

Racism comes home

Historical realities cry for solutions

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In the spirit of Ma'at



The historical reality of the recent events dictates that a lesson in African American history be noted here.

No one should have to tell you not to spend your money at Texaco or rent a car from Avis. In the spirit of Ma'at and the Nguzo Saba, the racially correct action is obvious. Yes, racially correct. A brief reiteration of the African/African American value systems: Ma'at means Truth, Justice, Righteousness, Harmony and Balance. The Nguzo Saba, celebrated formally during Kwanzaa, is Unity, Self-Determination, Collective Work and Responsibility, Cooperative Economics, Creativity, Purpose and Faith.

African Americans will continue to experience Rodney King, O.J. Simpson, 100 African American churches burned in 20 months, St. Petersburg, Proposition(s) 209, Texaco, Avis, police brutality, and glass ceilings along with the endless personal assaults we each experience for the right to exist as Africans born in America, if we do not re-learn and live the value system our ancestors lived by.

All of our historical leaders have advocated racial unity as a necessary step for achieving racial equality. African American leaders who, many in the face of death, exhorted us to unite for strength and power begins with David Walker, Frederick Douglass and Martin Delaney. The call for racial unity and the power within continued with W.E.B. DuBois, Carter G. Woodson, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, William Monroe Trotter and A. Phillip Randolph. The Black Panthers, SNCC, SCLC, King and Malcolm made the same exhortations, only to be echoed by Farrakhan today.

The power and strength that racial unification generates makes this country nervous. We have the opportunity to begin practicing a number of important racial principles, among them, Ujamaa - Cooperative Economics. But we must be conscious. We must stop being indiscriminate consumers of goods and services and understand our collective economic power - \$400 billion yearly - and act like we know. No one need tell me not to rent a car from Avis. (Or buy at Belk, for that matter. But you have to know your history.)

It is time to take ourselves and our race seriously. Racial unity is a crucial pre requisite for true liberation and equality. Self-knowledge promotes consciousness and is the precursor to racial unity. This is the lesson. African Americans will continue to experience Rodney King, O.J. Simpson, 100 African American churches burned in 20 months, St. Petersburg, Proposition(s) 209, Texaco, Avis, police brutality and glass ceilings along with the endless personal assaults we each experience for the right to exist as Africans born in America if we do not re-learn and live the value system our ancestors lived by.

Principal leads comeback

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below average," he said. "That means the middle school inherits them."

"In my profile last year, approximately 40 percent of the students enrolling here were reading below average. We've made progress in those areas, but we haven't made the expected gains as presented by the school board."

One of Sawyer's first challenges was to make the faculty represent the student body. Ranson is one of the few "majority-minority" schools in the system. Yet the faculty was less than 5 percent black.

In his first year, Sawyer increased the number of black teachers and administrators. He also added two new assistants to help with discipline. Students and parents saw the difference. Dunlap, who had a child at Ranson, noticed a change after Sawyer arrived.

"Ranson had a history of being a school with discipline problems," Dunlap said. "Part of that was the boundaries set up for the school. It's a melting pot. People come from some tough neighborhoods."

Dunlap said Sawyer imposed tougher discipline.

"After he got there, there was a difference in how discipline was being handled," Dunlap said. "They are stricter in terms of punishment. Things are now being handled that before people got away with."

Sawyer credits a new sense of ownership, by both students and parents for the change in the attitude at Ranson.

"I think that what we were able to bring to Ranson is a sense that we were there to lend to children something they needed to be successful," he said. "And for children to feel comfortable expressing themselves. We are going to turn this place around."

Sawyer is a perfect fit for Ranson. He has expertise in working with children with behavioral problems and has turned around three schools during his career as a principal. He spends summers traveling around the country, working with schools in trouble.

He has brought to campus several programs to help students, from the police-sponsored Right Moves for Youth to Best

Friends, a program for girls sponsored by the Coalition of 100 Black Women.

But Sawyer knows that it is not enough.

"We try to find every and all possible alternatives for our children to become part of something," he said. "I think the more important part of education these days is opportunity. Young people don't have enough opportunities. We wanted to create opportunities for them to express themselves in different areas."

Ranson contends with shortages every day. The library, for instance, is below the 10 book per child ratio mandated by the state. Lunch is a day-long activity because of a lack of space.

"There is a disparity in resources," Dunlap said. "If the school board will look at putting more resources into it, they will be all right."

In the meantime, Sawyer makes do with what he has and continues to be there for Ranson students and parents.

"I love my job," he says, pausing to answer students' questions. "I couldn't do anything else."

Death row inmate not killer, doctors testify in Sterling Spann hearing

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defense or state's attorney during testimony Monday. He refused to acknowledge that he confessed to the Neill murder.

Hullitt and his brother-in-law lived about two miles from the home of Myrtle Robinson, an elderly white woman strangled and sexually assaulted in Gastonia in 1975, according to Spann's hearing request. Three young black men were convicted.

Defense attorney John Blume's motion for a new trial cited analysis by the forensic experts - Drs. Werner Spitz and Emanuel Tanay - concluding the three murders were committed by the same serial killer. Blume also cited evidence corroborating Spann's explanation of how he obtained a coin belonging to the victim and expert analysis questioning the state's fingerprint evidence presented at Spann 1982 trial.

Spann was convicted and sentenced to death row in April 1982.

On Monday, Spitz, a nationally recognized pathologist, said the similarities between the three murders were so startling they could only be the work of one person.

Spitz, who reviewed autopsies of the victims and other documents, worked in the investigations of President John Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. and the O.J. Simpson case.

Most unusual, Spitz noted, was the method of strangulation - a sleeper-type hold similar to one used by police to subdue violent suspects. That hold, in which the arm is wrapped around the neck from behind with pressure applied to the sides of the neck, reduces blood flow to the brain. That hold does not apply pressure to the thyroid area.

Spitz said the victim dies slowly, but no bones are broken in the voice box area, bones which would be especially brittle in elderly women.

"The reason this is a significant finding and cannot be ignored is this is very rare," Spitz said. "I have not seen this method of death in conjunction with rape of an elderly victim. It indicates a common link."

He called the method of strangulation a "red flag" which should have been checked out by police investigators.

Other common links, Spitz said, where that the women were all grabbed tightly on the shoulders from behind, apparently during the violent sexual assault, possibly sodomy. The victims were beaten about the face and body, and their genital and rectal areas were assaulted. They were killed in a 60-day cycle within a 12-mile radius. The victims' clothing were cut

York man convicted in deaths of three elderly S.C. women

and two of the three were found in the bathtub. Alexander was found on the floor, covered in fruit juices.

"In my opinion, one person committed the offenses," Spitz said. "My overall conclusion, based on the significant similarities in the findings relative to the three individuals that strongly suggest a single perpetrator was involved in the three cases."

Following Spitz to the witness stand, Dr. Emanuel Tanay, a forensic psychologist, said he interviewed Spann and Hullitt and reviewed autopsy results from the cases.

Tanay, who worked on the case of serial killer Ted Bundy, said it was obvious the murders were committed by the same person. The murderer wanted to torture the victims, not just kill them, and derived sexual pleasure from it, Tanay said.

He called the killings "sadistic sexual homicides," which were so rare that its unlikely in a population the size of York County, there would be more than one sociopathic or psychopathic person committing such crimes.

Tanay noted police investigators were aware of the similarities between the Neill and Alexander murders and went back to make sure Spann was still in jail after finding Alexander's body.

"This kind of homicide is exceedingly rare," Tanay said. "It involves transgression of barriers and inhibitions, including torturing another human being, sexually assaulting an elderly woman, mutilation of genitalia. The three cases in question are unique and very rare."

"This is not about killing, this is about deriving sexual pleasure from inflicting pain or sexual pain on another individual. The individual is sadistic. He is not pursuing so much the death, but the torture and derives sexual pleasure from this."

Ted Bundy was the "classic case" of this, Tanay said. Most "sadistic sexual homicides" are committed by white males, he said.


Tanay's examinations of Hullitt and Spann and a review of their medical records and histories, indicate that Hullitt is the likely killer, because of his sadistic nature. Tanay noted that Hullitt had anally raped his wife and sexually assaulted his daughter, who was also scheduled to testify during the hearing.

Spann, on the other, showed no signs of abnormal behavior or psychological illness, despite his 14 years of incarceration.



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Lending A Helping Hand

Local McDonald's Owner/Operators roll up their sleeves to make a difference in their communities.

By Leonard Saleeby, Denny Anderson and Sharman Thornton as told by Karen Brown Tyson

In the spirit of McDonald's founder, Ray Kroc, local operators in North Carolina are lending a helping hand to make a difference in their communities.

Leonard Saleeby, a local McDonald's operator in Fayetteville, has demonstrated a commitment to his community through food donations to the Downtown Outreach Center for Males and sponsorship of the WIDU Gospel Celebration. Most recently, Saleeby, along with other McDonald's owners, joined a group of Fayetteville citizens in restoring the historic Orange Street School.


"Donating our time and services to restore such an important piece as the Orange Street School, was an honor," Said Saleeby.

The importance of educational development doesn't end in Fayetteville. Denny Anderson, who operates 10 McDonald's restaurants in Wilmington believes it's important for young people to continue their education. Each year, Anderson hosts the McDonald's Black History Makers of Tomorrow program. Working with the North Carolina Black Chamber of Commerce, Anderson encourages high school juniors to submit an essay on "How I Plan to Impact Black History." The winners of the contest are honored during a banquet celebration and awarded \$250 Scholarships for college.

Sharman Thornton, an operator in Charlotte agrees with Anderson, "Faced with so many tough issues today, young people everywhere are reaching out for support and encouragement. As a businesswoman and a mother, I plan to provide that support anyway possible."

With determination and commitment, Thornton provided that support by sponsoring an art auction featuring African-American artists. The \$10,000 raised at the auction was donated to the African-American Culture Center in Charlotte.

In North Carolina and across the country, McDonald's owners are keeping the spirit of giving alive.



Have You Had Your Break Today?