

PBS Panelists

Sherman Alexie

BACKGROUND:

Sherman Alexie is a 32-year-old, Washington-state born, Native American poet, author, and filmmaker. He is an author of nine books including his most recent novel, *Indian Killer*. He is also a filmmaker, and has written the screenplay for "Smoke Signals," a highly acclaimed movie that won two awards at the Sundance Film Festival this year. "Smoke Signals" depicts the distances between people: Indians and whites, reservation Indians and urban Indians, men and women, and between contemporary Indians and the traditional figures from their past. Alexie is a Coeur d'Alene Indian who grew up on the Spokane Indian Reservation in eastern Washington state. He is a very outspoken young American Indian who conveys the realities of contemporary Indian life through humor and going against conventional stereotypes of Indians. His work is based on his own personal life, on and off the reservation, which is a modern reality of Indians today.

RELEVANT RACE-RELATED ISSUES:

Alexie focuses on youth, sovereignty, and Americans deep misunderstanding of Native Americans. Alexi has a strong interest in the experiences of Indian youth today. This is expressed in his inclination to write from the point of view of young Indian characters.

Alexie feels that most Americans don't understand the special governmental status of American Indians and Alaska Natives. This misunderstanding has created a host of concerns and issues about a basic understanding of our collective history.

On a recent appearance on CNN, Alexie was described as controversial within Indian country because some American Indians feel that he has no right to comment about life on a reservation since he has not lived on a reservation in a long time and currently lives in Seattle, WA.

Elaine Chao

BACKGROUND:

Elaine Chao, a distinguished fellow at the Heritage Foundation and Sr. Editor of *Policy Review*, is married to Senator Mitch McConnell. From 1992 to 1996, Chao was President

and Chief Executive Officer of the United Way of America (UWA). Prior to joining the UWA, Chao was the director of the Peace Corps. Before joining the Peace Corps, Chao was deputy secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation. Before that, she was the chair of the Federal Maritime Commission. During her service in the Federal government, she became the highest-ranking Asian Pacific American appointed in the executive branch in U.S. history. She served as a White House Fellow in 1983-1984.

RELEVANT RACE-RELATED ISSUES:

Elaine Chao is a strong critic of affirmative action and a member of Ward Connerly's Citizens Initiative on Race. She participated in a meeting with you and other conservatives on December 19, 1997 when she expressed her belief that you had a "great opportunity to direct the path for the next millennium." Among the issues she discussed at that meeting were immigration, economic opportunity (vs. affirmative action programs) and empowerment for all Americans.

She has criticized the Initiative for focusing mostly on African Americans and whites.

Elaine Chao opposed Bill Lann Lee's nomination as assistant attorney general for Civil Rights.

Kay James

BACKGROUND:

Kay James is an African American graduate of Hampton University (Historically Black College and University). She also served in President Bush's administration and is currently the dean of Regent University in Virginia. Until January 1, 1996, she served in the cabinet of Virginia Governor George Allen as the secretary of health and human resources. Before being appointed to this post, James served as senior vice-president of the Family Research Council, a Washington-based policy organization. Prior to the Family Research Council, she served under President Bush as associate director for the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. James also served President Bush as assistant secretary for public affairs at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Resources. James was appointed by President Reagan and reappointed by President Bush as commissioner of the National Commission on Children. She also served on the White House Task Force on the Black Family. James has published two works, an autobiography, *Never Forget* (1993) and *Transforming America: From the Inside Out* (1995).

RELEVANT RACE-RELATED ISSUES:

Kay James supports personal rather than governmental strategies for attacking major societal problems. She believes the way to transform America is through “personal revival” and family values rather than political change.

In addition, she has argued that the well being of our democracy depends upon “increased Christian participation,” in public affairs.

She believes that racism is one of the four pivotal issues facing our society. The other issues are poverty, abortion and homosexuality.

Clarence Page

BACKGROUND:

Clarence Page is an African American Pulitzer Prize winning journalist and a member of the Editorial staff of *The Chicago Tribune*. Page has with the editorial staff of *The Chicago Tribune* since 1984, and his column is syndicated nationally by Tribune Media Services. Page is also a regular contributor on “The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer” as an essayist and a frequent member of the program’s panel of regional newspaper editors and columnists. He is also an occasional guest panelist on “The MacLaughlin Group.” Previously, Page spent 11 years as a reporter and assistant city editor for *The Chicago Tribune*. He won a 1989 Pulitzer Prize for commentary, a 1980 Illinois UPI Award for community service, the Edward Scott Beck Award for overseas reporting, and the 1987 American Civil Liberties Union James P. McGuire Award for his columns on constitutional rights. In addition, Page participated in a 1972 Chicago Tribune Task Force series on voter fraud, which also won a Pulitzer.

RELEVANT RACE-RELATED ISSUES:

Clarence Page is a thoughtful writer and critic of conservative commentators who say that race is not a major problem in America today; he is a self identified liberal.

He is the author of Showing My Color, Impolite Essays on Race and Identity, which focuses on promoting cultural sharing and encouraging Americans to be “color-curious” rather than “color-blind” or “color-bound.”

While Page believes that affirmative action is still needed today, he also feels that, in the future, it should be phased out. In addition, Page is a strong proponent of college and job recruitment programs and investing in our inner-cities.

Richard Rodriguez

BACKGROUND:

Richard Rodriguez is a prominent Mexican-American journalist and Newshour commentator. He is currently an editor at Pacific News Service and a contributing editor for *Harper's Magazine*, *U.S. News & World Report*, and the Sunday "Opinion" section of *The Los Angeles Times*. He has published numerous articles in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The American Scholar*, *Time Magazine*, *Mother Jones*, and *The New Republic*, as well as other publications. He has also written two books: *Hunger for Memory* and *Days of Obligation: An Argument With My Mexican Father*, as well as two BBC documentaries. Most recently, Rodriguez received a 1997 George Foster Peabody Award for his "NewsHour" essays on American life. His other awards include the Frankel Medal from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the International Journalism Award from the World Affairs Council of California.

RELEVANT RACE-RELATED ISSUES:

Richard Rodriguez describes himself as politically left of center. He is a noted opponent of bilingual education and affirmative action. Specifically, he is known for having turned down academic positions (as an English professor) because he felt they were offered to him based on his ethnicity.

Richard Rodriguez has written extensively about race in America, often focusing on the subtle challenges race presents to our nation's societal development. "The Color Brown," deals with the concept of "brown" people in a black and white country, and makes reference to comments from Dr. John Hope Franklin.

He has also questioned the legitimacy of the debate on bilingual education and its focus on English as the primary language.

Roger Rosenblatt

BACKGROUND:

Roger Rosenblatt is a white journalist, Sr. Essayist for Time & New York Times Magazine, and a contributor to "The NewsHour." He was formerly a columnist and editor-at-large for *Life Magazine* and is a contributing editor and essayist for *Vanity Fair*, *The New Republic*, and *Men's Journal*. His other accomplishments include serving as editor of *U.S. News & World Report*, and as a columnist and editorial board member of *The*

Washington Post. His journalistic honors include a Peabody Award, an Emmy, a Fulbright Scholarship, two George Polk Awards, and awards from the American Bar Association and Overseas Press Club. Rosenblatt's journalism career began in 1975 as literary editor of *The New Republic*. Previously, he taught English and American literature at Harvard University. He is the author of five books: *Black Fiction*, *Children of War* (which won the Robert F. Kennedy Book Prize), *Witness: The World Since Hiroshima*, *Life Itself: Abortion in the American Mind*, and *The Man in the Water*.

RELEVANT RACE-RELATED ISSUES:

Roger Rosenblatt is considered a philosophical rather than political commentator on societal issues. He tends to be a thoughtful journalist who approaches an issue from a moral, ethical, and personal point-of-view.

He has criticized the movement to "identity politics" in America, and the movement away from our connection to the larger societal fabric. Rosenblatt recognizes that race, religion, ethnicity and economic status are the foundation of this movement.

Roberto Suro

BACKGROUND:

Roberto Suro is a Hispanic journalist for *The Washington Post* and author of a book focusing on Latino immigration titled *Stranger Among Us*. In *Strangers Among Us*, he briefly sketches a childhood divided between a Spanish-speaking home and the English-speaking world outside. Suro began a career as a newspaper reporter in Chicago and was one of the first journalists to write about the Mexicans and Puerto Ricans who were moving into old blue-collar wards abandoned by European immigrants in favor of the suburbs. He also made several reporting trips to Latin America, including two visits to Cuba. In 1978, he became a correspondent for *Time Magazine*, eventually doing tours in its Chicago, Washington, Beirut and Rome bureaus. From 1985 to 1993, he worked as bureau chief for *The New York Times*, first in Rome and then in Houston, where most of his work was concentrated in Texas and the Southwest. Suro wrote about crises on the Mexican border, the implementation of new immigration programs and the changing status of Mexican migrants in the Texas economy. Along the way, Suro wrote two papers: "Remembering the American Dream: Hispanic Immigration and National Policy" and "Watching America's Door: The Immigration Backlash and the New Policy Debate."

RELEVANT RACE-RELATED ISSUES:

Roberto Suro believes that the growth of the Hispanic population is a positive contribution to the United States. He is a strong believer that immigration leaves the country “stronger” and with a “better sense of self.”

In his recent writings, Suro has focused on the impact of Hispanic immigration. He has expressed concerns about the backlash against immigration and new voter referendums in California. He believes that bilingual education is needed as a “transitional measure; it requires dedicated and talented teachers working in supportive environments.” (e.g. **High Hopes Initiative**)

Suro also has focused on high rates of inter-marriage by Hispanic and Asian Americans as signs of progress towards Americanization.

Cynthia Tucker

BACKGROUND

Cynthia Tucker, an African American journalist, is an editor of *The Atlanta Journal Constitution* and a frequent commentator on “The NewsHour.” Prior to being named editorial page editor of *The Atlanta Constitution*, she was associate editorial page editor. Prior to that, she was an editorial writer, reporter and columnist for *The Constitution's* sister paper, the afternoon *Atlanta Journal*. She has also been a reporter for *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. Tucker has covered local governments, national politics, crime and education. She has also reported from Africa and Central America. She is a member of the National Association of Black Journalists, the National Association of Minority Media Executives and the American Society of Newspaper Editors. She serves on the board of directors of the International Media Women’s Foundation and the Advisory Board of the Poynter Institute.

RELEVANT RACE-RELATED ISSUES:

Cynthia Tucker is known as a political moderate with views on a wide range of social issues. She comes from a more iconoclastic perspective than a traditional race-based perspective.

Tucker has recently written about the killing in Jasper, Texas, and the attitude of quiet forgiveness and mutual support that has come over the town as a result of the heartfelt and courageous apology from Ronald King, father of one of the suspects.

She is a thoughtful, non-confrontational and independent analyst of race issues with special expertise on the Southern States.

Rank ① ② ③

Lydia / Beverly

DRAFT #1 -- POTUS Q & A
July 8th --PBS Conversation on Race

Board mtg. w/ Pres.
in September

Accomplishments

- 1 Q. With one year to do its work, what has your Initiative accomplished and will it have a long-term impact on race in this country?
- 2 Q. Some have said the Initiative never quite picked up momentum and that it got off to a slow start because of a lack of clarity about the Board's mission. What happened?
- 1 Q. When you announced the Initiative during the University of California commencement address, you indicated that you would report to the American people periodically on the work of the Initiative. You have done the Akron Town Hall meeting, the ESPN conversation on race and this program. But that's only three events in the course of the entire year. Why have you not been more active in this effort?
- 3 Q. How much can you hope to accomplish unless you have the support of the Congress?
- 2 Q. In all your efforts to improve race relations in the past year, what have you learned about race that you didn't know?
- 2 Q. Do you think you've changed the way people feel and think about race?
- 1 Q. A June 10th USA Today/CNN Gallop poll suggested that race relations between blacks and whites have not changed much in the past year. If this is so, then didn't this Initiative fall short of its goals?

Current Issues

1 Q: What do you think is the most imp. thing (Personal as President) Prim. pract. opp. agenda (closing opp gap)

- 1 Q. What do racial incidents like the recent occurrence in Jasper say about the success of the Initiative and the state of race in this country?
- 2 Q. What role should the Federal government play in addressing these kinds of incidents?

no Bosnia

Dialogue

- Q. How engaged has the country been in the national dialogue on race, particularly since many people feel that race is no longer a major problem in America?

combine w/ class v. race

- 1 Q. How does dialogue help bridge racial divides if the real problem is opportunity gaps?

NYT piece by Nan Leohane

Not simple, but complex problem.

Opp sep & anti-discrim

- 2 Q. Is it possible that your focus on the changing racial demographics has in fact increased racial tension among white Americans?

Inclusion

- 1 Q. How do we get past our fixation on race, when the Federal government through such entities as the Census Bureau relies so heavily on racial classification?

② Q. What have you done to extend this national conversation on race beyond issues between blacks and whites?

③ Q. Critics such as Abigail Thernstrom and Ward Connerly have formed a new group called "The Citizens Initiative on Race and Ethnicity." Do you view this as an indication that the Initiative has failed in its effort to include conservative voices?

① Q. The American Indian community has sharply criticized the Initiative for failing to include an American Indian representative on the Advisory Board. Why was none appointed at the start, and what have you done to reach out to this community?

Policy

Future Q. Thirty years ago, the Kerner Commission examined race in America. It made major recommendations with a commitment of significant federal funds to address the problems it identified, but little changed. What can your Initiative do to have a lasting impact on race relations in America? Legacy ②

Q. What provisions are you making to reduce disparities in health, education, employment and other areas among underrepresented groups? Concrete actions

Q. Recent polls have reinforced that media images have significant impact on how young people view themselves and others. What responsibility does the media have in portraying racial images of minorities accurately and fairly? What is the role of the media in race relations? San Diego challenge on alternative Board Affirmative action

Q. Why hasn't the Initiative taken on the issue of affirmative action since it is clearly the hot button issue on race? Are the new federal contracting guidelines your effort to do so? Board has looked at this too

Q. Given the various propositions and court cases against affirmative action -- Proposition 209 in California, the *Hopwood* decision in Texas, and others -- do you continue to support the use of affirmative action in higher education and elsewhere, and if so, why? In the absence of affirmative action as a tool, what can be done to close the opportunity gap? Discriminatory pipeline still exists. Benchmark CR enforcement

Q. The issue of school choice has a race impact -- more white students are able to afford and attend private schools while more students of color are stuck in low-performing public schools, especially in urban areas. Why not support full school choice (i.e., public, private, and parochial) to let children of color move into better schools? Charter schools

Q. Why didn't the Initiative deal with the apology for slavery issue? Dr. Franklin's language: if slavery were the problem, it would have ended.

Q. Isn't the problem of race relations in this country really a problem of economics and class and not a racial issue? Combined w/ earlier

Q. How do you address the criticism that the Initiative didn't address tough issues like immigration, police brutality and bilingual education? spoke to

Board mth.

came out against

④ As my advisory board comm. core is econ. / educ.

Future

Q. Your Initiative has done outreach to the corporate community, the religious community, the education community, and youth. What will you ask leaders in those communities to do to promote racial reconciliation?

Q. The Initiative has identified many community based racial reconciliation efforts called promising practices. What difference will they make in moving us forward on racial issues?

2 good promising practices.

 You began the Initiative as a one-year effort. At its last meeting, the Advisory Board deliberated about the need to continue this Initiative beyond a year, including the possibility of a Council modeled on the CEA or the Council on Physical Fitness. Have you made a decision about extending the Initiative on Race beyond September and the way you would do so?

we're moving from phase 1 to phase 2.

Q. What will be in your final report and what purpose will it serve for the American public?

~~Q. Turn the clock back to early 1997. If you had the benefit of re-starting this Initiative at the beginning, what would you do differently?~~

~~Q. How will the Initiative on Race be remembered 10 to 20 years from now?~~

Briefing — Tuesday
go through top 10 @ 3A

Dry run on Mon. in Ann's office

What do

- * Ideas for Admin.
- * What can country do
What ~~can~~ have we done?)

robinson

Mon Jun 22 12:37 page 1

SLUG	WRITER	MODIFIED	LINES	TIME TOTAL
RACE PARTICIPANTS	robinson	Mon Jun 22 12:37	39	01:28

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RACE PARTICIPANTS:

ROBERTO SURO--Washington Post reporter and author of "Strangers Among Us: How Latino Immigration is Transforming America". He was formerly a correspondent for Time in the Middle East and was a bureau chief for the New York Times in Rome and Houston.

ELAINE CHAO--Fellow at Heritage Foundation; former president and chief executive officer of United Way of America from 1992-1996; she served in the Department of Transportation during both the Reagan and Bush administrations; in the Bush White House she was also the Director of the Peace Corps.

KAY JAMES--Dean of the Robertson School of Government at Regent University in Virginia Beach; former Secretary of Health and Human Resources for Virginia Governor George Allen and was a Senior Vice President for the Family Research Council; served in the Bush administration at the Department of Health and Human Services and at the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy.

SHERMAN ALEXIE--Author and filmmaker; author of nine books--his most recent novel is "Indian Killer"; he also wrote the screenplay for "Smoke Signals" based on his short story collection "The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven"; the movie won the Audience Award and Filmmaker's Trophy at the Sundance Film festival in January. He's Coeur d'Alene Indian who grew up on the Spokane Indian Reservation

RICHARD RODRIGUEZ--Editor at the Pacific News Service and essayist for the NewsHour.

CLARENCE PAGE--Columnist and member of the Editorial Board for the Chicago Tribune; essayist for the NewsHour.

ROGER ROSENBLATT--Essayist for Time magazine and the NewsHour.

CYNTHIA TUCKER--Editorial page editor of the Atlanta Constitution and part of the NewsHour's panel of regional commentators.

JP 6/23/98
Please
copy

(THIS
IS NOT
PUBLIC)

for
Marty

Judge
Marty
and
Richard
and
Mike McCarty

Theme:
What is the most imp. thing
the Pres. can do to improve
race relations.

