

Blacks urged to redouble push to help Africa

By Hazel Trice Edney
Special to Sentinel-Voice
WASHINGTON (NNPA) - Black people have talked far too much about the problems in Africa and the Diaspora without taking responsibility to be part of the solution, say veteran advocates for Africa at the National Urban League 65th annual conference.

"I think the secret to our civil rights movement was that we understood that segregation was real. We understood that there wasn't a reason to complain about it. We had to do something about it. Then we saw ourselves as leaders of the United States of America, redeeming the soul of America from the triple evils of racism, war and

poverty," said former United Nations Ambassador Andrew Young.

"Now, when it comes to dealing with that, I don't think we can redeem the soul of America from poverty unless we involve ourselves with the African continent," Young said.

While White Americans take advantage of economic ventures in Africa that benefit them, African-Americans have little knowledge of opportunities in their own homeland, said Young, chairman of GoodWorks International, which does economic development work in Africa and the Caribbean.

"White people are greedy. They're going where the money is. The money is in

"...I don't think we can redeem the soul of America from poverty unless we involve ourselves with the African continent."

— Andrew Young
GoodWorks International
Chairman



Africa. I don't care how humanitarian they are. I don't care how religious they are," Young told an audience during a town hall meeting on Africa and the Diaspora at the 65th Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.

"When it comes to economic opportunity and eco-

nommic potential, we have done ourselves and Africa a disservice by talking too much about the problems and not enough about the opportunities," Young said.

Florizelle Liser, assistant U.S. trade representative for Africa, said economic trade is improving with the U.S.,

but there is a long way to go.

"U.S. imports have risen substantially in the last few years, reaching \$26.6 billion in 2004, up 88 percent over 2003," she said.

"This increased trade translates into tens of thousands of new jobs in some of the poorest countries in African and hundreds of millions of dollars in new investment in the region," she said.

A problem, she said, is that many small Black firms know little about how to get started in a trade relationship with Africa.

Among resources for information, she pointed to the U.S. Department of Commerce and U.S. Export Assistance Centers around the nation.

Mel Foot, founding president and chief executive officer of Constituency for Africa, which co-sponsored the event with the Urban League, said many African-Americans have little knowledge of the travesties being suffered by Africans or the opportunities there to benefit both Africans and African-Americans.

"Hundreds of thousands of our sisters and brothers in Niger and in West Africa are dying and we don't know anything about it. The media is not covering it. It's not being told. We're pushing it with the Black Press, NNPA, but we've got to have a vehicle so we can inform our people about emergency (See Africa, Page 12)

Study contradicts LAPD account of teenager's death

By Kevin Herrera
Special to Sentinel-Voice
LOS ANGELES - A recreation of the police shooting of a 13-year-old stolen car suspect last February revealed that the officer who fired the fatal shots was not behind the moving car as originally thought, but was standing at the side of it.

Police Chief William Bratton told the Police Commission recently that the Los Angeles Police Department used assistance from Hollywood film studios to re-create the scene at 83rd Street and Western Avenue where 13-year-old Devin Brown was killed Feb. 6.

Deputy Police Chief Michael Berkow showed the Police Commission photographs from the elaborate reenactment that was conducted on vacant land in the San Fernando Valley. Police then re-created various scenarios of what may have happened as the boy backed a stolen 1992 Toyota Camry into a police cruiser shortly before 4:00 a.m. that day, Berkow said.

The investigation revealed that Officer Steve Garcia fired 10 shots into the passenger side of the vehicle, seven of which struck the youth, Bratton said.

He said results of the Brown investigation are expected to be presented to the county District Attorney's Office by next Monday.

"It is my belief and expectation, based on my awareness of our investigation, that [the district attorney] will not find that there's any criminal liability on the part of any Los Angeles police officer,"

Bratton said. Activist Najee Ali criticized Bratton for making those kinds of statements that may influence the district attorney in the Brown case.

"As a chief of police, he needs to keep quiet until the investigation has been completed," Ali said. "By doing so he is pressuring [District Attorney] Steve Cooley not to file charges. It is important for Chief Bratton to follow policy himself."

Brown's mother has filed a wrongful death and civil rights lawsuit against the city, maintaining her son "was not armed with any kind of weapon, and posed no reasonable threat of violence to Officer Garcia, nor to any other individual."

The shooting was one of three incidents Bratton addressed at Tuesday's Police Commission meeting.

The other two were the July 10 incident in which Jose Raul Peña and his 19-month-old daughter Suzie Marie were killed after a standoff on Peña's auto repair business in South Los Angeles and the beating of stolen car suspect Stanley Miller in June 2004 in Compton.

The Peña shooting also was the topic of a session called Days of Dialogue held last Tuesday night at the Watts Labor Community Action Committee.

Some participants in the session said they didn't expect anything substantial to come out of the candid discussions involving police, residents, community activists and elected officials.

However, the consensus was that the free-flowing dia-

logue provided a much-needed release for those who wanted to vent their frustrations with police, while also offering a rare chance for residents and officers to understand one another's perspective.

There is hope that the friendly exchange fosters greater cooperation between the two groups.

"I'm glad we're here," said Watts activist Eddie Jones, who said the Days of Dialogue are the beginning of what he believes should be the LAPD's top priority — getting more officers out of their patrol cars and on the streets talking with residents and building relationships.

"We need to get back to the basics where cops are walking the streets and asking people 'How are you today?' We need to walk and talk together."

Officers spoke openly there about their colleagues' depression following Suzie Marie Peña's death by a SWAT team member's bullet to the head, while residents voiced their disapproval of the officers' tactics, but laid some of the blame with Suzie's father, who authorities said used his daughter as a "human shield," during the 2 1/2 hour standoff.

Residents also expressed their feelings that the LAPD is still operating like an "occupying force" that devalues Black and Latino lives. Officers countered that with complaints of their own that many residents are too afraid or are unwilling to cooperate in investigations.

While heated at times, the discussions remained civil,

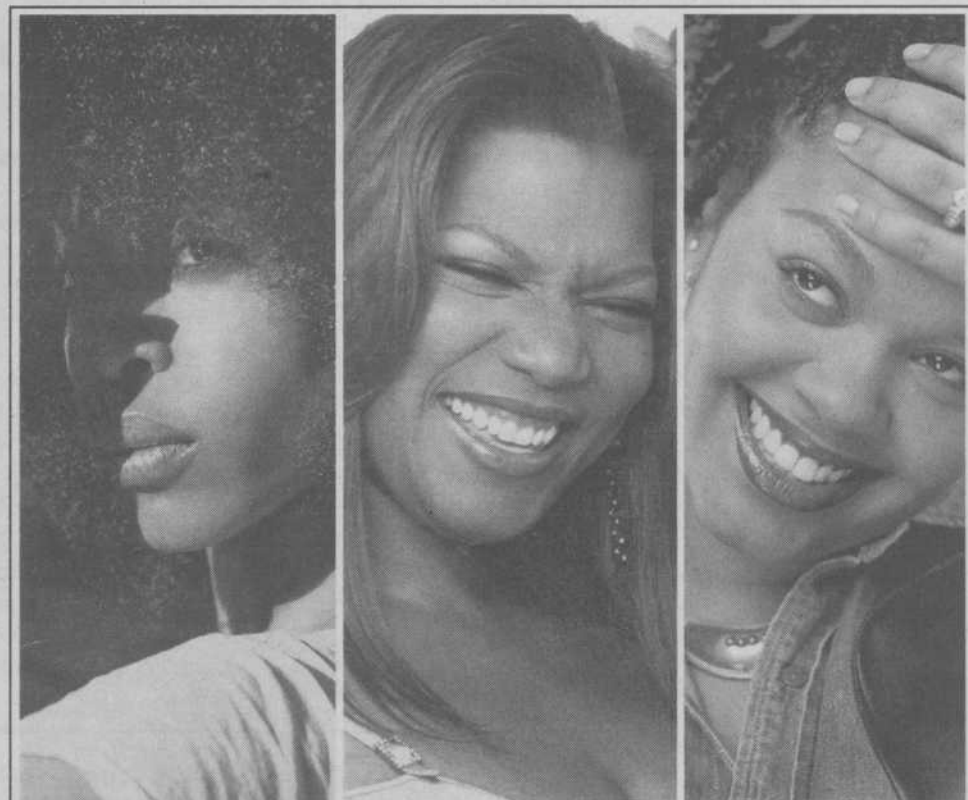
handshakes were exchanged and people left with smiles on their faces.

Raymond Lastra, 16, was walking by the WLCAC complex, said he decided to pop in, and then commented, "I'm definitely going to come back," promising to attend another forum.

"The discussions are pretty interesting. I know [elected officials and the police department] just do it to get people off their backs for a little while, and they never really do anything to solve the problems, but I did learn a lot. I think it was a good experience," he added.

Earlier in the day, Bratton briefed the Police Commission on the Peña case, announcing that a team of experts from outside of the department would investigate the tactics used by officers in the shootout.

The chief told the Police (See LAPD, Page 4)



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