

POINT OF VIEW

Our View

Catch phrases useless if not backed by action

Catch phrases, those movement-inspiring, sentiment-capturing, uniquely-worded creations of speech, are more alive than at any point in history.

Who can forget "family values." The simple phrase got introduced to the masses by former Vice President Dan Quayle after watching an episode of "Murphy Brown." Quayle was unnerved by an episode in which Brown, played by Candace Bergen, chose to become artificially inseminated. She wanted parenthood, but without the husband. The then-vice president bemoaned Brown as a symbol of all that's wrong with America: growing numbers of single-parent homes, skyrocketing divorce rates, and feminism.

What about, "Can't we all just get along?" Though spoken with sincerity by Rodney King after his beating at the hands of four LAPD officers sparked a riot that left billions in damage and dozens dead, it was soon used in joking terms in skits on sit-coms and variety shows.

"Burn Baby Burn" was popularized in urban areas during the riot-stricken 1960s by African-Americans nationwide upset at police brutality, poor wages and other ills that seemed endemic to their neighborhoods.

"Black Power" galvanized Black America around the concept of black upliftment. Black Power encompassed a wholesale elevation of the race, in economics, in social life, in education, in religion. Its principles were manifested in the civil disobedience of Martin Luther King — make no mistake, King espoused equality for all, that meant Blacks had to be enfranchised or empowered — in the righteous defiance of the Black Panthers, the religious bent of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, academic focus of the Urban League and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the economic reciprocity initiatives of the Nation of Islam.

Perhaps the most used catch phrase is: "Wake up call." From politicians to rappers, the phrase has made the rounds. Most recently, the wife of Ricky Byrdson, the former black Northwestern University basketball coach who was slain by a white supremacist, said she hoped her husband's death would serve as a "wake up call" to America to address racism and hate crimes.

Noble as Mrs. Byrdson's gesture is, sadly her husband's death will probably do little to galvanize support from the powers-that-be to help deal with the problem. Therein, lies another problem. While elected and appointed officials can set laws, they can't legislate morality. Twenty-one-year Benjamin Nathaniel Smith also killed a Korean graduate student, wounded six Jews, shot at an Asian-American couple, six Asian-Americans at the University of Illinois, three black men in two separate incidents and a black minister in Decatur during a three-day rampage over two states that ended Sunday when he shot and killed himself.

According to news reports, the killer once belonged to the white supremacist World Christian of the Creator. Smith also apparently wanted to be famous, according to news reports. Given the marriage of hate and the desire for fame, no catch phrase in the world was going to stop him from his murderous spree.

Sadly, all the rhetoric in the world won't stop those like Smith who are bent on wreaking havoc.

REXBABIN THE SACRAMENTO BEE



THE REAL PURPOSE OF BILL BRADLEY'S CALIFORNIA VISIT...

White privilege and Marv Albert's return

Richard Muhammad  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

The Dred Scott decision in 1857 declared a Black man didn't have any rights a white man was bound to respect. The law enshrined privileges enjoyed by America's Caucasian males as the law of the land.

Another privilege enjoyed by whites is the ability and prerogative to absolve one another of any wrongdoing or misconduct, no matter how heinous or deviant. The reinstatement of Marv Albert as a top NBC sportscaster again proves a white male can always be forgiven and redeemed. Albert, you may recall, was accused of assaulting a woman during a bizarre sexual escapade in 1997.

The woman accused Albert of biting her 15 times and forcing her to perform oral sex in a Vienna, Va., hotel room.

As his trial moved forward and details of his sex life and habit of wearing women's lingerie hit the media, Albert pleaded guilty to a lesser charge of misdemeanor assault and battery. A forcible sodomy rape charge was dropped. His sentence was delayed for a year and the Basketball Hall of Fame sportscaster received no jail time.

NBC declared June 29 that Albert would return to the air ways—not that he ever left—in a multi-year contract that has him covering Olympic boxing in Sydney, Australia, in 2000, and Olympic ice

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hockey in Salt Lake City in 2002. The broadcaster will also provide play-by-play coverage of the National Basketball Association, as he had before the hotel episode.

"I have always hoped Albert would be able to return to NBC Sports during my tenure," NBC sports big-shot Dick Ebersol, told the media.

Albert's return really isn't a return, it's more of an expansion of his never-gone-sour-career. Executives at the Madison Square Garden network brought Albert back last July—with the requisite apology and disclosure of therapy by him—to anchor its sports desk and do radio play-by-play for the New York Knicks. And, yes, that was Albert who you saw doing NBA games on cable's TNT network; he was brought back to the national scene by Turner Sports in April.

Unlike the vilification Black males face for crimes, violating white America's social expectations, speaking the truth or just walking down the street, the crimes of white men are always excusable.

So while welfare fraud gets you jail time, major fraud

and public contrition, ala onetime junk bond king Michael Milken, can get you time at a country club penal facility and you get to keep your status and money.

Sexual crimes—like actor Hugh Grant's encounter with a Black streetwalker, or former 1980s heart throb Rob Lowe's sexual tryst with a minor—also don't count, if you're a white male. If you're a Black male—especially an athlete or high profile person—any, or alleged crime, contributes to the downfall of the country's young people, perpetuates disrespect of women, and is a glaring example of America's

moral decline. Albert's return, already legitimized by the other sports networks, isn't likely to be greeted by howls from feminists, or outrage from white females.

Condemnation for sexual crime or abuse works best when aimed at Black males. It fits America's stereotype of the Black man as a crazed sexual predator.

You also won't see every sportscaster of prominence polled about whether the NBC network decision was right or wrong—the way prominent Blacks are polled to either embrace or disavow leaders or positions that whites repudiate.

None of that matters because white privilege is a fact of life in America, and the white man's rights must always be respected—even when he's wrong.

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