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Gerald O. Johnson CEO/PUBLISHER
Robert L. Johnson PUBLISHER/GENERAL MANAGER

Herbert L. White
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Democrats are political scaredy-cats

By Ron Walters
SPECIAL TO THE POST

I have been asked often why George Bush has not been impeached for malfeasance, given the illegal intervention in Iraq, I have generally replied that Bush would have to be charged with "high crimes and misdemeanors." Of course, we all know that the definition this concept is purely political inasmuch as Bill Clinton was impeached for consensual sex with a woman in the White House.

Compare what Bill Clinton did with Bush leading the country into an illegal war. He did so without the support of the country's strongest allies, under the false pretense of finding "weapons of mass destruction." In the process, we have wasted precious lives and financial resources.

Congressman Charles Rangel has recently drawn up impeachment articles against Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. In remarks on the House floor, Rangel pointed out that the Constitution gives to the House of Representatives the sole power of impeachment covering civil officers of the United States government. So far, only one such officer, Secretary of War William Worth Belknap, was impeached. And that was in 1876 for bribery.

I think an additional approach could be for the military's commission of crimes against persons who are considered prisoners of war in contravention to the Geneva Convention. It could be leveled against both President Bush and Secretary Rumsfeld. It should be focused at the top.

Why? Because Brig. General Mark Kimmitt and a story in Newsweek magazine revealed that Rumsfeld demanded to personally sign off on various tactics would that would be used to interrogate prisoners at the Guantanamo Base facility in Cuba immediately after the September 11 attack. That fits his detail, hands-on style of micro-management that has driven the military crazy and caused him to be unpopular with the higher brass.

We are led to believe that Rumsfeld approved these measures without the authorization of the president of the United States. In fact, it is known that Bush was told by Rumsfeld in late January or early February of this year that abuses of the prisoners had occurred in the facility at Abu Ghraib. So, we are also led to believe that Bush knew about what had happened, but did not approve of Rumsfeld participating in a cover-up by keeping this information away from Congress or the American people.

That means we should also believe that Rumsfeld participated in a closed intelligence briefing for the Senate Armed Services Committee on April 28, but did not disclose the secret report prepared by Major General Antonio Tagabu on the atrocities - and that President Bush did not know of his cover-up. Then, we should also believe that General Myers, the commanding general, called "60 Minutes II" to keep them from showing the pictures and that he did this all on his own, without any direction from the White House.

In other words, we are supposed to believe that Bush was not informed about all of this and did not issue any directives or guidance or make any decisions with respect to these events, taking the concept of "deniability" to one of the wildest heights in history. Our ignorance can only be resolved in the court of an impeachment hearing.

What connects this administration to a "high crime," is that it has committed war crimes as defined in the Geneva Convention. We have participated in an International Criminal Court hearing against the butcher Melosovich of Bosnia fame. And while at first blush the atrocities committed by the Bush folks don't appear to be anywhere near that, the fact is that we don't know of the extent to which this has occurred where prisoners have been kept.

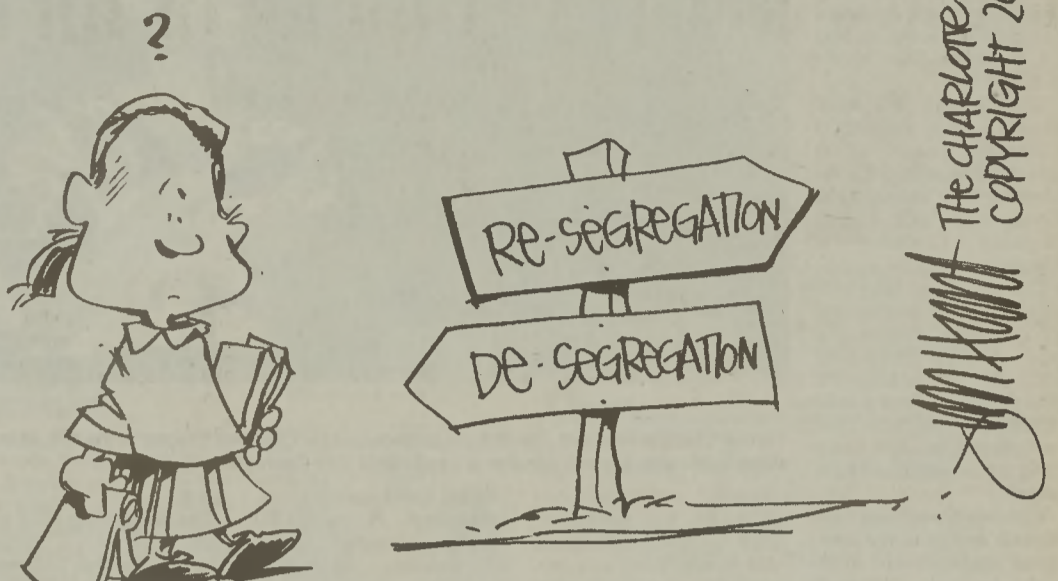
What is coming out is that there was tremendous pressure on the White House to justify its role in Iraq, to find weapons of mass destruction and to obtain the kind of intelligence that would lead them to Saddam Hussein and his remaining combatants who were killing American soldiers. This pressure was the fuel for the tactics used against other human beings and could have happened in other locations as well.

So, the question is who, or what entity will lead where the information goes? The Democrats appear to be knock-kneed, lily-livered punks when it comes to achieving anything like the aggressiveness with which the Republican pursued Clinton. You wouldn't know there was an election going and this issue could decide it.

Karl Rove knows and he is putting up one hell of a fight for Bush while Democrats are tap-dancing. If Bush gets overcomes this, John Kerry, his handlers, and Democratic National Committee leaders should be placed in a prison camp. Don't even both to send me the pictures.

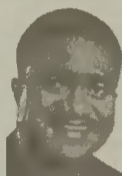
RON WALTERS is professor of government and politics at the University of Maryland-College Park. His latest book is "White Nationalism, Black Interests" (Wayne State University Press).

FIFTY YEARS LATER ... ANOTHER CROSSROAD



The second tragedy for Emmett Till

GEORGE E. CURRY



For almost 50 years, Emmett Till's mother, Mamie Till Mobley, has asked the president of the United States and the attorney general to correct a shameful miscarriage of justice.

Her son, Emmett, a 14-year-old African-American, was murdered while visiting relatives in Mississippi in 1955 for allegedly whistling at a white woman.

Initially, Till's mother appealed to President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Attorney General Herbert Brownell and FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover for help. They refused. So did every subsequent president, Democrat and Republican, liberal and conservative. Bill Clinton wouldn't help. And nor would George W. Bush. Not until now. Not until five months before the next presidential election. Not until a year after Mamie Till went to her grave without having seen justice served.

Emmett Till's death was a tragedy. The second tragedy is that the Justice Department's announcement last week that it will finally look into the possibility of re-opening the Till case is what one former white

House aide called TL-square: Too little, too late.

Shortly after they were acquitted for murdering young Till, Roy Bryant and his half-brother, J.W. Milam, admitted to writer William Bradford Huie that they had abducted Till, shot him in the head and thrown him into the Tallahatchie River.

Writing in Look magazine, Huie said Milam told him: "Well, when he [Emmett] told me about this white girl he had, my friend, that what this war's about down here. That's what we got to fight to protect. I just looked at him and I said, 'Boy, you ain't never going to see the sun come up again.'"

Bryant and Milam were poor white trailer park trash. There was never any doubt about their guilt and no one believed for one scintilla of a second their story that they snatched young Till from his great uncle's house, only to let him go unharmed. Rather than frown on the heinous murder of an unarmed teenager, the good ol' boys network protected Bryant and Milam. The sheriff helped the defense attorneys select jurors. All five members of the local bar served as defense attorneys.

An hour and seven minutes after leaving the courtroom, the all-white, all-male jury returned with a not-guilty verdict. No one was surprised.

The amazing thing about

that ordeal was the courage displayed by African-

Americans, knowing that they, too, could suffer a similar fate. Till's aging great uncle had the nerves to identify Milam and Bryant in open court. Medgar Evers, the NAACP's first field secretary in Mississippi, dressed as a field hand and went from plantation to plantation to locate reluctant witnesses. Journalist James Hicks and Ruby Hurley, a field representative for the NAACP, slipped into Milam's barn, where Till had been beaten and shot, looking for evidence. Some witnesses pretended to be dead and left Mississippi in caskets so that they could return later to testify against Milam and Bryant.

They took such bold actions knowing that they were risking their lives.

Just three months before Till's murder, Rev. George Lee, who became the first black to register in his county, was killed in Belzoni, Miss., apparently to dissuade other African-Americans from following his lead. Even though he had been shot in the face with a blast from a shotgun, Lee's death was ruled a traffic accident. No one was ever arrested.

A week before Till arrived in Mississippi, another African-American, Lamar Smith, was shot to death in front of the courthouse in Brookhaven, Miss. He had

recently voted in the state's Democratic primary. Again, no one was arrested for his murder.

Now contrast that courage with the cowardly behavior of national, state and local officials.

William Bradford Huie initially said there were four white men involved in the murder of Till. We know that two of them - Bryant and Milam - lived and died without ever being punished. The most that can be expected from this investigation is that those two persons will be belatedly brought to justice. Don't be surprised if several black farm hands that worked for the murders are implicated as well. They were ordered to clean up the mess that was created in the aftermath of Till's bloody death and at least one is believed to have accompanied Bryant and Milam when they abducted Till.

Even at this late date, I am glad the case is getting a second look. It saddens me, however, that that elected officials over the years didn't have a modicum of the courage that blacks in Mississippi demonstrated from the outset.

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," (Ballantine Books). He can be reached through his Web site, georgecurry.com.

Hillary Clinton's worst nightmare

By Michael F. Cannon
SPECIAL TO THE POST

Ever since the Clinton administration's proposal to direct America's health care system from Washington, D.C., went down in ignominious defeat a decade ago, its chief architect, Hillary Rodham Clinton, has shied away from "comprehensive health care reform." That is, until now.

Breaking what must have been a difficult 10-year silence, Sen. Clinton (D-N.Y.) recently asked on the cover of The New York Times Magazine, "Now Can We Talk About Health Care?" Without waiting for an answer, she called for "a new social contract for a new century premised on joint responsibility to prevent disease and provide those who need care access to it." Unfortunately, the new social contract looks a lot like the old social contract she offered last century.

Except for a few 21st century garnishes, Clinton's article relies on decade-old misconceptions and contradictions. She argues the U.S.

ranks 42nd among nations in infant mortality, even though many nations under-report infant deaths and when measured by birth weight, infants do better in the U.S. than in nations with supposedly lower mortality rates. She claims there are 43 million uninsured Americans despite authoritative scholarship showing the number is closer to half that figure. At the same time she decries the lack of treatments for rare diseases, she praises the same Food and Drug Administration that makes such treatments unprofitable.

"Individuals should understand that they put their lives at risk with unhealthy behavior," she says, but risk-based insurance pricing is cruel. Emergency room overcrowding is not a consequence of socialization, but evidence of the need for greater socialization.

Clinton's prescription remains "universal coverage," despite evidence that what such health systems provide is neither universal nor coverage. In addition to

the perverse incentives this would introduce, she hints at rules that would substitute the government's judgment about what treatments are appropriate for the judgment of the physician on the spot, plus similar rules governing health benefits, insurance pricing, medical records, municipalities, hospitals, household cleaners, gym class, diet, urban sprawl, you name it. It's déjà vu, all over again.

The reason behind Clinton's shift in strategy is hidden to all but the most ardent supporters and opponents of socialized medicine.

The recently enacted Medicare prescription drug law contains a deceptively small provision allowing personal, tax-free health savings accounts. Health savings accounts mark a fundamental shift federal health care policy. Health savings accounts treat an individual's medical expenditures and savings on a par with tax-free employer expenditures. As a result, they empower individuals to become stewards of their

own health care dollars rather than force people to depend on their employer to spend those dollars wisely.

However, the consequences that frighten the left are political. The left cannot impose a government-run health care system without a widespread sense of entitlement and openness to dependence, both of which are manifest in America's health care sector.

Former Sen. Phil Gramm quips that the left reacts to health savings accounts like a vampire reacts to a cross, because the left knows that once patients get a taste of freedom, all hope of achieving a government-run health care system will vanish.

To the most ardent supporters and opponents of health care consumerism, Clinton's desire to accelerate socialization makes perfect sense. Considering how health savings accounts will transform America's health care sector, it's imperative.

MICHAEL F. CANNON is director of health policy studies for the Cato Institute (www.cato.org).