

# The BLACK C o m m e n t a t o r

An independent weekly internet magazine  
dedicated to the movement for economic justice,  
social justice and peace - Providing commentary,  
analysis and investigations on issues affecting  
African Americans and the African world.

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**February 26, 2009 - Issue 313**

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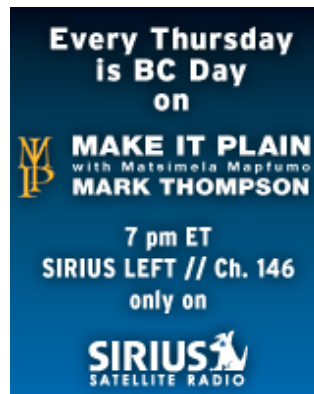
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## **Eric Holder Speaks the Truth / Things Fall Apart The Substance of Truth**

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*"They go to land-grant colleges, normal schools, and learn how to do the white man's work with refinement: home economics to prepare his food; teacher education to instruct black children in obedience; music to soothe the weary mastery and entertain his blunted soul. Here they learn the rest of the lesson begun in those soft houses with porch swings and pots of bleeding heart: how to behave."*

**-Morrison, Toni. [The Bluest Eye](#). New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1970 (1993 ed.), pp. 83**

*"Until the philosophy which hold one race/  
Superior and another inferior/  
Is finally and permanently discredited and abandoned/  
... That until there are no longer first class/  
And second class citizens of any nation/  
Until the color of a man's skin/  
Is of no more significance than the color of his eyes/  
Me say war!"*

**-Bob Marley, [War, Rastaman Vibration](#) (1976)**

*... [T]he need to confront our racial past, and our racial present, and to understand the history of African people in this country, endures... It is for this reason that the study of black history is important to everyone- black or white... While the problems that continue to afflict the black community may be more severe, they are an indication of where the rest of the nation may be if corrective measures are not taken. Our inner cities are still too conversant with crime but the level of fear generated by that crime, now found in once quiet, and now electronically padlocked suburbs is alarming and further demonstrates that our past, present and future are linked."*

**-Attorney General Eric Holder, [in a Black History Month lecture](#), last week (2009)**

It's unclear what was slipped into Mr. Holder's drink last Wednesday, as he delivered his landmark address, but he spoke the unbridled truth, and will probably have to pay for doing so. Though faulty in some of its assumptions about Black people, the majority of his lecture strung notes of long-held truths in the Black Community. In his remonstrance against social segregation, he failed to uncover the history that birthed this reality, but was candid, nonetheless, in highlighting that crucial point. He failed woefully in his assumption that mere conversations on *Race* matters can remedy the inhumane conditions in which people of culture/color are entrenched, but his passionate words did a great deal of justice in dismantling racial placidity President Obama's election has generated in all racial sectors around the world. As expected, his courageous words would not be welcomed with admiration and warmth from White journalists, and Black conservatives, in Washington.

The media has, ever since, sought to de-legitimize Eric Holder, for daring to criticize the country which permits him to advance professionally, and make history, in his own right. Mainstream press responded erratically, like 4-year olds on the verge of peeing themselves. In a quick rush to inflame the sensationalism, the 24-hour networks and tabloid (news) publications, ran with the "nation of cowards" excerpt, from the address, and stripped all context and content - just as was done, last year, with Rev. Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright Jr. - from his 16 minutes-long lecture. With the help of Black-conservative allies (*a la*, Amy Holmes, Ron Christie, etc.), mass media railed fire and thunder upon Holder, for being so "stupid," at this racial moment-of-silence, in the *Age of Obama*. Most vocal in his opposition to Holder's remarks was honorary Ku Klux Klan member, Pat Buchanan.

In [an appearance](#) on MSNBC's *Hardball*, Buchanan, for the first time, felt bold enough to declare, on air, the hate-filled rants his books have been filled with, for decades. Discussing Holder's speech with Georgetown professor Michael Eric Dyson, Buchanan, who openly employed Klansmen on his woeful presidential bids, all but called for the lynching of the new Attorney General. The [racial arsonist](#), who [once told](#) a Black woman to "shut up!" on the air, argued that when whites talk about race, they get

*"fired upon." The MSNBC paid-analyst characterized Holder's speech as, "a remark of almost paralyzing stupidity. If you want to start a discussion about how there is a measure of social self-segregation going on - I mean, you have got black churches, Black Caucus, black colleges, and black clubs - there is that."*

Dr. Dyson answered that this "segregation" is *"largely imposed from without."* Buchanan continued in his suggestion that Holder ought to be challenged for failing to speak with the same efficacy when Obama was *"sitting there silently [as] Reverend Wright went into his racist diatribes."* Dyson would not defend Rev. Wright against Buchanan's assault, but insisted that Holder's critics should look deep inside, as *"white supremacy, social injustice, the owning of slaves, Jim Crow law, and vicious bigotry have not led to the best experiment in democracy."* *"Let me tells some truths,"* Buchanan interjected, as his racist-barometer began rising: *"White folks in America are not responsible for the 70 percent illegitimacy rate in the black community. We are not responsible for the fact that African-Americans commit crimes at seven times the rate of white Americans. We are not responsible for the fact that many more children in the African-American community, 75 percent, are born out of wedlock, as I said. All of these things are the responsibility of the African-American community. And its leaders should address the problems in their own community and stop blaming folks who are not responsible."*

Dr. Dyson would not point out how those same ailments are not culturally exclusive, but a problem all ethnicities confront. Though refusing to note how the structural impediments most Blacks and Browns face from early childbirth escalate the problems of their community, he rightfully countered that personal responsibility cannot protect innocent Black people like *"Oscar Grant, when he goes out in Oakland, and then gets viciously assaulted by a policeman."* Buchanan further pushed his racist tirade, with unfounded claims that *"the statistics on group crime against individuals, gang rape and gang assaults, the numbers are almost 100-1. Forty-five percent of African-American crime is committed against whites. Whites commit 3 percent of their crimes against African-Americans."*

Such data, couched in selective inter-racial crime analysis, is what provokes the content of Pat Buchanan's message to the Black Community: *"[L]ook to your own responsibilities, instead of our faults."* Dyson contended that, according to Pat Buchanan, *"the entire problem of racial fascism in this country rests upon the backs of black people. You have not owned up to, at one point in this conversation, the reality that the dominant American culture has fed the - and fueled - the vicious divisiveness that we continue to confront. So, now you're trying to scapegoat."* At this point, Pat Buchanan, incensed, went off on his anticipated racist tangent: *"In 1948, the African-American community was far more responsible, far less criminal than it is today... I think, professor, you have got to take a little more responsibility for your own community."*

The same network, which permitted such hate-filled rant, finds no fault in employing a guy who wrote, last year, that the African Holocaust [turned out perfect](#) because, *"600,000 black people, brought from Africa in slave ships, grew into a community of 40 million, were introduced to Christian salvation, and reached the greatest levels of freedom and prosperity blacks have ever known,"* and ever since, *"no people anywhere has done more to lift up blacks than white Americans. Untold trillions have been spent since the '60s on welfare, food stamps, rent supplements, Section 8 housing, Pell grants, student loans, legal services, Medicaid, Earned Income Tax Credits and poverty programs designed to bring the African-American community into the mainstream."* Before the show was over that day, the temporary host, *Boston Herald* columnist, Mike

Barnicle, reignited the flames.

In a closing segment with *Rolling Stone's* Matt Taibi, and the *Washington Post's* Jonathan Capehart, [Barnicle wouldn't let it go](#). Informed by Capehart that the façade condoned earlier, "*with Pat Buchanan and Michael Eric Dyson is not the kind of conversation I think he want - he wanted Americans to have,*" he rebutted that Holder's comments are, in essence, unacceptable, because he didn't do it the Bill Cosby way: "*[I]f he had dealt with things like Bill Cosby has dealt with, talking about the destruction, the collapse of the black family in America over the course of the last 10 or 12 years [that would make much sense]. He didn't really mention that in this case.*"

Rolling Stone's white contributor agreed: "*I think the attorney general was doing bong hits last night before he wrote this speech. I mean, this - the country is not significantly different than it was 50 years ago, except the president is black and, you know, every major institution in this country has been desegregated and we had a major civil rights brouhaha in the '60s and '70s that has already been resolved favorably. I mean, I think it's crazy for him to say this kind of stuff.*"

His insulting, unfunny comments were be picked up by Barnicle, who, in turn, dropped the cloak of objectivity he had unsuccessfully worn through the show: "*That's an interesting point that you raise. Jonathan, do you think it's possible that Eric Holder is in the background there when Michael Phelps had the bong pipe? I mean - I mean, some of the stuff in here is, like, way out there. It's way out there.*" Capehart joined in, by mildly criticizing the "*pessimistic [and] dour*" - what others consider "truthful" - framework of Holder's speech. Barnicle, intent on showing his true colors, turned to his White sidekick, to kick some knowledge at the Black Community: "*But, you know, Matt, again, I think I understand where the attorney general was coming from. I appreciate where he's coming from. And yet, not to mention the collapse of the black family, teenage parenting, babies having babies. The fact that the dropout rate in many inner city schools, largely African-American, is horrendous, that adds up to the fact of why they're not living next door to us in the suburbs.*" Wow!

The views of those who think like Barnicle, that *Race*-conversations, as limited as they are, hardly see the light of day because of "*what happens*" to white people when they engage in those discussions, is what makes such a speech by Eric Holder timely. The likes of Barnicle and Buchanan have convinced themselves to believe a lie most preferred for the comfort it grants. They contend that any discussion centered on the concept of *Race* makes whites nonchalant, because almost always are they castigated as being racists, for their views. Keeping quiet, and leaving institutional racism intact, is much better, as they see it, than being branded a racist, for views that are, without a shred of doubt or equivocation, **RACIST!** The recent *New York Post* cartoon controversy, and [many White cartoonists' subsequent worries](#) that they are being forced, against their will, to "*bend over backwards not to make him [Obama] look like a cartoon stereotype,*" amply validates my submission.

Railing against *PC*, as the driving-force behind the fierce Black response to the Rupert Murdoch-owned *NY Post*, they decry being asked to perform their job any differently than they have, in past times - with White presidents. One conservative cartoonist makes the point that Black people are "*not too good (at being) made fun of.*" With the history of Black folks in this society, and the *unique* representations granted them (porch monkey, sub-human, baboon, chimpanzee, beast, slave, etc.) any denial surrounding the intent of the *NY Post* cartoon should not hold validity in 2009 - if Eric Holder was, indeed, wrong.

The unfettered united stance, taken by the Black community, against the racist



depiction of President Obama as a monkey, was refreshing to see - though, one wonders where this sense of unity lurked, two years ago, when Obama [claimed that Blacks](#) had come "90% of the way" to equality; or [with his insistence](#) that FEMA's response to Hurricane Katrina had no racial-tinge to it; or [when he reduced Black fathers](#) to the same stereotypes the likes of Barnicle and Buchanan are familiar with; or when he [admonished Black mothers](#) for their economic-disempowerment, which compensates feeding their kids leftover fast-food snacks for breakfast.

If the Black community did not unleash the same moral audacity when David Axelrod instructed Obama to silence all voices of conscience in the Black Community, and structure his campaign on a "race-neutral" strategy, it's hard to believe that their involvement in this campaign against the *NY Post* is built on a protection of the legacies of those whose immitigable struggles made Obama's historic run possible to begin with.

The explosive response, following the racist cartoon also revealed a troubling detail. It's no secret that the 2008 presidential election evoked very disturbing elements of society. With a Black family front and center of international attention, the inevitability of racial-consciousness in the election was accepted before it began. Unfortunately, David Axelrod, the *Obama '08* chief strategist, decided that it was best to present Obama as a different kind of Black candidate - one with undeniable skin pigmentation, but without the political/historical persuasion that had, historically, come with it. Obama would be summarized as a candidate "who happens to be Black" - not a *Black candidate*!

Forced to confront this fallacy, following the media-driven attacks on Rev. Wright, Obama would render a speech in Philadelphia, on March 18, 2008, that attempted to provide some context to the anger, pain and frustration many Black folks were articulating, through the lips of his former pastor. With unforgivable lies (misinformation) been told in the speech - his outstanding oratory notwithstanding - it was clear that the effect would be temporary, at best. Following Gov. Palin's emergence as Sen. McCain's running mate, Axelrod's plans for a *raceless* campaign would be [consumed](#) in unquenchable flames of the Alaskan's racial fire. [Drumming-up old narratives](#) of a Black beast, whose [preoccupation with assaulting White women](#) was only tamable by lynching, Gov. Palin helped remind all willing to listen, of how little progress had truly been made - racially.

It seems to me that the recent racial unrest following the *NY Post* cartoon, and AG Holder's comments, is simply the tipping point, following a campaign persistent on arresting any natural development of *Race*. Would it be so cruel as to afford an intimation that these events were the symbolism of Obama and Axelrod's chickens coming home to roost? Shall one be castigated, unrelentingly, for such an assertion grounded in truth and logic?

The most eloquently assuring aspect - if at all any - of the *NY Post* cartoon brouhaha seems to be the brutal assault dealt on the logic of a *post-racial* world - a concept concocted by unenlightened mass-media, in its lame attempts to come to terms with Obama's meteoric rise during the '08 Presidential race. The surmountable silver lining lies in the reality that now, [young Black boys](#), and [young Black girls](#), are no more under the false impression (oppression) that Dr. King's dream has been fulfilled, or equality has finally arrived for Black folks.

It also lends credence to the timeless adages that, "*truth crushed to earth shall rise again,*" and, as Thomas Carlyle once put it, "*if there be a Faith, from of old, it is this, as we often repeat, that no Lie can live forever. The very Truth has to change its*

vesture, from time to time; and be born again. But all Lies have sentence of death written down against them..." All the lies offered by mainstream media during the '08 Presidential race are now being, slowly and gradually uncovered, without the intervention of any unnatural cause. Mainstream media, which must have thought itself so gifted as to sell a child to its mother, now sits at the footstool of shame, for the intentionally misleading analysis it encouraged/supplied, on *Race*, throughout the 22-month long presidential campaign.


As the acclaimed scholar, bell hooks, ends in her classic text, [Killing Rage: Ending Racism](#) (1996), the struggle to arrive at a racial *Promised Land* is no fantasy, but rather, a challenge to anyone deeply concerned about the issue of equality, in a racially diverse context. In the years to come, all committed must begin, as she put it, "truly seek[ing] to live in an anti-racist world." Empty conversations wouldn't work, but "[i]f that longing guides our vision and our actions, the new culture will be born and anti-racist communities of resistance will emerge everywhere. That is where we must go from here."


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