

Forum

Compare Jail Time for White Suspects As Opposed to Blacks in Denny Case

Many people said a national calamity was avoided on Saturday, April 17, when the split decision verdict was read following the trial of four club-wielding police officers charged with depriving Rodney King of his civil rights. Some observers said the finding of two officers guilty would please black people and liberals and that the finding of two innocent would please those who applauded the all-white jury's verdict of innocence for all. Others approved the verdict because they thought it was a compromise that "gave something" to both sides and circumvented another uprising.



MINORITY REPORT

By JAMES E. ALSBROOK

Most of the black persons with whom I spoke complained that all four police officers should have been found guilty. Several white friends expressed the same opinion. Other Whites said the verdict was fair because the two most blameworthy offenders — Sgt. Koon who was in charge and Officer Powell who did most of the beating — were found guilty. Officer Bresino testified that he thought the beating was "excessive" and regretted it, and Timothy Wind was a mere trainee who had no authority but some participation.

Reactions from newspapers in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia should be available within the next two weeks. But it is interesting that of more than 30 foreign newspapers translated for libraries by scholars, all blamed last year's riots in Los Angeles and elsewhere on the racial and economic policies of Reagan and Bush. These critical newspapers were among the largest in England, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Israel and Australia.

The most direct indictment came from Asia in the Hong Kong Standard. It said: "Any advanced society that allows the development of a huge, under-employed, under-educated, impoverished underclass that lives in violence-racked, drug-ridden slums is storing up for itself a sort of trouble that the United States is now experiencing."

The Tokyo Times spoke at the last year's verdict of innocent for all four police officers: "This jury could not have done more damage to their country's image abroad if they had tried."

The videotape showing the beating of

Rodney King was seen all around the world. The treatment of blacks in the United States was condemned all around the world — even in South Africa where the media "rubbed it in."

But those who breathed a sign of relief when the two officers were convicted in Los Angeles had better take a deep breath and prepare to hold it again. The trial of the four black men charged with beating Reginald Denny is set for July 14 and the sentencing of

officers Koon and Powell is set for August 4 — only three weeks apart. If Koon and Powell get short sentences and the four black men get long sentences, we should expect some kind of trouble.

Although black people thought that the guilty verdict for only two of the officers was "half a loaf," the reverberations of this verdict have been felt far and wide. Influential editorials in some big daily newspapers have suggested that America take a closer look at its supposed even-handedness in law enforcement and are suggesting closer examinations of police practices in their own areas.

Moreover, if Rodney King wins his scheduled lawsuit providing millions of dollars for him and draining millions from the City of Angels, a powerful message and corrective action will have been taken across the nation. All city fathers become skiddish and cranky when struck in a very vulnerable place — the pocketbook. Those who boss the bosses will make changes mandatory.

Two very positive factors have resulted from this Rodney King episode. First, the nation and the world have seen a shocking example of the terrible police brutality suffered for many years by black men in America. Second, the nation and the world know now that black insurrections with heavy financial losses on all sides occur when abuses make black people's lives intolerable and their "cups runneth over."

The days of double standards in law enforcement are limited.

Clinton Administration Looks to Get Youths Working Again

The Clinton administration has come up with a number of fresh new ideas to get the nation moving in the right direction again.

A long, lean period in which national administration's avoided the new and gutted the old appears to have come to an end. But the Clinton proposals, ranging from a sweeping economic revival plan to a health reform program, face considerable obstacles.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle is the huge national deficit, which stands as a barrier to funding and implementing new initiatives, large or small.

One initiative that shouldn't get lost in the shuffle is a national service program for young people.

The administration's national service plan is very modest — a pilot summer program that would employ only 1,000 students at the minimum wage plus a grant towards college or other tuition. But it's planned to expand to 100,000 students in four years, at a projected annual cost \$3.4 billion.



TO BE EQUAL

John E. Jacob

Such a slow start may disappoint some who see a National Service Corps as essential to help young people make the transition to adult responsibilities.

Many back mandatory national service for all 18-or-19 year-olds, who would either enroll in a full-time program like VISTA or work for nonprofit organizations.

But it's doubtful the Congress or the country is now ready for such a mandatory plan. For now, national service supporters realize that given budget constraints and the ambitious reforms needed in other areas, a slow start is better than no start at all.

The administration's plan deserves support because it is a sound program in itself, and because it can lay the foundations for a universal national-service plan in the future.

Why is national service a good idea?

First, it can serve as a way to bind the next generation of Americans to the responsibilities of citizenship.

In such a diverse national culture, there

needs to be a way of bringing people together to interact with others of different backgrounds and to affirm their common national heritage.

In the past, the armed services fulfilled that function. But with the end of the draft and the reduction of forces, that avenue is now closed.

Second, national service can spur young people to continue their education and prepare themselves for a 21st century economy.

The best investment America ever made was the GI Bill, which helped an entire generation of Americans to secure educational opportunities and laid the groundwork for post-war economic growth.

A similar program applicable to all young people could do the same, enabling youngsters from poor and moderate income families to get

the college and technical training they — and the nation — need.

Third, there's an enormous amount of work to be done, from staffing libraries and hospitals to conversation and neighborhood safety.

It's not being done now because cities and non-profit institutions can't afford to hire people. It can be done if the federal government, through stipends and tuition grants for service, recruits young people to do it.

During the Depression, the Civilian Conservation Corps recruited half a million young people to help preserve national parklands, and similar local urban and rural programs since then have also been successful.

So we know that the national service can work. It can be a vital step in helping all of our young people become responsible, mature and educated citizens.

Doonesbury

BY G.B. TRUDEAU

MIKE, WHAT'S THIS "TAKE OUR DAUGHTERS TO WORK DAY" ALEX IS SO EXCITED ABOUT?
I THINK IT'S A SELF-ESTEEM EVENT...

THIS WEDNESDAY WE'RE ALL SUPPOSED TO TAKE OUR GIRLS TO WORK SO WE CAN SHOW THEM HOW MUCH THEY'LL BE VALUED IN THE WORKPLACE.

OH.

BUT WE'RE NOT VALUED IN THE WORKPLACE.

I KNOW. I WAS THINKING OF BORROWING SOMEONE'S OFFICE.

WELL, KIDDO, TODAY IS "TAKE OUR DAUGHTERS TO WORK DAY!"
THAT'S OKAY, DADDY. I CAN HEAR ABOUT IT FROM THE OTHER GIRLS.

NONSENSE! YOU'RE GOING TO GO TO WORK WITH US!
BUT I'VE ALREADY RIDDEN IN MOMMY'S TAXI A ZILLION TIMES, AND YOU JUST WORK AT THE KITCHEN TABLE!

HEY, THAT'S NOT ALL I DO. I ALSO WORK AT MY DRAFTING BOARD, WHERE I DO LAYOUTS ON A PROFESSIONAL SKETCH PAD! AND I MAKE PHOTOCOPIES! AND I FAX DOCUMENTS!

WANT TO SEE ME FAX AN ACTUAL DOCUMENT?
HE'S GOING TO MAKE ME STAY HOME, ISN'T HE?
BE A BRAVE GIRL...

WELL, LET'S GET "TAKE OUR DAUGHTERS TO WORK DAY" ON THE ROAD, SHALL WE, SQUIRT?
I GUESS.

FIRST OFF, THIS IS DADDY'S DESK. THIS IS WHERE I COME UP WITH ALL MY IDEAS. AS YOU CAN SEE, I'M SURROUNDED BY THE TOOLS OF MY TRADE...

PENCILS, PENS, RULERS— YOU NAME IT, EVERYTHING I NEED FOR SKETCHING OUT MY IDEAS RIGHT HERE ON THIS PROFESSIONAL LAYOUT DESK!

YES, THIS IS WHERE IT ALL HAPPENS...
DADDY, CAN I GO TO SCHOOL NOW? I DON'T WANT TO BE LATE.

SO WHERE DO I GET MY IDEAS? GOOD QUESTION! IDEAS CAN COME FROM ANYWHERE — TV, BOOKS, NEWSPAPERS, PERSONAL EXPERIENCES...

ANYTHING CAN SPARK THE IMAGINATION! AND IF I CAN DO IT, YOU CAN DO IT. WE BOTH KNOW YOU'RE A VERY CREATIVE LITTLE GIRL!

ANY QUESTIONS SO FAR, HONEY?... MONEY?

WHERE TO, MISS?
TO SCHOOL! QUICK! STEP ON IT!

YOU KNOW, ALEX, YOU MAY NOT BELIEVE THIS, BUT DRIVING A CAB HAS ITS OWN SET OF REWARDS...

A CABBIE MEETS INTERESTING PEOPLE, SHE CREATES HER OWN OPPORTUNITIES, AND THE WORK IS HONEST AND HONORABLE.
THAT'S GOOD, MOMMY.

OF COURSE, I'M REALLY AN ARTIST. I UNDERSTAND.

ARE WE ALMOST THERE, MOMMY? I DON'T WANT TO BE LATE!
DON'T WORRY, ALEX, YOU WON'T BE LATE FOR SCHOOL...

YOU KNOW, HONEY, YOU SHOULDN'T WORRY SO MUCH ABOUT GETTING IN TROUBLE. GIRLS ARE ALWAYS MUCH TOO PREOCCUPIED WITH BEING GOOD, WITH ALWAYS TRYING TO PLEASE OTHER PEOPLE...

THE WHOLE POINT OF "TAKE OUR DAUGHTERS" IS TO PUT YOU IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT, TO GIVE YOU A SENSE OF CONTROL AND MASTERY OVER YOUR...UH...YOUR...

WE'RE LOST AGAIN, AREN'T WE, MOMMY?
NO, DEAR, WE'RE EXPLORING. ROADS NOT TRAVELED.

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