# EDITORIALS

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## Sale of the Orioles

Evidence continues to surface reinforcing the ascendancy of black businesspeople into the mainstream of the world of finance.

While the headlines proclaim the recent sale of the Orioles as a routine transaction on today's money market, there is significant difference.

This time, a group of successful black businessmen were ready to put up $40 million to purchase 51 percent of the team's stock—a controlling interest.

For many years, it was thought that minorities with investment money were mainly show business luminaries, or sports figures.

One has only to examine recent fiscal events with minority involvement to realize that things have changed. When it was possible to have an interest in the city cable operations, it was accomplished with a minimum of fanfare.

Taking over an international conglomorate as Beatrice Foods by a minority firm, stunned the business world while lending further credence to black empowerment trends.

While efforts to get a piece of the action in the Orioles sale failed — they established a landmark in what is possible.

Just 30 years ago, minority ownership of a major league sports team was not even a dream—now we know it is a very real possibility.

The business world must now realize that minorities cannot be shut out of major business deals preemptorily. The money and the knowledge exists which indicates, it's just a matter of time.

We salute the individual businessmen who had the foresight to associate themselves in such a manner to achieve what we consider to be a positive objective.

Failure to reach this objective not withstanding, we'd like to see more of this.

## Getting the ear of Bush

Who has the ear of president elect George Bush and how to go about getting that ear to stay tuned to our way of thinking is the topic of conversation all over the country. What worries most people is that Bush, like most white people, has in mind that he can talk to one or two prominent black people and that they can speak for all 22 million blacks in this country. No way!

We are 12 percent of the population and like most large groups of people, there are segments in this population that cannot be represented by one or two persons. If this were not true, then all that the president-elect would have had to do would be to meet with one white leader, one Jewish leader or one Catholic leader and he would learn all he needed to know. That kind of thinking doesn't work for them and it doesn't work for us.

It is understandable that Bush used his first round of luncheons to meet with political leaders like the Rev. Jesse Jackson. And we appreciate the fact that he took the time to console the other political losers like Michael Dukakis.

But Bush's advisers are not in tune with the black community if they do not see the necessity of meeting with other power brokers like the head of the Congressional Black Caucus—Mervyn Dymally, the president of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) Patricia O'Flynn Thomas and that young fighter, Cong. Mike Espy.

We think it is nice to invite a Coretta Scott King to talk about the upcoming Martin Luther King holiday celebration but for hard hitting issues we would like to see Bush listening to the likes of a C. DeLores Tucker, head of the Democratic Black Caucus, or long-time Republican fighter Elaine Jenkins of One America, or Marion Wright Edelman, head of the Children's Defense Fund.

If Bush must bring Alan Keyes to the White House, we hope he will have the guts to invite our old friend, Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, who will remind him "I ain't dead yet" and at the same time give him a good lesson on what blacks need and want.

There are others on our list who need to get the ear of the president elect including the head of the World Conference of Mayors, Johnny Ford; actor-educator-producer Bill Cosby; ministers like Louis Farrahkan; black members of the British parliament and some of our Southern African leaders.

There is a lot of talk that blacks don't have an agenda and that whites can speak for blacks as well as for native Americans. HOGWASH! Once something like that is said to other minorities one finds out how stupid it sounds.

Our other problem is the age-old big house slave mentality where many whites ask their servants what leaders blacks have. The only fault with this is that that same person would not ask a white servant to identify his own leaders. We just want him to use the same sources for information for all groups — the media, organizations and people from all walks life.

The voices that Bush listens to will determine the fate of black Americans for years to come.

If he listens to the wrong voices, as President Reagan did, the United States of America will continue to lose the talents of millions of people whose ancestors have fought in every war for their fair share of the pie. He must be made aware — as most black leaders are — of the simmering revolution of the so-called black underclass which is exploding on our city streets and will soon engulf the white communities.

On the other side, if he can get his advisers to pay attention to more than one group — as he plans to do with other segments of the population — blacks will fare better under this administration.

Yes, Mr. Bush, there is more than one voice to listen to in the black community. We hope you will take the time to lend an ear.

Parren J. Mitchell
Former U.S. Rep.

## Next four years

At least a dozen people have said to me, "I believe things are going to be better for us under Bush; they certainly cannot be any worse than they were under Reagan." I find it hard to answer them. I would like to see things better under Bush, but they could be worse.

Bush has the difficulty of fleshing out his Administration in such a fashion as to appeal to moderate Republicans, and yet, at the same time, not alienating the far right wing conservative Republicans.

He has named James Baker as his Secretary of State. Most in political life would describe Baker as a moderate-oriented Republican in most matters, but not in economic matters.

I had the opportunity to meet Baker where he was Secretary of the Treasury, and had a number of chances to assess him when he testified before some of the committees of the Congress on which I served.

Unlike most of the spokespersons for the Reagan Administration, who were arrogant and often intemperate, Baker was always the gentlemen who would at least listen to the arguments of those of us who opposed some of the Administration's policies.

It is reasonable to believe that he will not be as much the hardliner against the Soviet Union that the present Secretary of State is.

The appointment of Admiral Stowecroft is generally acceptable. Stowecroft, though strong in his support of the military, is intelligent and realistic. (He secretly opposes one of Reagan's pet projects—Star Wars.)

It is hoped that his intelligence and past experiences will cause him to avoid military interventionism around the world, and the beating of the drums of war as the most important element in international relations.

On the other hand, two of Bush's appointments are cause for great concern for many of us. Governor Sununu of New Hampshire has been named as Chief of Staff. Sununu is a rigid, inflexible conservative who, I fear, will be totally insensitive to the needs of black citizens, the poor, and the working poor.

As White House Chief of Staff, he may very well control access to the President. He won his appointment because he delivered his state to George Bush during the primaries. Other than that, he has few, if any, credentials for the position of White House Chief of Staff.

Atwater has been named as Chairman of the Republican National Committee. For blacks, this appears to be a disaster. No one has publicly labeled him a racist, but there is much evidence to suggest that he holds black people in low esteem, at worse, and at best, is insensitive to us.

Interestingly, Paul Kirk will step down as Chairman of the Democratic National Committee. There will be a scramble for the position.

What we have seen in the Bush appointments, so far, is a balancing act, appeasing the ultra conservative bloc of the Republican party, and the more "moderate" conservative forces. Will Bush name a black to his Cabinet?

Will he appoint blacks to head federal agencies? Which blacks, if any, will be a part of his "Kitchen Cabinet," those not appointed to public positions, but those to whom he would turn for advice and counsel?

Our future under the Bush Administration will be closely tied to economic developments. Looming large are the balance of the trade deficit; the inability of Third World nations to pay their loans; America's debt to foreign nations and the threat of a significant rise in unemployment.

If conditions worsen in any of these areas, America could face a recession. In a recession, mild or deep, the concerns of black citizens are put on the shelf.

Kweisi Mfume
U.S. Congressman

## Civil Rights: on print and on film

Occasionally, there arises some form of artistic expression which adequately tells of the personal struggles and sacrifices of African-Americans as we fought for civil and human rights.

As a member of the Congressional Arts Caucus, I am aware of the many fine artistic contributions that Afro-Americans consistently make to the cultural life of this country and the world.

Unfortunately, there are too few works that express the very personal nature of the struggle. After all, it was not some anonymous "stranger" that struggled, it was us, our friends and families.

Fortunately, this Autumn the general public is presented with two different art forms which tell of the personal struggle for civil rights within the context of the larger movement.

Volume I of Taylor Branch's nonfictional account of the civil rights movement is entitled, **Parting the Waters: America in the King Years 1954-1963.**

Published by Simon and Schuster, Branch's work is over 1,000 pages and presents to us history as biography, and not just the biography of central figures like Kennedy or King.

America watched stories on the evening news of small black school children who were the target of spit and slurs, or the orderly demonstrators who peacefully suffered both the water cannon and police dog.

The media exposure elicited sympathy and money from many Americans and so the movement grew in power and influence. Branch asserts that these many unknowns were the real heroes of the movement.

The countless, nameless black Americans who had endured enough, indeed endured too much, and who now put their lives on the line to further the cause of justice.

The second art form about the civil rights movement is British director, Alan Parker's film, **Mississippi Burning.** This is more a detective movie than a documentary.

It fictionalizes one event of Freedom Summer 1964 when three young men mentioned earlier were murdered in Mississippi (whose names are listed above).

Gene Hackman and Willem Dafoe (**Platoon** and **Last Temptation of Christ** as Jesus) star as the two FBI agents assigned to investigate the disappearance of the three civil rights workers.

The background of their investigation is the story of black and white Mississippians at war. The weapons of war used by the white racists are terror and fire both of which are depicted in the film with graphic realism.

Churches burn, fathers are lynched, and worshippers are confronted by hooded Klansmen as they emerge from services. This Holly production is not glamorous in the least.

**Mississippi Burning** could be a horror film with all the violence and terror depicted, but such events did happen and in the film we briefly get to know those who experienced and perpetrated the terror.

Despite its fictional veneer this film provides us with both historical accuracy and a very gritty realism.

The camera doesn't shy away from showing us the horrible reality of racial terrorism. We come to appreciate the integrity and courage of the humble folk who were the objects of the terrorism.

I recommend both book and film with the warning that **Mississippi Burning** (Rated R) is violent and may be unsuitable for younger viewers.

Both book and film are major contributions to the growing body of works of art which tell of a crucial and personal stage in the struggle for civil and human rights in America.



# COMMENTARY & OPINIONS

AMDOC NNPA UPI

Les Payne

## Kareem Abdul Jabbar: basketball deep thinker

Surveying my past holiday offerings I have noticed that, over the years, almost every official observance, save New Year's, has been trashed at one time or another in this space.

This year, I am committed to restraint holidays shall pass like all other days.

Thanksgiving, a season I've blisted more than once, has passed this year with nary a discouraging word. Actually I was occupied at the lamp, reading up on the conflicting rumors about JFK's life and the theories on his death. Seldom has so much been written, and filmed, so inconclusively.

Dizzy from conspiracy theories, I pause from the search after human calamity, downshift and write with a nose for the uplift.

This is not easy, especially following a national election that, at the vice presidential level at least, has functionally removed from the American political vocabulary, the word "competent." Despite all, of course, the country will spiral its way on, albeit downward.

The real genius of the American system is that it would continue to function for six months, I am convinced, even if the image makers tricked the electorate into quartering in the Oval Office a gentler, more kindly Rottweiler.

But here, I go again.

On the uplift side, I saw Kareem Abdul-Jabbar play his last scheduled game at Madison Square Garden last week. The fame of this kindly giant will live as long as basketball is played. Not unexpectedly he brought talent, dedication and a winning spirit to the game, but Kareem has an intellectual energy that could never find expression on the basketball court.

"Believe me, this kid is a rare human being," said Guy Rodgers, a veteran professional player when Kareem was just entering the league.

"Although I have found him not to be a great conversationalist," wrote spots analyst Sam Goldaper, "I did find him to be compassionate and a very deep thinker. The trouble I found, especially during his early years, was the media never really took the time to understand him and at times I felt they did him much injustice."

This last point is as true as it is unfortunate. However, it is also typical of the media's dealing with intelligent, strong-willed, no-nonsense black athletes. Early in his professional career, Kareem converted to Islam, a wall American sportwriters are incapable of scaling.

Sportwriters gave up on him as remote and unapproachable. For his part, Kareem seemingly looked down upon the journalists as one part menace to every two parts nuisance. Thus the reading public was denied a fair and engaging look at the broader person that is Kareem.

It is the same with all such black athletes. The more intelligent a black athlete is the more likely he is forced to withdraw from an intimidated white press corps. Show me a black athlete who refuses to talk to the sporting press and I'll show you one who, if not super intelligent, is certainly wise, self-assured or socially conscious.

In these cases, as with Kareem's, the predominantly white press misses an opportunity to teach us something of value about ourselves.

I guess I should say here that I speak not entirely from a neutral zone.

When it came time for Kareem Abdul-Jabbar to write his autobiography a few years back, he prevailed upon his lawyer to track me down and offer me first refusal.

It turned out that Kareem had been a regular reader of a column I wrote for Encore Magazine, called "Disturbing the Peace."

Then as now, I figured that my storms rained mainly on the remotest of hard rocks. So I was quite surprised that Kareem, who knew me only as an Encore columnist, would seek me out to co-author his autobiography. In almost all cases, such an inquiry from an athlete, flattering though it might be, would have been flatly refused.

But I was convinced then, as I am now, that in Kareem Abdul-Jabbar there stirs much more than a jock who can heave a round ball on an arch through a wire hoop. So I took the Redeye to Los Angeles, reading two sports biographies en route. Although the collaboration didn't work out, I detected in Kareem a well-nourished intellect that, though neglected, was determined to find creative expression.

While other athletes exclusively worked the lobbies on the road, here was a man who always made time for books and art, jazz, culture and learning. Trapped in this extraordinary athlete's body was an inquiring scholar's mind.

Along his swift journey, Kareem, 41, has hit some financial low points.

After his last swing around the NBA, perhaps his other large talents, dormant till now, will find a more useful outlet.

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Walter E. Williams
MINORITY VIEWPOINT

## Holidays are hazardous to your health

As the nation's work calendar gets cluttered up with holidays, we might have to do away with some. Thanksgiving may be a ripe candidate for disposal for at least two reasons:

First, the feast of Thanksgiving is an antiquated ritual dating back to the Middle Ages when there was no refrigeration to store food over the winter, and — more important — agriculture was so inefficient that it was impossible to sustain large herds over the harsh winter months.

On winter's eve people had to slaughter excess animals, gather what remained of the fruit and vegetable crops, and go on an eating binge for several days in hopes that the memory might sustain their moral through the lean winter.

Our Pilgrim ancestors decided to name this event Thanksgiving. Well, since we now have refrigeration and the capacity to sustain livestock over the winter, need we continue this ritual?

Since we're turning into a nation of wimps—afraid of cigarette smoke, dioxin, holes in the ozone layer, the greenhouse effect, ethnic jokes, war, and cancer—there's even better reason for jettisoning Thanksgiving.

And, there's no greater leader in the attack against Thanksgiving than our crusading surgeon general, Everett Koop.

Dr. Elizabeth Whelan, director of the New York-based American Council on Health and Science (ACHS), recently sent me a Thanksgiving menu. One look at this menu should energize Dr. Koop into interdicting all Thanksgiving supplies.

Having cream of mushroom soup for an appetizer? Forget it. It contains hydrazines, a known carcinogen. How about a baked potato? No thanks! Potatoes contain amylase inhibitors, arsenic, chaconine, isoflavones, nitrate, oxalic acid, and solanine, all of which are toxic, cancer-causing chemicals.

You can have my share of turkey; I'm not going to eat heterocyclic amines and malonaldehyde. You can have my slice of pumpkin pie, too. It contains deadly myristcin, nitrates, and safrole.

Having a glass of wine? In addition to alcohol, wine contains ethyl carbamate, methyglyoxal, tannins, and tyramine, and that hurts me to my heart. Your Thanksgiving meal contains many toxins and mutagens and cancer-causing agents.

But Congress has blessed us through the Poison Prevention Packaging Act (1970), Federal Hazardous Substances Act (1970), and the Toxic Substances Control Act (1976).

Therefore, it is pure dereliction of duty if the surgeon general doesn't take to the highways and byways to interdict supplies of holiday food.

I hope you've gathered by now that I've been pulling your leg a bit. Though all of these foods contain highly dangerous natural chemicals, you can avoid their toxic and carcinogenic effects by simply using a little judgment:

Just try to refrain from eating 3.8 tons of turkey, 100 pounds of potatoes, or drinking 96 cups of coffee at one sitting..

Unlike the phony blessings we get from Congress, nature has given us true blessings. We eat many potentially lethal chemicals, but we metabolize, or excrete, them unchanged without sustaining any damage.

We remain healthy because toxicity is dose-related: The smaller the dose, the smaller the effect—something the Food and Drug Administration hasn't learned.

There are several lessons to be learned from the ACHS study: (1) Americans must stop acting as if natural is safe and man is suspect;

(2) we won't necessarily die from eating known toxins and carcinogens; and

(3) we must develop a greater suspicion of experts and politicians to promise us protection from the cradle to the grave.

**GUS HAWKINS:**

## Preventing youths from joining gangs

In many inner cities across the nation the most urgent concerns are not only infrastructure, housing, and education, but the presence of gang warfare. Gang violence remains the most serious problem facing communities like Los Angeles, Phoenix, Chicago and Portland.

What compels youths to join gangs? The lure of fast money from the drug trade is a common answer, however, gangs also provide emotional and material support for youngsters—a type of extended family.

Gang related murders, in the Los Angeles area, reached 207 so far this year. In South Central Los Angeles, where a disproportionate amount of gang activity occurs, 116 gang related deaths were reported. These youngsters, withdrawn from mainstream society, depend on the gang "family."

For years, law enforcement officials, elected officials, and concerned citizens focused on youths in gangs rather than on prevention or intervention.

Surprisingly, few model gang prevention programs do exist. These programs prove social agencies and communities can replace the gang unit by providing counseling and employment.

Although due to high dropout and truancy rates, many children hardly see a classroom; youngsters in **elementary school,** particularly in the inner city, ought to be taught about the dangers of drugs, crime and gang involvement. They need to understand that alternatives exist.

One school in California eliminated gang related graffiti in the halls. Other schools prohibit the wearing of gang insignia on school grounds. A few try to build self esteem and self confidence.

Gang activity has transcended disputes over turf boundaries. With the profit potential of drugs like "crack," gangs fight over their markets and whoever invades the gang's turf has a harsh punishment—death.

The value of life for many of these youngsters is meaningless. The leading cause of death for blacks 15-24 year olds, according to the Center for Disease Control, is homicide. Poverty and the alienation associated with being poor, contributes to gang violence.

Unemployment among black youth consistently remains over 30 percent; youths do not want to work for minimum wages when they can make $500 from one drug transaction.

For many inner city youths, these minimum wage jobs are not close to their homes and offer no dignity.

Can we blame children? The images they see on television glorify the materialism that they cannot hope to attain without hard work, dedication, and education.

Our society has evolved into one where instant gratification is sought. Children are a reflection of societal trends. For this reason, they need supportive services and positive role models.

Wesley Mitchell, Assistant Chief of the Los Angeles Unified School District Police Department, in **School and College** put it aptly, "The most difficult thing any of us will ever do is raise a child.

"It is more important to know how to raise a child than run a computer. But it is the thing we receive the least amount of training and education in today."

Congress recently passed the anti-drug bill which includes my amendment, providing additional federal aid to programs that give youths alternatives to joining gangs and teaches youths nationwide about the dangers of drug abuse.

The first step in reducing, and eventually eliminating gangs, begins with the recognition of the gang problem in our nation. Law enforcement is effective, but it is only one part of the solution.

The overcrowding in our jails and courts reiterates the need for prevention programs which will reach children before they go through the revolving door to nowhere.

Ruth Jenkins
SOB SISTER

## Bigtime crime stuff

There's no holiday season joy in Mafiaville tonight. 'Cause a federal court jury has thrown the book at Philly's organized crime chief and 16 tribesmen.

This is the period of traditional peace-on-earth emphasis. But the underworld has "suffered" unaccustomed peace and quiet for more than a year now. The same span that the heavyweight lords of vice and violence have been incarcerated. Awaiting trial on 40 counts of conspiracy and racketeering.

Meanwhile, back at Roughneck Rancho, there was literally "No Smoking"—guns, that is. Gats got rusty. And long-idle trigger-fingers may have to take a re-training course.

Nary a bombed or bullet-riddled package has surfaced for many moons now. But for three years previously, they used to pop up regular as clockwork. In car trunks, on wooded lanes, near restaurants and other hangouts, and often (quite boldly) just outside their homes. Sometimes they were rival tyrants; sometimes they were rebel teammates.

Now, gangland's goon spirit (and holiday spirit) was snuffed out. After a sensational trial, the jury gave the hoodlum hierarchy prime dibs on prison suits. With leases of up to 55 years.

They were convicted for violating the racketeering statute. Involved in nine murders, four attempted murders, extortion, loan sharking, illegal gambling, and drug trafficing. And some offenses which never even occurred to the Ten Commandments.

Star finger-pointers against these anti-social activists were two of their former brethren. Who admit having been "hit men." (Turned informant for government for forgiveness of some of their sins). The prosecution also presented almost 300 tapes of secretly recorded underworld conversations.

The jurors had been holed up in a hotel throughout the trial. "Anonymous," considering the black-hat-bag-guys reputation of the principal characters. For "courageously" doing their civic duty, they were applauded by the law officers. Shaking their hands, the judge assured them that by court order they will never be publicly identified.

By good old USA standards, a suspect is entitled to trial by a jury "of his peers" Definition of "peer" is "one that is of equal standing with another." Not everybody likes that literal application when it comes to criminal cases.

Like in the old joke on this subject. A neer-do-well pleaded not guilty to burglary. Given a choice of either a judge or jury trial, he asked "What are peers?" Told that the term meant his "equals," he protested indignantly: "I don't want to be tried by a bunch of thieves and liars."

It's amazing how sexist the underworld operation seems to be. Certainly not an equal-opportunity employer. Mobsters may not keep their women barefoot and pregnant, but they certainly keep them quiet.

No strident voice in anything. No public attention. No limelight behaviour. No TV talk shows. No kiss-and-tell books. No magazine centerfolds. No fashion spreads. No movie contracts. No political endorsements. No scandalous liaisons. Oh yes, and no role-model admiration of Ma Barker and Bonnie of Bonnie-and-Clyde infamy.

But the lassies who share the luxurious lifestyles of mobsters today are not the beauteous bubblehead molls of yesteryear. They may be silent, but certainly not silly or stupid. Today's crime world cuties are self-sufficient and smart. They look at sudden widowhood as an occupational hazard.

They cope well with widowhood by weapon. But widowhood by prison is a new challenge. Well they can cope with that too. As charter members of a new women's support group called W.I.L.L.—N.O.T. Meaning "Wilting In Longtime Loneliness—Not Our Thing."

Companions have wise words for men whose hobby is fishing. That the surest way to catch fish is to have someone throw it to you.

If they were allowed input, gangsters' gals could also give them sage advice. That the surest way to make money is by the counterfeit business.

*Why don't females run the rackets,*
*Since they're not stupid molls?*
*Well, guys make out like bandits,*
*But crime does not pay dolls.*