Baltimore Afro-American

OPINION

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The Ja-Wan McGee incident

Life will never be the same for 17-year-old Ja-Wan McGee who now lives paralyzed in most of his body after being shot in the back by an off-duty police officer.

McGee, with a friend, was in a pizza parlor and through some scarcely imaginable set of circumstances was, according to police reports, assumed to be a robber by the policeman in question.

McGee was unarmed. He was not given warning by the officer standing behind him.

Nothing! insofar as the police themselves describe this incident.

In light of this, Commissioner Donald Pomerleau, with whom we often disagree, did what we feel is the only proper thing.

He did not, as police commanders are often want to do, rush in to defend the officer in question simply because he was a policeman.

The Commissioner wisely did not block this matter from going before a grand jury, for the grand jury process is the only route on the McGee affair. The police cannot police themselves on this one.

A grand jury inquiry is the fairest approach for officer and victim alike.

There are too many questions. None of the answers, however, will give young Mcgee back the use of his limbs and indeed he is lucky to be alive.

How he came to this tragic point, is of course, at the very heart of the investigation now unfolding.

Cornell Estes (continued)

Another young man, Cornell Estes, suffered 15 months in prison having been convicted and sentenced to life for a murder he did not commit.

Last week we urged that Estes and his family seek whatever legal redress is available to them within our legal system to try and square the injustice done him.

We made this comment as part of a larger consideration of the Estes matter.

Now we focus on this singular aspect.

Estes should sue the government of Baltimore County for his torments.

His civil rights, in our minds at least, have been grievously violated.

He can never recoup time wasted in prison.

The lily - white government of the county outside our city must be alerted to the fact that they must pay and pay dearly for their racist policies.

Further violations

Not content with railroading Cornell Estes to jail, Baltimore County has now made public their purported confessions of the three young men who have been indicted for several murders, one of which Estes was convicted of wrongly.

Whereas the county was going to hang Estes quietly so to speak, they now seek to cover their tracks by publicly hanging these defendants through their heinous purported admissions of guilt.

These three suspects may well be monsters.

Just the same, confessions published in newspapers before trial are just as much a violation of a person's civil rights as wrongful imprisonment.

Baltimore County tries to correct one awful circumstance by trading it off for another awful and possibly unlawful procedure.

Stand up and be counted

"I'm here! I exist!"

People must get this message across to the government. We must all fight the trend today, to act as if the poor, the elderly, the needy, do not exist, as if they can be made "invisible."

Some economists even propose unemployment as a remedy for inflation, without regard to the suffering of the invisible people who "pay the price."

On April 1, 1980, we each have a chance to tell the government that we are here. April 1, is Census Day.

The Census is taken every 10 years, through a form that should be mailed to your home. The form asks you to list the number of people in your home, and little else.

The totals are used to deliver federal aid to the city and state, and to allocate seats in the Congress and the General Assembly. The federal aid averages about $200 per person per year.

Baltimore is a poor city that leans heavily on federal money. At least 45,000 Baltimoreans were missed in the 1970 Census. If the same number is lost in 1980, there are 90 million dollars in federal money that will be lost to Baltimore by 1990. This translates into services, day care, schools, and hospitals that will be denied the city's poorest people.

Some people avoid the Census, because they fear the information will go to the police or tax collectors.

But the answers you give are protected by law with a $5,000 fine and 5 years imprisonment for any Census Bureau employee, who releases any information.

For example, the Bureau has won in the courts to protect data about Japanese - Americans in World War II and about prominent citizens during the anti - communist hysteria of the McCarthy era.

Anyway, census data is only important when viewed as totals. The information each person gives is no more personal than a credit card application.

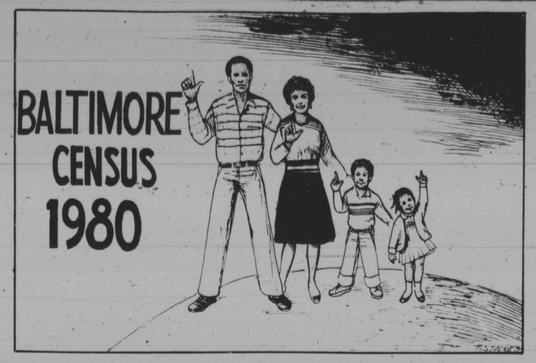
The Census undercount hits blacks, Hispanics, and other minority communities like a killer disease, cutting down the political voice of already powerless communities, and draining away federal and state dollars and programs from the poor.

The national undercount in 1970 was 2.5 percent. The estimated undercount in black communities was 7.7 percent, but it was even higher in younger age groups. The city counts to avoid a repetition of this in 1980.

Every multi - purpose center is prepared to help with the census. The 1,200 federal "enumerators" who will go door to door after April 1 are being recruited and hired from Baltimore's neighborhoods.

Cooperate! Be counted! We owe it to ourselves, our families, and our communities. If you don't receive a Census form on April 1, stand up and say "I exist! You cannot ignore me."

If the census form is not in your hands on April 1, call the Census Hotline, 396-1980, and demand to be recognized by giving your name and address.



LETTERS

In defense of William Allen

Dear AFRO:

Recently, in wake of hearing a barrage of complaints as to how the Superior Court Clerk's Office is run I interviewed its clerk William Allen.

After that interview, I am convinced that he has administrative capability that has proven itself in the visual progress of the standard of efficiency as to service. This was not evident two or three years ago. Mr. Allen told me, "Firstly, I ran an election and won with the strong support of the black community. Many throughout the city of the higher echelon of political life, vehemently remarked that no way could William Allen defeat Robert H. Bouse for the clerkship of the Superior Court of Baltimore." This sour note is the beginning of the turmoil and the quest for survival that William Allen, the elected clerk now faces.

When Mr. Allen took over office on December 1, 1978, he inherited 82 employees — 72 (white) and 10 (black). In the spring of 1979, over 20 of the veteran clerk employees in the court retired with, full benefits or resigned to take on more lucrative positions elsewhere.

The powers - to - be anticipated that the newly elected clerk, who took over this gigantic court would sit back, collect a pay check and have no program to offer the office or the community.

Instead, Mr. Allen took over the office with a creative program to: (1) hire more blacks (2) establish a strong cross-training program (3) integrate departments such as the counter recording department which never before had a black clerk (4) promote blacks to supervisor and assistant supervisor positions which never existed until Mr. Allen took over office on December 1, 1978.

The question is: Does the higher echelon want to see the reality of black supervisors and assistant supervisors — or must there still exist the same old trend of holding blacks back?

In the beginning many of the employees in the court Mr. Allen inherited requested of him to be moved to other departments where these employees felt they could learn more as to the operations of the Superior Court thus preparing them to better serve the public.

There were "those who were detrimental to the clerk's program, those who felt that the clerk did not exist and who lent their allegiance to supervisors who in the beginning, and still are not anxious to give the black employees in the Superior Court access to all of the information and knowledge that is required to be competent clerks.

William Allen has put more than twenty blacks to work — many of whom have responded well to training and some who have not been as productive as we had hoped for.

William Allen has been working in the city courthouse for the past 15 years. Fourteen years as a deputy clerk in the Criminal Court of Baltimore, and the past year as the elected clerk for the Superior Court of Baltimore.

During his long tenure in the courthouse, he has had the training in court administration and management that qualifies him for the gigantic undertaking he has had in reorganizing the sullen Superior Court of Baltimore.

Mr. Allen commented to this observer, that when he took over the office administratively, he could not find on record any written outline as to how the office was to be run or how it should be run. Instead, he had to devise his own plan of procedure. There were written policies or guidelines as to compensatory time or as to the procedures in hiring new employees. Again, the burden fell on this newly elected black clerk to devise and upgrade policies that were in the past decade known only by word of mouth.

For nearly five months a special panel of judges has been monitoring the operations and functions as to how well employees execute their jobs responsibilities in the Superior Court. However, it is the opinion of this observer, that the special panel of judges in their wisdom could help Clerk Allen in a better fashion, by having Mr. Allen present to face his accusers.

In the best interest of fair play this would eliminate secrecy and prevent others who have no sense of values or morals, from running to the judges with unwarranted complaints.

In this same area Mr. Allen has white and black employees from the previous administration who vehemently feel Mr. Allen should forget about the young black appointments and make every effort to benefit and reward the employees from the previous administration who now feel neglected.

It has been stated that the complaints categorized in the Morning Sun issue of Monday, March 24th, are small-time grievances that exist in any other office and do not require much — only unity and cooperation by all parties concerned — to put the court and its clerk's offices on an even line.

Complaints of willful mismanagement is one thing but the critics have failed to show us anything with the very likeness of being criminal at this time so why the confusion?

The confusion is: downtown cannot tolerate a black man who wishes to be independent in his judgment, to execute and represent the black community as the elected clerk for the largest court clerk's office in the city.

IRVIN CONWAY

Opposing extended liquor curfew

Dear AFRO:

The State Senate's approval of a 4 a.m. curfew for night clubs in the "block" is a step toward a more chaotic future for residents of the city.

The reason given for approval by one State Senator was to accommodate tourists who will be attending activities at the Convention Center. The extension of the operating hours of night spots on the block should increase the tax base by way of the tourist trade, perhaps. But, that is only one point of view.

There are also supporters of this legislation like the owner of a lounge in Park Heights and head of the Maryland Liquor and Beverages Association who stated, according to the AFRO-AMERICAN, and I quote, "The block is a foot in the door. We are realistic enough to know that you do things in stages. Later we hope to get this extended to other areas," unquote.

It is obvious to me that by this businessman's statement his concern is primarily his own self-interest — the extension of the curfew to businesses in residential areas for personal gain, at the expense of the poor and predominantly black families of the city.

I realize that even with the 2 a.m. closing customers are purchasing package goods before curfew to continue their drinking elsewhere, and that they will do the same with the extra two hours. But stop to think what could happen with the 4 a.m. curfew eventually gets to other areas of the city. Stop and think about the elevation of the agonies of alcoholism which is already an excruciating phenomenon in many families and homes. Also, there will be prolonged loitering on corners, and in alleys. There will be longer hours of loud noises and boisterous voices, abusive language in the very early hours of the morning.

The families and residential areas that are already terrorized by such carrying on will suffer a lot more from a 4 a.m. curfew. Also, additional hours of operational time for neighborhood lounges and bars will stimulate additional negative influences for the youth.

The 4 a.m. curfew for the "block" has already been approved in the Senate, next week the House. If it passes it may only be the beginning. So, it's up to you concerned citizens to act now before they waste you in Annapolis.

AMERICUS M. ROY

Prison not needed in Johnston Square

Dear AFRO:

As one who has served the Johnson Square community for 12 years I am openly opposed to building a new prison here.

It is unfair that any one district in Baltimore should have to bear the burden of the prison population for the whole state of Maryland.

I am aware of the fact many of our county and rural legislators have applauded the new site which came to light on March 4 in published reports which announced that Gov. Harry Hughes had now proposed a new 500 bed prison to be built near the present Maryland Penitentiary.

They say that the prison belongs in Baltimore City and not Anne Arundel County because there are more blacks incarcerated than anyone else. To this I am quick to answer, it's not because blacks are worse than anyone else but, I believe rather it is by design.

I also feel that it is by design that the citizens of East Baltimore seem to be having a prison forced on them. And I feel that the lack of sensitivity on the part of the city and state administration to their plight is by design.

I am surprised by the reports that some of the persons who were in the fight to keep the prison off the Continental Can site are now so silent, now that they want to put it in Johnson Square.

Maybe they have forgotten that it was me and others who stood with them when they almost stood alone. Maybe they have forgotten that we took up money for them in our churches to help them keep the fight going. Maybe they have forgotten that many of us gave of our personal money to help their cause.

I think it's now time for them to remember and join in the fight. They better remember that what happens in one part of East Baltimore happens in all of East Baltimore.

I think this fight should also make us take another look at our "Political Leaders" in the East. I confess that there are a few who you can depend on to be on the front line for right and the good of our people.

But there are others who are more concerned, about promoting themselves than looking out for the people. Some of them have forgotten that they are there to serve the people and not the people to serve theme.

In the days to come Baltimore Baptist Clergy In Action will be taking a close look at the persons who serve East Baltimore.

And by the next election we plan to give the voters the facts so that they can decide whether or not East Baltimore has a great need for a lot of changes on the political front. We will be joined by all.

THE REV. ALFRED C.D. VAUGHN, Pastor, Grace Memorial Baptist

G. JAMES FLEMING

Overwhelming evidence is again before Marylanders and the American people as to why capital punishment should be abolished.

Much has been written, and endless questions asked, about the "mistaken" arrest, the "mistaken" confession of crime, the "mistaken" conviction and the "mistaken" imprisonment of Cornell Estes — the Baltimore County teenager sentenced to life imprisonment, two years ago, for a murder he did not commit.

Suppose, however, that instead of life imprisonment, young Estes, now only 16, had been sentenced to the electric chair in a state where capital punishment is still legal and is practiced. Estes could be dead by now. Too late to benefit from the new findings about his innocence.

It is because capital punishment is a point of no return that enlightened men and women are opposed to it. It is also because the criminal justice system cannot prevent such malfunctioning as occurred in the Estes case why the ultimate and absolute punishment — death by the state — should not be executed.

History is studded with miscarriages of justice, or wilful manipulation of evidence, or racial prejudice which, together or singly, have led to capital punishment, where there should have been no capital punishment. In the case of Cornell Estes, there should have been no punishment at all, for it has now been discovered and revealed that the murder in question was committed by others.

The truth is that Estes and a companion, also "mistakenly" arrested and convicted were not involved in anyway in the murder. The evidence is also very strong that the two youngsters were nowhere near the scene of the murder.

Even when there is no wilful intention to railroad innocent people to prison or to the electric chair, sloppy, careless, and inefficient police work can conspire to give defendants less than "equal justice under law."

Sometimes, it may also be police brutality, or fear of expected police brutality, which makes accused people "confess" to crimes they did not commit. Police beatings, questioning unceasingly for endless hours, torture by fire or water, faked confessions, and other practices, have been used by police officers, with or without the acquiescence of superior personnel.

If the victims are poor, semi - literate, or have previously had "brushes" with the law, the system seems lined up against them. If those on the halls of the law are black, which usually means poor and black, the system seems 100 - fold united against them. This is evidenced by the statistics of arrests, convictions and imprisonments of black and other poor people, as compared to other segments of the population.

"The law," beginning with the police is considered stacked against the poor, especially poor blacks. As attorney William "Billy" Murphy Jr., recently said, in effect, on TV: "When a policeman, in his blue uniform, representing the law, and a seedy defendant, stand before the court, there is an atmosphere that causes the judge and jury to believe that the policeman never lies, or that he has no need to lie."

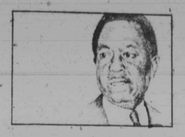
Although most police officers were deemed to be above board, Mr. Murphy continued: "In my experience as a criminal lawyer, I have faced and heard several policemen who were not telling the truth and who knew that they were not telling the truth."

Sheriffs and state attorneys sometimes also have "reasons", often political, why they need to send someone, or some kinds of people, to prison or to the electric chair.

A white police officer (policeman) once told this writer that he preferred working in Harlem: "Up here a policeman can become a hero faster, get honor citations, and so on." In other words, law enforcement officers do not need to exert much restraint if they are dealing with blacks. "The law" is on the side of the men in blue.

This discourse is no wholesale indictment of the criminal justice system or of every underpaid policeperson on the beat. Rather, it is a plea for better police performance, behavior, and professionalism, for a higher regard by the criminal justice system for the principle that a defendant is innocent until proven guilty; for a continuous, not lessened, campaign against official capital punishment; and for a call for citizens to be on the alert, in order that other Cornell Esteses will not face, "mistakenly," the electric chair or life imprisonment.

SAMUEL BANKS



End to bread, circuses

The projected federal budget cuts of President Jimmy Carter ($13 billion) and the House of Representatives (more than $16 billion) provide grim, bleak and dispiriting assurance that 30 million blacks and the poor of our nation will be driven to a socio - economic Armageddon.

Blacks in Baltimore and across the nation are reeling from the effects of institutional exclusion, and an historic lack of equal opportunity in the market - place. The great tragedy, as one reviews socio - economic indicators, is that the situation will worsen before there is some degree of stabilization after 1985.

Nowhere is the situation more parlous, bordering on sheer desperation, than Baltimore. The city has the ignoble distinction of leading the nation in terms of youth unemployment. The brick and mortar emphasis of Mayor William Donald Schaefer has been an abysmal failure in regard to abating or reducing unemployment in Monumental City.

Even more disquieting and unsettling, given the magnitude of unemployment (i.e., 50 percent) among black youths in Baltimore, there is a pervasive absence of a sense of urgency and caring, as shown in demonstrable results, insofar as the Mayor and City Council are concerned.

The permanent underclass developing here in Baltimore and across the nation constitutes a clear and present menace to the total population. The maelstrom of social protest and upheavals of the 1960s give vivid and troubling testimony as to what can happen when people defined as "losers" are devoid of hope and opportunity. Deviant and anti - social behavior is a painful reflection of shattered dreams, hopes and opportunities.

In conjunction with this point, a recent survey indicated that approximately one - third of Baltimore's black population under 25 by 1985 will either have a hostile encounter with law enforcement authorities or will be incarcerated. Socio - economic indices as represented by poverty, shoddy schooling, unemployment and a general attitude of hopelessness provided the underpinning for the distressing and shameful prediction.

As a means of diverting the thoughtful and serious attention of 150,000 black Baltimoreans, to these harsh realities, Mayor Schaefer has embraced a modus operandi or emphasis of "Panen et circenses" ("Bread and circuses"). A panoply of dances, neighborhood festivals, athletic contests and mayoral comedy are offered as a means of socio - economic rejet.

Inasmuch as the baubles, gaudiness and superficiality do not confront socio - economic realities, the fundamental human problems of the majority black population and the poor, in fact, are exacerbated.

The proposal now under review by the Mayor and his top aides relative to selling $85 million in bonds on the market, over half the current debt ceiling (i.e., 35 million) of the city, deserves, if a decision is made to move forward, careful scrutiny and discussion germane to how the total city will benefit.

This is particularly true of the majority black population and the economically distressed. If a determination is made by Mayor Schaefer that the $85 million are needed, it appears reasonable that an explanation will be forthcoming as to how the human needs of all citizens will be better served.

The time has come to end a bread and circus" approach to the needs of the socially distressed and the economically excluded in Baltimore. A brick and mortar accentuation must be replaced with an accentuation of human values and job opportunities.

Once again, as the backs of black Baltimoreans are pressed to the wall, the black church, the one independent institution in the black community, must dare to witness and "rescue the perishing." Black churches in Baltimore, given the severity of the socio - economic crisis, must end the obsession with other - worldliness and the cult of religious personalities. The intelligence and human and monetary resources must now be mobilized to end the "bread and circus" focus of the city's leadership and to re - establish the lost and gutted sense of community in black communities.

It is no less true today than it was over 2,000 years ago that "Faith without works is dead." This, to be sure, in the words of the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., is no time to become immobilized through a "paralysis of analysis."

The challenge for the black church, fraternal and sorority groups, civic and political leaders, the intelligensia and the economically advantaged is clear, present, and inexorable: Black Survival.

Year of the Family, By Marion Banfield

Mothers—teach responsibilty

"If you send me home again, my mother'll come back up here and tear up this place. No, I'm not going to the office! My mother cussed out the principal, the assistant principal and Miss Jones just last Thursday. She tol' me and my sister we don't have to take no stuff from none o' you teachers!"

This a true account of what happened in a local school. The mother had loudly and crudely expressed her disgust with the school faculty who were finding her two disruptive children a severe problem to the school.

Such a mother is giving the following message to her children: "You are free to behave according to your mood. You don't need to pay any attention to any rules that teachers require for keeping classroom order. If your rudeness and clowning keep other students from learning, that's their tough luck." Do your classwork and homework as you feel like it. Nobody can force you to do anything you don't want to do."

"You got rights." This is a free country. Anybody try to make you pay attention to a lot of stupid rules is interfering with your freedom. You're free and I'll fight for your rights anytime!"

I wonder what that family's life is like. How much yelling and cursing, threatening and hitting goes on among family members?

Are those children hiding their embarrassment about their mother's loud voice and putting up a big front? Has that mother spent so much of her life fighting to survive that she believes that each day is war day?

Who in that family of anger and fear can get a change to calmness, to finding a variety of ways to cope with human problems?

Children brought up to expect total freedom without regard for others can only end up in misery. No group, no family, no institution can survive it "freedom" is the only focus.

A responsibility of mothers is to teach their children that we all have to accept limited freedom. We all have to function in this rights of others. Responsibility for our own behaviour should be taught first in the family.

The family is what children depend on to become members of any group of humans anywhere in the world.

Mothers who teach their children to disobey rules, ignore authority, "do their thing", are not preparing their children for the real world. Of course, jails and other institutions are available in this real world.

Somehow, I don't believe that some of those overly emotional mothers plan jail or anything like that for their children.

Cool it, mothers.

Mrs. Banfield is director of Family Life Education with the Family and Children's Society.

FOR ALL WE KNOW

By Elizabeth M. Oliver
City Editor

WHETHER YOU REALIZE it or not, the world is turning into a period like none other in the history of mankind— right under your nose. Sociologists say they are unable to characterize this era of the early 1980's with any other on earth and they are dumfounded.

MOST OF ALL, nobody knows where and to what limits it will go.

ECONOMISTS SAY we are deep in a recession, that is to say a "slowdown" in economy. We already know about inflation and prices sky-high, so high it is expected they will never again go back down to a reasonable level.

NEVER AGAIN will you get porkchops at 25 cents a pound nor gas long our car under $2 a gallon. Gone forever are any kind of garments at $1.95 and you'll never even get a pair of hose for 50 cents. Potatoes will never be 25 cents a bushel and beans the most modest of all food will not ever be 5 pounds for a quarter.

FORGET STEAKS because they are already so high you feel guilty taking the smallest bite. Collard greens have long been 79 cents and liver, kidneys and even chitterlings are almost too dear to allow all you can eat. Chicken backs and necks are higher than you ever thought. Bread is nearing $1 and they've fixed things so you can not afford to bake your own.

You can't get nothin' you like no more, said a modest little old lady in the market and that's just the way it is— and it's getting worse, worse and worse. Who knows what tomorrow will bring?

ALL THIS wretched going on is what is causing society to take the unprecedented turn to like nothing we have ever seen.

HAVE YOU NOTICED? Folks are going wild, going to the extreme in every way like crazy. They just don't care. Iniquity and evil abound and morals and manners— what are they?

KIDS, MERE BABIES are involved in sexual misbehavior. Why in Junior High school, it's a common thing to see expectant mothers going to class without a blush. And, don't mention the guilty teenaged "father" who boasts of his carrying on.

UNWED TEENS are the subject boldly talked about on TV programs and in PTA's and other social meetings— everybody offering a solution to a problem that has the nation up a tree.

AND MURDER, why it's gotten so all the reports actually do not get in the newspaper. "You have to kill more than half a dozen before it's news," they say. Just an ordinary murder isn't news anymore.

ANOTHER THING, you talk about man's injustice to man why not add to it Women's injustice to men; kids injustice to parents and elders and children's injustice to each other. Topping the whole thing, whatthabout elected officials injustice to taxpayers and citizens who put them in office?

THE GUILTIEST of all in this era are those that the citizens loan out their money to to run the government. Talk about rip-offs.

HERE THEY STAND, the average citizen, poor as church mice, hungry, confused, losing property, homes, cars, all of family life, all because those they gave their tax dollars to and entrusted them to run the country just haven't done it.

THE GOVERNMENT holds forth, still reaping fabulous salaries on the poor citizen's tax money) and says without shame, "We're in a recession and you all have to tighten your belts until we can get it straightened out."

THINK ABOUT IT. We pay officials in Washington salaries exceeding $50,000, up to and over $100,000 a year plus expenses and all kinds of fringe stuff and here we are without anything at all and worried to death.

Kids gone astray because of homelessness and distraught parents who can't make it in any form, shape or fashion. No jobs anywhere as we beg for something, just anything.

SOOOO, to make a long story short, seems like this is happening as never before," folks just don't give a damn. They feel they can't win.

A recent court case revealed in testimony a lady with her back to the wall was told by her husband he intended to "blow her brains out". In return, according to court record, she sat him down to the dinner table, told him to "hurry up and eat. This is your last supper". That's not funny so don't laugh. LATER, the record states, and after arming herself with a gun, she "blew him away to glory."

Will we ever see the good days again?

THAT'S NOTHING to the case of a man who killed 30 some human beings and the case of the youngster who slew some kids and ate the parts. Actually, what's going on today is almost too terrible to mention.

SOOO, as we said, there is a trend for human beings to go their own way, without caring at all. They say to others lots of mean things and think nothing of it like, "Go to the devil" and "It's your funeral you do the crying."

KIDS get up in court and "blow the whistle on their parents, brothers and sisters and even grandma, sending them "up the river" for a term. Neighbors "spill the beans" on each other, causing great pain and suffering and they even lie and twist things around in church.

WICKED INDEED are the rent-raising landlords who think nothing of throwing widows, mothers and old folks out in the street.

YOU KNOW IT and you can point out a case for every instance. What about the young couple who slams their aging parents in a rest home and goes on about its business, not even visiting.

WHAT ABOUT the scheming lawyer who consumes his client's estate with unnecessary tours and turns of the law until it's all gone? What about the employer who fires the worker he does not like?? What about the employer who won't hire a man or woman because he or she is not a member of the "right" race? or color or age or hasn't got a "slacked" figure.

THEY SAY in certain government agencies the ugly woman hasn't got a chance even if she is qualified. And, the "too highly qualified" person doesn't get the job either.

DON'T FORGET the school principal who "has his or her picks" and fails to give the hard-working, un-attractive person a break.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST, TALKING ABOUT what's going on today as never before, take the husband hunting lady who searches the Death Notices to locate the widower who has just lost his wife and is free "to marry again" and who may have a pension. They say she will even go to the deceased wife's funeral, get a glimpse of the "bereaved husband", his address, phone number and a check on the survivors to see how many kids are living.

RECESSION, hostages, depression, all this is plunging society into that "never-before period" the sociologists say. As we stand in the wings and watch, maybe that's what you'll also say.

'That Another May Pick Up the Sword'

LESLIE KING HAMMOND

By Dr. L. King Hammond

In the opening statements of their brochure they make some very profound observations. "The Community has accepted another culture's definition of the Negro artist; they have believed the myth that art is not work and that the black artists' efforts may be summarized as a hobby not withstanding his education, training or spiritual commitment."

The current presentation of The Gallery of Art at Morgan State University has recently opened an exhibition entitled "Folio 4 Artists — That Another May Pick Up The Sword." This is a rather special show with real significance to this city. Each of the four showing artists lives here in the city. In addition all of the artists have graduated from the Maryland Institute, College of Art.

Quietly and with strength this city is building a solid, firm and confident community of artists. The four young men in this exhibition, Guy Jones, Pontella Mason, Ronald Roberson and Van Woodson represent some of the stronger members of this community. They see themselves as a vital part of this community and have designed the exhibition as a collective effort.

paintings, drawings and sculptures give serious proof that hard work and untold energy brought these works to life.

Three of the painters, Jones, Mason and Roberson, graduated from one of the more elite painting programs in the United States. The Hoffberger School of Painting under the direction of Grace Hartigan at the Maryland Institute has for the last 10 years graduated some of the more talented young painters on the East Coast. Jones, Mason and Roberson are some of the first blacks to graduate from this program. Van Woodson completed his undergraduate training at the same school.

Guy Jones is a Baltimore native. His works are those of a visionary, who uses fragmented images to explore various elements of reality. His use and understanding of color is fresh, clear and lucid. Most of the works on display are small pieces in water color or oil. Currently he is the gallery coordinator of Gallery 409.

Ronald Roberson is also a native of Baltimore City. Both Roberson and Jones finished their undergraduate training at Morgan State University, receiving their undergraduate degrees in the department of fine arts. Robertson went on to travel and study under a Fulbright Fellowship in 1974.

Roberson is a starting realist. His approach is cool and directed towards infinite detail. Working in the classical tradition of oil painting, Roberson's canvases shimmer with light and color as he tries with remarkable success to capture the essence of nature. While oil is his best medium there are some very impressive pastels included. Presently, Roberson is an instructor of art at the Friends School.

Pontella Mason, originally from North Carolina, studied at the School of Visual Arts in New York City where he finished his bachelor of fine arts degree. Similar to Roberson, Mason works from the realist definition only with a more expressive bend of the brush.

Music is a great influence in Mason's life and when he is not painting, or teaching studio classes at Coppin State College, Pontella can be found making music. Much of the subject matter of his canvasses comes from the images and inspiration of such greats as Billy Holiday, Lester Young and traditional African music and dance.

Van Woodson is the youngest and most diverse of these painters. The works on exhibition demonstrate Woodson's ability to handle several styles of expression. Also included are several sculptures. It has yet to be determined where or how Woodson will choose to concentrate or develop his visual style. The excitement of this show is his overwhelming ability for growth. Van Woodson is a highly prolific artist who is skilled in several materials.

This is a show to be proud of because these four men — young, gifted and black — have refused to sell out. This show is a testament to their courage and success in their pursuit of art. Possibly the best summation comes from the artists themselves — "The fact that we as artists have continued to work, means that we have passed a certain selection process. This may mean that we have jumped through some tiery hoops, or that this knowledge, this love that is inside of us, is for the community to experience also. Whatever the case we make a creative effort to protect our individual rights to continue to make art."

The show will continue until April 4. The gallery is located in the Murphy Fine Arts Building at Coldspring and Hillen Road. The Gallery is open daily 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and weekends are by appointment only.

Dr. Hammond is dean of graduate studies, Maryland Institute, College of Art.

—MORE LETTERS—

Praising teachings of Elijah Muhammad

Dear AFRO:

Today there is much talk about the '60s and the struggle during that era.

It is important to understand that our struggle in America did not begin in the 1960s, but in 1555 when the slave master went 9,000 miles to Africa, kidnapping black people from their homeland, and brought us to America in chains.

From that time up until the Revolutionary War to slave rebellions on the plantation, through the Civil War, the Emancipation Proclamation right up to the wholesale lynchings of blacks in the '20s, the depression of the '30s and black people marching off to war in the '40s, to the desegregation case of Brown vs. Board of Education in the '50s.

The '60s seem to signify the turning point of the black struggle in America.

In all contemporary history the most powerful, well organized militant and effective black movement in America has been Nation of Islam under the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. From the very inception of this movement in the early '30s its whole existance has been totally dedicated to freedom, justice, and equality for black people.

Yet we see today a master conspiracy by white people with the help of his so-called moderate black leaders to absolutely write the Honorable Elijah Muhammad out of modern history, to discredit him and to diminish the importance of his teachings, thus disillusioning black people of the significance of Messenger Muhammad's works, and the impact of his message to the black people.

Today we so boastfully say we are black and we are proud, yet it was the Nation of Islam under the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad who taught, suffered and in many cases even died to make black a definition of respect, honor and dignity, but the greatest fights were with our own people who preferred to be called negro, colored, or anything but black.

In our demands for black schools and black educators in the '30s, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and his followers were sent to jail and persecuted because they refused to permit their children to stay in the white man's schools and be taught to be satisfied slaves ashamed of their blackness and heritage.

It was Messenger Muhammad who demanded that black history be taught, not Negro history that started with us as slaves happy that the white man rescued the Negro from the lions and tigers in savage Africa, but our true and glorious history.

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad taught us to love ourselves and not our enemies. Without any government grants of funds, the Messenger cured more alcholics and drug addicts than any program in this country.

He set up an educational system that the white man's public school system has yet to match. Taking the so-called juvenile delinquents, cleaning their minds, the minds of their parents; opened the University of Islam and made these same children a positive example for all black people to model themselves by.

For the past 45 years, every so-called Negro leader, from the preacher, politician to the so called civil rights leader, to the athletes, militants, to the Pan Africanist has tried to copy, emulate or out right steal parts of the Messenger's program.

Every positive direction that black people talk about doing, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and a handful of followers made his ideas a reality.

As black people, we owe it to ourselves to at least hear and examine the teachings and work of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, and not be influenced by the white media and their hand picked black puppet parrots who have tried to destroy the name of every great black leader our people have ever produced.

We appeal to all black people — let us stop crime of distortion of our history.

EMMANUEL A. MUHAMMAD, Mohammad's Temple No. 1

AFRO welcomes letters

The AFRO welcomes letters from its readers. Letters should be brief and must bear the writer's name and address.

All letters will be given consideration for publication.