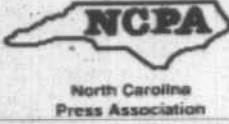


# OPINION

## THE CHRONICLE

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## It's Over?

What we can say at this point in the race for the Democratic nomination between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama is that Obama has won.

In fact, the numbers suggest that he probably has won since Wisconsin. On the night of May 6, Barack Obama won North Carolina handily at 56 percent and came within a hair of winning Indiana although losing 51-49. This was not wish of those in the media and the Clinton campaign who wanted her to win strongly in both states, not limp in with Indiana and lose North Carolina.

The strategy of the Clinton campaign however, has been to string the election out, hoping that Obama would stumble hard enough to fall, proving that he was un-electable and knocked out of the race. The "stumble strategy" however, has failed that was defined by the speech in which he said that the low income voters are "bitter" about their condition (by the way, in her speech following the squeaker in Indiana, she called them "invisible") and by the video clips of Rev. Jeremiah Wright. In fact, even on the national level, while 23 percent of people polled said they were concerned by Rev. Wright, 33 percent said they felt Hillary was not truthful!

Then, the Republican strategy worked out by Karl Rove and Rush Limbaugh which had Republicans voting for Hillary Clinton to make her the nominee so that they could beat her to death, was only minimally successful. In fact, if Republicans had not given Obama 45 percent of their vote in Indiana, he probably could have made up Hillary's 20,000 lead to take that state also.

What remains now are the conditions under which Hillary will concede defeat. The pressure is building, because her campaign is again running out of money, rumors are that she has lent it some more, Superdelegates continue to leave and the media momentum has finally swung back to Obama. From here on the media will ask the question as they did of Rev. Jackson in 1984, "what does Hillary want?" That will have to be worked out in private.

The past shows that where candidates competing for the nomination in hard fought contest were able to join a unity pact, the party went into the Fall election united, but where they couldn't they lost. So, Hillary will make some demands of Obama, perhaps to campaign, to accept some of her staff and some of her issues, some seats on the Democratic national commit-

tee and who knows what else.

Nevertheless, Barack Obama can now turn his campaign to John McCain and less to Clinton and begin the contest for the presidency. His acceptance speech after winning North Carolina was the last of the primary and the first of the campaign.

In it, he satisfied all the media demands about his loyalty, his love of country, his personal character, and etc. and suggested that in spite of the distractions thrown in his way, the American people were still winning through is campaign. It was powerful stuff and in the immediate aftermath, signs are that it has had a positive effect on the media.

They are beginning to ask the question, "why wasn't Hillary able to close?" in seeming disbelief that a half-term Senator has knocked out the powerful Clinton machine. One answer, Black voters, who went with Obama as a 91 percent clip in North Carolina and 92 percent in Indiana, is on the table. Indeed, it is so much on the table that if the Clinton's campaign for Obama in the general election, I wonder whether they will be sent into the Black community.

The other good sign, especially in the Indiana election, was that Barack Obama regained his lead with Independents (53-47 percent), since in the interim of fighting the barriers, the press had given the Independents to John McCain. Obama, however, should be competitive with McCain there, with the exit polls showing Obama beating McCain 53-42 percent in North Carolina and 50-47 percent in Indiana.

The last step will be for the DNC to handle the Florida and Michigan problem at its May 31 Rules Committee meeting in a way that doesn't muddy the waters of Obama's march to the nomination.

There are many rumors floating about that Hillary has the Committee packed with her people, but by this time, her tent should be folded and they should under the discipline of the deal between her camp and Obama's. So, the name of the game now should be cruise control for Obama.

*Dr. Ron Walters is the Distinguished Leadership Scholar, Director of the African American Leadership Center, and Professor of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland College Park. One of his latest books is: Freedom Is Not Enough: Black Voters, Black Candidates and American Presidential Politics (Rowman and Littlefield).*



## Bring Back Summer Jobs



**Marc Morial**  
 Guest Columnist

"The best poverty prevention program is a job."

For more than 30 years, beginning in the 1960s, the Federal Government saw the enormous benefit of providing summer jobs to millions of disadvantaged youth across America. But since 2000, the Summer Youth Employment and Training Program (SYETP), has lost its direct funding, and is now effectively buried among 10 competing programs within the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). With the economy reeling, unemployment soaring and the summer heat approaching, there is an urgent need to bring back summer jobs for youth.

We know that a summer job experience not only puts much-needed money into the pockets of poor kids and sometimes into the budgets of their families, it also provides opportunities to gain valuable new skills, and can be a pathway to higher education and ultimately to tax paying citi-



zenship. Investing in this effort returns tremendous dividends in reduced welfare dependency, fewer crimes, less incarceration and greater workforce productivity. For some youth, it can be a life saving alternative to the world of gangs and drugs.

Earlier this year, in separate letters to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, and House Speaker, Nancy Pelosi, I made, on behalf of the National Urban League, a strong case for including a "summer jobs stimulus" as part of the bipartisan economic stimulus package. For Black teens, a "summer jobs

stimulus" is most urgent. In 2007, Black teens, aged 16-19, had an unemployment rate of 29.5 percent compared to 13.9 percent for White teens. The summer jobs stimulus did not make it into the final bill, but all is not lost.

Currently, both the House and the Senate have introduced bills, H.R. 5444 introduced by House Majority Whip James Clyburn and S. 2755 introduced by Senator Patty Murray, that call for an immediate \$1 billion dollar commitment for youth summer jobs this year. While I support their efforts, the current state of our economy

makes it clear that \$1 billion is not enough. I implore them and the Congress to increase that commitment to \$2 billion.

The National Urban League has a historic commitment to securing summer jobs for low-income youth and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to earn. In 2000, we joined a coalition of youth serving organizations, churches, city and county political associations, the National League of Cities and the U.S. Conference of Mayors, all calling for the Congress to provide emergency supplemental appropriations for summer jobs. And over the last two years, we've called for restoring the Summer Youth Jobs Program as a separate program under WIA to be funded with new monies.

For years "The Opportunity to Earn" has been one of the four components of the National Urban League's Opportunity Compact. We believe that the Federal Government should act now to provide jobs to disadvantaged youth who want to work, who need to work and who are seeking alternatives to idleness and the dangers of the summer streets.

*Marc H. Morial heads the National Urban League.*

## My Apology to Black Women for Charles Knipp



**Jasmyne Cannick**  
 Guest Columnist

At this year's State of the Black Union, Dick Gregory apologized to President Bill Clinton on behalf of Blacks for our role in allowing Clinton to believe that he was Black.

In that same spirit, I feel compelled to apologize to Charles Knipp on behalf of gays for allowing him to think that he's one of the Black women that he unsuccessfully tries to emulate. I also want to apologize to Black women on behalf of gay America for Charles Knipp. Knipp's latest cry for help involved superimposing my head on some other Black woman's naked body and then tactlessly posting it on his website for my continuing to expose his constant mockery of the Black woman.

Charles Knipp is a self-described forty-five-year-old, fat, gay white man who believes he's on a mission from God. A mission that involves mimicking Black women as his alter ego character Shirley Q. Liquor. Knipp describes Liquor as being "a welfare mother with nineteen kids who guzzles malt liquor, and drives a Caddy." The character is a favorite among his core audience whom Knipp describes as being "gay men, their moms, and rednecks."

And while Isaiah Washington was unable to escape the wrath of gay America, Charles Knipp's blackface minstrel show con-

tinues to be rewarded by gay Americans to the tune of \$90k annually.

Imus may have called Black women "nappy-headed ho's," but it's Knipp who routinely tries to bring that image to life onstage as Shirley Q. Liquor when she tries to recollect the names of her "chirrun" with his skit "Who Is My Baby Daddy? Cheeto, Orangello, Chlamydia, and Kmartina..."

I blame gay America, from the political leaders to the club owners, for turning a blind eye to Knipp's blatantly racist routines that in his words are performed mostly for "gay men, their moms and rednecks." We are the reason that his racist act continues to go nearly undetected on the race radar.

And no matter how I feel about gay America, in particular white gay America, as a lesbian, a Black lesbian, by virtue of my sexual orientation, I am reluctantly tied to you as much as you are tied to me.

So I am just as much to blame for failing to help you understand that just because you usurp the Black Civil Rights Movement's strategies and language and proudly display photos of your leaders with late civil rights icons on your websites that doesn't mean that there aren't still very serious race issues still at play in gay America.

I should have told you that Black women continue to remain under attack in this country. And that it doesn't matter what our standing in corporate America, the White House, the media, who we're married to, what our sexual orientation is, how straight and long our hair is, or how light our skin, we are still Black and



*Charles Knipp as Shirley Q. Liquor.*

we are still under attack. Hear me.

I should have sat your leaders down and explained that it is not okay for any white man, straight or gay, to perform in blackface and mock African-American names and holidays. I should have made you understand that many of the same gay nightclubs that book Knipp are owned by the same people that donate money to many of your gay civil rights groups. I should have connected the dots for you. My bad.

It was I who forgot to explain that while RuPaul is African-American, he's as disconnected from Black America as Ward Connerly. So when he defends Knipp's act, it should be taken with a grain of salt.

I should have introduced you to Angela Davis, bell hooks, June Jordan, Audre Lorde, Sojourner Truth, Alice Walker, Ida Wells-Barnett, and the plight of the Black woman. Then maybe you'd understand why Charles Knipp's act is so offensive to me as a Black woman. Then maybe you'd care.

Please forgive my short-sightedness. It won't happen again.

Blacks are so often referred to as being the conscience of America. I want you to know that from this day forward, gay America can count on this Black lesbian to be its conscience when it comes to your involuntary and voluntary racist ways.

As for Charles Knipp, some would say that you need therapy. But I say forget therapy, I'm going to tell you this for free.

I'm sorry that you weren't born one of the Black women that you so love to impersonate. I know how beautiful we are and how unfair it is that we are blessed with what your race often has to go out and pay for. But I say to you, love the skin you're in. Most people in your situation settle for surrounding themselves with Black friends, marrying someone Black, moving into a Black neighborhood, listening to hip hop, watching BET, eating Soul Food, and voting for Barack Obama. Why don't you give it try and leave the act of being Black to those of us who are? We have enough confused Black folks out there without having to take on a confused forty-five-year-old, fat, gay white man who thinks he's Black.

*At 30, Jasmyne Cannick is a critic and commentator based in Los Angeles who writes about the worlds of pop culture, race, class, sexuality, and politics as it relates to the African-American community. She can be reached at www.jasmynecannick.com or www.myspace.com/jasmynecannick.*