

COMMENTARY

Lott's fib about ties to group more vexing than Clinton's lie

Special to Sentinel-Voice

I've been quiet up to now about what is going on in my hometown, Washington, D.C., but I just can't take it any more. Congress won't accept lying about sex, but lying about racism is allowed.

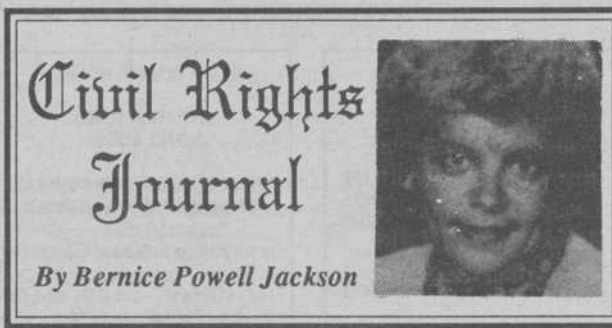
That's the message Congress is sending as it tries to impeach Bill Clinton for perjury about having a sexual affair and then lies about it but it turns the other way and winks when the Senate Majority Leader panders to a white supremacist group and then lies about it. That's the message the main-line media sent as well when they ignored this story for weeks and only just have begun to cover it.

Racism is all right, sex is

not.

Some will take me to task, saying that is a simplistic explanation of it. And perhaps it is, but while sex and lying about sex got Bill Clinton impeached and got rid of Bob Livingston even before he could become Speaker of the House, Trent Lott not only still serves, but still is very much in power and still lies about his ties with a racist group and no one on Capitol Hill seems to care.

It seems that Trent Lott has long had connections with the modern-day version of the White Citizens Council, now called the Council of Conservative Citizens. The White Citizen's Councils were the more "acceptable"



Civil Rights Journal

By Bernice Powell Jackson

version of the KKK in the 1950's and 60's, often being composed of local bankers, politicians and educators. Theirs may not have been the policy of violence of the Klan, but their actions provided the underpinnings of segregation and racism across the South.

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, which has monitored hate groups for three decades or so, the Council's newsletter is

replete with "a steady stream of anti-black and anti-homosexual columns."

The newsletter's readers are encouraged to study biological determinism, eugenics and other so-called "scientific" views long ago shown to be the racist non-science they really are. They often also read Trent Lott's syndicated newspaper columns which are frequently carried in it as well.

Indeed, Mr. Lott seems to have a long history of connections with the Council of Conservative Citizens, often speaking to their group and being photographed with its leaders. Some wonder whether he has not, in fact, been a member himself.

When, finally, the mainstream media began to question Mr. Lott about his ties to this racist organization, he began to try to distance himself from it, claiming that he was unaware of the organization's racist views. But Lott's own uncle said otherwise.

The evidence is pretty clear. Trent Lott, the Majority Leader of the Senate, has close ties with a known white supremacist group. If the

Republican party really wants to prove that it understands the vision of the 21st century, then they will have to do more than make J. C. Watts their poster boy. It will have to tell Trent Lott that he, too, like the dinosaur, must go.

If the Republican party really wants to prove that it is doing more than just trying to get rid of Bill Clinton for his lying about sex, then it will have to get rid of Trent Lott for lying about racism.

And if the almost all white male U.S. Senate wants us to believe that it can truly represent all the people of this great country, then it, too, must show that racism will not be tolerated in its own leadership. It can't just turn its back on this one.

Carl Rowan's Commentary

Parents should better monitor children's forays into cyberspace

Special to Sentinel-Voice

A California mother has sued the town of Livermore on charges that the local library violated her 12-year-old son's constitutional rights when it failed to install software that would have prevented him from downloading sexually explicit pictures from the library's Internet terminal.



CARL ROWAN

of editorial pages on the need and/or ways to protect children, or society in general, from the smut that is all over the Internet — and of course, it rages in Congress, which has passed a Communications Decency Act, parts of which the courts declared unconstitutional.

Does sex on the Internet

And therein lies the latest drama in a growing series of demands that someone protect all children by putting a cover on that big, pornographic screen in cyberspace.

Student leaders at Snow College in Utah are drafting legislation to enable other colleges to block access to pornography on the Internet. Snow has spent \$10,000 to develop a censorship program that blocks access to, among other things, pictures of naked people.

A clamor from some parents provoked the Loudoun County, Va., library to install filtering software on its public-use computers that blocks access to Internet sites that contain certain words and phrases. But U.S. District Judge Leonie Brinkema ruled that the filters violated the rights of free expression.

Most of the 90,000 computers in the public school system of Tennessee now are filtered by a system called Bess in an effort to ensure that no student "happens upon pornography, profanity and other inappropriate materials," as state officials put it.

A furious debate rages in hundreds of school boards, millions of homes and scores

constitute such a new and grave peril to our kids that we are honor-bound to block it, or wipe it out, no matter how much we have to curtail First Amendment rights?

I think back 60 years to the days when my school buddies and I would huddle furtively in the woodwork shop, peeking at smuggled-in little booklets of "dirty pictures" of Popeye and Olive Oyl, and Maggie and Jiggs, having sexual intercourse, and I conclude that the sexual perils to inquisitive kids have not increased much over the decades.

The Internet may enlighten youngsters long before they get a parental lecture about the birds and bees. But it is still a responsibility of concerned parents to supervise their children's viewing of the Internet, the afternoon soaps, the movies or whatever, and to provide the guidance and sense of morality that will override the "dirty" talk and pictures that they might just "happen upon."

I find it profoundly troubling that so many parents would rather rely on school board or government censors to try to ensure a "clean" world and cyberspace for their children.

Going home revitalizes, reassures, rekindles

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Several weeks ago, I traveled to my hometown of Chester, Pa. to speak to a group of people, many of whom were high school and college students.

The event was held in a bookstore in downtown Chester, a city devastated by poverty and decay. I felt as if I had entered a ghost town that was still occupied by people, trying hard to make a life for themselves, many of them very, very young.

That last thing that I wanted to project to them was that I was the home girl that done good. No! What I wanted to convey was my commitment, a commitment that growing up in Chester had burned into me to return and create something of value for my community.

I had left Chester to become a psychologist and in the process had met people — among them my mentor Fred Newman — who had shown me how anti-developmental traditional psychology (and politics and culture) had become. Together, we worked for 20 years to create a new approach to human development. I wanted to give that to Chester.

Twelve people, many of them youth, signed up to work on bringing elements of our approach to their city. While several adults argued about the sanity of building coalitions and whether white and Black Americans were of the same species, the young people kept interrupting and asking: Do you have to live in New York to join the Development School for Youth? Can we bring the All Stars Talent Show Network here? Will you help us build a third party in Chester?

Chester needs it.

Is it possible that even Chester can develop?

I was deeply touched by the interactions, the two hours spent there and the potential for development amongst these ashes of poverty and ruin.

One of the questions that I am often asked in reporting on our work in development is, "How do we know it works?"

What that usually means is, "Are there statistics or studies that show some long term

This Way For Black Empowerment

By Dr. Lenora Fulani



gain and impact of what you are doing?

While I understand the importance of gauging the success of various models, in these situations I sometimes have to repress my true responses.

Here's why. I actually don't care if these transformations that we witness in person after person — young and not so young — are measurable or not. Actually, I am extremely suspicious of what is measured by our standardized tests.

As one of the "Talented 10th" who was able to make it out of Chester (that term refers to the handful of people that are successful in the Black community) I have no interest in analyzing why I was able to do that. I am much more interested in the untalented everyone else who end up stuck in our communities without a clue about the potential of development.

For me, the best answer to "How do we know" is the thousands of young people who show up at our doors willing and ready to grow; the adults who come from very well-to-do communities who are willing to experience the strangeness of the inner cities so that they too can grow; the young people who come up to me on the streets and say "Hi, Dr. Fulani you don't remember me? I'm from the All Stars. I have stopped smoking weed and I am in a GED program at 26..." Or, "I work at K-Mart and I'm one of the night managers there... I'm in a Masters program at Cornell..."

So from my vantage point I believe the answer to "How do we know?" is much more profound and goes much deeper. It's not simply what we know. It's what we create.

Lenora B. Fulani chairs the Committee for a Unified Independent Party.

We accept letters to the editor

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