

Point of View

Why Tony Brown and Spike Lee Have a Right To Disagree

By Tony Brown

Bad news travels fast. That's why I was told minutes after his press conference at Duke University in Durham last week what Spike Lee said about me. "How do you answer Tony Brown's criticism that you, Robert Townsend and Eddie Murphy don't own your own films and, in effect, you simply work on the plantation of Hollywood studios?" an African American reporter fired at Lee.

Waking up from a dull question and answer session, Lee angrily shot back that Tony Brown was a worthless filmmaker who should keep his mouth shut until he learned how to make a movie. Brown didn't own anything either, because "White Girl" is a disaster on film. Lee added, along with some other salty criticisms. He left no doubt that he does not like Tony Brown.

He followed this salvo with many angry and vulgar tirades against the African American community's alleged economic backwardness and naivete about financing movies. His only salvation as a filmmaker, he said, is "White" people.

However, Cash Michaels pinned him to the mat with a question about the ownership of the movies he makes. Lee nervously stated that he owned 50% before he shifted the focus of the question away from the fact that "White Hollywood studios" own his movies. It is doubtful that the 50% answer is accurate, but Michaels did not pursue it.

However, Lee's negative reaction is partly understandable because he was provoked. The question wasn't a question; it was an attack wearing my name. And, as I later told the reporter, I had specifically told him (and he recalled) that my criticisms of Hollywood were not personally directed at Eddie Murphy, Robert Townsend or Spike Lee.



Tony Brown

Spike Lee, of course, has angrily attacked just about every African American with a name for not being "Black enough" - Eddie Murphy, Arsenio Hall, Morgan Freeman for "Driving Miss Daisy," and now Tony Brown for having an opinion about Spike Lee or what African Americans should be doing in the film industry. His reaction at Duke suggested to some that his over-reaction indicated a fear that another African American may muscle in on his movie turf and 15 minutes of fame. Ironically, I was fighting Hollywood and television to employ "Blacks" when Lee was in high school.

In the end what has all of this banter produced? Anger, hatred and fear. And it's a vicious cycle. All each of us mentioned above - Lee, Brown, Crouch and the *Spotlight* hit man - is doing, is building barriers to protect our own vulnerable and insecure emotions. Moreover, these attack-actions do not allow love and understanding to develop. And without love and understanding, the similarities that unite cannot replace the differences that divide and alienate.

These attacks upon one another keep us locked in a pattern of manifesting self-hatred by projecting our own fears to other African Americans. Once we've convinced ourselves, and others, we then feel justified in squeezing off a few rounds

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POLITICAL POINTS

By

Assemblyman
Wendell P. Williams

This One's For The Children



Assemblyman Williams

There is a concerted and strong effort sweeping this country to honor the late singer Marvin Gaye with a spot on the starstudded Hollywood's Walk of Fame. Without question Marvin's singing ability and style is unmatched anywhere in the world. However, one of the greatest things about Marvin was his vision and strong concern about the future of the world and specifically its children. His love for children and

Today, twenty years later, we are still ignoring the need to provide for the most important factor to prevent this nation's self-destruction, the well-being of our children. We are facing a moment of great national danger, and we have no moral or practical choice. The mounting crisis of our children and families is a rebuke to everything America professes to be. It will also bring America to its economic knees and increase violence and discord within the country unless we confront it.

In 1990, it is sad to know that every eight seconds of the school day, an American child drops out. Every twenty-six seconds of each school day, an American child runs away from home. Every forty-seven seconds, an American child is abused or neglected. Every sixty-seven seconds, an American teenager has a baby. Every seven minutes, an American child is arrested for a drug offense. Every thirty minutes, an American child is arrested for drunken driving. Every thirty-six minutes, an American child is killed or injured by guns. Every fifty-three minutes, an American child dies because of poverty. Every school day, 135,000 American children bring guns to school. And every day 100,000 American children are homeless.

Of course, as bad as this seems, the statistics are even worse for poor and minority children. Yet, these children make up an increasingly large portion of the youth population, and consequently, the future work force.

Only two of ten new work force entrants in the 1990s will be white males born in the U.S. If America is to compete effectively in the world economy, minority and poor children will have to produce, and America will have to help them produce.

All Americans need to confront the plain truth: Children from every economic and racial group are neglected, adrift, and in trouble. And their troubles pose a greater threat to American security, prosperity and ideals than any external enemy.

Investing in the education of our young at every level is the smartest thing money can buy. It offers rich returns, both for the individuals who are able to reach their full potentials, and for a national workforce in need of a quality education and higher skills development.

POINT OF VIEW: "When I look at the world, it fills me with sorrow; little children today will really suffer tomorrow. But who really cares - who is willing to try to save the world that is destined to die?"

— Marvin Gaye — 1970

POINTS IN HISTORY — 29 years ago on May 4th, CORE began freedom rides from Washington, D.C. to forge desegregation of Southern bus terminals.

40 years ago on May 5th, Gwendolyn Brooks won the Pulitzer Prize.

To Be Equal

PLANNING FOR PEACE

By John E. Jacob

The euphoria about winding down the Cold War is wearing off, and policy-makers now need to take a long, hard look at easing the transition to a peacetime economy.

The policy direction should be clear -- reshaping our

investments, they can also be losers in the process unless the transition is carefully planned for.

The armed forces, for example, is a major employer of minorities and perhaps the employer with the best equal opportunity hiring and promotion record.

Down-sizing the military means that many minorities will be thrown onto a civilian labor market marked by high unemployment, especially for



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defense structure to meet national security needs in a radically changed world, cutting excess defense expenditures, and reinvesting the huge savings in deficit reduction and investment in our economic future.

It's in the specifics that things tend to get tangled. For example, the task of reshaping our defense structure runs up against those who want to preserve worldwide commitments that may be marginal to real national security considerations.

Then there's the debate about how much of the defense budget to cut. That depends on devising a new national security strategy, but it is clear that annual savings of about \$150 billion can be made.

Finally, what to do with those savings -- do we implement an Urban Marshall Plan that develops our human resources or do we continue to starve public needs by cutting taxes?

It's clear to me that our defense obligations should be realistic, that we should cut as much as we can from current spending levels, and invest the savings in the Urban Marshall Plan.

But beating swords into plowshares won't be easy. While African Americans and the poor have the most to gain from redirecting priorities to human resources

young people. Minority officers will enter a civilian marketplace in which companies are cutting managers, and where opportunities for African Americans have always been tight.

But cutting force structures is only part of the issue. In the coming years, we can expect sharp cuts in defense procurement. We simply don't need all those high tech weapons now rolling off the assembly lines.

But we do need the expertise of the companies engaged in producing those military products and the skills of their workers. It would be suicidal to simply cut procurement budgets and let those people sink into unemployment.

We have to carefully plan the transition from a defense-oriented economy to a competitive civilian economy, not only to cushion the hardships of workers and their communities, but also to ensure that they will play a productive role in the future.

There's no reason that plants now producing tanks can't produce civilian goods, or that workers now producing military aircraft can't be retrained to produce civilian goods.

The nation's infrastructure needs are so huge that it should be possible to construct a relatively painless transition.

The biggest threat is that

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