

Blacks should take care of their own

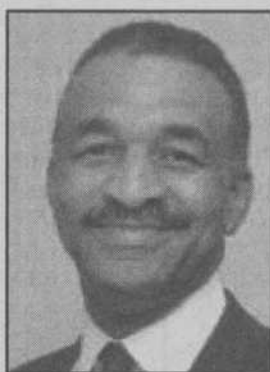
By James Clingman
Special to Sentinel-Voice

The current discussion among Black folks and Whites alike is the behavior of the children. That's right, I said children. Much of the conversation is centered on the little girl in St. Petersburg, Fla., who was handcuffed. There is another case of a 10-year-old boy in Philadelphia. And then there is the quiet case of the handcuffed 5-year-old in the city that leads the nation in these kinds of acts, the city Kweisi Mfume called "ground zero," the city in which a blind man was issued a jay-walking ticket and a grandmother was brought to court for dropping quarters into expired parking meters for strangers: Cincinnati, of course.

The handcuffing incident has caused some to get on their high horse and lambaste the 5-year-old and his mother, with some even saying the kid "deserved" to be handcuffed. After all, he was acting out, and if his mother won't discipline him, the police should. I

agree that his mother and all parents should discipline their children, but it's a stretch to think that most 5-year-old children won't act out or hit another child who hit them, which was the sin of the boy in Cincinnati. We adults seem to forget that we were children once, and we get holier-than-thou and self-righteous in a heartbeat.

The sad part is our penchant to get that way when it comes to our children. First, we turn them over to someone else to be educated and then condemn them for their behavior. I am not saying this child was taught to do what he did by the school system, but look around at our teens and young adults and see what their "education" has done to them. Further exacerbating the situation, we went along with the school system when they took away the disciplinary



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authority of the teachers. Thus, the first thing they do when a problem occurs is call the police — on 5-year-olds.

Claud Anderson coined the term, "inappropriate behavior" to capture the essence of our problems in this country, especially when it comes to economic empowerment. He wants us to see how inappropriate it is for Black people to do such things as turn our children over to others to educate, how it makes no sense to pay people who abuse you, and how ridiculous it is for Black folks to rely on White society for our sustenance. Let's take a look at some instances of inappropriate behavior among our learned, sacrosanct adults who, unlike children, should know better.

It is inappropriate for Black folks to rail against unfairness and "inequality" and wait for the Establishment to make things right. It

is inappropriate for us to complain about "foreigners" coming into our neighborhoods and opening a store that we could have opened prior to their arrival. It is inappropriate for Black folks to support other charities and causes without having first supported our own. It is inappropriate for our people to continue to follow after the standards of others and not be proud of — and seek after — the standard our ancestors set for us many years ago. It is inappropriate for Black people to finance our own oppression. It is inappropriate for us to participate in our own oppression. It is inappropriate for Black people to cut back-door, side-door, and under the table deals that go against the welfare of our people. It is inappropriate for brothers and sisters to run away and hide when the going gets a little tough, and it's time to take a collective stand against discrimination and mistreatment. It is inappropriate to think that because you have achieved a certain status,

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endorsement process in order to please White folks and have the audacity to adopt their race neutral rhetoric.

Do you think it's race neutral when White America continues to maintain its power base by deliberately, with absolute resolve, hiring their own people? Do you think it's race neutral when White America continuously promotes its own people, whether they're qualified or not? (Look at George Bush). Do you think it's race neutral when White America elects their own people to office?

Do you think it's race neutral when White America has locked up in excess of 1 million Black folks in the last five years? Do you think it's race neutral when White America controls the justice system and 42 percent of death row inmates are Black? Do you think it's race neutral when White America locks up one out of every 10 Black men? No! But we have more people running around talking about being race neutral than Whites do.

We've become so race neutral that the Founding Board Chair Louis Overstreet of the Caucus of African American Nevadans believes that "if we support [one of our own] we will hurt the organization that we represent and the community we serve." Mind you, we are talking about equally qualified candidates in a judicial race in North Las Vegas, Willia Chaney vs. Sean Hoeffgren. Chaney is the African-American, highly qualified candidate. How brainwashed have we become when we're afraid to stand up and support our own? How much of the Clarence Thomas Syndrome has really been ingrained in us?

Sadly, it's being revealed to me, beyond a shadow of doubt, that many of our people have the Clarence Thomas Syndrome. And because of the effective psychological manipulation that has taken place through the socialization process, they don't even know that they possess it. These are people that criticize Clarence Thomas, yet they possess some of the same traits and characteristics that he has.

When we are placed in decision-making capacities and the first thing that comes out of our mouth is "We shouldn't vote for them strictly because they are Black! We shouldn't hire them strictly because they are Black!"

If we are believing this, then there is something intrinsically wrong with us because,

make no mistake about it, White folks hire, promote, provide contracts, elect and set free other Whites every day because they are White. White America turns around and will not hire, will not promote, will not provide contracts, but will lock up Blacks in prison — whether they are guilty or not. Furthermore, many Whites will definitely not vote for Blacks, strictly, because they are Black.

We say we can't vote for someone because they are Black, but we don't have a problem voting for someone just because they're a Democrat or a Republican. This makes us more critical of Blacks than we are of Whites. This says that we hold our own to higher standards than we hold others to, even though we know that if you are a Black man or a Black woman in America the qualifications for you to be in a position have required considerably more blood, sweat and tears than our White counterparts.

I heard someone say that White folks love Jesus, and Black folks love White folks. When we don't have enough guts to vote our convictions because we're afraid of what White folks will say or think, or we're afraid that it will hurt our pandering efforts with them, then I believe that the above statement is true.

Also, when was the last time you voted against somebody based on the race neutral rationale? If you did, make no mistake about it, you have the Clarence Thomas Syndrome.

It's time that we rise up from that passive fear to a place of active courage and walk our walk that, first and foremost, should be this: the empowerment of Black people. We can't empower Black people if we don't put them in positions of power. And when we take a position that is in favor of African-Americans, we should stand on it, justify it and not waiver just because somebody doesn't like it. We must be true to our community's needs and not lie to self, each other or misrepresent our interests at any time.

Don't straddle the fence or nullify a pro-Black position to gain favor with non-Blacks. Once you make a decision, have the guts to stick to the decision. Don't vacillate, it will bode better for you in the community's eyes.

And most importantly, Proverbs 12:22 states "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but they that deal truly are his delight."

"Where's the Village" series continues next week.

Rice misfires on trip down right-wing lane

By George E. Curry
Special to Sentinel-Voice

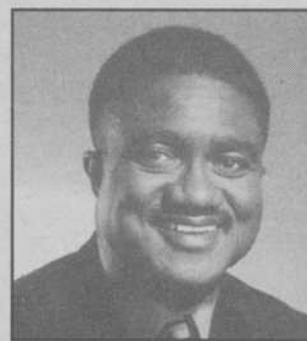
Few things are as repulsive as Black conservatives trying to advance the Republican agenda by mischaracterizing the Civil Rights Movement or distorting history. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice provided a textbook example of this during a recent appearance on CNN's "Larry King Live."

When asked her thoughts on gun control, Rice replied: "Well, Larry, I come out of my personal experiences...in Birmingham, Ala., my father and his friends defended our community in 1962 and 1963 against White nightriders by going to the head of the community, the head of the cul-de-sac, and sitting there armed. And so I'm very concerned about any abridgement of the Second Amendment..." Moments later, she added: "...We have to be very careful when we start abridging rights that our Founding Fathers thought very important. And on this one, I think that they understood that there might be circumstances that people like my father experienced in Birmingham, Ala., when, in fact, the police weren't going to protect you."

This expert on Soviet history obviously hasn't studied enough American history. There is no evidence that the Founding Fathers — or the Founding Fathers, as I like to call some of them — were the least bit worried about African-Americans being able to protect themselves against White supremacists. In fact, half of them owned slaves. So did nine U.S. presidents.

To brush up on her American history, Rice should read the expert witness testimony submitted by Eric Foner, then-president of the American Historical Association, in connection with the University of Michigan's defense of its affirmative action programs before the U.S. Supreme Court.

"Slaves, of course, experienced the in-



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stitution of politics and law quite differently from White Americans," wrote Foner, a history professor at Columbia University. "Before the law, slaves were property who had virtually no legal rights. They could be bought, sold, leased and seized to satisfy an owner's debt, their family ties had no legal stand-

ing, and they could not leave the plantation or hold meetings without the permission of their owner."

Given the treatment of African-Americans, it is incredulous to assert, as Rice does, that the Founding Fathers were even remotely concerned about allowing Blacks to protect themselves. This is not the first time Rice has distorted facts for political gain.

Speaking at the 2000 Republican convention, Rice praised her father as "the first Republican I knew." She declared, "Democrats in Jim Crow Alabama of 1952 would not register him to vote. The Republicans did. My father has never forgotten that day, and neither have I."

What Rice forgot was the truth: political parties don't register voters in Alabama. Voters are added to the voting rolls by registrars. A profile of Rice written by Dale Russakoff, a reporter for the *Washington Post* and native of Birmingham, was even more telling.

After a White registrar asked Rice's father a trick question to keep him from registering, according to Russakoff: "Rice says her father later learned of a Republican functionary in the registrar's office who would register Blacks secretly, as long as they registered Republican — not the expansive grant of suffrage suggested in her speech." Rice's exploitation of the Civil Rights Movement is even more notable because her middle-class parents, by her own admission, were not active in the movement. Her father, John Rice, was a

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