

Racism—An American Anomaly

Racism is the quintessential, unexamined and misunderstood political, economic and social issues in the United States today. The absence of an objective, raw-boned examination of racism fuels the mysticism that surrounds it.

Racism in the United States is content-dependent and has a contingent shelf-life, it has no inherent permanent, independent ability to exist on its own. It is precariously perched atop the rickety scaffolding of overt but unasked questions, lies and misinformation from politicians who reap fame and financial fortune from the perpetuation of race; aided and abetted by the complicity of institutions and the cynical manipulation of information by the main-stream media.

Through the pages of this book I will unravel and disjoint-limb by limb that black scarecrow of race; rip off its hypocritical fig leaf, thereby exposing racist politicians in all their ugly nakedness to white voters and the millions of white men, women and children who are direct victims of the economic collateral damage to whites by this race-based political propaganda.

Although this propaganda is clearly intended to dehumanize and victimize blacks, this book will show from the public record how whites are used by racist politicians as “blind white victims of a political skin game.”

Time has long passed for such a comprehensive examination, employing the methodology of science to analyze and diagnose, in an effort to establish cause and provide a prescription to cure the nagging problem of racism in the United States. This is the manifest destiny of this book.

Historians have chronicled the moving saga of the slash and burn “scorched-earth” policies of General Sherman, in his savage march through Georgia, the bloody battle at Antietam and General Grant’s stand before Richmond. Each of these bloody moments in American history was incremental and cumulative to the process that finally drove a wooden stake through the quivering heart of Slavery in the United States in 1865.

But, to this day, this nation, like the biblical Jacob, is wrestling with the angels over the unconquered and unresolved issue of Race -- that ugly surviving stepchild of American slavery.

Race is devoid of quantifiable physicality you can’t hug it, you can’t kiss it, nor have sex with it. But worst of all, you can’t Kick its Ass!!! Yet, when translated into representational, physical political behavior, its adverse impact on both sides of the color line is massive, as this book will show.

The “unexamined” and “misunderstood” characterization of race, mentioned above, should not be interpreted to mean that racism has been relegated to a back-burner status. Nothing could be further from the truth. America has a schizophrenic view and approach regarding race.

This country’s attitude toward race is like that of a group of healthy young men, age 18-35, in a room where a fully-formed young woman is standing, provocatively akimbo, in stark frontal nakedness and each of the young men are struggling to affect a demeanor of total unawareness of her presence.

The fact is that each of those guys in the room knows that a sexy broad is standing there. But, that is not all: Each of them in the room knows that each of the other guys in that room is acutely aware that sexy broad is standing there. And yet, no one, (to paraphrase the Bible, is willing to “touch the hem of her garment and be made whole.”

Setting Scriptures aside the net result is a total refusal to publicly recognize the lady’s presence. So this ragged Rube Goldberg scenario above is roughly analogous to the hypocritical denial of race in the United States. So the malady persists and festers.

But from the other schizophrenic angle, America is engaged in a torrid public, deep-throat, warm-wet kissing love affair with the subject of Race.

Today as noted earlier, there is no dearth of literature, books, magazine articles, radio, talk shows, and specials on national television, polling, studies, comparison and analysis, churning America’s

End Racism With A White Sword – Ernest Dillard Sr.

black/white relation. And at the end, most if not all of the literature and programs mentioned above, the feeling of black victimization is deeper. Whites feel uncomfortable or their negative attitude toward blacks is reinforced. Still, this torrent of material of the various aspect of race relation continues.

At this point a well-intentioned but critical reader might ask, "Given your reference above, "time has long passed for an examination of race in the United States" and your recognition of this torrent of materials on the aspects of race relation can it be that you are just a Johnnie-come-lately scratching around for public notice?" "What the hell are you bitching about?"

The response to such a question is: "It's the Perspective Stupid!!!" This book is not a criticism of material references above because most of it is faithful to its stated purpose and is not primarily concerned as is my book, with the basic cause and solution of racism in the United States.

Let me provide an example: Bruce A. Jacobs's recently published a remarkable book, entitled "Race Manner," subtitled "Navigating the Minefield between black and white Americans."

It is like a book on etiquette spelling out proper table manners when company is coming to dinner. The difference between this book and Dr. Jacob's "Race Manners" is a matter of perspective and goals. I am concerned with stopping and preventing the continued seeding of the United States's social environment with the deadly land mines of racism. In "Race Manners" Dr. Jacob has wielded his powerful pen in a robust effort to help people in "navigating the minefield between black and white in America."

The goals of both are needed now. And in fact they are complementary to each other. In the jargon of the old and out of fashion Marxist, the goals of each "are a progressive division of labor."

Against this backdrop where serious discussion of the cure for racism is indeed rare. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the very idea of a "Cure" for racism in the United States has been hospicized. According to Webster's New World College Dictionary, fourth edition, the definition of the word, "Hospice" "is a home-like facility to provide supportive care to the terminally ill". Clearly a cure is not within the equation, nor the concept of hospice.

Paradoxically, while the concern of the cure of racism seemingly is a rarity on popular agendas, the subject of race is an interminable topic --- across the country. For example a full page add in giant, bold, black type was printed on page 21 of the May 26th 2000 of the New York Times, promoting its upcoming six part series on race.

In the first paragraph it states, "The Story of race in America is increasingly a story beyond the policies, demonstrations and controversies over civil war flags, or police profiling. It is the story of relationships, people with relationships attempting to co-exist."

The third paragraph continues, "How race is lived in America is not meant to be an all encompassing view of our diverse, racial landscape. Rather it seeks to capture some of the troubling, challenging issues so many Americans still face. Indeed all of us ultimately face, taking you into that private zone- where race is really lived in America."

Essentially here, The New York Times has leap-fogged over and placed "off-limits," the hard stuff on race and there-by signaled their readers to expect a Year 2000 version of the "sensitivity training sessions of the 1960's.

In that era, well-intentioned people employed various and sundry techniques to probe and analyze the mind, emotions, and reactions, seeking to draw from the psychic of individual solutions to problems which were then and are now institutionally generated and institutionally perpetuated.

This is not criticism of that group of talented and hard working reporters of the New York Times; who perform professionally the myriads of tasks to make the multi series on race possible.

I am more concerned about the system of priorities of the editors of the Times who expended so much time, space, and staff effort to deal with a 'side-bar' issue on race rather than to grapple publicly with the guts of the problem of racism.

End Racism With A White Sword – Ernest Dillard Sr.

To me, their telegraphed message ... “Not meant to be an all out encompassing view... off racial landscape” signals again that there will be nothing new in this multi-series on race.

With a little bit of a stretch, the clock wheels of the inner workings of the paper’s multi-series program is similar to the operation of the digestive system of the proverbial “Contented Cow”, in green pastures, placidly chewing on its cud. (What’s a Cud?) According to Webster’s New World Dictionary, the definition of the word “cud” (It’s a noun) “is a mouth full of previously swallowed food regurgitated from the first...where it’s chewed slowly – a second time.” Since the word regurgitate was used in the definition of the word “cud,” I believe it’s important to know the formal definition of the word “regurgitate” which means “to cause to surge, a flow back to bring food from the stomach, back to the mouth.” In short you do the same thing over and over again. Under the logic of this analogy the multi series article was the “regurgitator” on the issue of race.

The fact that the Times gave such wide publicity to this multi series on race cracks open the door to the suspicions of motivation. While I have no hard-wired evidence of the “invisible hand” of the “free market system,” playing a role in the decision to publish this race series, nevertheless, the digitalized fingerprints of Adam Smith are clearly discernable pointing unerringly, to the Bottom Line.

In the mean time a cure for racism remains neglected and unnoticed in a dark corner of the hospice ward --- for the terminally ill.

But most of all it should be noted in the context of this discussion that when President Bill Clinton launched his “Initiative on Race Relations, in my opinion, that action trumped all others in the field of race relations. During that speech in San Diego, Clinton urged people of all races, creed and color to join in a mature dialogue on the problem of race in the United States.

But that was not all for immediate and practical implementation President Clinton appointed an Advisory Board of established professionals with the nationally known black historian, Dr. John Hope Franklin as chairman.

This action on the part of the President of the United States was unprecedented and in some quarters earning for him the rarely verbalized characterization of being the Nation’s “first Black President.” Upon hearing of this I experienced exquisite ecstasy. From my perspective the potential for real progress on the troubling issue of race was “without borders.” At the apex of my enthusiasm I wrote a congratulatory letter to Dr. Franklin, dated, September 12, 1997. Excerpts quoted from the above letter follows below:

Dear Mr. Franklin:

This is to congratulate on your appointment by President Clinton to the Chairmanship of the Advisory Board on Race Relations. Given your knowledge, wisdom and profession in this area, this appointment augers well for the Board’s task and is a giant step toward establishing constructive coalition – building for “one America” for the Twenty-first Century.

These are subjects with which I have been concerned for a good many years. I am glad President Clinton, through his Board, plans to grapple with them publicly on a national scale urging the American people to initiate a national dialogue: “Talk With” your fellow citizens across color, racial and ethnic lines about common problems.

Later on in this letter to Dr. Franklin, I called his attention to my idea of a non-conventional approach to the issue of race in the United States. I dubbed it, the “White Side” approach. I will explore this idea in full detail later in this book. For now, let me point out that this approach trains a public spotlight on the millions for white men, women and children who are now direct victims of the collateral economic damage to white people by a race-based political propaganda, consciously targeted to victimize and dehumanize blacks. But, innocent white folks are caught in the crossfire.

End Racism With A White Sword – Ernest Dillard Sr.

My letter to Mr. Franklin continues:

The "White-side" approach, as will be shown in this paper meets fully the criteria of three of President Clinton's "five central goals" for the Advisory Board:

Goal # 2 "To help educate the nation about the facts surrounding the issue of race."

Goal # 3 "To promote a constructive dialogue to confront and work through the difficult and controversial issues surrounding race."

Goal # 4 "To recruit and encourage leadership at all levels to help bridge racial divides.

The letter emphasizes in its quotes below that":

"The initial step in this "White-side" educational approach as I see it, is to begin with the history of race-card politics in the United States from the election campaign of George C. Wallace for governor of Alabama in the 1950's up to and including the presidential campaign of Bob Dole in 1996, with specific interest from Reagan in 1980 through 1992".

"It is my fundamental belief that an overwhelming majority of White citizens are not crazy, and they are not racist. They are fully capable of engaging in political dialogue on race at the adult level. There is no need to void, dumb-down, filter or sugar-coat objective facts and documents on race and chit-chat with White folks on race at the juvenile level of "the birds and the bees."

"White people in the United States are ready, entitled, deserve and will appreciate at long last, on the question of race, the truth, the whole truth, so help us, God. You and the Advisory Board have the moral obligation and legal authority under the President's initiative to provide White people with facts, statistics, and documents of the role of people, places and things in the sordid saga of race in the United States."

"As I see it Dr. Franklin the ball is in your court. Although you are not a magician with a magic wand to solve problems, you are strategically situated to move on the suggestion of Governor William Winter to launch a hard-hitting comprehensive information and education program designed to modify and in time crack present political misperceptions of White voters".

"Such a program would be in lock step with the aims and expectations of President Clinton who said," "I want this panel to help educate Americans about the facts surrounding the issue of race, to promote a dialogue in every community of the land to confront and work through these issues."

"I believe the ideas and suggestions above fit into the sentiment, expectations and the goals of the initiative as expressed by President Clinton."

"Dr. Franklin, I hope you find some of this useful in your program and I hope to hear from you soon."

"Sincerely and God Bless You, Dr. Franklin Ernest C. Dillard, Sr."

In the warring months before the one year curtain dropped on the Initiative On Race Relations I wrote an "Open Paper" on President Clinton's "Initiative" and sent it to Dr...Franklin and members of the Advisory Board and in addition I distributed it to various groups and prominent individuals. The "Open Paper" was dated June 16, 1998. Relevant excerpts following:

"I suggest (to Dr. Franklin) that the next meeting of the Advisory Board, you include on your agenda the following list of topics on Racism in the United States:

1. How is it spread?
2. Why is it spread?
3. Who gains from it?
4. Who spreads it?

End Racism With A White Sword – Ernest Dillard Sr.

5. Who are the real victims?
6. The role of the political campaign and the national media?
7. What can be done about it?"

I received no response, but most importantly I saw no evidence of the implementation of either of the above suggestions in the following program of the Board.

I believed that a dialogue around any of the seven suggested points would have constituted positive progress. First, it would have caused the dialogue to wheel away and end that endless chain of bumper-to-bumper antidotal recitations and testimonies about the symptoms of racism.-- the plaintive cry of "victimization" by blacks, matched by the erosive, non-progressive feeling of self-guilt on the part of white folks, a classical example of "regurgitation" on racism, as referenced above.

In my opinion, anyone of the seven suggestions would have widened the perspective and begin to focus on the role of institutions in the tragic travesty of racism in the United States. But, that did not happen. Yet, well-meaning whites and blacks participated in the dialogue on race, where they like "contented cows" in green pastures chewed and re-chewed the "cud" of race; and in line with the analogy of the digestive tract of the "contented cow," it was constantly "regurgitated" thereby repeating the process ad infinitum. While racism in the United States, like Paul Roberson's "Ole Man River, "It just keeps on rolling along."

During the one-year period of the Initiative on Race there was a Town Hall Meeting in Akron, Ohio in which President Bill Clinton participated. I taped that session.

About midway of that Town Hall Meeting a situation occurred that enhances the point that I want to make:

During the process of President Clinton's Town Hall Meeting on race in Akron, Jonathan Morgan, a White student at Akron University related that, "I have my own prejudices." If I am walking down the street at night and I see a Black, not well dressed, "I'd be a little scared." President Clinton asked him, "Is this due to your personal experience?" Morgan responded, "No, it has nothing to do with my personal experience. It's because of TV crime shows, the media, and what I hear." President Clinton tried to follow up but the next speaker took the dialogue in a different direction.

Here is a case born of sheer happenstance, but if allowed to develop would have led to a significant element in the topography of race, the role of the media in race relations in the United States.

If we as I show here, accidentally stumbled into the door way of a fundamental subject for the dialogue, it is mind-boggling to consider the positive progress in black/white relations, should we have planned to do so.

References and quotes from my letters to Dr. Franklin and the Advisory Board of the Initiative on Race Relations are not intended on my part to play like an All-Knowing, Non-White God, perched atop a Black Throne leveling criticisms towards Dr. Franklin and the Advisory Board. It ain't that simple.

Dr. Franklin and the Advisory Board's hard, diligent work was conducted within the climate of the "conventional" approach to race problems today and working within that confined box of the "conventional" approach to racism the Advisory Board did well.

In my opinion a different Chairman and Advisory Board equally stellar would not have significantly altered the outcome. The problem is not personnel, but rather lack of perspective, focus and a cure-driven goal.

The challenge for the nations is to remove the cure for racism from the status of Hospice – the "terminally ill" and to transfer it to the Intensive Care Ward of a fully accredited hospital, where every level of staff is on the same train, with the same destination --- a total and complete Cure for that festering disease of racism, in the United States.

End Racism With A White Sword – Ernest Dillard Sr.

Against the backdrop of this cyclonic obsession with racism (not a cure for racism), the manifest destiny of this book ---the solution of racism in the United States -- is like "spitting against the winds," but we are influenced by the poet who said, "If your grasp exceeds your reach -- what's heaven for"?

So, we have with our eyes wide open chosen to deal with this issue with the knowledge that it is a high hurdle, but it is not an insurmountable one and the need to search out, track-down and publicly identify the perpetrators, perpetuators and the proliferates of racism to monitor their political propaganda, analyze these forces and their cumulative impact on race relations in the United States is a daunting but doable task.

This public process I believe will defrock and demystify that ugly black scarecrow of racism by dragging it "out of the closet" at high noon by the seat of its raggedy pants; because in this process of ultra-transparency white voters in the United States will be able to make full face "eye contact" with racist politicians stripped of their "fig-leaf" of race-based political propaganda.

I am aware that a significant number of people, black and white believe as does Bob Jones (head of the Bob Jones College), who stated recently on CNN's Larry King's show, that he believed that racism was based on human nature, in effect, genetically-based. Personally, I do not believe that racism is formed in the womb and there is compelling evidence to support my view.

Small young boys, in town or county, will testify from eye-witness account, that a freshly born puppy, barely able to stand alone, if placed in a pond or pool will unhesitatingly, placidly paddle to safety and this identical stellar performance will be repeated whether one time or one hundred times. This is a classic example of physical behavior genetically imbedded. The point is this physical behavior is unchanged by environmental circumstances. The question is, if this is also a characteristic of racism in whites? Admittedly, this analogy has a "serious limp." But in the context of this subject the point is not lost.

In Detroit, during the late 1940s and early 1950s, I was a member of the board of directors of the Detroit Chapter of the NAACP and was appointed chairman of the committee to breakdown discrimination in the Detroit restaurants. In those years, Woodward Avenue was one of Detroit's main streets, beginning at the Detroit River on the south and stretching north to Highland Park. There were restaurants, cafes, and coffee shops in practically every block along the thoroughfare, but none served "colored."

This campaign was launched under the legal auspices of the Michigan Equal Accommodation Act which was passed in the 1940s. Under that law restaurant owners could not refuse to serve blacks coming into their businesses. Blacks sitting at counters would be ignored while whites all around were being served.

If finally you got a chance to put your order for a cup of coffee, the white waitress, without blinking an eye, would reply politely, "I am sorry sir, we are out of coffee," while directly in my line of vision and within her arms length there was a five gallon urn of freshly brewed percolated coffee. They would close coffee shops at high noon and open them when blacks left; cut off the lights, draw the blind and declare the place "closed" if blacks came after sun down.

We countered these tactics with what was later to be dubbed Sit-Ins: But we were 10 year ahead of Martin Luther King.

After about two years practically all Detroit Restaurants had dropped their discriminatory practices.

I raise this antidote to underscore the fact that after the restaurants adopted an Equal Accommodation policy there were scores of White waitresses and waiters jumping in line. When blacks came into the restaurant and coffee shops the same previously prejudiced white waitresses and waiters treated blacks the same as whites. What happened to their racial prejudice? We will pursue this line of questioning later.

End Racism With A White Sword – Ernest Dillard Sr.

In the 1940s, after Pearl Harbor, when the nation was gearing up for war production, its industry like a gigantic vacuum cleaner literally sucked into its plants a labor force from every section of the country and threw them into this multiracial, multicolored production process. Whites, from the back woods of the south, were thrown into jobs rubbing shoulders with blacks, on an equal basis for the first time in their lives. Many of them complained to the white foreman; "I never worked next to a nigger before – down home, whites don't do it."

When the significant institutions: the federal government, the corporate heads of War Production, The United Automobile Workers Union (The UAW), and other sections of the labor movement responded in one voice, "Ok Jeb, get your hat and coat and stop by the front office and pick up your check, which Jeb did and caught the next Greyhound Bus and headed back home.

I am sure there were thousands of southern whites who felt just like Jeb but did not act like Jeb. Why?

Returning to the white waitresses in Detroit who dropped their prejudices and began to serve blacks, perhaps the boss made them change. But, that's no excuse. They could have told the boss, "to hell with you; I am not serving those niggers, I quit." But, they did not! But every time the puppy was thrown into the pool he without hesitation swam to safety. The white waitresses and waiters failed the Puppy test. How come?

Readers today, yet unborn in the 1940's, might consider my reference to the white waitresses and waiters response to the new equal accommodation policy adopted by Detroit Restaurant owners in the 1940s, as ancient history and therefore inapplicable today.

But in the 1990's major Corporations were caught red handed in acts of gross racial discrimination and were forced to pay through the nose and to put in place strict anti-discrimination programs in the work places.

Yet, none of those corporate representatives, who actually carried out the racial discrimination policies, protested the change or defied their boss chanting, "Hell No, I Won't Go."

That is to say, none of them chose to quit their jobs rather than to accord equal treatment in blacks in the workplace.

So employees, at all levels through all the years when caught in similar circumstances, as reference above, reacts and responds exactly as did their predecessors 50 years before. Why?

This is just one of the many paradoxes in racism in the United States. There are many more; we will deal with them all as we move inexorable towards a cure and fundamental solution to the festering problem of race in the United States.

End Racism With A White Sword – Ernest Dillard Sr.