

## OUR VIEW

# Dress to Stress

NBA Commissioner David Stern has a problem with clothes. Namely, the clothes professional basketball players in his league wear to games and while on the sidelines. So, in a move he says is meant to elevate the league's "professionalism," Stern has mandated all players to dress business-casual. No more "chains, pendants or medallions worn over the player's clothing." (It's hard to imagine that if the league were comprised mostly of White cowboys, that Stern would ban 10-gallon hats, boots and those Texas-sized belt buckles.

The problems with the new business-casual mandate are legion. There's the dicey issue of enforcement: who's to say what's business-casual and what's not? Is Stern going to hire Dolce & Gabbana to serve as style police? How will scofflaws be penalized: Fines? (Your tie was one-fourth of an inch past your waistline, that'll be \$5,000.) How about sentencing them to a week interning for Giorgio Armani? Stern has to know that trying to legislate the behavior of grown men—men who are already dictated to more than the average employee; what other professional can tell you exactly where he will be, every day for nine months, almost to the hour?—would cause ripples. It's as if King Stern is sending a message to his (highly paid) serfs that he'll rule as he sees fit.

It's hard not to look at this situation through the lens of race. As Indiana Pacers guard Stephen Jackson told ESPN.com: "I think it's a racist statement because a lot of the guys who are wearing chains are my age and are Black. I wore all my jewelry today to let it be known that I'm upset with it. I'll wear a suit every day. I think we do need to look more professional because it is a business. A lot of guys have gotten sloppy with the way they dress. But it's one thing to [enforce a] dress code and it's another thing if you're attacking cultures, and that's what I think they're doing."

Jackson's argument could easily be extended to the issue of who supports the NBA. Sure, adults buy the tickets to the games, but it's the youth, the coveted 18-26 demographic, that power the NBA's popularity, buying T-Mac's shoes, Iverson's jerseys and Vince's posters. It's this demographic, with their rapidly rising discretionary income, that will comprise the bulk of NBA fans in the near future. While Stern isn't a respected arbiter of culture, we're sure he's not blind, either. NBA fans are more interested in how their favorite players play than what they wear. Is Stern is the only one that doesn't know that?

## Move to Action

Ten years ago, on the advent of the historic Million Man March in Washington, D.C., Black America was both nervous and excited. Nervous about the prospect of controversial Nation of Islam leader Minister Louis Farrakhan's goal to gather one million Black men in the nation's capital but excited about an event centered around atonement for sins, reconciliation with communities and a commitment to improve the lives of Black people.

No matter whose numbers you believe—NOI folks say the crowd topped one million; park officials estimated a couple hundred thousand—the event was historic. But its lasting effect hasn't been so profound. In some instances, attendees returned to their communities and fulfilled the march's promise by making a difference—tackling racism, starting businesses, becoming more spiritual. Many, however, were content to be a part of the experience and returned home with ... memories.

This, combined with subsequent, and less successful, "Millions"-themed events, have neutered the transformative potential of the Millions movement. If not for the putrid response by federal officials and the president toward Hurricane Katrina, you wonder if speakers would have had much to talk about. Charging America with "criminal neglect," as Farrakhan did, while eloquent, was ineffectual. It was actually civil rights leader Jesse Jackson who hit the nail on the head, telling people to channel their frustration into positivity in their communities.

Had that occurred 10 years ago, there might not have been a need for another Millions-themed march.



# White Power versus Black Power

By Dora LaGrande  
Sentinel-Voice

Over the past couple of days there have been several news accounts regarding a riot in Toledo, Ohio, on Saturday. The reports are that the Mayor and the city leaders allowed a Neo-Nazi group to march through a racially mixed neighborhood, and that both the Neo-Nazi's and the people that confronted them were hurling racial slurs.

After reading many of the accounts, I have a few questions:

In June, Toledo had a little bit of racial tension that made local broadcasts when a swastika was burned into the lawn of a biracial family's home. This home was on Streicher Street — the same street and just .02 miles from the staging area the police set up for the Nazi's when they arrived. So one would have to ask why would the people — the police, the Mayor and city leaders — allow the group to come into the city at all knowing that just three months earlier they had had to deal with racial tension. And did the biracial family that had the swastika burned on their lawn not have any rights? And did the city leaders subtly orchestrate this event?

Now, I understand why Black folks would be upset about White folks walking through their neighborhood promoting White supremacy. The frustration regarding how people are treated, the constant stereotyping and the



## ON THE RECORD

By Dora LaGrande

racism all take its toll on people. But, let's be realistic about this whole thing. Are they doing anymore than we are doing? We promote Black power; we promote economic empowerment; and we promote the uplifting of our people; so why do we get upset when Whites promote White supremacy?

Whether we are willing to admit it or not, all Whites promote supremacy. They just don't advertise it. They demonstrate it in their hiring practices; they demonstrate it in their lending practices; they demonstrate it in the miseducation of the majority of our children, and more often than not, we encourage them and sometimes even help them.

The majority of White folks gets upset with the Neo-Nazi's and other hate groups and calls them ignorant and out of touch with reality, because they understand that they don't have to advertise White supremacy. They already have all of the power, all of the wealth and all of the resources. They already have what we are so desperately trying to obtain. Let's just take a look locally and see what's taking place.

Because I am going to choose not to call anyone out, let's hypothetically talk about

some of our most popular White elected officials in this town.

Let's be honest with ourselves here. What can you truly (in black and white) say that they have done to promote Black folks? They show up at all of your events; they say what you want them to say; they promote putting White-owned businesses in your communities that take the money out; they put Federal buildings in your communities that don't generate jobs for the folks in the community; they hire the token-Black and tell them they have to agree with everything that they say or silence them completely, but when it comes to them promoting your agenda, what have they really done?

Nothing! And they don't

have to because if they do the aforementioned things, we say they like Black folks and they're doing a good job. They have us so hoodwinked and bamboozled that we truly can't see the forest for the trees.

Let's put them to the litmus test and ask ourselves a few questions. How much legislation have they spearheaded that will increase and train Black businesses to hire and train Black folks?

What have they done to ensure that there are employment opportunities and educational opportunities for Black folks? How many Black folks have they surrounded themselves with that truly understand the plight of Black people?

How many Black folks have they surrounded themselves with whom they know are willing to not only speak up for but act on behalf of Black people, and do they want these types of people in their camp?

When you ask a  
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