

File

3 June 1968

Dear Governor Agnew,

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Thank you for sending me the whole transcript of your remarks to some of the colored leaders in our community.

I'll be glad to tell you that in the second paragraph of your remarks you harangued the missing militant black leaders (whether you or I like them or not, they are still strong voices in the ghetto) and thereby killed the effective remarks you made later on in your speech. It's a shame that you didn't wait until the end of the talk to say these things that you felt needed saying. The trouble is that right now all black people are very sensitive to any alienation which a white man may attempt to stir up among them. I can see their point - they would rather set their own house in order, even if we great white fathers don't think they are capable of doing so. They probably thought you should have these trouble makers present so that you could "crack their knuckles with the ruler" face to face. Personally, I think this is a reasonable idea.

You waited until the end of your talk to compliment the members of the audience who remained to hear it all....if you want cooperation of the black and white communities, your speech (which mainly lashed out at two bitter young men) certainly was not a good beginning. Talking down to people is poor psychology, to put it very mildly.

In the last third of your speech, you stated that you could not even lightly endorse the Kerner report... why not? Because the report named white racism as the main evil causing this mess our country is in, and you (a white man) were facing many black faces? Sounds like a bit of false pride and right now that's just

what we don't need and can't afford, especially in our official spokesmen. You weren't speaking for my husband and myself when you talked to these leaders as you did, but that's how it will be taken by many people in our ghetto. For the love of God and man, the next time you gather together with black leaders.....be a lot more solicitous of their feelings and position before you open your mouth. A few more harangues like this one you delivered and we'll have even more hate and stiffened positions in people's hearts than we have now.

After reading your whole talk, I would say that you did more harm than good on both sides of the color curtain. The whole tone was harsh and completely lacking in sensitivity (yes, black people have feelings which we have ignored for many generations - we have no right to ignore these feelings any more) and I pray that you won't pull any more boo-boo's while you're in office. When you ran for the office of governor of our state, I thought your manner was haughty.....and by golly, I was right.

Of course most of our citizens in this state adored your condemnation statement - most of our people are white racists, and I'm honest enough to recognize it. Our society is sick, all right, soul sick - rather than rebuild the image of Baltimore, I'd love to see a new Baltimore arise, away from the post-Civil War attitude which it seems to need to rid itself of, a city ~~riding~~ ridding itself of hypocrisy and the double standard.

Thank you, Governor, for listening to my harangue - this problem, though, is your biggest one and until you admit (if only within yourself) that we are in this spot because most of us are racists then we'll end up tearing ourselves to pieces from a lack of love for each other. Funny, the black racists scare the stuff out of us, but all the white racists surrounding us don't seem to bother us a dot. Good luck and God help you in your work.

Mrs Jim Cox
2833 Plainfield Rd
Balto. Md. 21222