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# The Daily Tar Heel

88th year of editorial freedom

## The crystal glass

\*Last of two parts

A glass is filled with water to its halfway point. Is it half full or half empty? Does it hold the promise of quenching one's thirst or will in only wet the throat and tongue and make the pangs of thirst that much more acute? Bobby Doctor, regional director of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, uses this simple analogy to illustrate the subtle but real difference in the way blacks and whites perceive racial progress made in the last 15 years. (Doctor suggests that blacks see the glass half empty, while whites see it half full.) It is a poignant analogy, one that crystallizes the dilemma of black/white relations today, but it does not define the enormity or the complexity of the issue.

What does the future of black/white relations hold for Americans? A brief capsule of some of the events sure to affect this relationship is revealing. Membership in the Ku Klux Klan had doubled to 10,000 during the past five years and few would doubt that the number of Klan sympathizers would shame the membership figure. Accompanying this resurgence in racist activity is an increase in race-related crimes. Many blacks, in turn, are responding angrily and, sometimes, violently.

The recent Republican takeover of the Senate has spurred men like Sen. Jesse Helms, (R-N.C.), and Sen. Orrin Hatch, (R-Utah), to introduce measures that would make Affirmative Action and busing even hotter issues. Hatch is proposing a constitutional amendment that would ban Affirmative Action programs on the basis of reverse discrimination. Helms' legislation would make it impossible for the Justice Department to initiate or participate in any action to enforce busing.

As Harvard sociologist Thomas Pettigrew said more than a year ago, "Global attitudes on racial justice have in fact changed greatly in a positive direction, especially among young whites, but what hasn't improved much is the attitude toward the implementation of programs for achieving racial justice. On a whole series of implemented programs, attitudes have grown worse in the 70s."

Yet, even these complicated questions do not encompass what is perhaps the most pressing race-related problem today—the inner cities. It is, after all, in these areas where poverty, ignorance and hatred can be found in their most deplorable and naked forms. Even as many middle-class blacks enjoy the benefits of equal opportunity—and figures show that many young blacks are making gains comparable to those of whites of the same age—the blacks of the urban ghettos are excluded from this prosperity. As the middle-class black sector grows into a potent political and economic force, the ghettos grow as well—ugly and threatening.

The efforts by federal government to improve these potentially explosive areas have failed. And former civil rights activist Carl Gershman contends that the inner cities are more a class problem than a racial one. Still, the fact remains that blacks constitute the vast majority of the inner city population. So it is blacks who will rise up when they consider the situation unbearable.

What does the future of black/white relations hold for America? Certainly, the quiet '70s may give way to the more militant '80s, particularly if blacks don't see a change in white thinking or if the economy continues to devastate already bitter blacks. Some will greet this militancy enthusiastically, convinced that it is only through such action that positive change occurs. Still, the cries for patience and peaceful activism are just as loud as the cries for more militant response.

The many aspects of black/white relations today will not obscure the most important issue of all, the sensitivity of whites to the needs of the black community. Should whites, through ambivalence or resistance, push blacks to the clenched fist or gun, the glass—half-full or half-empty—will crash down leaving black and whites thirsting for quieter times.

## Klan-Nazi trial

### Readers speak out on controversial Greensboro verdict

To the editor:

I must object to your editorial, "Justice is just a word." (DTH, Nov. 18), and cartoon of the same day. Criticism of the recent elections is just fine, but criticism of a jury verdict on the grounds that you stated borders on irresponsible journalism.

What places you in a better position to determine the guilt or innocence of the Greensboro defendants than the jury of 12 of their peers who heard the case? I think that your cartoon and editorial do an injustice to the people on the jury who took their duty very seriously and deliberated for seven days before reaching a verdict.

You reach the conclusion in your article that justice is just a word, but you have reached that conclusion because you don't know what constitutes justice. The function of a jury is to determine the guilt or innocence of an individual on the basis of the facts presented concerning the incident giving rise to the charge.

The jury is not to consider the political or social consequences of reaching a certain verdict in determining the guilt or innocence of the individual on trial. Considerations such as whether the Communist Workers Party members will point to Greensboro as a symbol of corruption, or whether blacks will wonder about the concept of justice, or whether there will be future violence are immaterial to the jury's determination of the guilt or innocence of the individual and rightly so.

I see no desecration of the ideas for which the judicial system in this country stands. Nothing essential has been lost in Greensboro. The concept of justice has been affirmed in Greensboro when people from such vile and hated groups as the Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan can be found innocent despite public sentiment.

Steve Schoeberle  
UNC School of Law

'DTH' audacity

To the editor:

I sincerely disliked the condescending and patronizing attitude that your "Justice is just a

word" editorial (DTH, Nov. 18), conveyed in regard to what black people will wonder as a result of the disgusting verdict given in Greensboro. I took particular offense at the following sentences: "And like it or not, blacks will wonder about the concept of justice. They will wonder about the all-white jury and the racial superiority espoused by the Klan and Nazis, and they may conclude that there are in fact two sets of laws in America, one of whites and one for everyone else."

Those two sentences reveal a total ignorance of the black experience in this country. Whoever wrote or approved that garbage should bone up on the black experience or at least talk in depth with a lot of black people before assuming so damn much about what black people are going to wonder. Your audacity to print an editorial so "knowledgeable" about what black people will wonder does not surprise me because of the writer's and the Tar Heel's origins. But that does not make me any less angry at educated people who should know better than to make such ill-thought and off-hand assumptions with the pedantic arrogance of know-it-alls.

For your information—correct me if I am wrong—blacks will not wonder about the concept of justice in the United States as a result of the Greensboro verdict. They will not wonder about the all-white jury or the bullshit spouted by the Klan and Nazis. Blacks do not have to wonder about such things—they know! They know all about America's screwed-up, racist justice system, just as they know all about biased, all-white juries from generations of "not guilty" verdicts exonerating white murderers. Black people have known for years that there are two sets of laws in this country. And you had the gall to print that the verdict in Greensboro will make blacks come to the conclusion that there are "in fact two sets of laws in America, one of whites and one for everyone else."

Where in the world has the writer of the editorial been for the past few years? Is he really naive enough to think that after the acquittal of five murdering cops by an all-white jury in Florida and the acquittal of Klanners who shot three black women by an

all-white jury in Tennessee, that the verdict given in Greensboro is so damn unique and will cause blacks to despair at the unfairness of it all? Blacks in America know how unfair and how biased the judicial system is, it is too bad that "ivory towered" individuals are just finding out about that unpleasant reality created and sustained by white America. It's quite a rude awakening, isn't it? It should give you a little to "wonder" about.

Phyllis A. Hopkins  
Durham

Armchair judges

To the editor:

To read *The Daily Tar Heel*, it would seem America is ready to eliminate trial by jury in favor of trial by the media. Many people are upset over the verdict of the Greensboro trial. These people, after carefully weighing evidence from the two-minute segments on the evening news and a story or two they might have read in the paper, judiciously decided on a verdict of guilty.

Now that the real jury has disagreed, the armchair judges are shouting that the jury is wrong, that the jury members obviously hate Communists. To show disapproval, these people are going to have rallies and protest marches and write snappy slogans such as "Justice is only a word" and "Justice is dead."

The point is that 12 people in Greensboro sat through the longest trial in North Carolina history and deliberated six days before rendering their unanimous verdict. These 12 people are no less intelligent than the armchair judges and no more prejudiced. Thankfully, theirs is the verdict that stands. Unfortunately, the armchair judges may prove to be prophetic when they say "Justice is dead" if Americans continue to ignore the most important tenet of that justice, that one is innocent until proven guilty.

Chuck Bennett  
Chapel Hill

Don't think

To the editor:

Please don't ask the average intelligent student to choose, or even begin to take sides, between the Communist Workers Party and the Ku Klux Klan and Nazis after a 20-odd week trial by asking if the verdict is just. In "Justice is just a word," (DTH, Nov. 18), you are asking all those who disagree with the verdict to become Communists and all those agreeing with it to become Klansmen and Nazis. It's like asking one to choose whether they would want a mentally retarded child or a stillborn baby to be born into their family. I would want neither.

So, the next time you or anyone else asks me what I think of the verdict of the Greensboro trial, I'll answer: "I don't."

Dean Hodge  
Carolina Apartments

Poetic

To the editor:

Bob Dylan may write a song about it  
May even turn out a hit  
But one thing's for real  
This one's by me for our Daily Tar Heel

There was anger in the air, Carolina red  
By the false verdict it was bred  
The news came through the pines and oaks  
I heard it say "Justice is a joke."

Ali Mahmood  
Durham

Terifying trend

To the editor:

The series of articles on black/white relations and the Klan/Nazi trial in last week's *Daily Tar Heel* has brought home the startling realization that this year may mark a frightening turning point in our nation's history. A surprisingly rapid wave of conservatism swept the country in the recent election, and flagrantly racist organizations are attracting the attention and support of a substantial segment of the populace. Two years ago, Nazi groups and the KKK were

surrounded by uprooted Yankees. I, for one, feel a little intimidated by these guys from all those New England prep schools who grew up believing the South was something you had to fly over to get to the winter home in Florida.

"Poole, come over here and talk some for me," one of my Northern pals said to me one day last week. "I want to hear them Southern words."

I entertained a motion from the floor of my mind to table this guy with a left hook, but I never was one for physical violence. (Although I have been known to indulge in a little non-physical violence on occasion.) What I wound up doing was humoring him.

## Life in the Turn Lane



"Well hey there, buddy," I drawled; mustering up all the molasses and sorghum I could from deep within. "How's it goin'? It's been solog since I seen you I just can't believe y'all still around."

I know that I talk with a Southern flavor to my voice, and I'm really quite proud of it. Sometimes, in the course of speaking the Southern language, I violate some of the rules of grammar. But those rules were probably made up in the New York office of some English professor at Columbia University, and I refuse to recognize his authority on the matter. Convince me that some guy at Ole Miss or LSU made up the rules, and I'll follow them.

I also find myself defending the cuisine of my region a lot. My disgust for things like quiche on alfalfa sprouts is well-chronicled in this column. I feel it's my duty to try to re-educate folks; therefore, I have introduced a lot of Northern friends to the joys of barbecue, grits, liver mush and black-eyed peas. It's really a challenge at first, though.

"Barbecue?" one asked me. "Barbecued what?" "Just plain barbecue, ground pork that comes from a pig after you kill it and put a fahr under it and let it cook for about three days," I said.

"Pork. I thought barbecue was beef," the Northerner replied.

"Common misconception," I said. "Just remember, if it never oinked, it can't be barbecue."

Before I get done (Southern for finish), let me say that I don't feel that Stonewall Jackson's accidental death is the only thing that kept Robert E. Lee and the boys from riding through the north like Gen. William T. Sherman did in the South. I don't even think the South should have won the war—we had some wrong ideas back then.

But I do kinda wish Sherman hadn't blown the South out so bad. If we'd made it closer, we might have been able to surrender on more favorable terms. At least then, I reckon, we'd have been able to say "tars" (the things cars roll on) and more'n (short for more than) without being the stars of a sideshow.

"Hey, Poole. Kahm ahn ovah and tahlk for me."

David Poole, a seenyur journalism major from Gastonia, is assistant sports editor and columnist for The Daily Tar Heel.

Poole's void

To the editor:

Concerning David Poole's column "Wilson Library: uncomfortably silent," (DTH, Nov. 17):

Is it possible that someone can spend four years in college and still have no appreciation for a fine library? Even allowing for some exaggeration in the name of humor, Poole's article is a concession of shallow immaturity.

It does take a while to get used to the way a large library like Wilson operates, but surely by this time it should be familiar to Poole. Unless of course he spends so little time studying...

As for Wilson being too quiet, it is a blessing that some place on this campus reposes in calm quietude. In contrast, the Undergraduate Library is little more than a big, noisy study hall.

As for Wilson being a "great void," I feel sure the only void there is when Poole deigns to visits and brings the one between his ears.

P.B. Thompson  
321 Craige Residence Hall

## Letters?

The Daily Tar Heel welcomes letters to the editor and contributions of columns for the editorial page.

Such contributions should be typed, triple-spaced, on a 60-space line, and are subject to editing.

Column writers should include their majors and hometowns; each letter should include the writer's name, address and telephone number.

