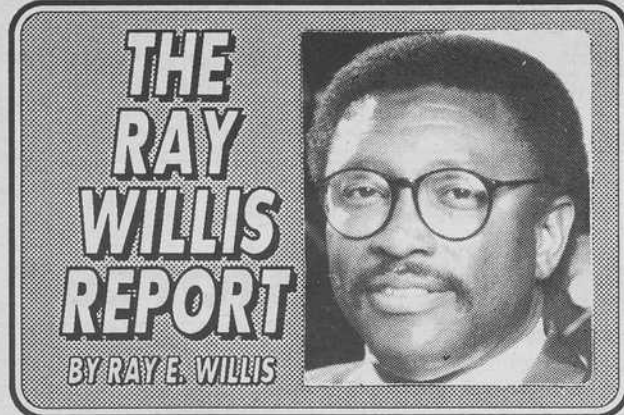


The LAS VEGAS SENTINEL-VOICE  
**CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL**  
**Tomorrow's Martin Luther Kings**



If you are a student of American history you know that Black people breathed a collective sigh of relief when we were "emancipated" back in the 1860s. Just the thought of no longer having to get up before the crack of dawn to pick cotton from sun up to sundown for no pay tickled our ancestors to death, and rightfully so.

But that was then, and this is now. Today we have a modern-day version of slavery that is in many ways a throwback to those days of old when our forefathers were made to toil against their will without pay.

After we were "emancipated" the traditional model of slavery gave way to more subtle ways to extract free labor from Black folk. Sharecropping is probably the best-known form of "legal" slavery, which has stood the test of time and continues to flourish. But, with the mass exodus of Blacks from the South to large urban centers, the powers-that-be searched high and low for more acceptable ways to exploit the under-utilized Black labor pool.

When industrial jobs in the North were plentiful, Black people had access to good-paying, steady, factory work. But now, in the '90s, Black unemployment in urban areas is triple the national average. On top of that, the "new Negroes" (other minorities) are being hired to fill the more menial jobs, traditionally reserved for Blacks.

Some enterprising producer of television talk shows somehow stumbled onto a virtual goldmine and moved in for the kill. In short order, their gambit paid off and TV talk shows soon became the rage.

Television talk shows have become a financial growth industry in telecommunications. And most of the profits are based on using mostly-free exploited labor. Primarily the labor of poor White and Black folk.

Back in the days of slavery, Blacks worked back-breaking schedules picking cotton and performing plantation chores at no pay. Now modern day buffoons parade themselves on stage and before the cameras disrespecting, sassing, rubbernecking, hand-in-facing and screaming at one another at the top of their lungs.

These talk show guests (and

audience members) are living proof that on any given day, an unaccomplished person can have the appeal of a movie star and command the attention of millions of viewers, simply by acting a fool! And the sad part about it is that in many instances, Blacks are unwittingly providing a financial bonanza to those who own and control the shows and the television networks that the programs appear on.

Because just like during slavery, none of the profits benefit those performing the work. In the case of the TV talk shows, the profits go to the networks and production companies who command top-dollar for commercials based on the on-stage antics of the Black talk show guests who are given a few minutes of "fame" in exchange for being made to look like a fool on national TV.

I understand how exciting it can be when a guest is offered free travel, transportation and expenses plus the opportunity to be seen by a national viewing audience. To be treated like a king or queen for a day is a fantasy fulfilled for some people.

For everything that has been stated, talk shows are not the problem with Black America. These programs are, however, symptomatic of the ills which plague our people. If we don't start identifying negative elements in society that are not in our best interest, none of us will be around long enough to matter. Before you can correct a problem, you must first identify what the problem is. Only then can you confront it head on, deal with it, and successfully overcome it.

Our commitment should be to eliminate this one obvious source of confusion among us. Stop watching, appearing on or otherwise patronizing television talk shows that demeans us in any way, shape, form or fashion.

My advise to you is not to watch these programs, and more importantly, not to mimic the same negative behavior in your private life and in your relationship with others.

Boycotting television talk shows isn't the ultimate panacea for all our problems, but will go a long way towards putting us back on track.

To know is to grow. Until next week.

By Bernice Powell Jackson

On January 15 we will once again celebrate the birthday of a great American and citizen of the world, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Many school children will recite his "I Have a Dream" speech given at the 1963 March on Washington and we will pay tribute to a great religious and moral leader of our lifetime.

But in the course of remembering Dr. King's life, it's important to remember that when he came into the nation's limelight as a leader of the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955, he was only 26 years old. As the civil rights movement showed here in the United States and the anti-apartheid movement did in South Africa, young people are often in the forefront of social change.

Who, then, are the future Martin Luther King, Jr.s in our time? Who are the young people who are working for justice for their people? While the media often ignore the stories of young people working for positive change, the good news is there are many young people who are about the business of justice for all. Here are the stories of just two of them.

**ANGELA BROWN**

Angela Brown is the only American winner of the Reebok Human Rights Award, an international award honoring young human rights activists working on the front lines for social change. We in the Commission for Racial Justice are especially proud of Angela because we have watched and encouraged her from age 14, when she organized young people around education and voter registration.

A child of the civil rights movement, she has been involved in the environmental justice movement from its inception and Angela now works with the Southern Organizing Committee and Greenpeace in organizing young people across the South around environmental justice issues. Her successful work helped to prevent the installation of a PVC plant in Wallace, Louisiana and a hazardous waste incinerator in Noxubbe, Mississippi. She is also an assistant pastor at Saint Delight UCC in Louisburg, North Carolina.

To today's young people, Angela Brown says, "Our generation is faced with a continual epidemic of drugs, the culture of violence, the sin of racism, the pain of miseducation, the divisiveness of class, and the indecisiveness to truly end sexist oppression. As young



Bernice Powell Jackson

people we can not continue to aid in these kinds of environmental atrocities. It is our human right all over this world to work, live and play in a healthy environment. I hope all people, but especially young people, will hear my call to struggle and demand their human rights."

**JUSTIN DEEGAN**

Justin Deegan is an Arickara/Sioux from the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in North Dakota. Currently a student at the University of North Dakota State University at Fargo, Justin's Indian name is We Cha Sha Nahzin, which means "Standing Man" in Dakota Sioux, a name given to him by his father who taught him that "when a man falls down, he must get back up again."

Justin was named North Dakota Indian Student of the Year in 1994 by the North Dakota Indian Education Association and was selected for Who's Who for three consecutive years. A natural leader, Justin has served as National Vice-Chair for UNITY, the United National Indian Tribal Youth organization. UNITY believes that as Indian youth, their members can make changes through their 12 inter-related goals — Unity, Spirituality, Family, Heritage, Health, Environment, Sovereignty, Mental, Service, Education, Physical and Community.

An athlete and scholar, Justin is also a Sunday School teacher in the church which his mother pastor's in Bismark. Justin is working with other Indian youth to make the world a better place for themselves and their people. He says, "I have become more aware of education for myself and for other Indian youth. I realize it is a tool for us to become more prosperous and spiritual. Throughout my journey, I have dedicated myself toward protecting our environment and being drug/alcohol free." One of Justin's role models is Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell and he hopes to one day be elected to public office and serve in Washington.

Justin Deegan and Angela Brown are just two of our future Martin Luther Kings, Jr.s. I think Dr. King would be proud.

Point of View

Carl Rowan's Commentary

It is truism that even when the greatest organization is at death's door, many are called but few will answer.

It is a modern miracle of sorts, then, that with the NAACP on the verge of extinction, three brave, classy people answered the desperate cries for help.



CARL ROWAN

When a triple-dipping, conscienceless chairman, William Gibson, was driving the nation's oldest civil rights organization into bankruptcy and rendering it bereft of respect throughout the nation, one brave woman dared to run against him. Myrlie Evers-Williams unseated Gibson by a single vote.

When the need was great to find a new executive of such vigor and respect that he would be approved by a bitterly divided NAACP board of directors, a great retired judge and still-active civic leader, A. Leon Higginbotham, walked into a cauldron of black self-destruction and led the committee that made an inspired choice.

When Rep. Kweisi Mfume of Baltimore learned that he was the choice to take on the role of savior of this nation's once-greatest civil rights organization, he pondered the fact that he had a "safe" seat in Congress; he had a reasonably tranquil life. Then he considered the critical importance of the NAACP post and said, "I will be the advocate of justice." The hope, of course, is that Rep. Mfume can be a new protecting voice, not just in Congress and the White House, but in corporate America, state legislatures, the churches of this troubled land, and more.

But it is folly not to face the truth that Mr. Mfume must have a lot of brave help to succeed.

The Internal Revenue Service and potential money-

givers are still waiting for the NAACP to move legally to retrieve the many hundreds of thousands of dollars taken from it improperly by Gibson, and by former executive director Benjamin Chavis. But no such step seems possible as long as the NAACP has a 64-member board, many of whom were put on by Gibson and care only about retaining their posts and keeping their benefactor, Gibson, out of prison.

The new president and CEO, Mfume, cannot function properly until by-laws are adopted that mandate a board that will be manageable and basically united in purpose. It would be a great gesture of self-respect and commitment to the NAACP's historic goals of racial justice if all 64 members of this board voted for a one limited to, say, 20 people, then they resigned to allow new, unfettered elections of those 20 people.

Can Mr. Mfume save the NAACP? Only if those on the current board who have been ripping off the organization and pursuing only their own personal agendas will find the conscience or the shame to give him a chance.

Race relations are now so bad, and the threat to the entire nation so great, that all Americans ought to pray that Mr. Mfume can make the NAACP once again a meaningful part of the conscience of this nation.

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**Ramon Savoy, Publisher**  
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**Nichole Davis, Staff Writer**  
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