort of Aggregation and old money responsibility that warms my belly to just beneath the point of fire. We all are worthy heirs, but only few of us are worthy curators, of these historical artifacts and their narrative.

We are all familiar with the phrase 'it's a big country'. Kinsey's breadth and depth remind us that it's a big race too. We 40 millions are a big people, a lot bigger than we often get credit for being. But there are only a small number who keep that in mind at all times by being faithful stewards of what has transpired in our sojourns in and out of freedom. It is easy to forget, fixed as our attentions can get on the loud and often debased here and now. Kinseys have taken their share and pulled from every corner of the world and our great nation that which binds us to 500 years of unique triumphs and failures in the cause of our own and everyone's dedication to liberty. The future depends upon our ability to maintain it piece by precious piece.

Yes Bernard and Shirley Kinsey, we follow you. God willing we will find a continuing and permanent home for these great reminders of our humanity and the never ending struggle to maintain liberty and justice for all.

February 07, 2010 in [Art, History, Keeping It Right](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(3\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Tags: [bernard kinsey](#), [shirley kinsey](#)

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January 17, 2010

Starting Today

Starting today, I'm going to take on some of my heroes to determine if they merit my attention. And the first I'm going to deal with is **Stanley Crouch**. Now Crouch is not an active hero. He is one of memory. He wrote [Notes of a Hanging Judge](#) and I couldn't wait to get my hands on it. That was almost 20 years ago and now I have an opus that's big enough to compile a similar work - except that I'm working in a different medium.

I have recently been challenged to be more productive with my writing talent, and I am indeed working part-part time on a couple of works. One is an autobiography called 'Up from Freedom' and one is something of an instruction manual on being a proper American. There are others, but both of these relate to Crouch.

You see if you asked me the black American men I would like to be most associated with, by dint of the reputations they have attained in public (not that I know them to be true or not) they would be the cultural conservatives Marsalis, Crouch and Murray. I see them as representing the Old School on the cultural side, whereas I am doing a new bit of exposition on the political side.

Now there's some aspect of political populism that I cannot stand and from what I'm seeing of Crouch's latest hip shots at the GOP it appears to me that he's not engaging anybody but barrellfish. It's his column, and it's possible that I misread him. But I'm going to try to understand this man well enough to build him up or take him down. Or maybe find that he's not worth the effort, or perhaps that I'm not up to the task. Either way, his triumvirate is where I'm aiming, and I'm trying to see how it is that they might be so blind to what political Conservatism is even as they fight to preserve the best of African American literature and music.

My gut tells me that they, like so many other New Yorkers, are assuming that the Black Swans are going to come to them, and that because none have been provided, they don't exist. The Black Swan in this case would be me, and others like me in the Conservative Brotherhood who are a little bit smarter than the average wingnut television news junkie.

I'm not trying to move the crowd. I'm trying to preserve what's right. And when Crouch suggests that the American Right is wrong on principle because of what some of their loudmouth propagandists say, I wonder if he realizes the blackness of his kettle.

I'm raising the profile of the conservative Brotherhood. That needs to be done, with some commercial animus. So I'm noodling on that because I think I have to be the man to do it, my way. There are others whose independence I would not attempt to co-opt as a 'black thang'. So I say more power to the Hiphop Republicans and the John Langston Forum, Project 21 and all the rest of the crowds. But there is a level of discourse that needs to be maintained and addressed - even though I'd rather be playing volleyball. I am cutting way back on my gaming, so there is more time for me.

Oh yeah and I'm turning comments back on. 2010 is ON.

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June 09, 2009

Lee Archer Once Again for D-Day

Lee has always been a hero. This may be the last time we see him on TV.

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June 08, 2009

Ivan Van Sertima: Dead

There is a small crowd of intellectuals in my head who are likely to pass from the scene unnoticed except for some devolved minsunderstanding of the nuance of their complaint. In a world of baller bands signalling logo-wise the exhortation of the famous cyclist to LIVESTRONG how can the work of Ivan Van Sertima compete? I don't think it ever will. But it's difficult for me to say that's categorically a bad thing.

Van Sertima was, of course, the biggest of the touring intellectuals on the old black nationalist college tour. He, the author of, *They Came Before Columbus* and various other lesser known revisionist histories, was the benchmark against which many undergraduates measured their black consciousness. "We came to America not as slaves but as masters." Gets towards the meat of his oeuvre which was to give black self doubt some authentic scholarly research in support of ideas that prove that Africans were not all the retards of White Supremacist myth.

Van Sertima unlike many who followed him was significantly dignified and coherent. He occupied the middle realm of black existential coaches. Very few people followed his career path as an historian and anthropologist which demonstrates the great irony of his appeal. Yet almost all of us recall his gift of the recognition of the Olmec head. It's African. Or more to the qualified point it is African enough. Because whether or not you buy into Van Sertima's scholarship, you cannot deny that he was the right man at the right time in the development of black social capital. Before him, you might find men such as John Hope Franklin, C. Eric Lincoln and C. L. R. James. People vaguely recognized by our generation as living and having something scholarly to do with the me-centrism of blackness, but not up close and personal - not in our faces or our media. They wrote those big old books that nobody ever made us read, learn and get tested on. Following Van Sertima was a class of Afrocentrists who continued the soul-lifting exhortations of African greatness, but didn't really bother to write large, deep or often. The likes of Jawanza Kunjufu, LeGrand Clegg and Frances Cress Welsing were greatly derivative of the respect built up by their antecedents.

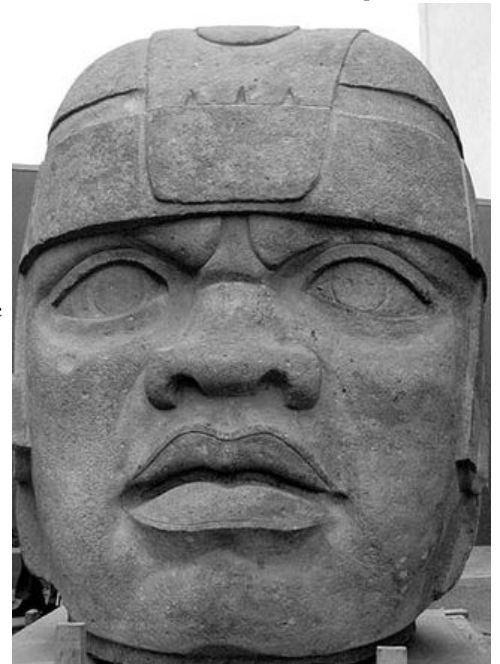
Of the lot of these public intellectuals, I preferred Naim Akbar the most. He, unlike the others, was a trained psychologist and dealt with the disorders of black existential dilemmas directly. He needed no racial conspiracy theories, no confrontation with academic power structures or dichotomies of sun people and cave people to deal confidently with those whose need to spend student body money brought them to campus after campus during the 80s and 90s.

Van Sertima was therefore, right in the middle of our more radical roots, bringing forth a controversial subject with academic credibility on a matter of import that is no longer important. He raised more eyebrows than he raised the race, but was just quite enough Sidney Poitier not to get dismissed. In retrospect, I suppose that it was important that we saw him speak in his unidentifiably sophisticated accent and saw him not get assassinated. He proved that a black man could be scholarly, move around America at will and not be destroyed by anything other than lack of market share. He figured largely in the the weave of the black politics that was, or what I'm now calling the collection of sentiments that was our political attitude. You will hear this echoed in all mentions of him.

The legacy of Van Sertima is certainly lost. There will be, in our future economies, no sophisticated analysis of the content of African influence in the cultures of the Americas and no need for it. All will be urban, suburban, exurban and indigenous, with the indigenous end rounding down to ever smaller fractions. How ancient cultures came to be will not figure large in their wills to power. In America, the authenticity of race and ethnicity have been deboned by actions of affirmation. Neither La Raza nor the Afrocentrics can withstand the symbolic power of their magical exemplars. All that remains of racially charged and overfreighted anthropology is... well anthropology.

This may be bemoaned by those who studied the academic war between Bernal and Lefkowitz, but only a few of us remember that. And surely there are several handfuls of tenured black academics who remain to crank that old wheel. But I think an honest assessment of the passing of Van Sertima will close the door on the black consciousness chapter of political revisionist history.

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February 21, 2009

A Reminder of Who We Are



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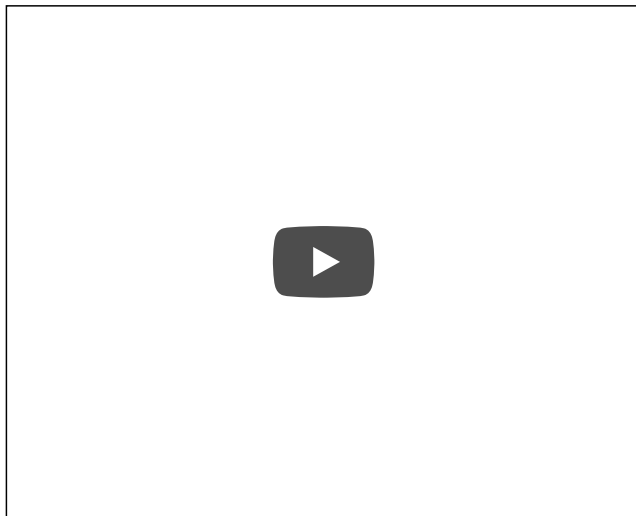
October 06, 2008

USNS Carl Brashear

It's not a sin to get knocked down; it's a sin to stay down.

-- Carl M. Brashear

Many of us are familiar with the film Men of Honor starring Cuba Gooding Jr. Well it turns out that the real-life hero of that film, [Carl M. Brashear](#) has become more than an icon in film, but that a ship has been named after him and was launched a few weeks ago in San Diego.



Brashear himself was an extraordinary man with a highly distinguished career in the Navy. He was awarded plenty of honors as the [Naval History website shows](#). But having a ship named after him is, by my reckoning the coolest. I don't know if there are other Navy ships named after African Americans, but I suspect that there might be another considering that I didn't read anything about the Brashear that indicated that it was the first. The USNS Carl Brashear is a 210 meter Lewis and Clark class cargo ship. Others of this sort have been named after other great explorers like Peary, Earhart and Alan Shepard. Fine company indeed.

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March 08, 2008

Charles Phillips

Charles Phillips is President of Oracle Corporation and a member of the Board of Directors. He is responsible for global field operations including consulting, marketing, sales, alliances and channels, and customer programs, as well as corporate strategy. Prior to joining Oracle, Mr. Phillips was a Managing Director with Morgan Stanley in its technology group. Prior to his career on Wall Street, Mr. Phillips was a Captain in the United States Marine Corps. Mr. Phillips holds a BS in Computer Science from the United States Air Force Academy, an MBA from Hampton University, and a JD from New York Law School and is a member of the bar in Washington D.C. and Georgia. Mr. Phillips is on the boards of Viacom Corporation, Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York City, and New York Law School.



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February 08, 2008

Randal Simmons



The LA Daily News reports on the death of SWAT Officer Randal Simmons:

If I had a kid and he told me he wanted to be an officer, I would have told him this is someone you should aspire to be like," said LAPD Assistant Chief Jim McDonnell, who knew Simmons for 15 years.

"He was the consummate SWAT officer."

A minister, the 51-year-old Simmons was affectionately called "The Deacon" by fellow officers.

Born in San Bernardino, he worked in the LAPD for 27 years and was shot in the line of duty early in his career.

He was often seen playing basketball in the front yard of his Rancho Palos Verdes home, or jogging through the neighborhood.

"I couldn't believe it when I saw it," neighbor Mary Bobic said. "When I saw his picture, I said, 'Oh, my God!' I told my husband. He said, 'He's a good man.'"

Simmons' father was in the Air Force, and the family lived in Germany and Long Island, N.Y., for a time before relocating to Southern California, said his sister, Valjean Adams of Winona, Minn.

He graduated from Fairfax High School, Adams said, and was a standout athlete who played football at Washington State University, where there was a moment of silence for him Thursday night before the basketball game against UCLA. He had a tryout with the Dallas Cowboys, but didn't quite make it.

Helping youths

While Simmons' weekdays were consumed primarily by police work, his weekends were dedicated to helping youths in seven South Los Angeles housing projects as a minister for the Glory Christian Fellowship church in Carson.

When he wasn't doing that, he was coaching his son's football team.

[Continue reading "Randal Simmons" »](#)

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Tags: lapd, randal simmons, swat

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January 23, 2008

Janks Morton

Janks Morton made a [public service announcement](#) a year ago. It was rather cool, and in fact I made a response to that video. It turns out that Morton has made an entire film. The premise is simple. There is a war of disinformation out there in the mediasphere, and one example of it is that blackfolks believe lies about blackfolks which has undermined their ability to sustain healthy relationships, and most importantly, marriage. Far too many have bought into a simple lie and that demonstrates their vulnerability to a host of stereotypes. Yet another generation is deaf to the sound of the drum. Janks Morton bangs out a rhythm of truth in his independent film 'What Black Men Think'. Nice going.

Going behind the scenes in [an interview with Brian Lamb](#), you get to see a couple extraordinary things. Firstly, Morton demonstrates that a little bit of initiative can go a long way. He was simply inspired to do the right thing and address a complicated question head on. He has done so in a way that shames big media and all of their attempts to deal with issue of interest to African Americans. He was able to take a simple misrepresentation of fact, discover how that myth was promulgated through society, and demonstrate how thoroughly brainwashed so many Americans are.

Secondly, as a filmmaker you're tempted to say that he's the rebirth of Michael Moore, except that he's an order of magnitude more intelligent and one eighth as shameless. By using the power of technologies once only available to pros, he has put together an excellent piece of work single-handedly. He shot a very sweet rip of Morpheus, and of course he was smart enough not to say anything like that, just to set up the red pill of an investigation he was ready to throw down.

Morton strikes me as a guy from my generation who just simply knows too much to stay shut up. He did the math and couldn't let the myth stand. If you're like me, you wonder how it is that we manage in this society of ours to pay millions to Heath Ledger and not get much to a man with a simple question who has a simple answer. **Are there more black men in jail or in college?** It may not take much to answer that question, but at least the answer takes us somewhere away from dangerous fictions. What good does it do our society to ask if Batman can beat The Joker and provide that answer? Spending on mindless fictions and sustaining dangerous fictions undermines the social contract. We all pay sooner or later.

James Burke says that we are perhaps on the very brink of a revolution of knowing. He has an XRepublic-ish linking factotum [he speaks about to Dan Carlin](#). When enough of these are built, we will come to discover what Burke already knows: our system of education is truly outdated, and extraordinarily inefficient way of getting the

billions of minds in our world working with the right set of ideas and facts. It will start with texts and audio and video, and some of us 'amateurs' are going to be stars for asking the right questions and giving memorable, reasonable answers. Janks Morton is one of those stars.

As for the controversy itself, I'm somewhat addressed to it and somewhat beyond it. It is a horrible shame that so many African Americans are not proponents of strong black families. On the other hand, I'm just as likely to buy more Wynton and not give a rat's about who's buying Tupac, if you catch my drift. I'm not sure which is best. Saving the 'black' race from itself is a matter of soul conservation, but I cannot assume that what I'm doing and where I'm doing it is inaccessible and beyond 'their' consideration. I just have to keep writing that which compels me. Begging the question of whether black families are coming apart also begs the question of exactly whom is susceptible to statistical morality BS game that Janks deconstructs. If you will believe the hype, how long should I cry about your ignorance?

But perhaps what Carlin said in another podcast is the right way to go about thinking, and that ties us in with Nulan. Carlin asks with his liberal brain, who is looking out for the losers? How many losers can our society sustain until they drag us all down too? Put economically, if we do fine with 8% unemployment OK, but what happens when it gets to 16%?, 24%? Sooner or later the whole economy crashes. When African Americans are born 70% without two parent households, some tipping point for the entire nation is imminent. I know it sounds callous to put it in national terms, where is the black love? But black love is already in survival mode. We're already fighting the orientation that challenges the premise of married families. What am I talking about? We're already past the national tipping point. We're already thinking of a National Defense of Marriage Amendment. We're already fighting the Unmarriage Revolution. Sometimes I forget.

This ties us in with Nulan because he's sniffing the air for moments and inflections that signal the collapse of Western Civ, and now that I'm getting more world historical and less political, I'm inclined to hear more of that out, especially given my focus on Plato and other ancient history this month.

Anyway, Janks was over at Booker Rising today and I'm going to add his blog to the roll. He's clear, he's present and he's dangerous to ignorance. I'm on board for sustaining the dialog, of course, and it's always good to welcome another mind into the meld.

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Tags: janks morton, what black men think

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January 18, 2008

Kevin Brooks

There are moments in my life when I go off on tangents and let my mind wander. I'm in one such moment now. Interestingly, at this particular moment I haven't wandered much. I got a short burst of creativity and made a half dozen comics and then I crashed back to practicality.

One of the reasons I think this way, and write this way can be attributed to a brief and friendly encounter with **Kevin Brooks** from MIT. At that particular moment in my life, circa 1993, I was deeply considering multimedia possibilities. I was a bit fed up with the poetry performance scene and looked to digitize the kinds of narratives that I found lacking in what we now call derisively the 'mainstream media'.

Kevin Brooks was all over that and I knew it within 20 minutes of meeting him:

My academic research evolved over the years into the area new media. I wanted to synthesize a dream out of fragments of memory, pieces of beliefs, sections of personal mythology and theology, and parts of me which I delight in discovering anew. It represents a period of my life during which I irreversibly changed, evolved, improved and deteriorated - all at the same time. But such is the life of a storyteller.

As an undergraduate and masters student I studied traditional linear written and cinematic narrative. The bulk of my doctoral work focused on non-linear narrative and evolved into what I eventually referred to as metalinear story systems. My major research project, entitled Agent Stories, is a story design and presentation environment for metalinear, multiple point-of-view cinematic stories. A metalinear narrative is a collection of small related story pieces designed to be arranged in many different ways, to tell many different linear stories from different points of view, with the aid of a story engine which sequences the story pieces. Thus, a metalinear story is not one story, but a collection - a community of stories designed to be recombined from different points of view. The Agent Stories research endeavored to find new ways in which computational processes can assist in the development and presentation of stories and how user input can feed into these processes. Designed for the writer interested in building stories of multi-variant cinematic payout, the Agent Stories tool promoted the structuring and rewriting of metalinear narratives before and as they are realized in video and audio. My dissertation entitled Metalinear Cinematic Narrative: Theory, Process, and Tool, was completed in May of 1999.

I wrote a paper on the project called **Do Agent Stories Use Rocking Chairs: The Theory and Implementation of One Model for Computational Narrative** ([pdf](#)). It is published in the proceedings for ACM Multimedia '96 and won best student paper.

I have applied to a gig at Google, trying at last to get my ultimate systems built by some sort of collaborative (and I may end up open sourcing some of it) and I found myself in my retrospective speaking about Kevin. I had no idea that I would mention him directly when I began recording this longish video, but he came up in the story.

Check out his site. He has an enormous amount of reference material to the uses of narrative. Very impressive.

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January 07, 2008

Andrew Olmstead

I never heard of him while he was alive, but he must have been somebody. He's done a damned fine job from beyond the grave.

As passionate as I am about personal freedom, I don't buy the claims of anarchists that humanity would be just fine without any government at all. There are too many people in the world who believe that they know best how people should live their lives, and many of them are more than willing to use force to impose those beliefs on others. A world without government simply wouldn't last very long; as soon as it was established, strongmen would immediately spring up to establish their fiefdoms. So there is a need for government to protect the people's rights. And one of the fundamental tools to do that is an army that can prevent outside agencies from imposing their rules on a society. A lot of people will protest that argument by noting that the people we are fighting in Iraq are unlikely to threaten the rights of the average American. That's certainly true; while our enemies would certainly like to wreak great levels of havoc on our society, the fact is they're not likely to succeed. But that doesn't mean there isn't still a need for an army (setting aside debates regarding whether ours is the right size at the moment). Americans are fortunate that we don't have to worry too much about people coming to try and overthrow us, but part of the reason we don't have to worry about that is because we have an army that is stopping anyone who would try.

Soldiers cannot have the option of opting out of missions because they don't agree with them: that violates the social contract. The duly-elected American government decided to go to war in Iraq. (Even if you maintain President Bush was not properly elected, Congress voted for war as well.) As a soldier, I have a duty to obey the orders of the President of the United States as long as they are Constitutional. I can no more opt out of missions I disagree with than I can ignore laws I think are improper. I do not consider it a violation of my individual rights to have gone to Iraq on orders because I raised my right hand and volunteered to join the army. Whether or not this mission was a good one, my participation in it was an affirmation of something I consider quite necessary to society. So if nothing else, I gave my life for a pretty important principle; I can (if you'll pardon the pun) live with that.

So can I.

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November 28, 2007

Ralph Dumain & The Minds of SCAA

I'm still deleting duplicates out of my Outlook contacts. I'm down to about 6800 names which is about right. Who did I stumble across this morning but [Ralph Dumain](#).

Back in the golden age of [SCAA](#), during the early 90s, there were several standout intellectuals. I've already talked about [Eugene Holman](#). But he was an island in a sea of calm compared to the tempests that Dumain would stir up. Dumain was a great fan of Ellison. He wrote:

Ellison's significance is manifold. His place in American history is on a par with that of Richard Wright; the two of them together as cultural figures punctuate 20th century American history. Ellison represents the heroic reach of black modernism, taking Wright's achievement into the realm of cultural philosophy. Wright pulled himself up from the backward environment of the rural south, threw off the smiling mask of submission, and intervened in world culture to place himself and Black America at the very center of the existential and political concerns of the twentieth century, fighting for a secular, humanistic, and rational philosophy of man and warning of the violence to come if the thrust toward freedom were not accommodated. Ellison reiterated these political and existential themes, but took Black modernism one step further. I detect three central themes in Ellison that demand recognition today more than ever. These themes would seem to work against one another but in fact are complementary: (1) the relation of self to environment and the primacy of individual responsibility over collective identification; (2) the Negro (his term) as the cultural and intellectual foundation and avant-garde of American society; (3) the multidimensional, essentially multicultural and non-stereotypical cultural being of the Negro-American.

He wrote of MLK:

Metaphysically, King's major objection to Hegel comes from the influence of Personalism. King felt that for some thinkers -- Hegel and Spinoza among them -- the individual tended to disappear into the whole.

The section "Dialectical opposition for total truth and freedom" [p. 119-128] explains the influence of Hegel on King. Most interesting is King's analysis of the dialectical interaction between repression and nonviolent resistance as the motor of progress of the movement for social justice.

With any luck, Dumain might come out and blog with us. The great minds of SCAA are missed, and the security and freedom now afforded by the blogosphere would be greatly enriched by their presence.

If you're out there, Burlinda Radney, James White, Hal Womack, Pilar Quezzaire-Belle, Ron Buckmire, Rodney Coates, John Alexander Clark, Stephanie McNeal, Rodney Jordan, Darryl Hamilton... give us a hat tip.

I still keep in touch with Charles Isbell, Kenny Crudup, Ed Brown and Lester Spence.

November 28, 2007 in [Keeping It Right](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

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September 14, 2007

Michael Bowen at Solver

My turn:

LOS ANGELES, CA—September 13, 2007—Solver, Inc., a Business Intelligence solutions provider, has announced that Michael Bowen has joined the company as Vice President of Services. Michael Bowen is a Business Intelligence (BI) industry veteran of 17 years, now working with his fourth-generation of BI tools. As a practitioner he has been responsible for the design and implementation of over 200 data marts into production in various industries.

"It's always interesting to see new technology enter the BI market. With Microsoft Office PerformancePoint Server, Microsoft has the ability to leapfrog a generation of software and bring many more customers into the previously pricey club of Performance Management. I am excited to be at the cutting edge of implementing this next-generation technology which will redefine the size and scope of the BI marketplace. Solver is at the heart of expanding this market and dedicated to excellence. This is the place to be," says Bowen.

Prior to joining Solver, Bowen's BI consulting career began at Pilot Software, and has worked at Arbor, Hyperion and his own consultancies. At Hyperion, Bowen was Americas Domain Lead for DW and BI Tools and WW Business Development Manager for eCRM Analytics. Bowen is noted as a keen observer of both business and technical trends in BI having worked C Level Sales and International Channels as well as with DW staff and product engineering groups. Prior to joining Solver as VP of Services, he was Manager of BI Best Practices at Answerthink.

"Michael's extensive background from the Business Intelligence Industry is adding significant value to the Solver organization and the overall strategy for delivering quality solutions for PerformancePoint solutions for both Monitoring and Analytics, as well as his strength from large Hyperion implementations will safeguard the quality of the way Solver will be able to deliver high quality solutions to large Fortune 3000 companies based on Microsoft's new ground breaking technologies in the Business Performance Management field," says Per Solli, Co-owner and CEO of Solver, Inc.

[Continue reading "Michael Bowen at Solver" »](#)

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Tags: bi, cpm, epm, microsoft, olap, pps

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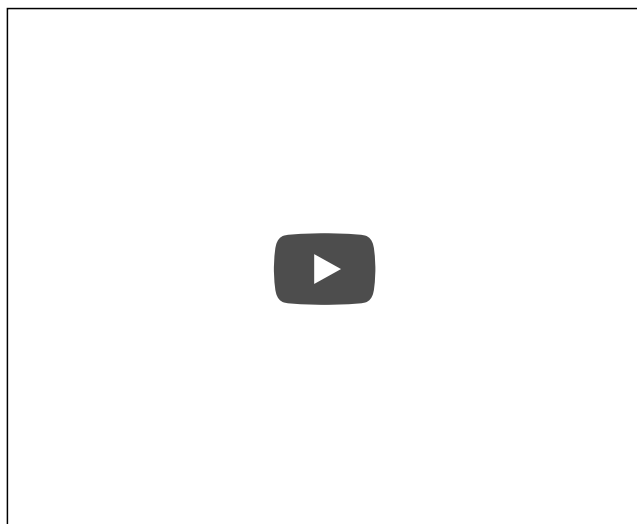
August 30, 2007

Junior (B-Boy Buana)August 30, 2007 in [Keeping It Right](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Tags: breakdance

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August 19, 2007

Stern Faces & Chiseled Chins

I just discovered this, exactly how I don't know. But something went click and I remembered that Baldilocks was talking about Devil Dog Poetry. Heh. Guess what? Same thing. Well I want to have it on my website too. Blam. I can't wait to find the transcribed lyrics.

Details: Staff Sgt Lawrence E. Dean II interviewed [here](#).August 19, 2007 in [Keeping It Right](#) | [Permalink](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Tags: lawrence e dean, marines, patriotism, poetry, spoken word

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August 16, 2007

Troy A. Stovall

Troy A. Stovall brings over 15 years of experience in the fields of telecommunications, information/communication technology, management consulting, investment management, and non-profit leadership/management. Beginning in July-2004, Mr. Stovall assumed the position of Senior Vice President, Finance & Operations for Jackson State University (JSU) in Jackson, MS. In that role, Mr. Stovall has responsibility for the finances, facilities, construction, auxiliaries, economic development and strategy implementation for a university with over 8,000 students and a budget of over \$90M. In addition, Mr. Stovall serves as Treasurer of the JSU Development Foundation and Executive Director of the JSU Educational Building Corporation (EBC). Mr. Stovall is also Managing Member and Founder of LeMaile Stovall LLC, a management consulting/advisory/interim senior management firm targeted at small/mid-size technology firms and economic development agencies looking to enhance their strategic thinking, management team, internal operations and funding sources. Prior to LeMaile Stovall, Mr. Stovall was Co-Founder and CEO of GulfSouth Capital, Inc. and Managing General Partner of GS Ventures (GSV), LLC. At GulfSouth, Mr. Stovall was responsible for overall investment and fund-raising responsibility for \$100M+ across 3 funds: GSV, Palmer Foundation (education and the arts in MS) and John N Palmer's (SkyTel Founder and Ambassador to Portugal) personal investment portfolio.

Prior to GulfSouth, Mr. Stovall was a Senior Engagement Manager at the strategy management-consulting firm, McKinsey & Co., where he served firms in the telecommunication services and equipment, computers, specialty chemicals and information technology sectors in areas of operations, organizational design, and strategy. Mr. Stovall was a leader in McKinsey's Telecom Practice where he authored well-reviewed papers on Internet commerce, ISPs and wireless data.

Mr. Stovall has also had experience at Rockwell International, AT&T Bell Labs, and Southwestern Bell Telephone Company (SWBT) in their management-training program, Advanced Management Program (AMP). He received two SWBT Key Awards for Outstanding Service in 1989 and 1991.

Mr. Stovall has held several leadership positions:

* With the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), including National Conference Planning Chair, National Finance Chair, Alumni National Treasurer, and National Advisory Board. Director for Internet America (OTC BB:GEEK.OB).

* Southern Methodist University's (SMU) School of Engineering Executive Advisory Board and SMU's Electrical Engineering Department Advisory Board, from 2000-2004 serving as its first Chairperson.

* Mr. Stovall holds a BS in Electrical Engineering cum laude ('87) from SMU, MS in Computer Science ('89) from Stanford University and an MBA ('94) from Harvard Business School.

Mr. Stovall is married to the former Sonya L Wiggins, they have two children, Zora Lauren and Langston Anthony, and a Shih Tzu named Lucky.

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Tags: jackson state, troy stovall

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August 01, 2007

Charles Belk

Charles Belk has been named to a two year term on the Board of Directors of the University of Southern California Black Alumni Association. Charged with the primary task of raising money for scholarships, Charles Belk's involvement with the BAA continues his 25 year relationship with the university dating back to his sophomore year in college when he was first selected as a Resident Advisor.



Currently, president and chief branding officer of Charles Belk Management, but undoubtedly a USC Trojan for life, Charles Belk's commitment to the university as a student included serving as president, vice president and treasurer of the USC chapter of NSBE, a Student Senator, a Trojan Knight, and as a member of the Engineering Student Council, the Black Executive Leadership Council, Blue Key, Skull & Dagger and the the Senior Development Committee. Post graduation, Charles Belk continued to be involved with USC from 3,000 miles away, as a member of the Atlanta Alumni Chapter and the South Florida Alumni Chapter; meeting with prospective and incoming students; and placing USC student in summer internships. A relocation back to southern California earlier this year allowed Charles Belk to re-establish a direct involvement with the university, most recently serving as the key note speaker at the USC School of Engineering Center for Engineering Diversity's 2007 Awards Banquet.

Only a few months back in Los Angeles, Charles Belk, an avid community volunteer, serves on the 2007 Silver Lake Film Festival Board of Directors and the Chaka Khan Foundation Gala Committee, and is a member of the Los Angeles chapters of the National Black MBA Association and The Recording Academy (*Grammy Awards*). During his 12 years stint in Atlanta (prior to relocating back to LA), he was on the board of directors of Georgia Court Appointed Special Advocates (GA CASA), Hughes Spaulding Childrens Hospital, Jomandi Theater, House of Love For the Homeless and the Cobb County Transit Advisory Committee.

"Each day, I wake up feeling blessed that God has given me yet another chance, another day, to experience life to it's fullest. Being involved and giving back is the least I can do, considering all the things that people have given me and done for me." Belk responded when asked how does he finds the time to be so involved.

With a primary mission of providing scholarship funds to support the financial needs of African American students attending USC, the Black Alumni Association has successfully reached out to African American students to provide financial aid and mentoring support for over 30 years. The USC BAA was founded in 1976 by civil rights activist, the late Dr. Rev. Thomas Kilgore, Jr.

About Charles Belk Management

Charles Belk Management (www.myspace.com/charlesbelk) is a Los Angeles based entertainment agency that offers artist brand development & awareness and artist management. Services include a complete "branding experience" for up & coming and established recording artists, music producers, actors, models, comedians, directors, on-air personalities and professional athletes.

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July 12, 2007

David E. Garnett

Mr. Garnett is President of iAM Solutions, LLC (iAM). iAM is a woman and minority owned business enterprise. iAM provides consulting in the areas of: Technology, Go to Market Strategies, business development for start ups, and the development of end to end solutions in the XML, biometric and digital office [Garnett](#)



environment that unite Communities of Practices. iAM's targeted market is Government, K-16 and Fortune 100 clients.

In August 2002, iAM acquired the "**Minority Online Information Services" database (MOLIS) from ScienceWise**. MOLIS is a one-stop source of in-depth information about the research and educational capabilities of 118 HBCUs and 176 Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs). The MSI group is comprised of 130 Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), 30 Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and other 16 Minority Postsecondary Institutions (OMPIs). MOLIS provides information on the institutions' research centers, research interests and capabilities, facilities, equipment, faculty profiles, statistics on the number of degrees awarded and enrollment figures, scholarship and fellowship information, and federal opportunity alerts. Federal agencies use MOLIS to identify an institution's capabilities so that they can help them build capacity in the area of grants and contracts. In June of 2006 iAM launched its "Communiversity" initiative that extends its database to other webbased tools to uniquely connect the HBCU/MI community to the small business, entrepreneurs, professionals, and Faith Based Organizations.

Prior to iAM, Mr. Garnett was President and CEO of Chrystal Software, a member of Xerox Technology Enterprises (XTE). XTE is a business development arm of Xerox Corporation chartered with the identification, development and successful commercialization of new technologies. David was appointed to this position in January of 2000.

Prior to Chrystal Software, Mr. Garnett was Senior Vice President of Global Accounts where he was responsible for the strategy and operational direction for Xerox' top 500 accounts worldwide. These accounts represent 52% of the United States revenue and 37% of the worldwide revenues. The strategy comprehended the global delivery of Xerox's entire portfolio of solutions, services and products. During Mr. Garnett's tenure in this assignment the revenue grew at an annualized rate of 10% on a base of \$1.7B.

Mr. Garnett joined Xerox in 1978. Since then he has held numerous field positions which included: Office Systems Sales Representative, Midwest Region Systems Training Manager, Branch Manager Systems, Region Systems Operations Manager, Region Agent Manager, District Manager-Oakbrook, National Systems Sales Operations Manager, Western Region General Manager of North American Systems Sales, Vice President of Field Operations - Mid-Atlantic Area, Vice President Xerox Professional Document Services and USCO Vice President of Field Operations - North Atlantic Area.

Mr. Garnett was born in Buffalo, NY. He earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Pittsburgh. He is a member of the Omega Psi Phi and Boule' Fraternities. He is involved with a number of community activities, including: Children's National Medical Center-Director, DC Public School Foundation – Former Chairman, Washington Board of Trade- Former Director, Historical Black College Visitation Program-Sponsor, Xerox Foundation. - Former trustee, National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education – (NAFEO) - Chairman of Corporate Advisory Council, Metropolitan A.M.E. Church Senior Steward Board, 2001 Distinguished African American Alumni – University of Pittsburgh; Man of the Year Metropolitan A.M.E. Church 2000; Northern Virginia Urban League – Board of Directors. In November of 2004 he received a "Distinguished Varsity Alumni Award" from the University of Pittsburgh.

He and his wife Sheila, reside in Clifton, VA. They have two sons, Kevin and David and three grand children

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July 10, 2007

Harold E. Doley Jr.

A distinguished member of the New Orleans business community, Harold Doley, Jr. was the first African-American member of the New York Stock Exchange when he began his career there in 1972. Three years later, Doley founded his own financial firm -- the realization of a dream that began with a childhood curiosity for business fostered inside his father's local grocery store. Doley Securities, Inc., the oldest African American owned investment-banking firm in the nation. Doley Securities, Inc. provides investment products and services to institutional clients. As the lead investment banker for Doley Securities, Inc., Mr. Doley guides the firm's participation in tens of billions of dollars in transactions annually involving federal agencies, state and local governments, international entities, and corporate and institutional clients.

Villa Lewaro, the home of Madame C.J. Walker on the Hudson in Irvington, NY was acquired by Harold E. Doley Jr., in 1994. He did not disclose the cost. It was designed by the first registered black architect, [Vertner Woodson Tandy](#), at a cost of \$250,000.

Originally bequeathed to the NAACP, the estate which is located on two acres of land and contains a thirty-five room house and a carriage houses. Madame Walker selected the site due to its proximity to the estates of John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie.

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July 02, 2007

Ditra Edwards



Ditra has centered her life's work on the intention of working with communities of color to fight for justice. A skilled trainer, facilitator, community organizer, fundraisers and strategists, Ditra brings a high level integrity and effectiveness to all of her work.

Over the last year Ditra has served as a consultant in partnership with the Hill Snowdon Foundation, The Center for Applied Research and Technical Assistance, Inc. (CARTA), The Funders Collaborative on Youth Organizing (FCYO) and The Praxis Project. As a consultant, Ditra brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in the areas of organizational and leadership development, community strategy and relationship building.

From 1999 to 2005, Ditra Edwards was on the staff of LISTEN, Inc., serving as Executive Director from 2002 to 2005. Under Ditra's leadership the organization grew tremendously. The organization secured and managed the National Roots Initiative for two years in partnership with the Funders Collaborative on Youth Organizing. Ditra also won multi-year funding to secure the infrastructure of LISTEN and core support for the grass roots organizations supported by the organization.

As director of Training and Youth Development at LISTEN, Ditra was responsible for the design and implementation of the Global Exchange Program which supported the youth activist from the United States and their counterparts in other countries to learn about leadership and democracy. Ditra was also the catalyst for the content and framework of the organization's leadership and youth development curriculum. At LISTEN, Ditra also helped incubate Youth Education Alliance (YEA), a DC based youth organizing group

fighting for equality education in DC Public Schools. YEA has recently transitioned into and independence organization. Finally, during her tenure at LISTEN, Ditra help to co-create the national network of youth workers and organizers called Building Leadership Organizing Communities (BLOC).

Prior to LISTEN, Ditra served as Senior Program Director for Community Programs at the YMCA of Greater Boston. During her tenure at the YMCA, she helped to found and direct the nationally recognized Youth Workers Alliance of Boston. In addition, she was responsible for the vision and direction of the Greater Boston YMCA Youth development Center. As a facilitator for the Academy of Educational Development's (AED) National Youth Workers Training Institute, Ditra is certified to deliver professional development for youth workers in all areas and disciplines.

Ditra has served on the board of the Funders Collaborative on Youth Organizing, and presently serves on the Columbia Heights Shaw family Support Collaborative and Emory Beacon of Light Community Development Corporation board of directors. Ditra was the recipient of the Salzburg Seminar Fellowship, Session 366 on Urban Youth and the Smithsonian Institute, Museum Leadership Award

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Tags: non-profits, youth programs

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June 20, 2007

Wendy Y. Carter



Raised in a home filled with poverty, alcoholism and abuse, Dr. Wendy Carter persevered against the odds to earn five degrees from Stanford, Carnegie Mellon, and University of Wisconsin-Madison. Currently serving as a program coordinator for the University of Maryland Baltimore County PROMISE (Maryland's AGEP) program, Dr. Carter also owns her own company that markets her dissertation completion product, "TA-DA Thesis and Dissertation Accomplished™." TA-DA is a product which she created, developed, and shares with graduate students to help demystify the maze of higher education.

As a result of her personal adversities, Dr. Carter has a passion for helping people succeed. A strong advocate of higher education, in the midst of her educational trials, Dr. Carter realized that the thesis and the dissertation phase is where fifty percent of students drop-out. In response to this startling statistic, she developed an interactive CD-ROM tutorial product designed to alleviate the high attrition rate among graduate students working on dissertations or theses.

One of five children, this eager young scholar's parents could not afford to send her to college. Keeping her eyes on the prize, when told something could not be accomplished, Dr. Carter, found the means to succeed despite the obstacles. As a result, Dr. Carter has adopted author Julia Cameron's ([The Artist's Way](#)) personal philosophy "Leap and the net will appear," a motto which served Dr. Carter throughout her educational career.

As a student at the rigorous Boston Latin Academy (formerly Girl's Latin), Dr. Carter was able to attend one of the country's most demanding preparatory schools and excel both academically and as a leader. To escape an alcoholic household, she applied to Stanford for her undergraduate program, where she was accepted. She earned both a B.A. and M.A. from Stanford

in six years, in addition to becoming a single parent.

After graduation, Dr. Carter went to work for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Unchallenged by her work, Carter applied for and was accepted to Carnegie Mellon's School of Urban and Public Affairs for their Master's program in Management and Public Policy. Acceptance into the program was a stellar accomplishment, but as a single parent without financial aid the news was bittersweet. In keeping with her motto, she "leapt," and the funding net appeared with a Patricia Harris Fellowship.

Again getting funding after her admittance to the doctoral program, Dr. Carter was accepted to the nationally-recognized Ph.D. program in sociology at University of Wisconsin-Madison. Securing a six-year research assistantship, Dr. Carter honed the skills she now markets to become the first in her group to finish her course-work in the doctoral program. Despite failing her qualifying exams, she succeeded in her second try while suffering from depression and continuing to raise her daughter. Today, her daughter is a senior majoring in Communications at Howard University.

In all, Dr. Carter has identified roadblocks throughout her life, overcome them, and moved forward to advance to new levels of success. As a woman, parent, educator, motivational speaker and business owner, Dr. Carter exemplifies leading by example.


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Tags: higher education, wendy carter

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June 17, 2007

Lewis Hamilton is For Real

 OK this one almost caught me by surprise. I say almost because I've actually heard this guy's name before today. Now I'm not one of those folks who actually keeps up with Formula One racing, in fact the sport has been going downhill for a while, and they keep thinking of new ways to revitalize it. Well [Lewis Hamilton](#) might be the guy to do that.

Today [Hamilton won the US Grand Prix](#). He's only 22.

Rookie sensation [Lewis Hamilton](#) did it again, racing to his second straight Formula One victory in Sunday's U.S. Grand Prix.

The first black driver in F1's 61-year history has finished all seven races this season in the top three. He now leads Mercedes McLaren teammate and two-time world champion [Fernando Alonso](#) by 10 points in the standings.

I'm a car freak, I must admit. OK maybe a car fan, but I really am about the technology, not so much about the thrill of being a fan of the celebrities. But race drivers are no joke in the skills department.

A young, good looking guy like Lewis, who his folks named after Carl Lewis, the sprinter, has a good chance to bring a lot more attention to the sport.

Of course lots of blackfolks are going to claim him in the old ritual. And much bloviation will follow about breaking barriers. Maybe my bow Willie T. Ribbs will get some play out of this. His debut a decade or so at the Long Beach GP where he failed to win any commanding titles left the hoo-rah section a little cold and limp, and of course Ribbs had serious attitude. So he wasn't about to be placed in anybody's poster. That's something rather common about F1 and certainly superbike racers. They are incredible egos, like jet fighter pilots, they simply don't downplay it. So if Hamilton is like other speedsters, and unlike the Aw Shucks crew in NASCAR, then his adulation from the black rank and file may come late if ever. I can't see him trying to get an interview with Tavis or Oprah.

Tavis? Oprah? Where do we get these names?

Anyway, congratulations to Hamilton. Another black person at the top of another pile. Get use to it.

Here is [a great interview](#) with Hamilton to give you an idea.

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Tags: [fi](#), [lewis hamilton](#)

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May 16, 2007

Ursula Burns



According to the [Buffalo News](#), there's going to be a new CEO of Xerox Corporation soon.

Chief Executive Officer Anne Mulcahy, 54, in April named Ursula Burns, 48, president with the expectation that she would move up when Mulcahy steps down, analysts say.

Burns, who grew up in a housing project in Manhattan, also became the only inside director besides the CEO.

Burns "is to business what Condi Rice is to government, in terms of someone who never grew up expecting to be a president of a major corporation," said John Engler, a former Republican governor of Michigan and president of the National Association of Manufacturers, where Burns is a director. "It's hard, regardless of color and gender, to reach the high level of responsibility she's reached."

--

This is not unexpected from Xerox. I learned a lot about management philosophy at Xerox which was my first corporate gig out of school. I had three internships there, in one I built the [Affirmative Action](#) and Manpower Planning reporting system. Xerox has always been serious about succession planning and management by objective, rather than by personality. So the culture of advanced meritocracy have always been present. Additionally, the company has had a strong black executive and management presence for decades. Starting with Bernard Kinsey in the 80s.

I have [my own little stories](#) about black managers at Xerox and today they are still being written. Congrats to Burns.

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Tags: [ursula burns](#), [xerox](#)

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May 05, 2007

Jeremy Clarkson: My Kind of Brit

In speaking about a 185 MPH car, [Clarkson writes](#):

"Think of it as an Aussie from the outback. Maybe he can't quote Shakespeare. Maybe he's never heard of Terence Conran. But he can smash all the teeth clean out of your mouth with a single punch. That's the Monaro"

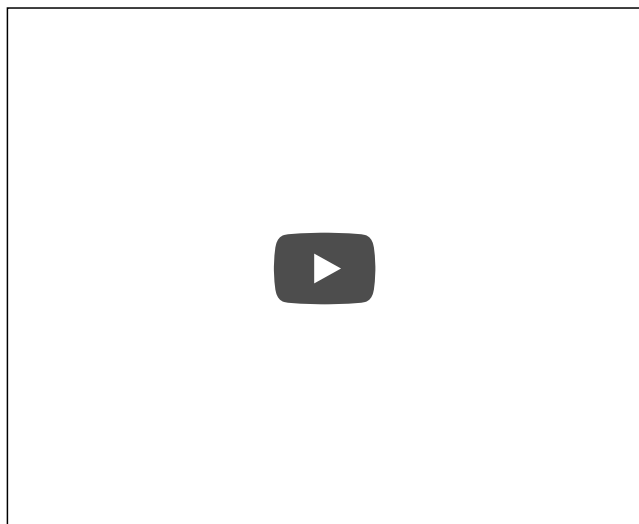
I love this guy. When it comes to lining up ballsy adverbs around the performance of hot cars nobody matches Clarkson. In the wimpified world of American metrosexuality, few people have managed to distinguish between manliness and machismo. I hear that they've got that problem across the pond as well. But Clarkson has managed to keep just the right amount of cave in his manhood, abetted as he his by access to the best sports cars the world has to offer.

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April 29, 2007

Dorothy Dandridge



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April 18, 2007

I've only seen him in the past several years in his role in 'Black Like Me'. He played according to form, something of a stereotype of himself, an 'overeducated' black man in the American South. His voice, his diction were true to form. He was in that very classic way, an actor. Pronounce the long 'o' in the word actor.

Recently, hanging out with relatives the conversation ran to alumni of Lincoln University, where my father first went to study physics. I learned that Browne was an audacious character. He was a quite the track star and ladies' man, I was told. It seemed hard to reconcile Browne cutting such a figure, but that he was. And so I remember him as a man audacious enough to defy those expectations of him, to imbue with unforgettable and undeniable dignity and presence, the small shell of a black actor in 20th century America.

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Tags: Roscoe Lee Browne

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April 10, 2007

Johnson Beharry



Johnson Beharry is the first recipient of the [Victoria Cross](#) since the posthumous awards to Lieutenant Colonel H. Jones and Sergeant Ian John McKay for service in the Falklands War in 1982. He is the first living recipient of the VC since Keith Payne and Rayene Stewart Simpson, both Australian, for actions in Vietnam in 1969, and the first living recipient of the VC in the British Army since Rambahadur Limbu, a Gurkha, in the Indonesia-Malaysia confrontation in 1965. As of 26 June 2006, he is one of only 12 living recipients of the VC, and the youngest.

Beharry was born in Grenada, and has four brothers and three sisters. He moved to the UK in 1999.

On 1 May 2004, Beharry was driving a Warrior Tracked Armoured Vehicle that had been called to the assistance of a foot patrol caught in a series of ambushes. The Warrior was hit by multiple rocket propelled grenades, causing damage and resulting in the loss of radio communications. The platoon commander, the vehicle's gunner and a number of other soldiers in the vehicle were injured. Beharry drove through the ambush, taking his own crew and leading five other Warriors to safety. He then extracted his wounded colleagues from the vehicle, all the time exposed to further enemy fire. He was cited on this occasion for "valour of the highest order".

While back on duty on 11 June 2004, Beharry was again driving the lead Warrior vehicle of his platoon through Al Amarah when his vehicle was ambushed. A rocket propelled grenade hit the vehicle and Beharry received serious head injuries. Other rockets hit the vehicle incapacitating his commander and injuring several of the crew. Despite his very serious injuries, Beharry then took control of his vehicle and drove it out of the ambush area before losing consciousness. He required brain surgery for his head injuries, and he was still recovering when he was awarded the VC in March 2005. He suggested on at least one occasion that he would return to military service if physically able.

According to the British newspaper *The Telegraph*, a planned 90-minute drama about Beharry was canceled by the BBC because it was "too positive" and would alienate members of the audience opposed to the war in Iraq.

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Tags: beharry

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March 27, 2007

Rebecca Walker

Rebecca Walker decided to have a baby.

I'm not sure how old she was when she did, but it was a very difficult decision for her. You see, Walker is a lesbian. Or at least one can say that she was in some sense of the word. Things are only so simple for people who cruise bars.

I finished my bar hopping for the evening and ambled into the bookstore on Rittenhouse Square looking for a hardcover copy of Harlot's Ghost, or a copy of The Satanic Verses, the next books on my reading list. I didn't find Mailer but I did stumble upon this leg of Walker's book tour. As I stood in the rear of the small gathering of quiet voices and anxious questions I found myself becoming more intrigued by the scene, first out of contrast to my previous encounters, second out of nostalgia for the days I regularly attended such soulful gatherings and thirdly out of genuine interest.

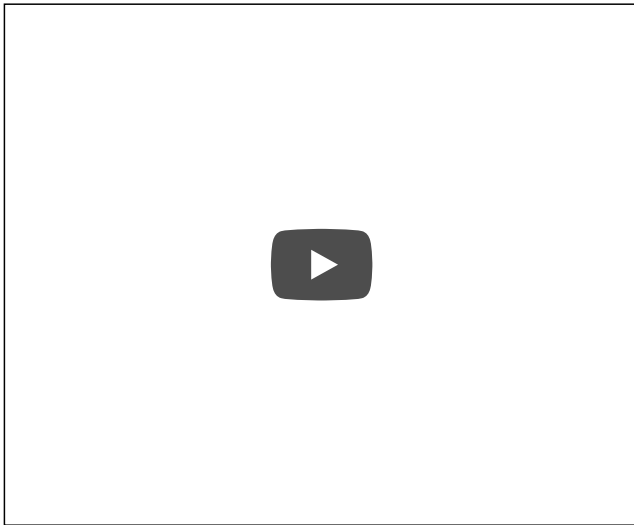
The subject was one which I regularly state as one of the axiomatic pillars of the difference between liberalism and conservatism. Conservatism protects the family from corruption of the state. Liberalism uses the state to protect from the corruption of the family. One can almost equally consider it an axiom that emotionally mature conservatives of this sort come from very well managed families. A well-managed family is not necessarily a good or great one, but it is one from whose strength one can reliably depend. Of course in every society families break, some tragically. In a highly individualistic society as ours, folks can depend on long, ugly streaks of isolation and longing when one is damaged in the home. I have a lot of respect for that healing process which is why I recognized the tough love behind Walker. Yeah I'm a bit more experienced as a dad, but I hear her mom vibes loud and clear. It is a secret language understood only by initiates.

Walker's audience was largely comprised of women who have not suffered through the cleansing agony of childbirth, and one could sense their conflict and ambivalence from a distance. Walker is a master of talking to them straight and guiding them gently. She's got a writer's honesty and self-knowledge. As I surfed her website and perused her bio, I found she's got much experience talking to young folks such as these.

There is genuine confusion and empathy. A thousand conversations that cannot occur in bars await the patient author on book tours. I could feel the tender tendrils extending as each young person walked up to the table after the talk. With one in particular whom I seem to recall in a denim skirt, the two women reminded me of my own two daughters whispering to each other. Oh how women talk. And where else could they go but to each other?

They can come to me, because in the end, big brother that I am, I spent most of the evening acquainting myself with a universalized version of this ritual. How can I protect this, I kept asking myself. How can I keep this part of society working? How can I recognize this from the fraud of eclexia? Walker invoked he who is Chesterton in my mind when she expressed that family works and has worked for hundreds and thousands of years, and 'we' shouldn't be so quick to dismiss its value. She recognizes what era she's living in, and said that those are dangerous words in some quarters. I imagine she would know that very well.

Andre Watts Transcendant



I can still remember the day when I heard Andre Watts for the first time. He was playing this, Chopin's Revolutionary Etude Opus 10 #12. I was listening to KUSC, of of LA's two classical radio stations. Around my sophomore year, having finished Godel, Escher, Bach, it seemed to me that I should start listening to...well Bach. And taking the normal route, I started listening for preludes and fugues. I already was familiar with the Brandenburg concertos through Walter Carlos, so I'd expand. KUSC had a night dedicated to that, (remember classical station program guides?) Then out of nowhere comes this incredibly dense, passionate and powerful stuff. Blew my freakin' mind.

It was Watts' live concert that probably went down in history. He broke two strings on the concert piano that night at Lincoln Center and he was up for his second or third encore when he played Liszt's Transcendental Etude #10, another instant favorite.

Somewhere, I still have a cassette tape recording of that very radio broadcast. On the other side of it was the Art of Noise and Malcolm McLaren, my other two musical loves of the early 80s.

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April 17, 2007

'Buked



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April 16, 2007

Roscoe Lee Browne

Roscoe Lee Browne died this weekend in Los Angeles at the age of 81. He was a role model for me.

I think everyone's first reaction to Roscoe Lee Browne was "who does he think he is?". And the more you watch him, the more transfixed you become and then you start doubting yourself for doubting him. As a young man I was always told that every black actor was always more dignified in person than they could ever be allowed to be on the screen. To think that Browne could possibly be more dignified than he appeared on television seemed incredible, it made everything he did even that more impressive.

What I didn't really know then as I well as I know now is very much the same thing that these young people don't know. That is that the sexier you are and the more you recognize that free instinct, the more you will recognize your nature to be a parent. We just have lives that are so interesting and compelling outside of the basics of childrearing that to sacrifice our personalities and lifestyles seems such a leap. You get fat. You get tired. You stop experimenting with and 'experiencing' life. Instead you start living to protect life. But surely there are many who have grown up in ways that defy that basic element of humanity. And for those whose tastes and fears get the best of them, Rebecca Walker has written a book called [Baby Love](#).

I love babies so much. I love babies so much. I can just write a whole paragraph about loving babies. But I won't. Still, I was distracted by the 14 month old at the back. That's my guess, anyway. He's an adventurous and curious boy. Loving babies is easy, directing children is hard. It takes dedication, but it also takes the mature realization that you have no choice. It's a job you must grow proud of no matter how painful it is. Everyone knows, no matter how many prize winning and brilliant authors we grow, our society cannot endure massive distrust of the business of raising children properly. I expect and hope the young people who heard Walker out will see through their fears. Their children will thank them. They will know.

As for me, my problem is not children nor families. I grew up straight with some very deep understandings about family that became roaringly self-evident to me despite my fascinating young lifestyle. I am completely given over to family and feeling nicely righteous; extra strength is what I feel. I am compelled to protect and serve. It is why I am Conservative. I don't love humanity generically, I watch and respect what people are capable of. I recognize their strengths and weaknesses, in what they do and what they fail to do. People are capable of enormous acts of heroism and tenderness. People are capable of absolute terrifying butchery and savagery. So I'm willing to be bold enough to suggest that the choices many see as their inheritance is not indeed liberty, but unhinged freedom. That knowing what people can do determines some things that some people must do. More heroes please. More tender, heroic parents and leaders please.

I listened to the lyrics to Salt & Pepa's "None of Your Business" last night and I was reminded of the rejection of the idea of a [purity ball](#). I hear that 'It's my life' thing loud and clear. I know why people reject society's opinions. It's a cold, impersonal society out there. People seem to be caught up in minding their own business. But then again a lot of us are minding our own families. There's only so many football games, beach parties, protest marches, shopping malls and book signings you can go to. Public life has its limits; you're not going to get sustaining love out there. That, you have to build yourself.

For all my lefty friends out there, you know this to be true somewhere in your misty minds. You know that there's something awesome about the indigenous woman who gives birth without prepaid health care and prescription drug benefits. Go ahead and admit it. She's more courageous than you. She's more family-oriented than you. She has resisted all of the compelling lifestyle choices you have. She's not trying to juggle the kids, and the Xs, Ys and Zs of your bourgie desire. She falls in love and has babies. It's a good thing. She might even be illiterate and incapable of having a nuanced conversation about a fascinating book about family. But she's got family.

Maybe our society creates the market for psychosis and psychiatry. Some of us are really crazy. But I think most of us just need a shove in the right direction, and assurances that everything is going to be alright. I watched Latigo Flint take himself metaphorically out of the equation. I read about John Perkins' 20 year suicide. I know there are many many young Americans peering into the pool of parenthood, shivering on the deck and deathly afraid of jumping in. I don't want you to take yourselves out. Do it. Give your kid a freaky name and encourage her to pierce her finger-webs and heave a flying bird to the System. Make her even crazier than you, with all that love and sensitivity you have for Gaia. See if you can stand it.

In the meantime the world keeps turning. With or without the healing powers of a thoughtful and generous soul like that of Rebecca Walker, the beat goes on. We brave the dangers and get strength by giving it to our children. My children make me extraordinarily courageous in ways I never imagined I'd be.

Rebecca Walker had a baby. Aren't you glad you can have a baby?

March 27, 2007 in [Keeping It Right](#), [Marriage](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

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March 23, 2007

John Backus RIP

[John Backus](#), the inventor of FORTRAN died this week. The world loses another old head and builds from his discoveries and work.

I personally had a love hate relationship with FORTRAN. I learned FORTRAN IV in advance of the FORTRAN 77 standard. Yeah I was still a kid in highschool but I recognized flaws with the language when I saw them. I actually tried to build a game in FORTRAN. That's why I hated it. It was just too inflexible. If only I had seen Simula back then.

But I came to love Backus when I learned [BNF](#), and have appreciated him for that, ever since. Rest, great man.

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