

POINT OF VIEW

Our View

# Rembrante, Picasso or graffiti

It seems that the era of yellow journalism did not die with the end of the Great Depression.

Indeed, media pundits have proceeded to vilify Clark County Commission Chairwoman Yvonne Atkinson-Gates in news stories about her attempt to do business with a hotel she makes decisions on. As journalists, we should know not to inject our personal opinions about people in news stories. Apparently, not all the journalists in this city realize this, especially when it comes to Atkinson-Gates.

She recently bowed out of a business deal with neighbor Ed Nigro to open a daiquiri business in the MGM Grand hotel. She makes decisions affecting the hotel, therefore, it is unethical for her to have business dealings with it.

Atkinson-Gates said she received legal counsel and was told the proposed venture was OK. Another official said the chairwoman was advised not to pursue the business. A state ethics committee will determine if she violated ethics by awarding concessions to businesses owned by a friend.

Whatever the case, it is no excuse for people are supposed to be professionals to paint a sordid mess of her case when commissioner Lance Malone ruled favorably on leases for a company owned by a friend of his wife. But will editorials and cartoons follows. But Atkinson-Gates seems to have all the cannons director at her.

Lets look at it the situation from an artistic perspective. If you desire to paint, you know that you need supplies. Inspired by your own creative processes, you begin to put on paper what what your feel is good and fair.

Journalism is not different. You need materials: an inquisitive mind, a curious eye, talent, fairness and professionalism.

Some local journalists need to ask themselves if they have these materials.

Politicians expect opponents to paint unsavory pictures of them. They understand that. They expect to be praised for doing what's right and grilled for doing what's wrong. They don't expect to have their lives charaded around for the public's amusement.

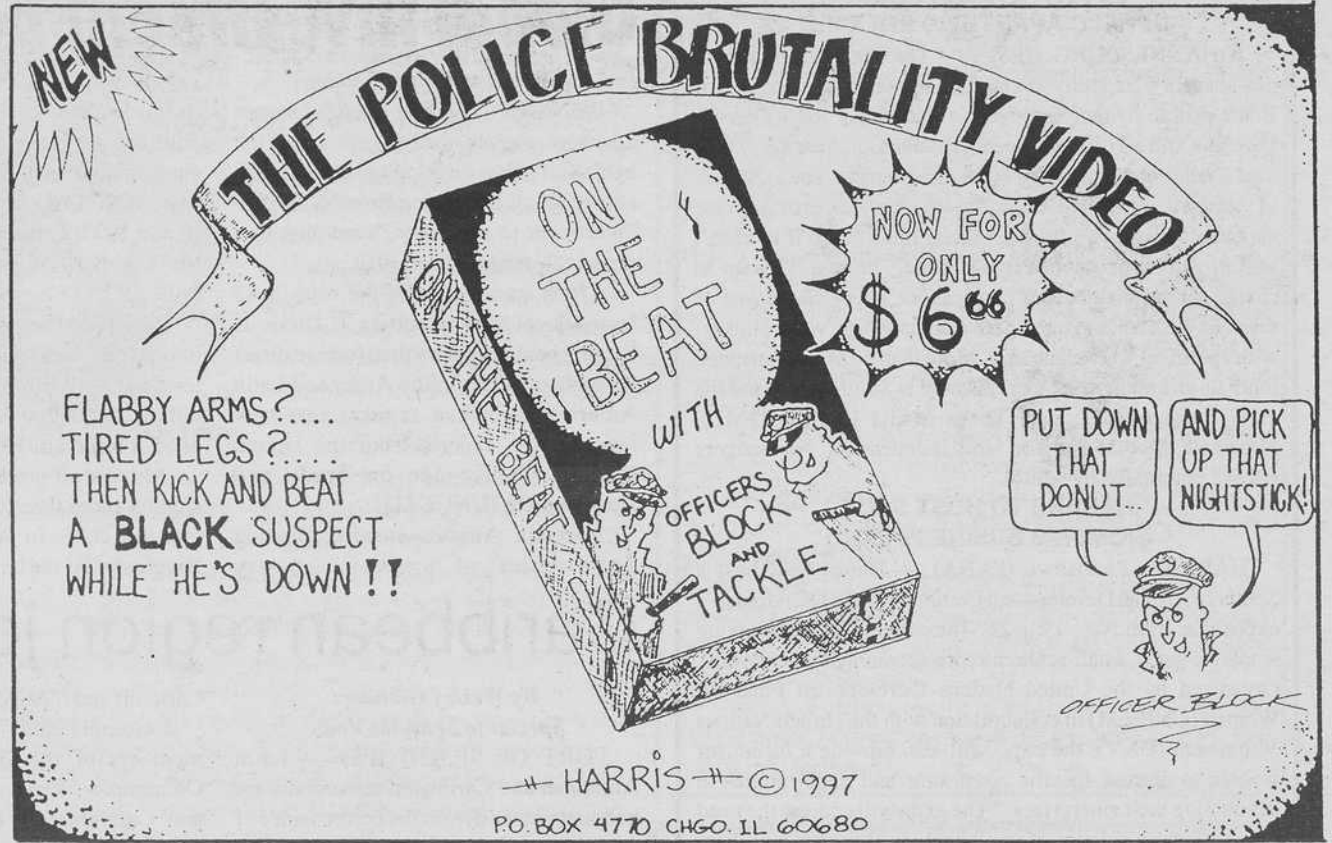
Pictures hurt. Words hurt. But when tempered with fairness, even if true, the sting is reduced.

With an almost daily dose of editorial cartoons which dehumanize her, a professional journalist should ask, has the line been crossed?

Reflective of the tactics disclosed resently during the investigation hearings of the IRS ... guilty until proven innocent. Before the last stokes have been put on this portrait, lets critique the artist and their motives.

Atkinson-Gates should not have her integrity sullied without wrongdoing actually being proven through due process.

The Ethics Commision is charged with ruling on whether the her actions and those of her constituents violated ethics. Lets' just hope they don't paint with a tainted brush.



## Actions speak louder than words

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Last June, President Clinton urged our nation to lay the groundwork for becoming what he calls "One America in the 21st Century" by confronting its lingering tensions over race.

America must heed his advice. We all have an enormous stake in that effort because our racial difficulties undermine our many strengths.

On a moral level, America can't preach human rights to other nations when racial injustice continues to fester in our own. On a pragmatic level, we won't be prepared to compete in the global marketplace if the dynamics of race and ethnicity continue to deny millions of people a first-rate education.

The Urban League has acted to promote racial harmony and inclusion for nearly a century; and we've recently joined with the National Conference, Anti-Defamation League, National Council of La Raza and Leadership Education for Asian Pacific's in the National Voices coalition to more effectively do that.


We salute the President and the early steps his task force of distinguished citizens has taken.

But, to be blunt, we worry that the initiative is too long on dialogue and too short on action. Talk is not enough. Now is the time for actions to speak louder than words — in order to empower the words with real meaning.

For one thing, the President can react swiftly to the dismaying announcement last week by Gilbert Casellas, chairman of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity

### To Be Equal

By Hugh B. Price  
President  
National Urban League



Commission, that he'll resign at the end of the year.

Casellas is widely admired in the civil rights community for trying to effectively lead an agency burdened with a huge caseload and a too-small budget.

His own assessment — that the agency "could do a lot better if we had more money, more people, more support" — ought to galvanize the White House to take the action necessary to eliminate its backlog of 80,000 cases and enable it to stay current with its caseload from now on.

Secondly, Clinton and the task force must continue to remind the nation that by the middle of the next century, half the population will be people of color. That reality underscores how important promoting inclusion and equal opportunity is.

America's economic and civic vitality will increasingly be dependent on non-white workers, entrepreneurs, taxpayers and customers. The more educated this growing segment of the American population is, the more robust our economy, the more harmonious our society and the more secure the entire population will be.

Court decisions and state

ballot initiatives may alter some of the tools and mechanisms use to reach that goal. But the President's initiative should keep the nation's eye on the prize of inclusion — in the neighborhoods we live in, in the schools and colleges we attend, in the companies we work for or own — even if the mechanisms used to achieve it have to evolve.

The President can drive that point home by inviting regional corporate CEOs, Chamber of Commerce leaders, and university presidents to high-profile meetings to affirm their commitments to inclusion. Similar summits involving grass roots organizations like the Urban League and our partners in National Voices and

other community and religious institutions could be held simultaneously all across the country to shore up the national commitment to inclusion.

The President's initiative must also squarely confront the festering issue of police misconduct and brutality toward minority civilians. The 1996 killing of Johnny Gammage by white police officers outside Pittsburgh, the vicious assault on Rodney King and, most recently, the barbaric attack on Abner Louima are just the most notorious of a widespread pattern of law enforcement tactics that often ensnare civilian who've done little or nothing wrong.

Of course, we must catch and punish criminals and maintain order by enforcing "quality-of-life" laws. But treating trivial offenders and true innocents like hardened criminals is dangerously counterproductive. If there's one lesson America should have learned by now, it's that race relations won't improve until there is peace between police and the minority civilians they are sworn to serve.

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