

## COMMENTARY

**Goodyear tires are as strong as a black man's lips**

By Harry C. Alford  
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Special to Sentinel-Voice

"Goodyear tires are as strong as a black man's lips."

It sounds pretty dirty, doesn't it? Believe it or not this stereotypical and racist statement was uttered during a television commercial. Not back in the 1950's but now.

Why? Apparently, Goodyear figured that since the ad would be placed on television in Peru it would be no big thing.

In this global economy we must begin to think, "Racism anywhere is Racism everywhere." The same outrage must be issued regardless of which ethnicity or group is victimized.

Characters on a popular Peruvian television show performed the above commercial weekly. The show features whites in black face and spends an inordinate amount of time demeaning blacks and characterizing them as shiftless, criminal and unattractive — pretty much like the old Step-n-fetch-it role. There are several

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other shows like this shown in Peru. The most upsetting fact is that more than a few American-based companies are sponsoring them.

Besides Goodyear we have the following brands being advertised on the shows: Pennzoil, Pantene, Mylanta, Taco Bell, Royal, Pert, Cap'n Crunch, Crest, Lux, Head & Shoulders. Yes, major corporations such as Cheeseborough Ponds, Procter & Gamble, PepsiCo, Nabisco Brands/RJR and Quaker Oats are included in this extreme problem.

Some of us have begun to act. Those organizing the exposure of this practice and assembling the fight against it are: UPN Television affiliate, Channel 9, New York City; Gary Brouse, Interfaith Center for Corporate

Responsibility, New York City; Dr. Manning Marable, professor, Columbia University, New York City; and Dr. Jorge Morcone, professor, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J.

These admirable people have confronted the above corporations. Some have responded positively such as Goodyear Tire by pulling its advertisement Jan. 1 of this year.

Others have not been so positive.

Said Cheeseborough Ponds: "It takes too much time to investigate."

Shell Oil said, "This was a business decision based on the ratings of the show."

This is terribly disappointing. Where are the NAACP, Urban League, African-American Leadership Forum, etc., who were notified about

this occurrence? Why aren't they sounding off and demanding more responsible advertising?

Is this going to be like Texaco when our leadership allowed an out-of-hand situation to simmer and then boil and refused to act until our media started blasting it to the world. This "sound bite" approach to racism is going to kill us off if we continue our apathetic ways.

How can companies, which have diversity departments, stated commitments to inclusion, and so on, allow such ads to exist in their marketing schemes, even if it happens abroad?

We must set up a mechanism that can detect such irresponsibility by our corporations and a process to quickly end it. I have viewed these commercials and it is sickening. The worst part of it is that good ol' Yankee companies are paying for them.

Join in this fight! Call the above individuals who are working on this situation and voice your encouragement and support of their noble efforts.

Racism, anywhere in the world, must be stopped and especially when American companies are sponsoring it.

**A VOICE FROM THE HILL:**

**The struggle for affirmative action continues**

By George Wilson  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

It's no secret that affirmative action has been subjected to a relentless attack from forces who feel that the American playing field is level and that no adjustments are needed.

Those forces got a boost last year when Californians voted in favor of a measure known as Proposition 209, that would eliminate affirmative action in the state.

Immediately after the vote those opposed to the proposition took the matter to court to seek a restraining order barring implementation of the law, until it was heard by a panel of judges.

In San Francisco, Chief U.S. District Judge Felton Henderson, who happens to be an African American, ruled that Proposition 209 as it was passed, discriminated against minorities and women.

Unfortunately, a three-judge panel overturned Henderson's decision and lifted the restraining order ruling that the people had spoken through their vote and that the court didn't have the right to undermine their decision.

The next step for opponents of the proposition is to appeal to a nine-judge panel for what is known as a formalized ruling.

They will ask the panel to reinstate Judge Henderson's ruling.

Among those opposing Proposition 209 is Congresswoman Maxine Waters (D-Ca.) who says that this matter is far from over. "This is

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— Rep. Maxine Waters

just one step in a battle. Those of us who are opposed to Proposition 209, who are fighting against allowing them to dismantle affirmative action are prepared to go all the way to the Supreme Court. This is just another step in the struggle," she said.

Waters and other opponents are determined, as are their adversaries, to prevail.

The California case has national implications. After all, if Proposition 209 is allowed to take effect, it's just a matter of time before other states implement similar programs.

By inaccurately portraying African Americans and others as non-deserving of any type of special consideration to correct decades of injustice, supporters of measures like Proposition 209 are telling a segment of America to "sink or swim" and "we are out of life preservers."

For quite some time, President Clinton has been saying that affirmative action should be "mended,

but not ended" when it has been politically correct for him to talk about the subject.

In light of the continuing battle to maintain affirmative action, it would seem that bold decisive leadership must be exhibited. Phrases are nice, but action is even better.

Rep. Waters and others are starting to wonder what the Chief Executive might do. "I don't know what I can expect from the President," Waters noted.

The President, meanwhile, has been in a 'mend it, don't end it' mode. He has said, 'Don't throw out the baby with the bath water' when people have pointed to areas of affirmative action that they thought create problems.

"We supported the President's idea of 'mend it, don't end it' in some aspects of federal law. The President spoke out against Proposition 209 in the state of California. I would hope that he would be with us all the way in this struggle because we are in it for the long haul and we are going to need him and everybody else with us," Rep. Waters said.

The struggle to preserve affirmative action is but one of many challenges confronting the African-American community.

A sincere battle is essential on all fronts because as many have said, failure is not an option.

George Wilson is a 16-year Capitol Hill correspondent for the American Urban Radio Network

**Carl Rowan's Commentary**

**Clinton paying lip  
service to IRS reform**

Special to Sentinel-Voice

President Clinton doesn't yet seem to understand the deep hostility of millions of Americans toward the Internal Revenue Service.

His "reform" proposes to cozy us up to more IRS agents to prove that the agency is "user-friendly."

Hell, what the people want is less IRS in their lives, not more! Especially no more of the arrogant, bullies who have so unfairly brought terrible punishment-without-trial to thousands of taxpayers.

As I have written, no IRS reform will be worth a damn if it does not give Joe American recourse to appeal IRS decisions without bankrupting himself by hiring lawyers and accountants and paying exorbitant court costs.

In an earlier column, I proposed the creation of citizen review panels to which taxpayers could go for the mediation of disputes before the Internal Revenue Service issues liens or seizes property in disputes over what that taxpayer supposedly owes Uncle Sam.

I have thought more about the suggestion, and think that complainants might be charged just enough for an appeal to prevent frivolous charges against the IRS or individual agents.

The Clinton people cannot be totally unaware that the fundamental problem is the taxpayers' feeling of helplessness in the face of abuses by a giant, faceless bureaucracy. They have accepted the idea of some citizen intervention by proposing 33 "civilian advocacy panels" across the country. That is not enough panels with enough clout to give the people any real sense of protection such as I'm talking about.

House Majority leader Dick Army of Texas leads a group of Republicans who want to replace the existing system with a flat tax starting at 20 percent and falling to 17 percent. Under this plan, all deductions and credits would be eliminated and the things taxed would include wages, salaries, pensions and employer-paid health insurance. There no longer would be a tax on dividends, interest, capital gains, inheritance and Social Security income.

Representative Billy Tauzin, a Louisiana Republican, leads Republicans who want a simple national sales tax of 15 percent, perhaps a bit higher, that would be imposed on most retail purchases, including homes, rent, services, food, clothing, health care and insurance premiums.

Both Republican schemes will have great appeal to wealthy Americans because the rich would benefit handsomely from either the flat tax or the sales tax. Both plans, especially the sales tax, would hit middle-class and poor Americans very hard.

Just as important is the fact that the revenues collected under the Republican plans would be far less than are collected today, meaning that the government would find it impossible to deliver many of the services that the American people have come to expect.



CARL ROWAN

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