

SPECIAL CLARENCE THOMAS SECTION

The Black(?) Man They Call Clarence Thomas

by Timothy Jessie

Associate Justice Clarence Thomas now sits on the United States Supreme Court smiling a very toothy smile. He should smile -- a lot. Thomas was very close to not being confirmed after that "Anita Hill vs. Clarence Thomas" bout in the extended confirmation hearings. As everyone knows, this extension was due to the allegation by Professor Anita Hill that Clarence Thomas sexually harassed her nearly ten years ago while they were both at the Department of Education and then at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). These allegations served to create juicy and provocative findings for the duration of the extended hearings. All of that nonsense in Washington, D.C. even managed to set men and women at odds, especially in the work place (now, no man wants to

say the words "Coke" and "hair" in the same sentence).

A lot of people that I have talked to see the whole Clarence Thomas situation as President Bush's favorite "boy" (or "house nigger") getting his little reward for selling out black folks. Even people I hold in high esteem think 'homeboy' Clarence is full of, uh, cow dung. For example, when I recently sat in on one of my grandmother's "family gossip sessions" (when they discuss everything and anything like in a "Snuffy Smith" cartoon), my uncle Archie said "He (Clarence Thomas) sat up there looking all mean and saying 'I'd rather die (than resign from the confirmation process)!'; someone should have gone and smacked him up side his head!" I couldn't help but laugh; my uncle had surprised me with his candor. But one thing is certain, Bush is one intelligent and crafty Caucasian; he knew the appointment of Clarence Thomas would pose an unsolvable enigma for the African American community at large and especially groups like the NAACP. Do you suppose doing things like that is why Bush is sitting in the Oval Office today?

Furthermore, Clarence Thomas' appointment put African Americans (blacks, negroes, "browns" or whatever term is fashion-able these days) on both sides of the fence. But, for some, it was simple: Thomas is black (ball 1) and rose from poverty to the top of his field (ball 2) but he's a "conservative" (strike 1), against affirmative action (strike 2), and he married a white woman after

divorcing a black woman (strike three, he's out).

However, we really should be looking at his qualifications to determine if he can do the job. Admittedly, Thomas is "green" as far as practicing law in a judiciary capacity, but people forget that the current Chief Justice, William Rehnquist, had very little judicial experience when he was appointed. Knowing that, a great deal of individuals, including myself, continue to flip-flop between being for Clarence or against him. I'll end that now by publicly stating that I support Associate Justice Clarence Thomas from Pin Point, Georgia; I am cautiously optimistic and glad that those 100 white folks composing the Senate are going to give the brother a chance to prove himself to his people.

There's one last thing about Clarence Thomas that is somewhat disturbing - his apparent break with traditional black views. I understand that he is a conservative (whatever the hell that really means) and a Republican, but Clarence used to be into civil rights and helping his fellow brother. In fact, he even helped to start a black student union at Yale. Some people I have questioned think he somehow got twisted up at the EEOC; I'm not sure where he went astray, but somewhere he cut the line between himself and the African American community.

Clarence, my man, sitting up there on the Supreme Court, you must start helping your people. Do you still know who your people are? Let me give you a hint, we're the ones originally from Africa, Clarence; you figure out the rest. I can only hope that you serve with distinction and avoid further scandal. As a fellow African American male, I support you, Clarence, but if you're not going to "do" for your people, then get the hell out of there.

Don't let us down, brother.

AN OPEN LETTER TO UNCLE THOM

Judge Clarence Thomas,

I deem you a liar - with liar friends and liar senators in your pocket. Your nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court and partial disclosure of your political ideology left little to be desired by my admitted left-leaning sensibilities. During the course of your nomination procedure, terms like 'natural law' were brought up and exploited by you as well as the press. Yet, no one took the time to explain natural law, its origins or adherents, few of which are Afro-Americans or women. You refused to express your views on abortion and as a criminal justice major who has a deep respect for fairness and proper procedure, I respected your stance. However, it was you who offered the information that not only would you not disclose your opinions on abortion in general or *Roe v. Wade* specifically, but in actuality you had not put much thought to the matter. I deem you a liar.



Signature

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And it was at this point in the proceedings I realized I'd never support you - regardless of the color of your skin. I admire Black achievement, but all I see on you is black. There is no great achievement in lying your way to the top.

What kind of legal scholar has not dedicated serious thought to *Roe v. Wade*? (Obviously the same kind of Black scholar that denies the benefits of the Civil Rights Movement! According to Manning Marable, during the '60s you were quite the 'race man'. Are we to assume that you've changed - kinda like David Duke - a tuck here, a fold there - poof! Your past gone bye-bye!)

During the hearings concerning the allegations levied by Professor Anita Hill, numerous witnesses, many of them female, publicly professed to the 'non-sexist' nature of your character. Many of the women, even the self-proclaimed feminists, former fellow employees, claimed that you were more sensitive to their issues as women than most men and even some women! However, all those laudatory exclamations to your 'feminist' character are in direct contradiction to your statements concerning the abortion issue. How can you, this supposedly 'feminist' man, not have thoughts/opinions about the issue that is of central concern to women?! Am I to believe you are concerned about women's issues only to the extent that the concerns are non-reproductive in nature?

Also, I want to hip you to a false stereotype that surfaced and

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