

# Profit, loss statement—Their profit, our loss

By James Clingman  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Those familiar with accounting and business practices, and even many of those who are not, understand what profit and loss is all about. If you have a small business and apply for a loan, they ask for your P&L statements; they want to know if you are making money or losing money. Collectively, if Black people in the United States check our P&L statement, we will not like what we see. It will reveal a startling fact: Everyone else is profiting, and Blacks are taking a huge loss.

If businesses conducted themselves the way we conduct ourselves, regarding reciprocity in the marketplace, they would be out of business in a heartbeat. How long will Black folks survive if we continue in the same vein of demanding rather than supplying? We are spending billions of dollars each year with virtually no return. Their profit; our loss.

Black people are buying everything everyone else makes, no matter how ridiculous the item is and no matter how fast the item depreciates. Their profit; our loss. Our people are in love with numbers and names on athletic jerseys, rims that keep spinning when the car stops, soft drinks that embarrass us with their commercials, and fast food restaurants that sell Black history to us—with fries, of course. Their profit; our loss.

Black people acquiesce to the so-called "powers that be." Public Enemy notwithstanding, rather than stand up like men and women and fight against what we know is detrimental to our people, especially our children. The media messages and the control of

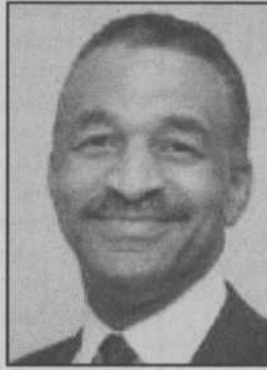
so-called Black Entertainment Television, which has now made yet another move to dumb-down its audience by canceling the BET 11 p.m. news, are indicative of our plight. Talk about mission creep; Viacom, the company that acquired BET, has it down to a fine art and a science. Their profit; our loss.

Who knows, maybe Viacom's action will start a trend that will lead to NBC, ABC, and CBS canceling their late night news. After all, if the news can be more effective given to us at intervals throughout the day and night, why do we need to have any news at 10 p.m. or 11 p.m.? Just a thought for Brian Williams and company.

We look on as immigrants move their businesses into our neighborhoods as we mumble and complain under our breath but crouch at the start-line ready to race to their stores to buy their products. Their profit; our loss.

We stand by, even in towns where we are the majority, while projects funded by our tax dollars are being doled out, yet the lion's share is always given to outside developers, contractors and workers. The most ridiculous thing is even when we get control of a project, some of our people ask, "What's the minority portion of this project?"

A prime example of this "inappropriate behavior" is occurring right now in Cincinnati, Ohio. Check this out: After, under false



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pretenses and lies, the city wrestled control of 60 acres of prime real estate by putting some 500 Black families out of their homes (132 of those families had to go into homeless shelters), the city gave the property to two adjacent Black churches to carry out the rest of their dastardly scheme. The two Black churches (neither one raised a hand to stop the takeover) immediately went to work by giving a significant portion of the deal to a White developer.

To add insult to injury, the two Black churches then brought in a White-owned company to build the houses, despite there being a Black faith-based housing developer in that same neighborhood. The company they brought in has annual revenues that exceed the aggregate revenues of all Black businesses in Cincinnati. As if they had not rubbed Black faces in the mud enough, the White builder, with the help of Black "economic inclusion" experts, puts an article in the local Black newspaper calling for "minority" subcontractors to work on the project.

As I say on my radio show sometimes, "Do we practice being this stupid, or does it just come naturally?"

Why do we, even when we get control of economic development projects, continue to play the minority game and act as though

there are no Black folks who can develop land and build houses?

As Brother Claud Anderson always says, "Black folks can't even do wrong right."

Steven Biko said, "The greatest weapon in the hand of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed."

Massa doesn't even have to be in the room or in charge of the deal, and some of us will still do his bidding anyway.

Carter G. Woodson was so correct in his comment, "If you control a man's thinking..."

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Is there a Black CPA out there somewhere who is willing to do an annual report on our people? Is there an accountant who will show us exactly what our profit and loss statement says about how we spend our money and how we allow others to exploit us? Is there a bookkeeper available who will tell us that it makes no sense to turn over our own projects to White males (the ones who already get 70 percent to 85 percent of the contracts anyway) when we finally get control of those projects?

Sadly, by the moves we make and the ones we fail to make, Black people make profit and loss statements every day, but they always end up being, "Their profit and our loss."

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## LaGrande

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campaigns never show older adults making them an invisible at-risk population.

As a result, these individuals are generally less knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS than younger people and less aware of how to protect themselves against the infection.

The largest group of AIDS cases among adults over 50 is made up of men who have sex with other men. Older gay men tend to be invisible and ignored both in the gay community and in prevention campaigns. Among the HIV risk factors for older gay men are internalized homophobia, denial of risk, alcohol and other substance abuse, and anonymous sexual encounters.

Women comprise a greater percentage of all AIDS cases as age increases. While 6.1 percent of all AIDS cases among those aged 50 to 59, are women, the percentage of cases occurring among women rises to 13.2 percent for age 60 to 69 and 28.7 percent for those 65 and older. Normal aging changes, such as a decrease in vaginal lubrication and thinning vaginal walls can put older women at higher risk for HIV infection during intercourse.

Doctors and nurses often do not consider HIV to be a risk for older patients. A study found that most doctors rarely or never ask patients older than 50 years of age any questions about HIV/AIDS or discuss risk factor reduction such as condom use or even getting tested.

As anyone can see by these numbers, this disease is ravaging our community. And, in fact, represents another form of genocide for our people. So, what is the answer?

Do we have any answers? Can we reverse this downward spiral?

We can begin by encouraging our Congress to increase funding for HIV/AIDS treatment programs and Medicaid, provide more comprehensive prevention education in schools, adopt a sensible HIV/AIDS prevention policy for prisons and curb the cost of HIV/AIDS related medications.

Since 40 percent of all cases are derived from the use of contaminated needles, in addition to the substance abuse prevention aspect, the states could adopt a needle exchange program.

One of the central components in prevention is treatment. There are powerful AIDS drugs in the marketplace that can knock down levels of the virus in the body and reduce the chances that the patient will infect others. The need for health care, an unmet and substantial missing factor for so many African-Americans, becomes, yet again, a major problem in limiting treatment options and access to medical care.

The one thing that puzzles me about this whole HIV/AIDS issue: How did HIV/AIDS go from being a predominantly White homosexual male disease to a predominantly Black, young heterosexual female disease? I would submit that it is the Black male in between; you know, that down-low brother. Looking at these alarming statistics, maybe abstinence is the best policy. But while it's the safest route to circumvent contracting the virus, it's also a challenge that obviously the majority in our communities have not accepted.

Brothers and sisters, we must secure our future — if not for us, then for our children. We should be safe, get tested and get treated. And, at the very least, if you can't refrain from sexual activity, then wear the sleeve of life.

## Race, runaway bride—Unfairly stoking fears

By George E. Curry  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

A hoax by a runaway bride is not a topic I would normally address. However, the national interest in Jennifer Wilbanks' decision to "postpone" her wedding in Duluth, Ga. by falsely claiming to have been abducted while jogging is irresistible. As many have now pointed out, her cold feet have gotten her in hot water. This case of life imitating Reality TV speaks volumes about us as a society.

Usually, the fact that Wilbanks contracted a sudden case of cold feet would be of interest only to her embarrassed fiancé, her parents and friends, the 14 groomsmen, 14 bridesmaids and the 600 invited guests. But many Americans are voyeurs, interested in peeking into the personal lives of others. And if there's a sordid side, that makes it even more appealing.

So, from the time Wilbanks was said to have been abducted, to her cross-country trip that ended up in Albuquerque, N.M., where she finally admitted that it was all a hoax, to the first class airline trip back to Georgia, Americans feasted on this real life version of "Survivor."

Now that she's back, inquiring minds want to know: Will she be convicted of a misdemeanor or a felony? Will she get any jail time? And will she be treated like the University of Wisconsin student who concocted a similar story and ended up get-



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ting probation, community service and was ordered to repay the \$10,000 it took searching for her? And what about the poor fellow left at the altar, so to speak? Will he still want to marry her? If so, what does that say about him? What does it say about him if he does not want to marry her?

As these end-of-the-world issues were being debated over the past two weeks, there was one aspect of the saga that grabbed my attention. Before acknowledging that she had made up the tale, Wilbanks claimed that she had been abducted and forced into a blue van by a Hispanic man and a White woman.

When I heard the Hispanic angle, my mind flashed back to numerous hoaxes in which, to gain public sympathy, a White woman said she had been abused or raped by a Black male. At least, Wilbanks took a different route by claiming this mystery man was Hispanic. In either case, the point is the same: introduce race or ethnicity into any case with sexual overtones, and the story will get around-the-clock coverage in the national media.

In 1989, Boston businessman Charles Stuart murdered his wife for life insurance and tried to cover it up by alleging that a Black man had killed his pregnant wife. Hundreds of Black men were questioned by police. Stuart committed suicide the following year, and it was only then that the truth came out.

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