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THE HUNGRY CLUB OF THE
FOURTH AVENUE BRANCH YMCA

BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA
MARCH 16, 1972

DO WE NEED A BLACK PRESS?

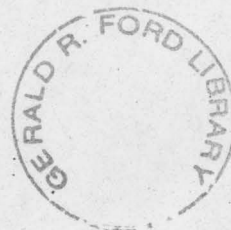
BY
STANLEY S. SCOTT
ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR
OF COMMUNICATIONS
FOR THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH,
THE WHITE HOUSE



Thank you very much. That wonderful introduction by _____ reminds me of another occasion on which a chairman introduced me.

This particular chairman was most inexperienced, and he said that never having undertaken such a task before, he had gone to a veteran toastmaster and asked him what the rule of introductions was, the veteran told him that it was a very simple rule: "If the man is a big-shot and really amounts to something, simply state: 'We have with us today' and say no more. But if he is small potatoes and does not amount to much, say just as much as you can about him." This young fellow then started with my birth and moved on down for the next fifteen minutes.

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As you are well aware -- this is an election year. Some are saying the Democrats are the party of the past. I don't really see how. So far in Congress they haven't passed anything.

I must admit Congress is a great institution. As you know, the entire House of Representatives and a third of the Senate are running this year -- and that's only for the Presidency!

However, I do want to assure you, that you will be able to tell the democratic candidates apart at the convention by the kind of transportation they'll use. Muskie will be trying to railroad the nomination. Humphrey will try to ride in on the gravy train. Shirley Chisholm will be riding a women's bicycle. George McGovern will be riding a dark horse and George Wallace will be driving a school bus.



This will be a rather brief speech -- and you can thank three people for it. My speech writer who took a one-hour talk and cut it down to 30 minutes; my wife who took the 30 minutes and cut it down to 15; and my secretary who took the 15 minute version -- and lost it!

This is the 145th anniversary of the Black press in America. I would like to pay special tribute to those of you who are here today.

Henry La Brie has said "at a time when frustration is a common commodity within the Black community, the Black press can point to those areas of positive achievement which have been made within the framework of a democratic society... It continues to be a unifying force throughout America's Black community."

For over one-hundred years, we as a people have struggled to gain full equality.

And for over one-hundred years the Black press has been at the forefront as a leader of that cause.



It all began in 1827, in the City of New York when the New York Sun refused to publish a letter written by two men who wished to "refute a racist attack" which was made by that paper.

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With the advent of the Civil War and the period of reconstruction, we witnessed the rapid emergence of Black newspapers.



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The white Southerners had their political power restored to them. The white Northerners who had supported the Black cause in the early 1860's found themselves abandoning the Black masses.

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The Black press, again was called upon to provide that defense.

It was during this period, that The New York Age, fought for the adoption of a Civil Rights Bill and the abolition of separate schools in New York State. Further, the Age also waged an effective fight to obtain the right of Blacks to serve in the Spanish American War.

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was accepted by Presidents, the Supreme Court, Congress, organized labor, the General Federation of Women's Clubs -- indeed by the vast majority of Americans, North and South...."

It was at this point that the Black press began to mature. They not only became the major vehicle by which the injustice to Blacks was carried, but, they also began to disseminate the message of contemporary life into the Black communities.

The image of the Black man had to be changed. The majority press had contributed greatly to the distortion and stereotyping of the Black man.

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While the story itself tends to discredit the professor's theories -- many Americans both black and white will only read as far as the headline.

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These papers began to address themselves to the problems of the black community -- not just the problems of blacks relating to whites but, blacks relating to blacks.



The papers began to reach out not only to the educated but the uneducated; not only to the well-fed but the hungry; not only to the affluent but to the poor.

Forty-three years ago The Atlanta Daily World was founded by my family. It was the first black daily in America.

My family -- I would like to think -- pioneered to bring about a political awareness which would serve to protect the interest of the minority community.

As a small boy I can remember watching the style of the paper change.

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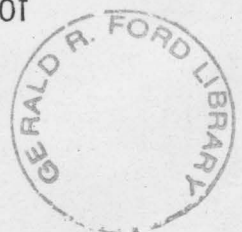
needed money to buy food; was the crime committed because he had been promised by politicians in Washington, a better life -- but for some reason that better life never materialized?

By the 1940's there were about one-hundred and forty-four black publications. Today there are some one-hundred and seventy-eight dailys, semi-weeklys or weeklys published in America. These publications are serving the needs of twenty-two million blacks. They are bringing the word to the community.

We have looked briefly at the history of the Black press. A history which has given the Blacks dignity and respect and the will to fight for first-class citizenship and opportunities taken for granted by other Americans.

We know where we have been -- but one question we may want to ask ourselves is where are we today? What about the future?

In terms of today, I have been reading with great interest the many news stories resulting from the six-day gathering of professional black newsmen at Howard University.



The reports emanating from these meetings indicate that the majority press is biased, minority hiring is at a minimum and we need to bring more blacks into the white communications apparatus.

I would agree to this, to the extent that we now have less than five percent across the board minority involvement in the majority press. However, I disagree to the extent that encouraging more black newsmen to enter the majority press may well destroy the purpose of the black press as we know it today.

It occurs to me that for the last decade we as a people have encouraged our brothers and sisters to take pride in themselves; to be proud of their heritage; to climb over the walls of degradation and walk with self-respect hand in hand with all Americans.

We of the black press have been the instigators -- we have been the leaders of that march to self-respect, and we must never drop by the wayside -- for once we stop -- it will be damn difficult to get up again.



Perhaps the better solution is not to demand that more blacks be hired by the white press, but to demand better educational facilities to educate our people in the field of communications. Once educated, we should encourage him to enter the black communications field and improve our links with the community, both black and white.

We talk a great deal today about the need for identity -- well believe me if the function of the black press is allowed to die a slow death -- the black man will never find his true identity.

If young black students of communications are encouraged only to gain an education in order to infiltrate the majority press then surely our people will never be heard from again.

It was not the majority press that pioneered for freedom, it was not the majority press that pioneered for recognition of equal civil rights; it is the black press which incessantly focuses attention on the need to eradicate hunger and poverty; and it is the black



press, occasionally supported by the majority press, which rages when the educational needs of our people are pitifully reduced to chalk dust.

The black press must continue to prove itself the viable link to the community.

We are entering a political year. The role the black press plays in the next nine months will be more important than ever.

I noted with alarm, several weeks ago a Gallup poll which showed that blacks consider themselves Democrats by a margin of 72 percent to 9 percent.

This country was built on the two-party system. Yet, for the Blacks, the figures seem to indicate that we are made up of only one party.

Ladies and gentlemen, you have a big job ahead of you.

When I look at the figures -- and you should be looking at them also -- and informing the community -- I can't help but



find myself thinking the Democrats don't need to worry about the Black vote. With 72 percent of the Blacks claiming Democrat party affiliation -- why should they.

On the other hand the Republicans, far too often, feel that they shouldn't waste their time developing programs for the Blacks -- because no matter what they do they won't get the vote.

I have travelled a great deal around this country and I am absolutely amazed at how many blacks are convinced that the Democrats do everything for them.

I am here to tell you, that this is a falacy which must be buried once and for all -- and the black press must do it.

The Democrats have certainly aided in advancing the cause of the Blacks -- I would not for one minute imply otherwise.

But, to be totally realistic about the overall political picture we better start taking a look at what this Administration has been doing.



The fact is, that the record for the last three and a half years has been rather remarkable when you consider that Richard Nixon didn't owe his election victory in 1968 to the Black vote.

In 1968 the President said, "For too long, white America has sought to buy off the Negro -- and to buy off its own sense of guilt -- with ever more programs of welfare, or public housing, of payments to the poor, but not for anything except for keeping out of sight: payments that perpetuated poverty and that kept the endless, dismal cycle of dependency spinning from generation to generation."

Our task -- our challenge -- is to break this cycle of dependency ... the way to do it is not with more of the same. ..."

And he has not given us more of the same. Let us look for a moment at just a few accomplishments.

In 1969, \$75 million was budgeted for civil rights enforcement activity compared to 1973's recommendations for \$602.1 million --



an eight-fold increase over a five-year period. Also, in 1973 the total Federal civil rights budget will almost triple the 1969 expenditures -- \$0.9 billion to \$2.6 billion.

The Justice Department has substantially increased its staff of attorneys, to enforce Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, from 93 in Fiscal Year 1969 to 158 in Fiscal Year 1972; in 1973 funds will be increased by 35 percent. The number of compliance reviews performed under this program are expected to increase 52,000 in 1973 compared to 12,300 in 1969.

The 1973 budget provides \$69 million for legal services compared to \$36 million in 1968.

Minority business assistance increased from \$200 million in 1969 to \$360.3 million in 1971. In 1973 outlays will amount to \$505.8 million.

In Fiscal Year 1968, the Small Business Administration reserved 8 federal government contracts worth \$10.4 million for minority businesses. In Fiscal Year 1971, SBA reserved 751 contracts worth over \$60 million for minority businesses.



In 1969, 500,000 minority children in the South were in desegregated schools. In 1971 that figure rose to over 3 million.

These are some of the facts -- and the black press must encourage the community to look at both sides. It is only in this way that we are going to achieve the political leverage -- to force both major parties to go after our vote. It is only in this way that we are going to be assured that our vote counts for something.

Last weekend in Gary, Indiana -- political strategy for the 1972 election was mapped. A strategy involving a united black front; a strategy which says we are through giving the Democrats all of our votes -- if they want them they are going to have to earn them. Further, it is a strategy which says to the Republicans -- the vote is your providing you are willing to seek our vote -- to include us as you do the other segments of the population in this country.

Yes, a united black front which will assume a posture of independence -- not just a commitment to one candidate and one party.



I think President Nixon has shown he is interested in our vote. I think he has shown it by deeds -- not inflated rhetoric and it is time that the black community recognizes this.

Several days ago Representative William Clay, one of my own brothers, accused President Nixon of being a "racist President." He went on to say he thought the President was "making a mistake, surrounding himself with the kind of colored people he has...."

I consider his charges cheap, and underhanded. They smack of partisan politics, they smack of demagoguery at its worst, and further they serve no useful purpose.

Congressman Clay has chosen to hit below-the-belt. He has used the auspices of his office as an elected official of this country to further his own political ambitions. But, even worse than that -- he has done it at the expense and welfare of our own people.

Further, I would suggest that Congressman Clay stop harping about the President and his staff. Instead, Clay might explain to



our people why his own party leadership -- in the Senate and in the House -- has flatly refused to meet with the Black Caucus. I might add that President Nixon has met with them and given an item by item response.

I should also like to point out that as members of the House of Representatives, the Black Caucus could have -- and still can -- put their entire list of proposals in the form of legislation and submit them to the Democrat controlled Congress for passage:

This is not 1865 -- this is 1972. And if we are to survive as a people we must approach our problems with clear, cool, calculated reasoning.

You ladies and gentlemen have the vehicle by which we can achieve the solutions to the problems.

You can bring to the community the facts, you can create an atmosphere of questioning, of debating, of criticism and plaudit.

The majority press cannot do this -- but the black press can.



That black press is the voice of our communities -- the majority press is merely an echo.

Earlier in my address I asked where would we go in the future? I don't think it necessary to speculate on the future -- for what you do here today -- the present -- will determine the future. Not only the future of the black press -- but the future of our people.

VSE

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Emory Jackson
3rd Sunday in April
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Get back to Emory
with answer

Moses Newton
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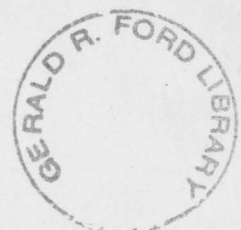
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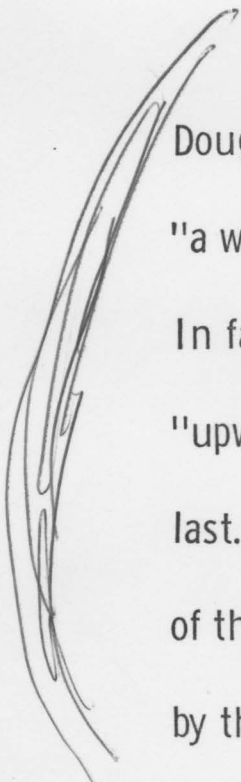
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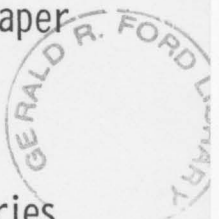
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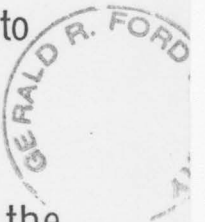
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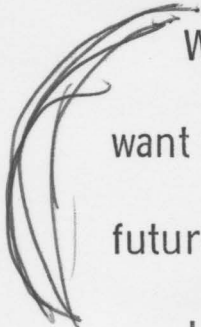
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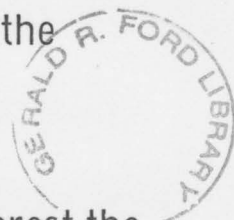
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