

Blacks should complain about subtle intimidation or expect worse

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Syndicated Columnist

If you have ever attended a predominantly white school, you know what the word intimidation means.

Doors are closed just as you are going through them. People bump into you without excusing themselves. No one says "hello," "thank you" or "please." It's almost as if you don't exist. You sit in a class and feel as if all eyes are on you.

You feel as though you are under a magnifying glass. Soon, even if no one calls you a "nigger," you still know that you are not wanted. No one tells you to go home, but you want to go anyhow. "They" can be brutal when they want to be. But somehow, you stick it out. You don't really know why. It's almost a challenge, a contest, between you and them. They think that you are inferior, but you'll show them. You'll win or go

down fighting.

Did you read about the seven black professionals who sued Ramada Inn Hotel in Baltimore for \$5 million? The seven attempted separately during one evening to visit a discotheque located in the Ramada Inn. While they were asked to produce two pieces of identification, whites were allowed to enter with one piece of identification (and no I.D. in some cases). A Maryland state trooper observed this violation of civil rights.

If that shocks you, this will probably floor you: two years ago a well-known disco in Washington, D.C., refused to admit the mayor's wife. Can you imagine that? The mayor's wife unable to enter a disco that operated with a license issued by the city of which her husband is mayor. That club was also sued and is now out of business. The mayor and his wife, incidentally, are black.

So what else is new? The ugly head of racism is as ugly today as

it ever was. The shrewd way to discriminate now is often subtle and almost hidden. You don't realize that you have been discriminated against until you get home and think about it. Instead of overtly rejecting blacks, the method is often disguised. The double-standard is back: one criteria is used to judge whites, another more difficult (and often unnecessary) criteria is used to judge blacks. Good old Southern Jim Crow has come north. So what else is new? This double-standard practice is not new and is very widespread. When the discrimination in Baltimore and Washington was publicized, many other blacks began to tell about the difficulties that they had experienced in being admitted to downtown discos and so-called exclusive clubs, which at the time, were found to be insidious.

It is similar from city to city and club to club: whites walk right on in while blacks must submit to embarrassing, close

scrutiny. Perhaps the great discovery is that blacks are so often exposed to this form of racism that they often accept it without complaint and return politely to their homes without raising even a whimper.

That's one of the reasons these problems exist in the first place. Many blacks think it simply isn't worth the hassle to complain, so they act as if the problem doesn't exist.

The Reagan administration has left it up to you to respond to the problem of discrimination to the best of your ability and with your own resources. They are not going to help you. And if Reagan is re-elected, they are going to make it more difficult to defend yourself. If you do not challenge it, the monster simply gets bigger and bigger and bolder and bolder.

Actually, racism gets worse if you don't complain about it when it happens to you, because racists think of us as weak and begin to enjoy embarrassing us.

They must know that every time they even begin to think about discriminating, blacks are going to complain. There seems to be very little inhibition on the part of whites to exclude blacks when they feel threatened, either financially or psychologically, by the participation of blacks in "their" activities. However, blacks seem very reluctant to complain even in the face of obvious discrimination.

Perhaps it is the religious tradition that motivates blacks to yield to the dictum, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto

you." This very postulate has aided the continuation and even perpetuation of acute racial discrimination.

So, the enemy has gone underground instead of away. Perhaps blacks should be suspicious. And it is this necessary suspicion that gives blacks the labels of paranoid and racist. Maybe it is better to wear these labels with pride and exterminate racism, rather than wear the labels of "socially impotent" and participate indirectly in the tradition of black society as we now know it.

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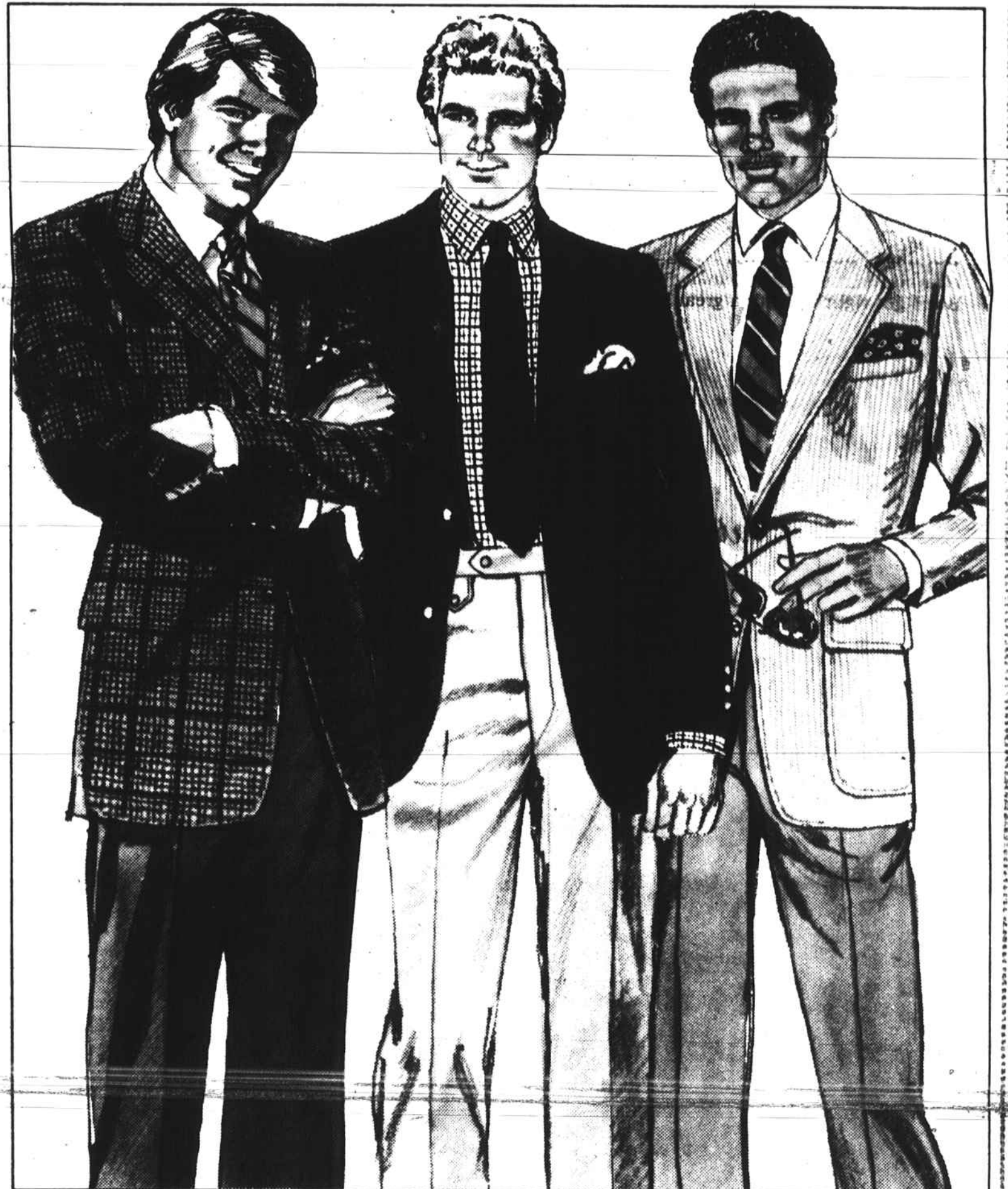
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