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# The true meaning of Turkey's Day

By James Clingman

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By the time you read this article many of you will have eaten enough to feed one of those starving children for a week, and some of you will have gone out and spent your hard-earned money on things you did not need just because the advertisers told you the biggest shopping day of the year is the day after Thanksgiving.

By the time you read this, you will have taken advantage of the big sales and all of the bargains, thus, continuing the trend of enriching others by creating wealth for them, while maintaining the current level of economic enslavement that exists among African Americans. Oh yeah, and we will inevitably hear the post-Thanksgiving fallout about "Black Friday" and how we should have spent our money at black-owned businesses and vendor marketplaces.

I have written several articles on this subject and decided to curtail my pre-Thanksgiving pleadings this year. It seems to do no good to suggest that we incorporate a daily, year-round, sustainable economic strategy rather than get all bent out of shape when Thanksgiving and Christmas roll around. I suppose that's too easy and we definitely like things to be difficult, don't we? For instance, I have pushed and advocated for a mindset, a collective consciousness among black folks that would create in us a daily "habit" of seeking out black businesses and mutual support.

If we could ever get to that state of mind we would not have to revisit the annual flawed strategy of waiting for the holidays to react to our economic plight in this country. We would not need Black Out Days and other superfluous efforts that only last for short periods of time and have no sustaining effect on those we are attempting to hurt. As a matter of fact, we get so hung-up on hurting others and often neglect the fact that we should be helping ourselves.

With all of that said, I am suggesting that we are the real turkeys in the economic scenario of this country. They carve us up and divide us up every year – as a matter of fact, they do it all year long. They stuff us with advertising and marketing campaigns, rub us down with the oil of credit, tie our legs together in order to keep us contained, and then they bake us all day long in their oven malls until we are done, I mean really done. Then they feast on us for the following four weeks or so, as turkey stew, turkey sandwiches, turkey soup, turkey hash, and turkey salad.

They slice us, dice us, fry us, mix us up, and stir us up in an effort to keep that turkey flavor flowing for as long as they can. And we accommodate them by continuing to buy, buy, and buy all year long, all the while neglecting our own economic survival.

Yes, we are indeed their Thanksgiving turkeys, brothers and sisters. We are also their Christmas presents. When are we going to wake up from our fantasy-land economic delusions? Black people in this country are the economic fodder for everyone else's well-being and prosperity. We complain, march, and come up with strategies and tactics that do no more than make us feel good about getting an apology from those who economically exploit us. Our so-called leaders tell us when to be angry, what to be angry about, and at whom we should be angry. They even tell us when it's time to stop being mad, but they seldom tell us anything we can do to economically empower ourselves to the point where it would no longer matter who calls us a name or fails to give us good service at their restaurant.

What brand of leadership serves its own people up for dinner? I often say that we have enough intellectual capacity to great things for our economic future and that of our children. The message from our "leaders" should be couched in economic freedom, self-reliance, and empowerment, rather than feed us a steady diet of mere "feel-good," "you can do it," and "you're a winner," speeches and strategies.

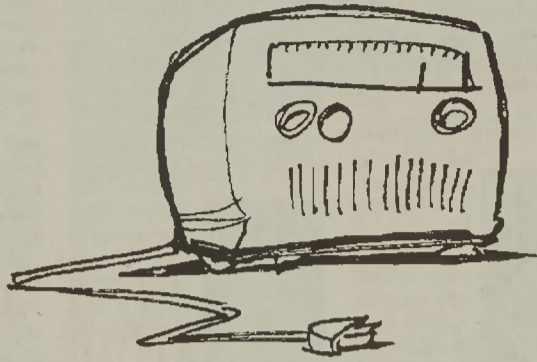
They should be teaching us how to move beyond the rhetoric to real action and progress from year to year. They should, in addition to the registering to vote campaigns, teach us what Booker T. Washington taught us: How to register our dollars all year long. They should show us the way to economic freedom; they should lead us there, and they should serve us, as Carter G. Woodson wrote, with their expertise in business, finance, and entrepreneurship.

Every Thanksgiving and Christmas, we are marinated, basted in our own savory juices, and cooked to perfection until the meat just falls off our bones, not unlike the dollars that fall out of our pockets and purses. We traipse to the stores, plop down the green, and return to our abodes to complain about how miserably "they" treat us.

This year, as we move through another holiday season that used to be a Holy Day season, let's resolve to change the menu and take turkey off the tables of the corporate hordes. And let's stop allowing our people to be consumed and digested, only to be excreted upon when the New Year begins. I apologize for the graphic language, but this is just that serious, brothers and sisters. We're supposed to have the meal, not be the meal. It's called "Turkey Day," not "Turkeys' Day."

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PULLING THE PLUG  
AT WGIN-AM ...



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## Jackson's mess is no Thriller

GEORGE E. CURRY



Unlike many of my colleagues, I had planned to abstain from writing about Michael Jackson's latest troubles. I wanted to just say no. And I was doing fine until Jermaine Jackson asserted that his brother was being lynched.

The problem is that when we take cases that have only a tangential relationship to race and characterize them as "racism" or a "lynching," we cheapen the instances where that is actually the case. Getting justice or even media attention in a legitimate discrimination case is hard enough without the distraction of throwing irrelevant analogies into the mix.

We don't like to admit it, but there are some African-Americans who see a conspiracy in everything negative that involves a black person. I suspect that when it rains, some black people believe that a white person is disturbing the clouds to make African-Americans wet. It's time to get a grip.

The latest case is the result of the alleged victim of child molestation confiding to a professional counselor who, as required by law, shared that information with law enforcement authorities. A search was made of "Neverland," Jackson's sprawling California estate

in Santa Barbara County, and the singer was subsequently charged with multiple counts of lewd and lascivious conduct with a minor, booked and released on a \$3 million bond. Jackson has steadfastly maintained that he's not guilty.

This would have been a major story if such accusations had been filed against Captain Kangaroo. Jackson's race is not the issue. It's even more of a story because a decade ago, Jackson reached an out-of-court settlement to resolve a similar complaint.

Unfortunately for Jackson, these charges came in November, a sweeps period in which many television stations measure their audience. The larger the audience, the more a station or network can charge for commercials. Coverage is also expanded because we live in a world of around-the-clock cable television networks that need stories to fill all that airtime.

The media deserves criticism, but for a different reason.

The name and the photograph of the boy making the allegation against Jackson have been widely circulated in foreign newspapers and on Web sites. An Australian site, newscom.au, has reproduced a picture of Jackson

with the boy, now 14 years old, and disclosed his name. South Africa's Sunday Mail ran the headline, "The boy who outed Jacko." A headline in the Sydney, Australia, Sunday Telegraph read, "Jackson's accuser – Revealed: The boy who brought down superstar Michael Jackson."

While professing not to stoop to such low levels, U.S. newspapers have not used the name of Jackson's accuser. Anyone who saw a British documentary by Martin Bashir on Michael Jackson, the one in which he admits to having slept in the bed with young boys but sees nothing wrong with the practice, can easily identify the boy.

The Los Angeles Times, under the headline "Hard Life for Jackson's Alleged Victim," quotes the boy in the documentary: "There was one night I asked him if I could stay in the bedroom. And he let me stay in the bedroom." Jackson quickly added at the time that he had slept on the floor that night. The Times further identifies the kid by writing, "The boy had leukemia and received treatment at Children's Hospital in Los Angeles."

The New York's Daily News struck a self-congratulatory tone: "And the boy – who has not been identified by police, and whose name is being withheld by the Daily News – is caught in a tug-of-war between his estranged parents."

Considering the amount of

details the Daily News provided about the boy, they did not need to publish his name in order to identify him.

The paper's story began, "Be careful what you wish for." It continued, "The cancer-stricken boy said to be at the center of the Michael Jackson kiddie sex scandal was introduced to the pop star by a soft-hearted businessman who wanted to make the youth's dream come true...His wish was to meet Adam Sandler, Chris Tucker or Michael Jackson."

The child got his wish – forever altering his life and Jackson's.

Syndicated columnist Leonard Pitts Jr. put it best: "He is a 45-year-old man wearing lipstick and eyeliner on a surgically altered face that could give Charles Manson nightmares. He is 10 years removed from a child molestation scandal. His home is a monument to arrested development."

And the boy's parents are not without fault. Michael gave everyone a clue when he named his larger-than-life playground. "Neverland." It should have sent all parents a clear message: Never let your son land in this place.

GEORGE E. CURRY is editor-in-chief of the NNPA News Service and BlackPressUSA.com. His most recent book is "The Best of Emerge Magazine," an anthology published by Ballantine Books. He can be reached through his Web site, georgecurry.com.

## Urging leader to make adjustments

D.G. MARTIN



President Bush's quick Thanksgiving visit to the troops was an appropriate and touching gesture from the commander who sent them there.

The president's trip and his dogged determination to find a winning solution in Iraq reminded me of a leadership trait of someone whom I admired very much.

That person was smart, had good judgment, and most often made very good choices of the options that were presented to him. But it was not for these good qualities that I most admired him. It was when he sometimes made a decision that was not the best choice that he showed his great strength.

He was so tenacious, determined, and strong that he would make even his "wrong" decisions turn out

well.

Lots of us would argue that the best thing to do when you have made a wrong decision is to back up, change course, and try to minimize the damage. Sometimes, for some people a decision reversal is best.

On the other hand, it is to a leader's great advantage to have people know that when he starts something, he is going to stick with it until the job is done. Those who follow or support such a person can know that they will not be left to "hang out to dry" by a "wishy-washy" leader. None of us can get comfortable following someone who changes his mind after we have gone out on a limb for him.

I thought about all of these things as I watched the president's Thanksgiving trip that showed symbolically his determination to make his decision to invade and occupy Iraq turn out for the best.

I observed his efforts with admiration even though I disagreed with his initial decision – and still do. The consequences were too obvi-

ous from the beginning. As I wrote in this column in March just before the invasion, the president must deal "with the hard responsibilities that will come from the expected military success in Iraq. Governing this diverse country, composed of warring factions and peoples, is hard enough for a brutal dictator like Saddam Hussein, who has no reluctance to eliminate dissent by torture, murder, and widespread repression.

Even if we had broad-based support from other countries and the United Nations, trying to impose peace and democracy on Iraq would drain the financial and spiritual resources of our country. Without that international help, the president must be beginning to understand that he may be committing us to a 'Vietnam-type' enterprise, one that will keep us from other important tasks to keep our country safe and healthy."

Still believing that the president made the wrong initial choice about Iraq, I want very much for him to

make this project a success. Success will not come easy. Iraq is proving even harder to govern than I thought back in March. Imposing order on the many dissident groups more and more seems to require the ruthless style of Saddam Hussein – a style our military is not conditioned to duplicate. Nor can we in good conscience now leave those groups to fight among themselves until another Hussein rises up to impose order by crushing all dissent.

The leaders we most admire are not only determined ones, but ones who learn that to stay the course to success, they often have to make painful adjustments.

Those of us who wish for a successful conclusion in Iraq should advocate for those adjustments, including an immediate and real internationalization of the occupation, and urge them on the president – even as we admire his determined spirit.

D.G. MARTIN hosts UNC-TV's North Carolina Bookwatch, which airs Sundays at 5 p.m.