

# King's death reminds us dreamers face peril

By Dr. Barbara Reynolds  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

And when his brothers saw him they said one to another, "behold the dreamer cometh," come now and slay him... and we shall see what will become of his dreams. (Genesis 37:18-20) I have given lip service to the unprecedented saga of Sen. Barack Obama to become president of the United States, but not my heartfelt support.

I wonder is it because I have seen so much tragedy confront our big dreamers, especially African-Americans, that like a mother to a son I have to curb my enthusiasm.

This week, we commemorate not only the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, but also the mysterious death and possible assassination of the first Black Commerce Secretary Ron Brown.

On April 3, 1996, on the eve of Dr. King's murder—some 28 years before—Brown's plane went down, along with 34 others, on a mountaintop in Croatia.

Not only have these two great men been taken from us, but also the historic memory of why they died, how their dreams have been twisted and what does all of this portend for the next Big Dreamer.

If Dr. King and Brown were only dreamers, they would have been alive today. Dr. King was one of the 20th century's greatest prophets, a man who had the skills to analyze, organize and activate. The King movement showed first the victims and then the victimizers that the way U.S. Blacks were

forced to live under a reign of terror, without dignity nor democracy, was a sin and a scandal.

King and the movement reordered traditional social relationships. That meant no longer would Blacks, browns, women, the handicapped or any other group accept the status of a valueless nobody without a fight. And this vision of equality was translated into a world-view that challenges this nation's concept of a global superiority that permits it to invade other countries to steal their resources and subjugate their people.

King, the activist, is not the King that the media serves up ever King holiday that has him sleepwalking through history. The King the media has created could be used in ads for mattresses: "Come buy the King mattress and you too could have a dream."

King in his prophetic mission did not always use somnambulist language, but fiery challenges, not much different from the spirited sermons of Pastor Jeremiah Wright. King often quoted the Negro fight song that "before I be a slave, I'll be buried in my grave and go home to my Lord and be free."

King's militant non-violent context resulted in his death. Unfortunately as we commemorate his death, the nagging questions surrounding it, as well as that of Brown, remain. For example:



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- Why were the two Black firemen who watched over Dr. King when he was in Memphis transferred from their post the evening before the killing?

- Why has the sworn testimony of Lloyd Jowers been ignored? Jowers, who owned Jim's Grill across from the Lorraine Motel, said he was offered \$100,000 from a Mafia businessman to set up the

killing of King in which a patsy (James Earl Ray) would be provided. Jowers said after the shooting, he took the "smoking rifle," from the hit man, who was not Ray.

- Why has Rev Walter Fauntroy, the former delegate from the District of Columbia, who was on the sub-committee of the King assassination panel, maintained: "The assassination was a conspiracy involving operatives in our intelligence agency, including the military, along with the Mafia and corporate interests."

In the case of Brown, two weeks before his plane crashed, he called me to his office to observe a new plan of action, which he felt would drastically change the plight of Africa, by launching a new program based on trade not aid.

Brown, too, was a big dreamer whose dreams would have benefited people of color globally. Few people these days mention him, nor is there any action to investigate why forensic pathologists stepped forward and put

their careers on the line to say that Brown's skull had a hole that resembled a bullet wound. Yet, to my knowledge there has been no independent autopsy and neither are the media or civil rights groups clamoring for it.

No credible explanations were ever given to why there were no cockpit recorders aboard the government aircraft, why an experienced pilot was replaced by someone with lesser experience and why the maintenance chief at the airport where Brown's plane crashed, was found dead before U.S. investigators reached him, reportedly from a self-inflicted wound.

If Obama becomes the first Black president, this would mean a Black man would be commander-in-chief of the most lethal superpower on the globe. In addition, under his administration, he could influence world trade, the global financial markets, the course of the Middle East and shape the direction of the U.S. Supreme Court. Even more important, Obama would possibly be privy to all or most of the United States dirty secrets.

At least two other African-Americans who stepped on or into the power stream of the United States were taken out.

As the nation commemorates Dr. King, I can't help but worry if the rulers of a nation built on the foundation of White supremacy will once again see the dreamer coming.

And then would they slay him?

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## Where are children in President Bush's budget?

By Marian Wright Edelman  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

When President George W. Bush released his \$3.1 trillion Fiscal Year 2009 Federal Budget on February 4, it was a clear statement that he has far less regard for our nation's children than for the richest most powerful Americans and far more interest in waging war than in waging peace. Permanent tax cuts for the richest Americans and increased war spending are the anchors of this White House budget.

The Federal Budget is not just a spending plan, it reflects our nation's deepest priorities. Even a cursory analysis of President Bush's spending proposal reveals a failure in many areas to construct a budget that protects the well-being of children in low- to middle-income families. Today, 12.8 million children live in poverty, an increase of 1.2 million children since the President took office. If adopted by Congress, the administration's budget threatens to increase the number of children in America who are poor, uninsured and lack access to quality early childhood and education programs.

President Bush's plan would cut the budget for Medicaid, the frontline program that

makes healthcare accessible to the nation's poorest children. And while the president did propose a larger but still woefully small five-year increase in the State Children's Health Insurance Program, SCHIP, than he did last year, it is still not enough even to cover all currently enrolled children, much less make program improvements or enroll any of the more than 9.4 million uninsured children in America—whose numbers have increased by over one million in the past two years. President Bush proposes to eliminate the Emergency Medical Services for Children program, which supports the nation's nearly 60 independent children's teaching hospitals as well as the Children's Graduate Medical Education program, which trains 4,700 pediatricians and pediatric subspecialists according to the American Academy of Pediatrics.

In addition to tens of billions of dollars in cuts to vital programs, the president's budget also calls for increased restrictions on state efforts to cover uninsured children. Last



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summer, without congressional approval, the Bush Administration changed the SCHIP and Medicaid rules for providing health coverage to children with family incomes that exceed 250 percent of the federal poverty level (\$53,000 for a family of four). This was a backdoor effort to circumvent the congressional legislative process and reduce federal support for children's health coverage.

In his current budget proposal, Mr. Bush seeks to extend these harmful new rules to more children and prohibit states from providing health coverage to uninsured children in families with incomes that exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty level (\$42,400 a year for a family of four) unless certain unrealistic conditions are met. Among these conditions is a requirement that states assure specific levels of employer-sponsored health coverage—something that state officials have no authority to regulate. States would also be required to impose a 12-month waiting period before enrolling a child in SCHIP, without any exceptions—even parental loss of employment or death. These changes would affect at least 26 states that already cover children above 200 percent of the poverty level.

The Bush budget assaults vital nutrition programs for children. This is the fourth year in a row President Bush has proposed changes that would eliminate Food Stamps for more than 300,000 people in low-income families with children, according to the Food Research and Action Center. His budget plan does not include enough funding to meet the expected needs of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

For the third year in a row, the President proposes to eliminate funding for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program that would halt the distribution in an average month of nutritious food packages to more than 473,000 low-income mothers, children under age six, and seniors.

The president's budget would cut funding for other basic needs such as the Section 8 housing voucher program, a rent subsidy for low-income families. The funding reductions contained in his plan would result in at least 100,000 fewer such households receiving assistance, according to estimates from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

The president's proposed addition of \$149 million for Head Start will not meet projected increased costs, let alone provide funding for the hundreds of thousands of children who are eligible for Head Start but are not in the program. And his raise for Pell Grants will not keep pace with the skyrocketing costs of a college education. It is astonishing that Mr. Bush is asking Congress to eliminate 47 programs in the U.S. Department of Education that would disproportionately affect low-income, minority and at-risk children including, for example, Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants that benefit college students from America's poorest families.

Taken as a whole, President Bush's budget plan is a profound rejection of our nation's most vulnerable children. When he requests \$675 billion for overall military spending in fiscal year 2009, an 11 percent increase over this year, but can't ensure that children from low-income families have basic nutrition, healthcare and quality education, it's time for President Bush to rethink his budget priorities.

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## Alford

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destroying the futures of hardworking Black families. You can go down to the individual mortgage brokers who pursued people in these redlined zones and started them down to the road to ruin.

Most of them are getting off the hook. Why even the CEO of Ameriquest, one of the biggest perpetrators, subsequently served as U.S. Ambassador to the Netherlands for two years.

It's as if he received meritorious distinc-

tion for his sinister work against Black neighborhoods.

In essence, a major hate crime has just been committed against Black America and the question becomes: What are the U.S. Attorney General, state attorney generals and local prosecutors going to do?

If the answer is nothing, then the "birth defect" that America has continues on.

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