

Seale

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film is total fiction; it had nothing to do whatsoever with the real true issue of the Black Panther Party," he said. "They give you some insidious notion that we're some street toughs that just started talking talk and got hold of some guns."

That's not the case, Seale said. He says they decided to take matters to another level with weapons but not as aggressors, only defenders.

"...We as young folks said we're going to take the position that if a bunch of racists attack us, we're going to defend ourselves," he said.

But the journey down the road to the beginning of the Black Panther Party was an auspicious one. It all started back in 1962 in California.

Seale was just one of the many thousand young college students who packed the Oakland auditorium at the time to hear slain civil rights leader the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. speak.

"He talked about economics because (business owners) wouldn't hire black folks," Seale said. "(King) went on to say, 'Brothers and sisters, I want you to boycott Wonder Bread...and make Wonder Bread wonder where our money went to.' That stuff used to get to me."

With King's moving speech fresh in his mind, Seale realized that he knew nothing about the historical struggle of his race. Determined to change this, he

read hundreds of books by black authors like W.E.B. Dubois and Frederick Douglas from 1962-1965.

He went to hear speeches from other black leaders of the time such as the Nation of Islam's Malcom X and even delved into the political issues surrounding Nelson Mandela, who was then going to trial in South Africa.

In October 1966, using his own money, Seale rented an office and the Black Panther Party for Self Defense was born. A year and a half later, more than 400 had joined the fledgling civil rights group.

But, it wasn't until the assassination of King in April 1968 that the Panther membership grew by leaps and bounds.

"In a matter of five months I had over four and a half thousand members of the Black Panther Party," Seale said. "I had 45 chapters headed out across the United States."

Seale says that many college students were jolted by King's death and wanted to jump on to the Panther Party wagon and fight oppression. WSSU professor and local activist Larry Little was a part of that group. In 1969 Little joined a group that included current Board of Alderman member Nelson Malloy in starting a Winston-Salem chapter in 1969.

Little flew out to California for training. He met the Panther founder while he was doing time in a San Francisco jail.

"It so inspired me because I



Bobby Seale, co-founder of the Black Panther Party, was on the campus of Winston-Salem State University this past week. The 66-year-old will be speaking at a student luncheon at UNC-Greensboro this Saturday.

Photo by Damon Ford

was following a leader who not only talked that talk but he was prepared to walk that walk and from that point on we have established a lifetime bond and friendship," he said.

Looking at the many acts of racism that continue to run rampant around the nation, including the recent grisly dragging death

of James Byrd in Jasper, Texas, Seale says things have not changed, but the way to fight has. Guns are not the answer, education is, he says.

"I want every black young person, male or female, to be able to come out of college making \$100,000 a year-make a million a year, but the main thing they got

to remember (is) five, 10, 20 or three percent of their energy and time has to go into trying to solve these problems and eradicate this country of all forms of institutionalized racism and exploitation," he said. "They have to make some small contribution."

Seale said he would like to "get a couple million young peo-

ple today 18, 19, 20 to evolve to a point 10 years from now in this high-tech fast-paced, scientific social order to understand that I'm going to make a contribution to ultimately try to eradicate any and all forms of excessive exploitation and any and all forms of continuing institutionalized racism."

Hooks

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The one who has doled out stinging criticisms on topics like the black family and on public figures like Oprah Winfrey, gradually came out as the audience quizzed her for her opinions on various issues.

To truly end racism, whites must help eradicate white privilege - the benefits gained in this society for simply being Caucasian - hooks said after being asked about the topic.

She criticized some whites for denying the existence of both white privilege and racism. This denial is one small drawback in the enormous strides made in the Civil Rights Movement, hooks said.

"Denial is very, very dangerous. At least in the Civil Rights era, we didn't have white people telling us racism doesn't exist," she said.

In the Civil Rights Movement blacks also felt that they had to educate whites about their plight in order to garner their support, hooks said, after someone asked her about the rise in diversity/sensitivity training programs in corporations throughout the country.

But today, hooks said, many whites don't need to be educated about race; they just refuse to share the wealth with minorities and women.

"A lot of them are not ignorant, they just want to hold on to power...Information itself does not lead to change," hooks said.

Later, while urging the audience to be supportive of the plight of people throughout the world, hooks said not to lose sight of what's happening in our own backyard.

"It is tragic," she said alluding to the situation in Kosovo, "but in our nation people are going hungry everyday...There are people here who are victims of class terrorism." But hooks saved her critical words for the black community.

When asked about the proliferation of the word "nigger" in pop culture, hooks said that she does not buy into the notion that blacks have now turned the slur into a positive affirmation.

"I see too much self-hate among young black males to believe that saying the word nigger is empowering," hooks said, making dramatic gestures with one of her hands. She also lashed out at the rap world for helping to foster a misogynistic culture where women feel they have to change who they are to fit a certain ideal.

"Lil' Kim had a boob job. Lil' Kim is a little porn, rap star," hooks said, describing the entertainer as the audience laughed nervously at her bold description.

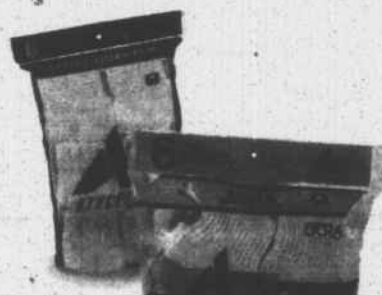
hooks said she recently interviewed the multi-platinum rap artist - best known for her album "Hard Core" - and found that she was not self-made, but the creation of what several men thought a woman

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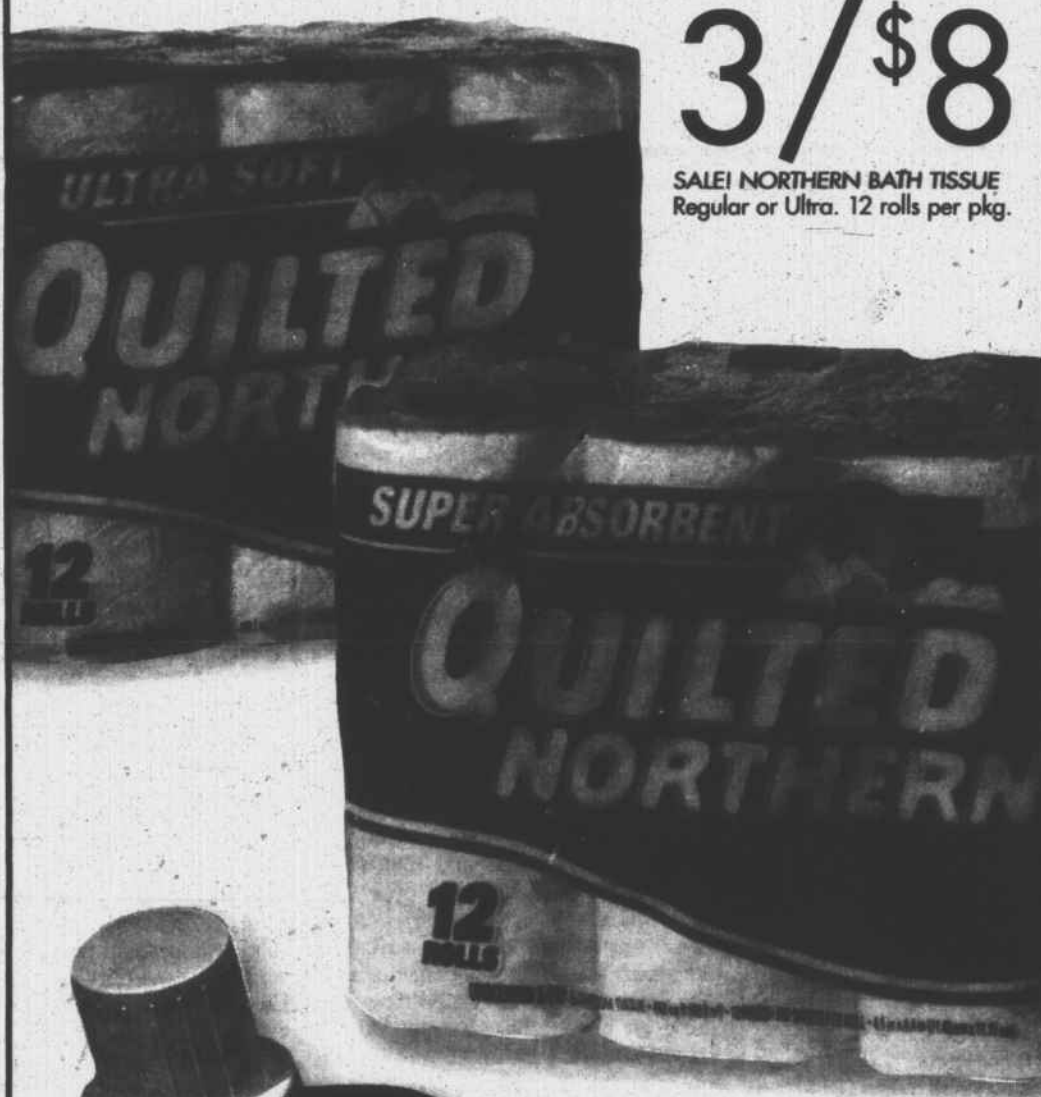
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