

White Is Right - Brown Stick Around - Black Get Back

The Ray Willis Report

By: Ray E. Willis



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After a hiatus lasting several weeks away from my column I have returned, refreshed, invigorated, and renewed both spiritually and physically. Thanks to many kind expressions from those of you who missed reading my column.

Today's topic is dedicated to the exploration of the seemingly contradictory phenomenon of African-Americans discriminating among themselves based on variations of skin color ranging from light to dark complexioned.

This issue of intra-racial discrimination has been with us since slavery, but is now enjoying a current renewal of interest due in part to the case of Tracy Morrow, a black woman who filed suit recently in federal court in Atlanta to try and prove that she was fired by her boss, also a black woman, because of the shade of her skin.

Morrow, who is light-complexioned, claims her ex-boss, Ruby Lewis, fired her because Lewis, who has darker skin, resented her light skin.

The fact that it is alleged that Morrow was fired for poor job performance because she couldn't type nor write simple sentences doesn't seem to even matter. Everyone is focusing solely on the circumstance of two blacks fighting among themselves over color.

Looking at this issue reminds me of the Louisiana woman a few years ago who tried to get a driver's license. It was discovered she was one-sixteenth black so they told her it was mandatory that her license indicate she was black, not white as her appearance denoted. The woman went to court, confident of victory. But she lost the case.

Now, to look at the Louisiana woman one would automatically assume without thinking that she was white. But under "race" on her driver's license it clearly says she is black. Situations like this one kind of makes the whole race issue seem ridiculous, don't they?

Now, back to the main issue--the conflict between light skinned and dark skinned blacks. People say blacks have been brain-washed by the system to the extent we subconsciously favor lighter skinned blacks.

Leading black American psychologists (whom upon

close examination might be predominantly lighter skinned themselves), confirm that light skinned blacks are favored by the system (whites) over darker blacks.

Over time, the recognition of such favoritism has created a backlash among darker skinned blacks to the extent many now have outright disdain, for no particular reason, for light skinned blacks.

For years through my childhood and as an adult I scoffed at the suggestion that I personally favored lighter skinned blacks over darker ones, ancillary to the fact that I fit into the lighter black category myself. Sure, they called me "Little Red" because of my Indian features and redbone complexion. But I had no earthly idea I could possibly even on a subconscious level discriminate against my darker-hued brothers. And to my knowledge, I was true to my word. However, there is one incident that proved to be my ultimate test.

During my college days, a dark-skinned colleague from my hometown always put me down in front of our mutual friends. Until one day I confronted him. We argued bitterly and finally wound up in a fight. It wasn't until afterward that I put two and two together and discerned he

was antagonistic toward me because of his hatred for lighter skinned blacks. Apparently, he chose to take his frustrations out on me because in his eyes I represented a black with a future because I was lighter skinned, and he feared that because he was a darker skinned black he might not fare as well with the system.

And so it may be with many others, that they have hatred for a fellow brother's skin hue predicated upon how we blacks as a group are treated by the predominant group wielding economic and political power.

I can't help but reason that this practice of inbred hatred based on shades of color within our race doesn't seem like the proverbial tale of the dog chasing its own tail. What difference does it make if you're light-skinned and black or dark-skinned and black--you're still black?

It's a saga dating almost back to the beginning of time. Almost from then, Man has sought to differentiate among mankind based on some identifiable trait or physical feature. I guess if it wasn't skin color it would be the size of one's ear lobe or perhaps how tall or how short a person is that would be the separating factor.

Even so, wouldn't it be gratifying if the focus was shifted away from skin color to some other trait? That would certainly give us a whole new perspective on who we are, make it possible for us to stop chasing our own shadow and permit us to focus our energies on productive pursuits which could free us totally from our present Catch 22 existence.

Think about it.

Dr. William H. (Bob) Bailey To Accept Presidential Appointment

Longtime community leader, Dr. William H. (Bob) Bailey, has been appointed as Associate Director, Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), U.S. Department of Commerce. Dr. Bailey was sworn in on February 2 in Washington, D.C.

Bailey's appointment is the first presidential appointment for a Black from the state of Nevada. He has received over 90 awards from the State, County and City saluting his contributions toward the development of civil rights and minority enterprise over the past 30 years.

Bailey is currently president of the Nevada Economic Development Company, Inc. (NEDCO), New Ventures Certified Development Company and New Ventures, Inc.

National University conferred a Doctorate of Human Letters to Dr. Bailey in 1987 for his outstanding service to the community and business.

Dr. Bailey is former president and charter mem-

ber of the Nevada Black Chamber of Commerce and past board member of the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce; past president of the Prospectors and an executive board member of the National Association of Black and Minority Chambers of Commerce.

Bailey also founded the NEDCO Conference, a nationally renowned Minority Business Enterprise Procurement Conference, held annually in Las Vegas. Top federal and private sector speakers have appeared

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THE NAACP AND YOU!



Rev. Jesse D. Scott
President
Las Vegas, NAACP



Police Brutality - Perception or Reality?

Sheriff John Moran of Clark County says "NO, just good police work." Keith Harrison, a Black 16 year old Valley High ACT/SO Honor Student says, "Yes, yes, yes!"

It IS a reality! Evidence: A witness, a busted head and stitches to show for it!

Now you are invited to

stand up and be counted. Send your donation to the Keith Harrison Legal Defense Fund, Westside Federal Credit Union, 418 Madison Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada 89106 or call 648-4626.

Sheriff John Moran's response to the question of

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