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**Resurrection Now, Crucifixion Later  
The Substance of Truth  
By Tolu Olorunda  
BlackCommentator.com Columnist**

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*"My brain never touched the soap/  
Refused to be another f\*\*kin' slave that stuffed the boats/"*  
-Jus Allah, "White Nightmare," All Fates Have Changed (2005).

*On a rainy evening, November 27, 2016, Saphronia and her nephew - now an adopted son - sit by the fireside, as they sink deep into a pool of conversation. Saphronia has played a vital role in Sammy's life, since the passing of his mother, Simone, to breast cancer, 15 years ago, at 26 years of age. Today, his 19th birthday, Sammy's eyes are set on better discovering the vast volume of time and space ahead of him. Alongside the surrogate-mother and son relationship that has developed over the years, Sammy has also come to see Saphronia as the teacher he never had. Though a 20-year veteran of the academy, she is currently devoted to the re-education of younger Black students - including her nephew - through independent pedagogical facilities. As they reflect inside this West Virginian duplex, emotion shortly becomes the potter that molds and shapes their thoughts:*

Sammy: ... But... But... He said he was bringing change! His exact words were: "Change is on the way." He tricked us! He tricked us! I can't believe it: Eight years flushed down the latrine of history - just like that!

Saphronia: What do you mean *he tricked us*?

Sammy: I mean - he lied! He did everything he said he wouldn't do - went against his word!

Saphronia: What specifically did he promise to do, which he failed to accomplish?

Sammy: Health care, the Iraq & Afghanistan wars, poverty, social security - everything!

Saphronia: I'm not sure you were actually listening to his words, when he spoke.

Sammy: I was. I read his speeches, and watched them, too. I loved watching them. He had an uncanny ability to communicate directly with whatever audience he was speaking to.

Saphronia: And you heard him promise single-payer healthcare; an end of the Iraq & Afghanistan wars, with a full withdrawal of troops; an agenda against poverty; and a de-privatization of social security?

Sammy: It was implied! He alluded to it... I mean, he didn't have to mention those programs, by name.

Saphronia: Why?

Sammy: Because he was trying to get elected.

Saphronia: And what happened the second time around - with his soaring popularity and a Republican ticket like Sarah Palin/Alan Keyes?

Sammy: I guess the people failed.

Saphronia: Which people?

Sammy: The leaders.

Saphronia: Who did they fail?

Sammy: Themselves, along with the communities they represented.

Saphronia: Can't the "communities" think for themselves?

Sammy: I don't know. I - They - The problem is -

Saphronia: I don't mean to assume superiority, but I can't honestly claim to be shocked by anything he -

Sammy: What I still can't believe, was how he let loose a battalion of private contractors on his own people! His own people! I mean, that's beyond me! Your own people! Without Kenya, there's no *him*! Without that East African soil, there would never have been -

Saphronia: Why is it so hard to believe he carried out the AFRICOM agenda?

Sammy: Because, they're his people - his skin! Flesh and blood is thicker than politics - I thought!

Saphronia: Well, where there any protests to deter his plan?

Sammy: Yes - plenty!

Saphronia: Where?

Sammy: On the internet. There were petitions filed, articles written, letters mailed, and thousands of signatures to -

Saphronia: Son, technology is no substitute for human will - especially in a life-or-death crisis!

Sammy: But does that excuse the unmolested slaughter of tens of thousands of precious lives? Lives lost to "rid the world of terror" - evil?

Saphronia: I disagree. The U.N. lady said it was "humanitarian intervention." I don't know. That seemed believable to me!

Sammy: You can't possibly be making light of the lives lost in that senseless non-war over -

Saphronia: Some things are too bitter to be cried about...

Sammy: The level of disrespect is what astounded me most. They - the soldiers - went into individual houses, huts, villages, and, in broad daylight, in full view of TV cameras, took shotguns to the heads of innocent people. What could they have done to deserve such inhumane treatment?!

Saphronia: Son, I hate to break it to you, but the system runs on autopilot.

Sammy: What do you mean?

Saphronia: I mean, a map is drawn out, and incorporated - regardless of who's flying the plane.

Sammy: But he was the first Black president! He made history! He looked *different* - from the first 43.

Saphronia: Different does not mean deficient. Plus, looks can be deceiving -

Sammy: It wasn't just the look - it was something else: His mannerisms, style, speech, tone, composure, behavior, character, etc. - all *different*.

Saphronia: But I didn't hear the word, "substance."

Sammy: What difference does it make?

Saphronia: Sometimes, the pilot's role is inconsequential - just a prop to keep at bay the worries and anxieties of flight travelers.

Sammy: But he was a "new face."

Saphronia: Of what use is a new face to an old body?

Sammy: It can glamorize it - make it more presentable!

Saphronia: And how dare you be upset when a *new face* fails to alter the deeds of the body?

Sammy: I see your point.

Saphronia: Lorraine Hansberry was right: Human life functions according to a binary model - "the 'taker' and the 'taken'." You see, the oppressed are trained to see themselves through the prism of victimhood, which makes the goal of colonization more easily executed. As a result, *power* can always count on the availability of people willing to be victimized.

Sammy: Are you blaming the victim?

Saphronia: Of course not. The issue is that a victim is only a victim when the victim sees him or herself as one.

Sammy: What do you mean?

Saphronia: Can a rape victim refuse to be shackled by the trauma of his or her experience, and begin recovering what was stolen by the abuser?

Sammy: I guess so.

Saphronia: By the same token, the oppressed can always take steps toward de-colonizing themselves - if they are truly dissatisfied with oppression.

Sammy: Does this mean they've become accustomed to it, and perhaps, even dependent on it - oppression?

Saphronia: I wouldn't put it so bluntly. What I do know, however, is that because most people don't think for themselves; it is possible that they've come to associate various degrees of oppression with freedom from it.

Sammy: You mean, like the slavery stories you told me when I was younger?

Saphronia: Exactly, and if you recall -

Sammy: Where our people were pacified with all kinds of things, except the very thing they sought - freedom!

Saphronia: But it didn't just stop there.

Sammy: What - where?

Saphronia: I mean, this technique - we called it "bait and switch." It didn't just come to an abrupt end once slavery was officially aborted. (*In some areas, that is.*) I mean, some would call the de-segregation efforts of the '60s, and the burst of the Black middle class, a form of pacification.

Sammy: How so?

Saphronia: Because all it did was take our eyes of the *ball*.

Sammy: The *ball* of freedom?

Saphronia: Yes. And not just *abstract* freedom. But the freedom to organize, love one another, build our own communities, learn (from) our history, strengthen our homes, and live a life of dignity - one dependent on no one but our ancestors. So that, if desegregation could only make rich a few more Negroes - *and the no-good ones, at that* - it can't really be considered a victory, in terms of the struggle for dignity, freedom and human integrity.

Sammy: Are you saying, then, that the last eight years, though historic, should have been gauged by the same meter, as well?

Saphronia: Of course!

Sammy: And why did they let him get away with it - do whatever he wanted?

Saphronia: That's a complex question, because unless you first identify the "they," everything else would turn out confusing.

Sammy: I mean, the Black intellectuals, essayists, critics, academics, editors, writers, activists, entertainers -

Saphronia: Son, here lies the danger in generalization.

Sammy: I'm not generalizing; but -

Saphronia: When you ask why "they" let him get away, you dismiss the efforts of those who relentlessly put pressure, however limitedly, on his administration - year in, year out.

Sammy: But if "they" really held his feet to the fire, how come he got away?

Saphronia: His policies, and the docility that accompanied it from within the so-called left base, is no indictment on the efforts of the true progressives, who unwaveringly strengthened their commitment to challenging his imperialistic interests and values.

Sammy: And how would you explain the lack of visibility this group suffered from, in all those years?

Saphronia: You'll have to thank the liberal, leftist and Negro Obamamaniacs for that!

Sammy: I still don't see how this accounts for the programs that got green-lighted under a Democratic presidency.

Saphronia: Son, what kind of fruits do poisoned trees bear?

Sammy: Equally poisoned ones?

Saphronia: And if the branch is -

Sammy: But, how can this tree be poisoned, if it came from fresh seeds?!

Saphronia: Because even fresh seeds are impotent on rocky soil.

Sammy: Was that his fault?

Saphronia: Well, every great farmer knows best to check the quality of the soil, before any planting arrangements!

Sammy: And what if the soil is thorny, rocky and arid?

Saphronia: Then, such farmer would either deal with it first, or be forced to plant elsewhere.

Sammy: I see.

Saphronia: These are concepts every true progressive knew of - long before November 2008!

Sammy: Are you hopeful we can plot a comeback?

Saphronia: Oh, son. I'm always hopeful. My hope resides in the reality that in spite of the obstacles, our people have always emerged victorious - with a slice of dignity to go along. Come Hell or High Water, we've never given up. My great grandmother used to tell a joke, that if slavery didn't kill us, maybe God just doesn't know what to do with us yet. There's some truth to that, because even in defeat lies the potential for victory.

Sammy: And what victory do you foresee in this conundrum?

Saphronia: Well, for one, we got our first African-American Woman president! You know, she's -

Sammy: You just warned me against sensationalism and sentimentalism!

Saphronia: Yes, but I also know what she stands for - what she's stood for. I *know* her record. From Georgia to Washington, she remained faithful, pursuing her goal of restoring "power to the people."

Sammy: Is that why *they* ran all those fraudulent reports in the newspapers, radio and TV stations, about illegal affairs, terrorism-enabling, Black supremacist - *whatever that is* - alliances, and financial improprieties?

Saphronia: Precisely. The Black supremacy one made me chuckle, at first. Anybody who knows her, *knows* her respect for all mankind, and how much she values equality as a fiduciary obligation of humanity.

Sammy: But the tactics didn't work.

Saphronia: Yes, and after eight years of that cynical opportunist, they were bound not to. The people were fed up. They had had enough. The running joke amongst progressive circles is: "Eight years ought to do that to you. If it doesn't, ask for your vote or your money back!" But also, when you've got Harriet Tubman, Anna Julia Cooper, Callie House, and Shirley Chisholm sitting in the fire with you, you're pretty much in good hands.

Sammy: So, what happens next?

Saphronia: Well, for one, we don't just *wait and see*. We begin bringing pressure to bear on her administration. She might be a family member of the progressive community, but that's not good grounds for acquiescence. Having a Black Puerto Rican veteran activist as V.P. doesn't rain manna from heaven. And having a true ally in the White House does not change water into wine, either. So, we are confident that she's truly listening, but we also find the need to amplify our voices in defense of the sick, poor, starving, hungry, lost, oppressed, misled, mis-educated, and deceived. We also know that her press secretary is devoted to telling the truth, at any cost, so we're fully prepared to hold him, as well, accountable. His decades on Death Row produced some of the most compelling radio commentaries ever in the history of journalism, which makes it easier to hold his feet, and consequently hers, to the fire.

Sammy: But why didn't the same group of people hold her predecessor accountable, in the early stages of his presidency?

Saphronia: I admit: I'm befuddled. Sometimes, I think it was his charm, or his eloquence. At other moments, I'm convinced that the emotional exuberance of his presidency's historical precedence corrupted the intellects of otherwise reasoning people. Other times, however, I fail to find any excuse for the permission so-called progressives gave him, as he tore down all facilities of civility leftover after the reign of the cowboys. So, I don't think you can blame him for doing, practically, what he had promised, all along, to do; and, quite frankly, what he was never obstructed from -

Sammy: But... But... He said he was bringing change! His exact words were: "Change is on the way." He tricked us! He tricked us! I can't believe it: Eight years flushed down the latrine of history - just like that!

Saphronia: What do you mean *he tricked us*?

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