

Writer trains pen on former D.C. mayor Barry

By Nisa Islam Muhammad
Special to Sentinel-Voice
WASHINGTON (NNPA) - While many in the nation's capital have forgiven former Mayor Marion Barry for his drug problem — he's now the Ward 8 Councilman — Washington Post writer Tim Page, won't let him forget.

The Pulitzer Prize winning writer responded several weeks ago to an unsolicited press release from Andre Johnson, an aide of Councilman Barry: "Must we hear about it every time this crack addict attempts to rehabilitate himself with some new-and-typically half-witted-political grandstanding? ...I'd be

grateful if you would take me off your mailing list. I can't think of anything the useless Marion Barry could do that would interest me in the slightest, up to and including overdose."

Barry told the *Washington Post* in an interview that he was "outraged" and "incredulous" at the "despicable" e-mail, "particularly coming from a reporter at a reputable newspaper like the *Washington Post*, not a rag."

He said the note amounted to "character assassination" at a time when "around the nation, it's almost open season on Black people."

The paper reported that Executive Editor Leonard Downie Jr. called Page's e-mail "a terrible mistake" and said he has taken "appropriate internal action," but neither he nor Page would disclose it.

Downie said Barry called him and that "we had a good conversation. ...He accepted my apology." But Barry's response was that Page "ought to be fired, and the *Washington Post* ought to run an editorial apology."

"That would be a signal to the whole world that the *Washington Post* won't tolerate this kind of low-life activity."

Page, a music critic, apologized to Barry and called the incident "the stupidest thing I've done in 30-years in journalism." He added, "I hope people won't judge me on this one explosion."

Ward 8-A Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner Anthony Muhammad replied: "There are two standards in America — one Black and one White. If you are White, you can ask for mercy and understanding, like Page did, and expect to get it. You can go on with your life and future achievements, without having to be reminded because an aide

sent an e-mail to someone of your shortcomings.

"But that didn't happen with Councilman Barry because he's Black. George Bush admitted to abusing alcohol until he was age 40. That admission didn't stop

him from becoming president, and I don't believe any [journalist-writer] would address the president with the same repugnance as Mr. Page and expect to keep his job."

Nisa Islam Muhammad writes for the Final Call.

Foreclosure

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Earlier, at a "Save Our Homes: Restructure Loans, Not Repossess Homes" rally held in New York's Financial District, an alliance of civil rights coalitions and community-based consumer advocacy groups offered strategies to end the mortgage crisis as well as predatory, discriminatory practices that

currently plague the lending industry. The crisis from the practices has resulted in a record number of home foreclosures — up 94 percent in the last year alone — and late mortgage payment levels that now stand at a 20-year high.

"The subprime loan is firmly implicated in the severity of the mortgage crisis," said Interim NAACP


President & CEO Dennis Courtland Hayes.

"Data shows us that African-Americans disproportionately hold more than half of these higher priced loans that stymie families' attempts at keeping good credit, retaining their homes and amassing wealth. The home loans that have been offered

built on financial quicksand, and we are demanding that a solid foundation be laid to replace the damage that has been done and reduce the risk that stands to decimate whole communities."

Tia Carol Jones writes for the Washington Informer.

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