

O.J.

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encounters, and social distancing. There will be more public demands that blacks take a tougher stance on punishing black crime to prove that they aren't like O.J.

Affirmative Action and Social Programs: The passage of Proposition 209 in California was in part an unstated backlash to the O.J. verdict. Although blacks have made modest gains

in business and the professions, the Texaco, Avis, and Circuit City discrimination cases, and cutbacks by corporations in contracts to minority-owned businesses are strong signs that racism is still rampant in corporate suites.

The Clinton administration decision to "review" affirmative action programs in government, Supreme Court rulings disallowing race as a factor in

college admissions, and the University of California regents eliminating it completely, came during or after the O.J. trial. This is a powerful signal that the assault on affirmative action programs will intensify. Clinton and Congress under the guise of deficit reduction and budget balancing will put more social, education, and welfare programs on the chopping block.

Criminal Justice System: Clinton voiced concern about the O.J. case but not about the racially-biased mandatory drug sentencing laws. The result: blacks make up nearly half the prison population and their rate of incarceration will accelerate. The number of prisoners executed in 1995 were the highest in a quarter century. Nearly half were black. That number will rise. The loud call by the public, politicians, and courts after the O.J. verdict for tougher laws, jury changes, and longer sentences will continue. The acquittal of police officers involved in killings of blacks by all-white juries in Pittsburgh and exonerated by police and public officials in St. Petersburg, indicate that police and public officials refuse to punish police misconduct. This increases the likelihood that black anger and frustration will flare into more civil disturbances.

Racially Motivated Violence: In O.J.'s home County of Los Angeles, hate crimes committed mostly by young white males against blacks sharply climbed in 1995. Other cities reported a similar rise. Militia, Klan, and white supremacist

groups operate in all 50 states and are bigger and deadlier than ever. Despite scattered federal prosecutions, the attacks on black churches has not stopped. Hate talk radio jocks and ultra-conservative politicians, despite Clinton's complaints, will continue to fan the flames of intolerance and bigotry and make political mean-spiritedness respectable.

Political Marginalization: Clinton's quick step to the "dynamic center" (translated: even more conservative) will scatter black political gains along the path. His failure to appoint more blacks to cabinet positions,

judgeships, and lower level offices, propose any new social legislation, vigorously support affirmative action, halt the slash and burn of health, education, and welfare programs is a powerful bellwether of declining black political fortunes. The Congressional Black Caucus's embarrassing silence on public advocacy issues, particularly the CIA-Crack allegations, and abysmal failure to get a single piece of substantive legislation through Congress reduces it to little more than a political nuisance.

This is not a doomsday scenario. Much of this has

already happened. The challenge is for blacks to continue to pressure business and political leaders for greater funding for job, education and social services, non-punitive welfare reform, crime and drug prevention programs, and media fairness. Blacks also must initiate and support more self-help business and community improvement programs. This is the only way to overcome the O.J. fall-out.

Dr. Earl Ofari Hutchinson is the author of The Assassination of The Black Male Image and Beyond O.J.: Race, Sex, and Class Lessons for America.

Farmers

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African-American farmer was 222 days.

"The department (USDA) has acknowledged discrimination, but they have not paid anyone to compensate for it. They have not settled any of the cases," said Boyd. As the number of African-American farmers continue to dwindle, members of Congress, the National Black Farmer's Association and the United States Department of Agriculture's Coalition of Minority Employees are demanding that measures be taken to eradicate the situation.

"These are long-term cases. These farmers have not just begun complaining overnight, they have been suffering for a while," said Congresswoman Eva Clayton in a recent telephone interview.

"The farmers themselves are at a boiling point and the farmers are bringing their plight to the public's attention. They are doing this because they feel the conventional channels to voice their complaints are not effective. I am calling for a congressional hearing to address the situation," said Clayton.

Along with calling for hearings to address discrimination in the USDA, she supports a moratorium on foreclosures on farm property until there is a change in policy. Henry Glickman, the Secretary of Agriculture, will ask for a hold to be placed on all foreclosure, especially those where discrimination complaints are pending.

Glickman has directed each USDA agency to establish an outreach office that reports directly to the administrator. He will also hold a national forum early this year on the delivery of USDA programs and has directed state offices to hold simultaneous statewide forums. Secretary Glickman has also appointed Pearlie S. Reed, associate chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, to head the civil rights action team in an audit of USDA civil rights issues inside and outside of the department.

The allegations by the African-American farmers come at a time when the USDA is presently dealing with several class action suits and administrative complaints of discrimination from employees.

Outlook

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welfare and work.

Williams would like the state to enter a partnership with the city to create the child care centers where the mothers will be trained to be professional child care providers and will also learn the business end of centers.

The city's part in the process would be to supply land or buildings for the pilot child care training centers.

"The problem for women in transition is that they get too little money to make the transition. There's none left after child care," he said. "It's very difficult when someone is entering the job market for the first time."

Williams is also concerned that there are AFDC recipients who don't know that their benefits will end in two years. The only way they will be able to continue to receive benefits is to be involved in school, training or work.

"We need to put things in place for the path from welfare to work and one of those things is child care. The state is responsible for these children," he said.

"It's time to place an emphasis on human infrastructure," he added.

Williams serves on the health and human services committee.

As for infrastructure, Williams wants the exit to remain open on I-95 and Martin Luther King Blvd. Due to design flaws, the Nevada Department of Transportation wanted to close the exit in the 80s, and it is still being discussed, he said.

"Closing the exit would shut off the life blood to the businesses

and the community," he said.

As majority whip and firmly ensconced in a leadership position, Williams, who is serving his sixth term in the Assembly, will use his experience and leadership position to "bring things to my constituents. Experience pays off," he said.

As for the lack of enforcement of the drive-by shooting law and other laws that are passed and ignored, Williams said, he plans to pursue follow-up and enforcement.

Preview

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executives with major corporations, according to Dr. William "Bob" Bailey. There is a "glaring absence of African-American and women in these positions [right now]," said Bailey, a long-time Las Vegas resident, businessman and political activist. "It is the responsibility of African-Americans to see that we are involved at every level ... We must 'sit at the table' where decisions are being made ... it can be amazing to see [how effective we can be]," Bailey said.

Noting the low number of black attendees at the event, Bailey expressed his desire and

encouragement for more African-Americans to take part in business events. Bailey said places like Preview '97 are a good way for African-Americans to make inroads to the hotel and other major industries by meeting the key contacts in top positions. He concluded that blacks can benefit from the business progress of Las Vegas in both "professional and non-professional" job areas by actively participating in every way possible.

Regarding racial inclusion, Bailey responded emphatically. "As a leader in the tourist industry," he said, "Las Vegas

has to lead this nation by showing that diversity is a way of life here."



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