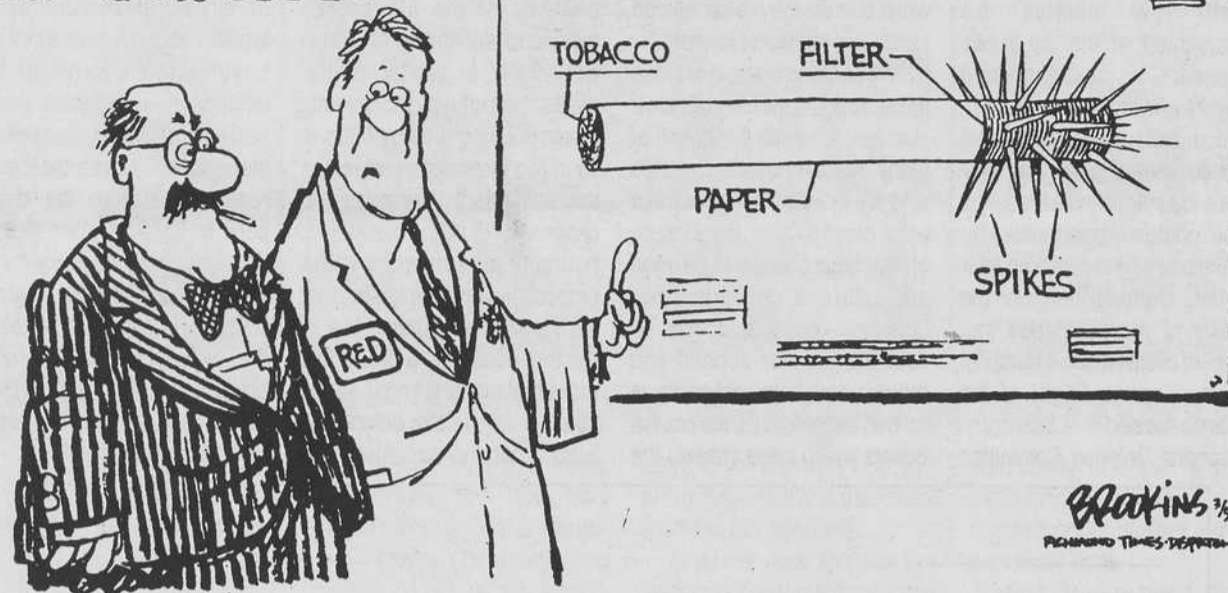


POINT OF VIEW

al Tobacco



"WE ONLY SAID WE COULD MAKE A SAFER CIGARETTE ... WE NEVER SAID IT WOULD SELL..."

Carl Rowan's Commentary

If you want what Bob Dole calls a "wedge issue" - a social-political controversy over which you and your neighbor can bloody up each other - the mother lode is in California.



CARL ROWAN

California can't hold an election without burdening voters with an assortment of "propositions" and initiatives that draw meanness, greed, bigotry out in a force equal to the desert sun.

And because the state holds more electoral votes than any other, it is a magnet for all politicians, especially those desperate for a lifeline.

Bob Dole was here when he was supposed to be in Denver, mining the holes of empty and boarded-up minds, grasping for the ballots of the paranoid, the alienated, and even those who are a little nutty on the wedge issues.

This time around it was affirmative action and immigration that had Californians propositioning their inner souls.

A sad dialogue occurs in which people constantly shout past each other, but rarely about the same thing.

Affirmative action - which Dole once supported - is the most divisive of the propositions that came up for a vote, with immigration the second hottest initiative.

For foes of affirmative action, such programs of employment and education are nothing but "preferences" and "quotas" for "less qualified" blacks, Hispanics and women - just "reverse discrimination" against whites, especially males.

For supporters, affirmative action is an outreach effort to spread opportunities to qualified people in long-cheated groups, gaining in the process the brainpower, skills, leadership of a broader spectrum of Americans.

I found it sad, painful, to watch Dole pander to the most bigoted elements in California, even though it is obvious why he wanted desperately to carry the state.

Dole was telling people here that when he rides to work in Washington he sees "all those jobless black men for whom affirmative action hasn't done a thing."

If Dole really cared about those unemployed black men, he would acknowledge that no one ever acted affirmatively to give them job skills or decent jobs - thus, more affirmative action is needed to achieve justice.

But that would fly in the face of paranoid cries that those black men already are getting more than they have earned or deserve.

Dole, like so many of his pals, finds it easier to pander to people with baseless fears than to try to enlighten them. He may even get passage of some of the propositions here as a consolation prize.

That almost certainly means that Dole couldn't win the big prize - the presidency.

COPING

Black males often use machismo for respect

By Dr. Charles W. Faulkner

There are not enough decent jobs in this country for either black or white people. Why the hell is it that white people discriminate against blacks just because they are afraid that black people want to take their lousy jobs? Is this a phony reason for racism?

Mr. T., Cleveland

Dear Mr. T.:

I don't think for a minute that there is a large scale fear by white people of black people wanting to take their jobs. If this theory were true, it could not account for the racial abuse that blacks regularly receive from whites who have secure jobs with high salaries.

I think that the supposed fear of black people taking jobs from whites is a rationale; it's a cop-out. This theory is used by many whites to justify their racial abuse of blacks.

Let's look at some important points:

1. Blacks (especially black males) have been extraordinarily successful in athletics. They stand out nationally and, often, internationally, as boxing champions, football players, and rough and rugged, highly-hip "street dudes." Black males are the world's *macho* prototypes.

2. Black males have been viewed historically as sexually superior. Even though this stereotype is unjustifiably silly, it is believed by many whites and blacks.

3. Black males, having been stripped by this society of nearly any reason to be self-confident, flaunt their *machismo*. It provides

a reason to live. It gives the black man a reason to feel proud of himself.

4. This black male machismo motivates insecurity in most other men, particularly in white males who are the controlling force in this society. White males observe black male machismo and begin to compare themselves to the "powerful" black male. White males who see themselves as the controlling force, intellectually, must spend huge sums of money to observe black males pushing around their compatriots on the athletic field and in the boxing ring. This produces jealousy and near-hatred of the black male.

5. Whites have been able to put the black male *in his place* in the job market by refusing to give him a job, or by relegating him to a lowly position.

6. The only way for the white male to put the black male in his place, with respect to black male machismo, is to insult him at every opportunity.

7. Black male machismo has made white males question their own maleness. White males obtain a sense of self-satisfaction and get a psychological resuscitation of their own maleness, if they observe black males in a situation that is harmful, distasteful or destructive. Their joy is compounded if they can *create* such a negative situation.

8. In conclusion, most racial insensitivity toward blacks results from the way that whites reaffirm their own worth. They put blacks down in order to lift themselves up.

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

Criminal justice and the case of Kwame Cannon

By Bernice Powell Jackson

Institutional racism is part of the daily life of most people of color in this country. The Texaco case and others like it point to racism in the workplace. But institutional racism in the criminal justice system is perhaps the most devastating because it impacts the poorest of our nation's citizens in life and death ways and seems to be the institution least likely to change.



Bernice Powell Jackson

Take the case of Kwame Cannon. Kwame has served ten years of not one but two life sentences for unarmed burglary in the state of North Carolina. He has an outstanding prison record, having assisted chaplains and counseled other inmates and guards. He studied for his GED and now is studying college courses. He works in the kitchen. His life and his attitude shows that if our criminal justice system were really interested in rehabilitation, he would be a model.

Why did he receive such a harsh sentence? There are some who believe that his sentence is related to the fact that his mother, Willena Cannon, was a labor leader in 1979, when five activists in the Greensboro area were shot by Klan and Neo-Nazis in board daylight, but never convicted. At age 10, Kwame was present at the massacre. As a result of his mother's part in a lawsuit against the city for its part in these killings, she was unable to work for a number of years.

As Kwame grew up, he became frustrated and angry with the extreme poverty and he began to break into houses. He never used a weapon or confronted residents. At age 17 he was caught and confessed to six burglaries. But he was accused of many other unsolved burglaries by the police at the time. Several white men were later convicted of some of these burglaries vaguely attributed to Kwame. They received much shorter sentences.

There are others who believe that Kwame's long sentence was because he was a poor African-American youth, who ended up being represented by an alcoholic attorney, who was later disbarred. His attorney recommended that Kwame accept a plea bargain which resulted in the two life sentences. Indeed, recent research shows that the length of his sentence was unprecedented for his offense in North Carolina. Furthermore, since his conviction the laws have changed so that unarmed burglary would not draw a life sentence.

For the past five years a group of pastors in Greensboro have been seeking the release of this remarkable young man who has already served ten years and has turned himself around. Even his last victim, a college president, has joined the effort, as have business executives, most of the city council, the mayor and a former chief justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court. Each year they have petitioned Governor Jim Hunt to commute this young man's sentence or at least release him to the clergy so that he can work with them to help keep others out of prison. But Governor Hunt has turned a deaf ear to their cries.

The Greensboro Pulpit Forum sees the case of Kwame Cannon as both the most extreme example of the inequities of the criminal justice system and an instance of wasted human potential. Kwame Cannon, they believe, has been rehabilitated and can help others stay away from a life of crime.

Here is an excerpt from an open letter written to young people from Kwame Cannon:

"...Sure, life out there can seem unfair at times, here in prison

(See Kwame, Page 16)

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Contributing Writers:
Jackie Brantley
Carl Chamberlain
Ron Gibson
Loretta Arrington Hall
Barbara Robinson
Diana Saffold
Fred T. Snyder
Photographers:
Stacy Banks
John Broussard
Jonathan Olsen

Ramon Savoy, *Publisher-Editor*
Lynnette Sawyer, *General Manager*
Willis Brown, *Production Manager*
Don Snook, *Graphics*
Ed & Betty Brown, *Founders*

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