

1 A CONFERENCE ON RACE AND THE PRESS

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Washington, D. C.

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June 28, 2001

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THE JOAN SHORENSTEIN CENTER

16

ON THE PRESS, POLITICS AND PUBLIC POLICY

17

JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

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HARVARD UNIVERSITY

19

79 JOHN F. KENNEDY STREET

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CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

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P R O C E E D I N G S

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(9:05 a. m.)

Race and Press Transcript

3 MR. SHORENSTEIN: Good morning. I'm Walter  
4 Shorenstein. The sponsor of the Joan Shorenstein Center  
5 on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at the Kennedy  
6 School. Got that all out.

7 But I want to introduce my daughter, Carol; my  
8 grandson, Wally; and granddaughter, Gracie. Delighted  
9 that they could be here with us.

10 It's a real thrill to be able to sponsor  
11 programs of this nature. When the Shorenstein Center was  
12 established 15 years ago, little did we think that it  
13 would emanate to the position that it has attained and  
14 we're delighted that Marvin Kalb has done such a great job  
15 at the center. And we now have Alex Jones who will follow  
16 Marvin's footsteps and do a great job for us. So, Alex.

17 MR. JONES: Thank you and good morning. Very  
18 glad to have you with us. On behalf of the Joan  
19 Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public  
20 Policy of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at  
21 Harvard University, welcome. That is a mouthful I  
22 understand.

23 Today we're going to be taking a sharp look, a  
24 sharply focused look at the issue of the race in media.  
25 That's a big topic as you know. Before I get to that

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1 though, I want to tell you a little bit about the Joan  
2 Shorenstein Center. Joan Shorenstein was Walter  
3 Shorenstein's daughter. She was a committed first rate  
4 journalist, a producer at CBS of the CBS Evening News with  
5 Dan Rather and with Face the Nation. She died far too

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6 young of breast cancer and in 1986, Walter Shorenstein  
7 endowed the Shorenstein Center in her honor. Since that  
8 time, Walter has been the Center's chief benefactor, main  
9 squeaky wheel, and the man who absolutely is committed to  
10 this enterprise and I would like to ask you if you would  
11 to join me in honoring him because he is really the one  
12 responsible for us being here today.

13 I also particularly want to say a welcome to  
14 Carol and Wally and Gracie. We're very glad you all are  
15 here with us.

16 So what exactly is the Joan Shorenstein Center  
17 on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at the Kennedy  
18 School at Harvard? Well, you know what Harvard is. The  
19 Kennedy School you may not understand quite so well. The  
20 Kennedy School is not just a graduate school at Harvard  
21 dealing with government. It is a place that has both an  
22 academic, a rigorously academic side and a side that is  
23 intended to be engaged with the real world. It's supposed  
24 to be both of those things. That's very unusual. That's  
25 very unusual in an academic world. That real world

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1 dimension.

2 The Shorenstein Center is like that. Real world  
3 and academic but focused on the media itself, which is a  
4 very, very big topic. Our job is to illuminate how the  
5 media affects politics and public policy. And we're here  
6 today to try to do something that is also our mandate  
7 which is to improve the way the media affect politics and  
8 public policy.

9 Our idea today was to bring together people who

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10 are very knowledgeable and dig into this enormously  
11 important issue of race and the media. We wanted to make  
12 this gathering focused, manageably short, not  
13 encyclopedic, insightful. Ultimately useful. We're going  
14 to distill this morning's ideas into a document that we  
15 will distribute widely which will also be focused, not  
16 encyclopedic, and we hope very insightful and useful. So  
17 let's begin.

18           Our first plunge into the issue of race in the  
19 media will be led by Tom Patterson, my colleague at  
20 Harvard at the Shorenstein Center and the Bradley  
21 Professor of Government and the Press. Tom is the author  
22 of a number of books including *Out of Order*. His  
23 specialty is the impact of the media on politics and many  
24 of you may have followed the research project that he and  
25 Marvin Kalb ran this past year through the Shorenstein

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1 Center called the Vanishing Voter Project which really  
2 tracked voter attitudes throughout the 2000 campaign.  
3 Tom's subject race in the media, the local story. Tom  
4 Patterson.

5           MR. PATTERSON: Alex, thank you. Good morning.  
6 We're going to do the local side of the race and press  
7 story. It's a story that includes the misrepresentation  
8 of minorities through if it bleeds, it needs reporting.  
9 And it's a much larger story than that as you'll see.

10           The local story is obviously a large part of the  
11 total story. The community is where the hopes and the  
12 fears of America's many faces come together and we'll talk

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13 also about that this morning.

14           Hopefully, we'll have a forward tilt to the  
15 panel. To know where we're going to go next, we need to  
16 know where we are and where we've been but I do hope at  
17 the conclusion of the hour that we'll have some ideas to  
18 take away from here.

19           I'll also, when this panel is over, you can look  
20 back and say that we've used the time efficiently and  
21 equitably and I've imposed and this is the only  
22 restriction on their opening remarks, I've imposed a five  
23 minute limitation on the panelists. So let me introduce  
24 the panelists. We have -- it's a relatively short period  
25 for this panel and we can jump right in. I'll introduce

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1 all of them and then we'll start without reintroductions  
2 as we move through the panel. And we'll try to get to the  
3 audience with at least 15 minutes left so that you can be  
4 part of the participation or discussion as well.

5           On my far left is Robert Entman. Bob is  
6 Professor and Chair of the Communication Department at  
7 North Carolina State. He was with us three years ago at  
8 the Shorenstein Center as the Visiting Lombard Professor.  
9 He was senior author of Mass Media and Reconciliation  
10 which is a report that was written for President Clinton's  
11 race initiative. Author of several books, most recently  
12 the award winning The Black Image in the White Mind, Media  
13 and Race in America.

14           Next to Bob is Paul Tash who's the Editor and  
15 President of one of the nation's best newspapers, the St.  
16 Petersburg Times. He came up through the ranks of the

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17 Times, joining it in 1978 after studies abroad as a  
18 Marshall Scholar.

19 Next to me is Gerald Boyd, Deputy Managing  
20 Editor of news at the New York Times, a 17-year veteran at  
21 the Times. A variety of positions including in this town  
22 as a White House correspondent. Before joining the Times,  
23 he was for ten years at his hometown newspaper, the  
24 St. Louis Post Dispatch.

25 On my right, Paula Madison, President and

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1 General Manager of NBC4, a Los Angeles television station.  
2 A 25 year veteran of print and television journalism. She  
3 was at WNBC in New York prior to heading up NBC4. She led  
4 both stations to the top of the ratings, an extraordinary  
5 accomplishment in what arguably are the two most  
6 competitive media markets in the country.

7 And then on my far right and concluding the  
8 panel is Robert Blendon. Bob is a colleague. He's a  
9 Professor of health policy and political analysis at both  
10 the Kennedy School and the Harvard School of Public  
11 Health. He co-directs with the Henry J. Kaiser Foundation  
12 a special series that many of you are familiar with,  
13 Public Opinion and Social Issues for National Public Radio  
14 and the Washington Post.

15 So We're going to jump right into this question  
16 of race in the press, the local story, starting with  
17 Robert Entman. Bob.

18 MR. ENTMAN: Thank you. I want to talk about  
19 context. If I said Koby will be as good as Michael, I

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20 just came from Italy, if I said that in Italy I think only  
21 a small number of people would know what I was talking  
22 about. I suspect in this audience the majority think they  
23 know what I'm talking about but that's because we share a  
24 context and you know when I use those two words, you know  
25 who those two first names probably refer to. It's also

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1 possible that I'm not talking about Koby Bryant and  
2 Michael Jordan but I'm talking about two other people and  
3 maybe I'm talking about how well they'll behave for the  
4 babysitter. That's a very homely example of the  
5 importance of context for understanding how heavily we  
6 rely upon context for inferring the truth of a description  
7 of any situation and for understanding what that situation  
8 means.

9 I would argue that local news, both television  
10 and in many respects newspapers as well, do a lot of  
11 uncontextualized reporting as if they were giving you  
12 names with no context and you have very little to go on to  
13 understand the larger meaning. If you look for example at  
14 crime reporting which is the staple of local television  
15 news, not quite as much so in the newspaper, but you find  
16 many daily uncontextualized reports of crime involving,  
17 especially black and Latino defendants, newspaper visuals,  
18 little tiny pictures of heads that are often minority  
19 members without context.

20 Without context, false inferences are likely.  
21 Failing to contextualize means implanting and reinforcing  
22 derogatory views of non-whites among whites and it means  
23 supporting false ideas, inaccurate understanding. So in

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24 other words, failing to contextualize violates the central  
25 goals of journalism which are balance and accuracy.

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1 Now journalists and those of us who study this  
2 area know there are many forces working against the  
3 provision of context. There is ratings competition, there  
4 is the time pressure, there is space limitation, there's  
5 the declining audience in serious news, this great fear of  
6 losing the audience if you provide too much information.  
7 All of this is well-known. Less acknowledged I think is  
8 journalists own deficit of understanding how they are  
9 violating objectivity. They are violating the central  
10 professional norms that they claim to adhere to when they  
11 enact the process, the standard operating procedures of  
12 the newsroom in combination with those forces like limited  
13 time and so forth.

14 Also less widely recognized I think is the  
15 irresponsibility and cynicism of many political leaders  
16 who have in the main failed to discuss race and ethnic  
17 relations honestly in the past few decades which means  
18 journalists have few sources to turn to for this context.  
19 Journalists have trouble providing it on their own. There  
20 aren't many good sources to provide it.

21 So what do we do? I would suggest that  
22 journalists understand that the white audience consumes  
23 news with a high degree of sensitivity to racial and  
24 ethnic identity. Journalists can't deny, they can't just  
25 say, oh well, you know, the person happens to be black,



1 happens to be Latino. We know from social science  
2 research that Americans are very sensitive to the ethnic  
3 identity of people in the news and white America also  
4 consumes the news with a high degree of anxiety and  
5 ignorance about non-whites. Therefore, it's easy for the  
6 news to reinforce prejudices both by what it reports and  
7 what it leaves out.

8           Given that context, what should journalists do?  
9 One thing I would suggest is choosing visual images and  
10 sources deliberately to counter this ignorance, to counter  
11 stereotypes, which therefore helps to uphold the standard  
12 tenets of journalism. Balance and accuracy. It helps to  
13 correct for the deficits that are in the culture. Choose  
14 black scientists deliberately when you're reporting a  
15 science story. Choose Latino economists. Show white  
16 welfare recipients.

17           Another possibility, use quotation marks, I  
18 always feel like Austin Powers when I do this, around the  
19 word race. The very notion of race is thoroughly  
20 discredited in social scientific and scientific circles.  
21 It's a bogus concept left over from the 19th Century. If  
22 local TV news has to show crime, how about one long story  
23 each day that actually tells the full or at least a good  
24 part of the whole story of the life of the defendant and  
25 the victim. That actually makes it into I think a much

1 more interesting and compelling story for the audience

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2 than five or six brief snippets about Michael and Koby or  
3 whoever it is did some crime and we've seen that yesterday  
4 and we're going to see it tomorrow. So it seems to me  
5 there are ways to provide context and perhaps still  
6 maintain ratings and audience interest.

7 Perhaps the core theme of some of those kinds of  
8 stories would be the discrimination that shapes the lives  
9 of so many members of minorities, particularly  
10 African-Americans, pervasive discrimination. It's the key  
11 contextual point. It is the key source of racial  
12 animosity among whites is the ignorance of pervasive  
13 discrimination. The whole coverage for example of  
14 affirmative action suffered egregiously and suffers to  
15 this day from a lack of understanding of the context of  
16 discrimination. There is solid evidence that preferential  
17 admissions for upper middle class white people far exceeds  
18 preferential admissions for African-Americans or Latinos  
19 in college. That's a contextual fact that most Americans  
20 don't know and that might be extraordinarily helpful in  
21 healing the racial breach.

22 So, absent a contextual understanding of the  
23 individual stories that parade by the audience, I believe  
24 racial and ethnic tensions will continue. All the costs  
25 that they entail not just for members of non-white groups

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1 but for the white group as well, all of those costs will  
2 continue. So I do believe the media have both an  
3 opportunity and a responsibility acknowledging the many  
4 limitations and pressures they face.

5 MR. PATTERSON: Bob, thank you. Paul.

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6 MR. TASH: I want to spend a little time talking  
7 about the connections between the people covering the news  
8 and the kinds of stories that they cover.

9 Ten days ago on Father's Day, we published a  
10 story about a young woman of Indian ancestry who had  
11 defied her father's wishes and married a white American  
12 man. Dad came around and he paid the bill for five days  
13 of wedding ceremony but it was quite a moving story. And  
14 it was written by a young woman, herself of Indian  
15 ancestry, who also had gone against her own father's  
16 wishes that she go into the family business and instead  
17 she became a newspaper reporter.

18 A little while before that, we published a story  
19 about a housing project in Tampa that is now dominated by  
20 immigrants from southeast Asia who have imported their own  
21 customs and they are even growing their own Vietnamese  
22 vegetables. That story was written by a young woman who  
23 when she was two years old escaped with her family on the  
24 last ship to leave Saigon when South Viet Nam fell to the  
25 Communists.

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1 So if you're looking for evidence of the  
2 connection between the people who are covering the news  
3 and the kinds of stories they tell, these two examples  
4 strike me as pretty compelling. And it's that connection  
5 between life experience and world view that makes the  
6 drive for greater diversity in America's newsrooms so  
7 important and what makes the gap between goals and results  
8 so vexing.

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9                   Of course, the categories of ethnic background  
10 are measured principally because they are so obvious. At  
11 best, they are only the rough surrogates for some presumed  
12 collection of common experience shared by the members of  
13 an apparently similar group. It's as easy as it is  
14 dangerous to let race be the filter through which we see  
15 events and issues.

16                   One of my favorite columnists is Bill Raspberry  
17 of the Washington Post who had a great column last week in  
18 particular. Myrtle Beach, South Carolina was the site of  
19 two successive rallies by motorcycle enthusiasts. One  
20 group was mostly white. The second group was  
21 predominantly black. "The white bikers," Raspberry  
22 writes, "left town with their bills paid, their motel  
23 rooms untrashed, and the restaurateur is grateful." "The  
24 black bikers," not to put too fine a point on it,  
25 "didn't." But Raspberry goes on to say that the most

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1 obvious characteristic may not be the most important one.  
2 The white bikers were older, in their mid-50's and up and  
3 more affluent. Their bikes were in the \$20,000 range.  
4 The black bikers were younger, 35 and down, and rode  
5 cheaper bikes with more exuberance. Raspberry quotes an  
6 observer, "Yes, these two groups of bikers are as  
7 different as night and day but when considered as  
8 individuals, the differences are attributable to age,  
9 income and attitude, not just the race."

10                   Well, if it's a mistake to rely excessively on  
11 race as a way to frame coverage of people and events, it's  
12 also risky to rely only on the race of the journalist

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13 doing that coverage as a measure of diversity. Those two  
14 young reporters I mentioned at the outset of my remarks,  
15 helped broaden the coverage of the St. Petersburg Times  
16 with stories that might otherwise have been beyond our  
17 scope. But those two young women cannot represent the  
18 full range of experience and perspective among people who  
19 happen just to look like them. They help our newspaper  
20 achieve a measure of diversity that is absolutely  
21 necessary and welcomed but not by itself sufficient.

22           So how can newsrooms get past the threshold of  
23 demographic diversity within their own ranks to a more  
24 complete and rounded reflection of the communities they  
25 cover? The problem is difficult and I wish I had better

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1 answers. Every journalist we hire, whatever his or her  
2 demographic characteristics and background, has met a  
3 fairly common standard of education, enjoys a certain  
4 level of economic success and shares some set of  
5 professional values that help make them more like other  
6 journalists, whatever their personal background and can  
7 diminish their connection to the people they cover.

8           But one answer to the riddle of real diversity  
9 does seem clear to me anyway and that's to have enough  
10 minority journalists within a newspaper or a news  
11 organization so that the full range of their own  
12 experiences, including their differences can reveal  
13 themselves.

14           I'll close with a story from my own newsroom  
15 that gives me some encouragement. I overheard an argument

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16 between two editors about a story we had published. A  
17 passer-by had rescued someone from great peril and was  
18 credited by authorities as a hero. But down in the jump  
19 of our story, we noted that the hero had a criminal record  
20 and had done time in state prison. The editors were  
21 arguing whether that was a gratuitous shot at someone who  
22 had risked his own life to save another or whether it  
23 reflected appropriately that even someone who had been  
24 branded a felon was capable of great good deeds.

25 The positions themselves were well stated and

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1 forcefully stated but the argument itself was unremarkable  
2 except in this one respect. All the people involved, the  
3 subject of the story, the reporter who wrote it, and both  
4 editors, were black. And for a moment, I thought I had a  
5 glimpse of what real diversity might look like.

6 MR. PATTERSON: Paul, thank you. Gerald.

7 MR. BOYD: Good morning. I'm always glad when I  
8 do panels like this and go before sister Madison over  
9 there because if you really want to know what's going on  
10 in local TV news, there's no one better or more  
11 knowledgeable. So you should listen to her and take down  
12 what she says and hopefully I can entertain you a little  
13 but you don't have to remember.

14 I can't tell you how great it is to be here even  
15 though any journalist I know who's worth his salt is a  
16 night person, not a 9:00 a.m. person. And even though  
17 this must be the two millionth panel discussion on race  
18 and the press and probably the one millionth that I've  
19 personally participated in, it's still a joy to be here.

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20           The issue of how local TV news covers race and  
21 all of its manifestations remains as important today as it  
22 has been at any one point in our history. Perhaps more so  
23 because we all know I think that society is changing. Now  
24 I won't waste time since we're sort of limited detailing  
25 the profound demographic and economic changes that are

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1 transforming America and I won't sort of rehash the  
2 widening gap of class that takes on even more significance  
3 today as increasing numbers of African-Americans  
4 especially move into the middle class leaving their  
5 brothers and sisters behind. But if ever journalism had a  
6 mission and that mission being to help society understand  
7 itself or navigate these waters, it's now the time.

8           So, you know, I remember when I started in the  
9 business of, in St. Louis, the Post Dispatch referred to  
10 people who appeared in its news, identified in its news  
11 columns, as Mr. with two noticeable exceptions. Felons  
12 were not identified as Mr. and blacks were not identified  
13 as Mr. I remember when I started in the business, black  
14 on black crime was not something that routinely appeared  
15 in the paper and it didn't appear, certainly didn't appear  
16 on page one. Black on white crime always did. So it's  
17 not just TV that's at issue here. It's certainly the  
18 media at large.

19           But even so, I think we should start this by  
20 resolving, having it resolved, that local journalists and  
21 TV journalists in particular are not bloodthirsty ratings  
22 driven twits who live to suck the life out of the crime

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23 story of the day. I think we should all agree on that.  
24 They're not. They're good people, believe me. So why  
25 does this happen? Why do we have this drumbeat of crime

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1 stories out there every day?

2 I think we can't lose sight of journalism as we  
3 know it and journalism as we know it is such that crime is  
4 and always has been news. It's at least as interesting  
5 and stimulating as the local, your local zoning board  
6 dispute, or the martial woes of the local mayor, even if  
7 heat local mayor is brother Giuliani. The quick and dirty  
8 recounting of crime stories delivers a bang for the buck  
9 and people have come to want it and expect it.

10 And let's also remember that these local TV  
11 stations or local TV markets we talked about are not owned  
12 by that little lady next door who has a stake in the  
13 community who goes to church every Sunday. They're owned  
14 by a huge conglomerate whose leaders have little or no  
15 stake in the community and who really don't care. So if  
16 that's the reality we face, how do we begin to fix it? I  
17 have to believe that the smarter people in our industry  
18 realize a fundamental truth that unless we are relevant to  
19 readers and viewers and unless we give them the  
20 information that undresses the complexity of today, they  
21 will eventually tune out and turn off. Now maybe I'm  
22 naive although I don't think people at the New York Times  
23 or people who know me would call me naive.

24 I think that's the case. I have to believe that  
25 in the end, good roots out bad. That my news industry



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1 will wake up and understand that we can't begin to be  
2 relevant and I keep using that word because I think it is  
3 critical to those we serve unless we provide the balance  
4 and context they need to understand the world of today. I  
5 have to believe that we know some truths. That presenting  
6 one dimensional coverage of blacks and other people of  
7 color is wrong. Just that simple. It's wrong. It's  
8 wrong morally and it's wrong ethically. And in the long  
9 run, I believe, we understand that this makes us less than  
10 relevant.

11 I have to believe that we know that our world  
12 today is a world that is far too complicated to be simple  
13 for very long journalistically. So why if indeed we kind  
14 of know these things, why doesn't it take place? I think  
15 there are some dirty little secrets. Increasingly,  
16 journalism and what we call journalism is -- involves an  
17 issue of class. The dirty little secret is the moment any  
18 journalist gets his first paycheck, he begins an upward  
19 journey, up a ladder, in which he leaves behind a lot of  
20 people and that is especially true of people of color.  
21 And so the notion that a journalist of color understands  
22 what's happening in inner cities across this country is a  
23 myth. You know, I live on the east side of Manhattan. I  
24 go to Harlem and (indiscernible) to get my hair cut but  
25 that's not my world. And I have to recognize that and I

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1 have to own up to it.

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2           The other little secret which someone touched on  
3 is, earlier, is that we don't all agree. I had the luxury  
4 of growing up in a time when it was very popular to be  
5 black. A few of you in this room know what that means but  
6 most of you don't. Where you would go out to a lunch or a  
7 dinner with a bunch of white people and you would sit  
8 around and you would talk about how all black people felt.  
9 All black people love basketball and everybody would say,  
10 "Wow." Or all black people eat fried chicken and people  
11 would say, "Wow, I didn't know that. How interesting."  
12 Well, people now know or at least they think they know and  
13 blacks and people of color disagree.

14           Witness what happened in Los Angeles when we  
15 were supposed to have the Los Angeles Mayor's Race when we  
16 were supposed to have this grand coalition of blacks and  
17 Latinos that was going to elect the first black or first  
18 Latino mayor. It didn't happen. It didn't come together.  
19 People disagreed. And so I think we've got to own up to  
20 some of these truths as we go forward and really try to  
21 deal with this issue in an honest way.

22           The last point I want to make is increasingly  
23 when you talk about these kinds of issues, you're talking  
24 about an issue of honesty. You're talking about an  
25 ability of people whether they're whites, blacks or other

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1 people of color to be honest about their feelings. And  
2 time and time again, that doesn't happen. Whites don't  
3 want to say how they really feel about blacks and people  
4 of color because they don't want to be perceived as

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5 racists. Blacks don't want to say how they really feel  
6 about whites because they're tired of it and they feel  
7 they've been there, they've said it, and nothing changes.  
8 And unless we find a way as journalists and as a society  
9 in general to really talk about these kinds of issues,  
10 whether they're in the newsroom or outside of the  
11 newsroom, We're not going to go forward.

12 Last point, New York Times did a 15 part series  
13 on "How Race is Lived in America" that won a Pulitzer  
14 prize this year and it started after some of us, one of  
15 us, after I witnessed what happened in our newsroom when  
16 the O. J. Simpson verdict, remember O. J. Simpson, came  
17 down. And what happened was whites looked at the TV  
18 screen and blacks looked at the TV screens and you could  
19 see black reporters and editors kind of smiling like, "He  
20 got off." And you could see whites shaking their heads  
21 saying, "What the hell is happening out there?" And no  
22 one talked about it. No one talked about it. The minute  
23 the verdict came down, people went back to their jobs, we  
24 put out the next day's paper, no one talked about it. And  
25 I think that's a statement of honesty, a lack of honesty

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1 that we need to find a way to address.

2 MR. PATTERSON: Gerald, thank you. Paula.

3 MS. MADISON: First of all, I'd like to thank  
4 Gerald who obviously loves me.

5 MR. BOYD: I do. I do.

6 MS. MADISON: Secondly, I'd like to correct one  
7 thing. At WNBC we did become number one in all newscasts.  
8 I've only been in Los Angeles for seven months and we're

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9 number one in three newscasts but I'm on my way.

10 The issue of coverage for me is really important  
11 and as for all of us but the concept of what news is in  
12 television newsrooms is where I'd like to get to. And  
13 after, I don't know, maybe 25 years now of working in  
14 television newsrooms and I spent some time in there eight  
15 years, I don't remember quite how long, as a print  
16 reporter and editor, what I've concluded is that it isn't  
17 a dastardly plot and it isn't that, you know, we've  
18 decided that we're going to make black people look really  
19 bad on the air. It's laziness and it's such a degree of  
20 laziness and lack of connection with the communities that  
21 we cover that we do what I call we pay homage to the  
22 scanner gods.

23 The easiest, stupidest news to cover is the news  
24 that comes across the scanner. There's a fire at 4th and  
25 Main. Police are moving to a location where XYZ is

23

1 happening and we will break all those stories and we run  
2 and that is our definition of news.

3 If you don't have a connection to the community  
4 and if you, community in general, and if you don't have  
5 any historical perspective and you have no real context as  
6 a journalist in that community where you're working, the  
7 easiest thing to do is make beat checks. And in our  
8 world, beat checks translate to calling the cop shops and  
9 what do you get, what crime, when you call the cop shop?  
10 When you call the desk in a police station and you say,  
11 "hey, anything happen overnight?" You get crime, you get

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12 rape, you get crime, you get murder, you get, you know,  
13 you call the fire department EMS, you'll hear about heart  
14 attacks and fires and we have created a real market for  
15 reporting this all of which I think is important.

16 But the question has to be asked, you know, when  
17 you're establishing your priorities, when you're  
18 establishing what do you want to put on the air in the 22  
19 minutes out of a half hour that accounts for news, is that  
20 really what you want to tell the people? And my position  
21 is no, not really. Only when it breaks through.

22 I just moved to Los Angeles seven months ago  
23 and, you know, with some, you know, trepidation but  
24 determination, I got there and said okay, I am moving to  
25 the home of the helicopter chases. I'm moving to the

24

1 market where suspend all newscasts, all news content, cut  
2 into programming, so that we can show you police chasing a  
3 driver down the highway. And most times it ends with the  
4 driver getting out of the car, doing this, laying down in  
5 the street and being handcuffed. That's usually how it  
6 ends. On the occasions that it doesn't end that way, I  
7 believe that's when it's a news story.

8 But until or unless something takes it over the  
9 top, you know, in Texas for example there are car chases  
10 and the police in Texas, one of their routines is we'll  
11 just shoot the tires out of the car. That's so typical in  
12 Texas, that doesn't make it on the air all the time.

13 In Los Angeles, if the police were going to  
14 shoot the tires out of the car, now you see that's when  
15 I'd say put it on the air. But until then, it becomes

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16 unfortunately a routine occurrence in a highly congested  
17 populated area where people are frustrated and are  
18 doing -- some people are doing bad things. But when does  
19 it get to the point where I say I'm not going to tell you  
20 about immigration issues. I'm not going to tell you about  
21 education issues. I won't cover politics or governmental  
22 affairs. I won't talk about issues affecting seniors, the  
23 elderly, because I want to show you in my allotted news  
24 time this guy driving down the highway and cops chasing  
25 him.

25

1 I do believe that there is a place on television  
2 for guys driving down the highway and cops chasing them.  
3 But Fox has a program sometimes and they call it, you  
4 know, America's Greatest Car Chases or Cop Chases or  
5 something like that. You know, there is a place for  
6 slugging it out. That's boxing. There's a place for  
7 forgive me, T&A. That's the Playboy channel. But I don't  
8 know that just because this event happens that that means  
9 that I must therefore put it on the news.

10 So try this one. It's 2:00 in the afternoon and  
11 there's a three alarm fire. Might break into coverage. I  
12 don't know. It depends upon your market and your news  
13 director. At 4:55, three alarm fire, you can pretty much  
14 bet that's going to lead the newscast. Why? Great  
15 picture. Somewhere in the world of producing, somebody  
16 has defined that action means oh, my God, suspend all  
17 other coverage and put it on the air and I disagree with  
18 that.



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23 decision as to who they were going to vote for. But those  
24 of us who, and I didn't care who they voted for, I just  
25 wanted to know that they voted and that their decision was

27

1 impacted by what we'd put on the air.

2 Now those of us who were covering news regularly  
3 out there, we knew that there was no coalition between  
4 African-Americans and Latinos. There's been a historic  
5 division in Los Angeles between them. So were we  
6 surprised that Viaragosa (phonetic) was not elected?  
7 Absolutely. I was absolutely surprised because I thought  
8 more Latinos would go to the polls and they didn't.

9 But we knew there was a coalition between an  
10 overwhelming majority of African-Americans and whites in  
11 Los Angeles and that's how Hahn got elected. But you see,  
12 the -- speaking to Gerald's point, there is the  
13 expectation that people of color will automatically band  
14 together. There's the expectation that people of color  
15 are automatically going to be the ones who will populate  
16 the prisons. That one's true because of a number of  
17 social issues that we could spend 15 years discussing.

18 But the fact is that if you're connected to your  
19 community, you will in fact report the crimes that will  
20 make a difference in your community. If what you're  
21 trying to do is impact quality of life decisions --  
22 transportation in Los Angeles is huge. So was health.  
23 The percentages of young people who have asthma. These  
24 are important issues that transcend economic level, race  
25 and gender. And I am a believer in if as journalists, we



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1 are smart enough to go out into our communities which I do  
2 with 15 other station and news executives. Every six  
3 weeks we go to a different community and invite 50 to 60  
4 leaders of the community, who have constituents but  
5 they're not necessarily elected leaders, and we listen to  
6 them tell us what are the issues that are most important  
7 to your community. We will put those on the air. That's  
8 what we did in New York and slowly but surely we became  
9 number one in every newscast and in every day part. That  
10 was because when there was a question about New York, we  
11 knew our market. There's a question about Los Angeles, I  
12 am still learning. It's a fast learning curve but my goal  
13 is, my hope, my belief, no my prayer is that should we  
14 become successful at this, that other news operations will  
15 copy us.

16 MR. PATTERSON: Paula, thank you. Bob.

17 MR. BLENDON: Hi, Bob Blendon. I'd like to be  
18 helpful here by drawing from a recent survey we have done  
19 in conjunction with the Washington Post, my colleague,  
20 Rich Warren, is in the audience, on race relations today.  
21 This is the most sensitive issue that you can pull on an  
22 American. And I want to use the data very briefly to make  
23 two points.

24 First is that the perceptions between many  
25 whites and blacks about the state of black experience

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1 today is so widely far apart, it's almost impossible to  
2 find a common ground when you talk about specific  
3 problems. This could be in a crisis in Cincinnati. It  
4 could be for a number of issues that we're writing about  
5 today.

6 The second point I'm going to make is that if  
7 you narrow those perceptions, you make it much easier for  
8 people to actually talk about and solve the problems that  
9 are in front of their communities. So I want to use the  
10 data, this is very briefly, from March and April and what  
11 I want to do is first just briefly summarize black answers  
12 about their experiences today.

13 First, 46 percent say that they have experienced  
14 significant discrimination in the last ten years. 49  
15 percent say they haven't been hired or promoted based on  
16 their race. 37 percent and this is where you are and what  
17 is the news story, are unfairly stopped by the police  
18 based on their race. That was one-half of all  
19 African-American men in the survey. How many whites  
20 answered that question? Four percent.

21 70 percent of the African-Americans said that  
22 they received poor service in restaurants and in stores  
23 because they were black. 51 percent said that their  
24 personal financial lives were in fair or poor shape, that  
25 was twice that of whites.

30

1 We then turned to whites and we said to them,  
2 "Let's just ask you about the other side of your  
3 community. What goes on?" 20 percent of whites said that  
4 African-Americans faced a lot of discrimination today. 42

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5 percent said that African-Americans had the same or better  
6 income than whites. 51 percent said they had the same or  
7 better jobs than whites. 49 percent said that the schools  
8 were as good or as better as white Americans had. And 61  
9 percent said, "Oh, the access to health care for blacks,  
10 as good or better than whites get today."

11 On every one of these issues, the  
12 African-American answer was at the other end of the scale.  
13 These were serious deficiency where they viewed their life  
14 very different.

15 A point too. Does knowing or now in this  
16 different matter, we asked whites about their perception  
17 of the black experience today. If you're white and you  
18 think that they actually face a lot of discrimination, on  
19 every issue that I mentioned, you're in favor of  
20 government and community organizations trying to narrow  
21 the gap here today. If I'm white and I say that there  
22 isn't much discrimination today or blacks have the same  
23 lives as most of us, I am against government moving on  
24 every one of these.

25 I want to close and use one example because it

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1 has nothing to do with government. It has to do with  
2 newsrooms and universities. We ask people what we thought  
3 was an extremely benign question. Would you favor  
4 employers and colleges making an extra effort, extra  
5 effort is all we used, to recruit qualified minorities,  
6 qualified here? One-half of whites said yes; one-half of  
7 whites said no. The whites who said yes believe that

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8 there is discrimination in this country. The whites who  
9 said no said it's not a serious problem. Perceptions  
10 matter.

11 And would close briefly by saying that this is  
12 usually the moment when we say it's all the media's fault.  
13 The problem with the search is life is complex. In our  
14 survey, people perceived that they got their information  
15 about whites and blacks from lots of sources. Not just  
16 the media. So it's a mistake to say that we just look in  
17 the window here. It's all the fault of everybody in the  
18 room. It's not correct.

19 However, you're stuck. There are only three  
20 places that people ever talk about narrowing the  
21 perceptions. Through the media, in colleges and public  
22 schools. And if we can't narrow these perceptual  
23 differences, when there is a crisis on race, the survey of  
24 The Post of which there is a series coming shows that  
25 immediately the white audiences and the black audiences

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1 start looking at any specific issue at a completely  
2 different place about the state of America today.

3 MR. PATTERSON: Bob, thank you. We obviously  
4 violated our efficiency but I would like to go back to the  
5 panel one more time before we go to the audience and  
6 invite each panelist to speak for a minute or so on one of  
7 two issues, whichever they think they can contribute the  
8 most to.

9 One, and it's an item that's come up here and  
10 that's how do we deal with crime reported? As many of you  
11 know, about half the local television newscasts lead with

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12 a crime or a bloody story of some kind. The subject takes  
13 up the largest amount of air time on local television  
14 news. That may be changing. A study by the Committee of  
15 Concerned Journalists indicates some audience fatigue in  
16 our own work. Audience fatigue around that subject and  
17 some changes that are taking place in local news but as  
18 Gerald suggests, you know, crime is always going to be a  
19 pretty large part of the news coverage. The first paid  
20 full time American reporter was not a political reporter,  
21 it was a crime reporter hired by the New York Sun back in  
22 the 1830's. So it's going to be there. And the question  
23 that I have is how can the over representation of blacks  
24 and Latinos in this coverage be reduced or at least  
25 contextualized which was the question that Bob had.

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1 The second question that I would invite the  
2 panelists to address and because of time, address only one  
3 of these two, and here we get I think into a bit of where  
4 Paula was leading us and certainly what Bob's remarks, Bob  
5 Blendon's remarks allude to, how do we cover the minority  
6 community? Not simply how do we react to this crime area  
7 but how can we be proactive in terms of thinking about  
8 this community, bringing it's needs, it's interests, it's  
9 perspectives, to the table in a more -- in a larger and  
10 more affirmative way?

11 So again, maybe starting with Bob and again if  
12 you'd kind of work within a minute, minute and a half  
13 here, so that we do in fact have some time left for the  
14 audience. And then when we get done, we'll go straight to

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15 the audience and if you want to ask a question, then you  
16 can begin to anticipate getting in line. You'll have to  
17 use one of the microphones that's in the aisle. Bob  
18 Entman.

19 MR. ENTMAN: Let me say a little more about the  
20 crime coverage issue. My research showed that Blacks  
21 accused of violent or drug related crimes are twice as  
22 likely to be shown on local television news physically  
23 restrained, either in handcuffs or being grasped by a  
24 police officer, as white defendants accused of the same  
25 kind of crimes.

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1 Now that sends a message over the years of the  
2 steady drip, drip of these images that Blacks are more  
3 dangerous than whites even when they're accused of the  
4 same crime. Now the cause of that is a very complicated  
5 series of forces that act together. One thing is that  
6 police, white dominated police forces, may be more  
7 frightened of black defendants than of whites so that they  
8 may in fact be twice as likely to hold black defendants.  
9 White police forces may be less protective of the privacy  
10 rights of black defendants. Black defendants are less  
11 likely to have costly legal representation which can lobby  
12 or instruct police stations not to show their client for a  
13 perp walk.

14 Now given that kind of knowledge that it really  
15 isn't exactly the media's fault, but that these images are  
16 damaging and they are demonstrably damaging, social  
17 scientists have found that they heighten white antagonism,  
18 what can journalists do? Well, I guess I lobby for an

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19 understanding that showing those images disproportionately  
20 that way is an editorial statement. It has an effect on  
21 race relations and one needs to counter it. One way would  
22 be to stop covering the crime daily as I suggested and  
23 just focus on one individual story each day.

24 But another might be just deliberately to turn  
25 down the perp walks when it's a black defendant. Show

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1 something else. Knowing that this fits into a damaging  
2 pattern. So I think we're all sensitive to the  
3 constraints on journalists.

4 On the other hand, there is a range of choice  
5 there which I think journalists could be more active in  
6 seizing.

7 MR. TASH: I'd like to pick up on Bob Blendon's  
8 point about the gap in perception between white and black  
9 citizens. After the Florida election, you remember that,  
10 we were very interested in the question about how the  
11 results of the election as they were ultimately certified  
12 might affect the perception of black citizens about their  
13 ability to participate in the process and their sense of  
14 detachment from electoral politics as a whole. And so we  
15 did a statewide poll and reported the results showing a  
16 great sense of, as you might guess, of suspicion and  
17 antipathy about the results from the Florida election.

18 And the reaction on our letters to the editor  
19 page was interesting and in some ways disquieting because  
20 white readers, many white readers, excoriated the  
21 newspaper for having asked the question and reported the

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22 answer as a way of stirring up this sense of division.  
23 Why can't you just leave well enough alone? And so while  
24 I'm from the Midwest and therefore constitutionally an  
25 optimist, that optimism is challenged a little bit in the

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1 sense that just because we may know each other better,  
2 doesn't necessarily mean that we're ready to hear what  
3 someone else is thinking.

4 And I think that's one of the challenges for  
5 news organizations is to write about these issues in ways  
6 that do resonate with the larger majority white audience  
7 rather than just have them tune out and turn off as yet  
8 another example of the white liberal media sticking up for  
9 causes and issues that really don't have our own sense of  
10 support.

11 MR. BOYD: Hi, Carole. It's Carole Simpson,  
12 outstanding TV journalist. You know, we have more blacks,  
13 African-Americans, in the middle class than at any point  
14 in this country's history. More blacks or  
15 African-Americans attending college, more  
16 African-Americans owning homes, at any point in this  
17 nation's history.

18 That doesn't come up and we have these kind of  
19 conversations is to talk about or focus on  
20 African-Americans as criminals and all of that. There are  
21 two realities about journalists.

22 One is Paula mentioned how there is a lazy way  
23 of reporting. I wouldn't call it lazy. I wouldn't say  
24 journalists are lazy. At least those journalists who work  
25 for me aren't lazy. But we're human beings. And, you



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1 know, we come in, we come to work, we want to go home, we  
2 got to deal with the kids, we got to deal with going out,  
3 we got to make a wife happy or a husband happy. We're  
4 human beings. And we face a lot of pressures and that is  
5 a reality.

6 Another reality is We're arrogant as hell. We  
7 think we know everything because we get paid for that. So  
8 what you have essentially is two kinds that clash when it  
9 comes to covering something like race. You're covering a  
10 subject that by it's very nature is so (indiscernible) and  
11 so complicated that you can't do it in effect on the  
12 cheap. Whether it's time or whether it's money, resource  
13 wise, you can't do it on the cheap. And yet the tendency  
14 is to do it, get it done, and get out of there and move  
15 on. That is human.

16 And I think what has to be done at some point is  
17 recognition of the reality that we face. There is no such  
18 thing as that community. No matter what surveys show or  
19 polls show, there's no such thing as a monolithic  
20 community when it comes to people of color or it comes to  
21 whites.

22 When the New York Times did a series a few years  
23 ago called "Children of the Shadow" and it was about  
24 inter-city kids and what they were going through and it  
25 started with a profound premise on the part of some

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1 editors at the Times and that was we didn't understand  
2 these kids. These kids aren't our kids. They don't live  
3 in our world. We don't live in their world. And so how  
4 can we sit down and devise a series of articles that gives  
5 insight into the lives and the struggles of these kids  
6 when we don't know them.

7           And I could design five series on the presidency  
8 because I cover the White House or government because we  
9 know government or the middle class because we know middle  
10 class. But if you're talking about inter-city kids who  
11 happen to have be a minority, their world is not our  
12 world.

13           So before we did anything, anything, we sat  
14 down, we spent a day and a half just talking to a group of  
15 inter-city kids from Bedsty, poorest neighborhood in New  
16 York. And we learned from firsthand accounts, their  
17 feelings that institutions were failing them, whether it  
18 was the church, whether it was the school, whether it was  
19 police, whether it was parents, and that they had no place  
20 to turn. And that became the basis for our smarts. And I  
21 just think that before we move ahead journalistically,  
22 we've got to acknowledge some realities and we've got to  
23 try to work through them and I think that's all.

24           MS. MADISON: I am one of those kids. I grew up  
25 on welfare in Harlem. My parents were immigrants and they

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1 broke up before I was born. And I did go through a number  
2 of systems where my family relied on governmental support  
3 and charity frankly in order to get us through. My

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4 brother went to Williams and Harvard Business School and I  
5 graduated from Vassar and I went to Syracuse University  
6 and left because I didn't like it there.

7 But anyway, you know unless you are -- and I  
8 said that -- I mean I tell you that not because I got a  
9 badge or there's a mark on my forehead or any of that. I  
10 mean it is who I am. But the fact is is that unless we  
11 invite everyone into our newsrooms and unless everyone has  
12 the opportunity to rise and help set policy in our  
13 newsrooms, we're going to get ourselves into trouble  
14 insofar as coverage is concerned.

15 If -- I mean it's sort of an interesting story  
16 about the O. J. Simpson verdict that, you know, what  
17 happened at the New York Times. The New York Times, as  
18 Gerald said, you know, people saw the verdict, the black  
19 reporters took it one way and the white reporters took it  
20 another way and nobody talked for fear that it would  
21 probably turn into a slugfest I'm certain. But at WNBC,  
22 oh, we talked about it and voices were raised and we, you  
23 know, and but the reason why we did it was not because we  
24 said, "Well, you know what, we don't have anything better  
25 to do. Let's stand around and risk getting into a fight."

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1 We did it because we are a huge institution, we the media,  
2 and if we don't discuss race and if we can't talk about  
3 and hear from each other and try to dispel some of the  
4 attitudes on both sides, then how are we equipped to go  
5 out and cover the story when we're coming equipped with  
6 our own biases that we've never said out loud. That we've  
7 never put in the context of for example some of the

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8 statistics that Bob just shared with us.

9           So one of the things that I think would be  
10 important would be, unless you are skilled at this, I  
11 would not recommend that you encourage a discussion about  
12 race in the newsrooms or frankly in the classrooms because  
13 you are likely to find that fights will occur. But there  
14 are organizations, the Maynard Institute, Nancy and Bob  
15 Maynard's, the fault lines discussion, bring somebody in  
16 who can either train your managers and your employees or  
17 help participate in such a discussion so that, you know,  
18 here's an example that I'm asked by teens often, "Why do  
19 teenagers always end up on the news doing bad things?"  
20 You know, that's another group that just overwhelmingly is  
21 shown doing something bad. Unless they rescued an old  
22 lady from a burning building. But otherwise we're afraid  
23 of teens. We don't like them, they're bad, sex, drugs,  
24 hey, rock and roll.

25           But think about the numbers of teenagers who are

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1 graduating every year as valedictorians and salutatorians  
2 and going to college and going into the military and  
3 becoming productive citizens. But when they see  
4 themselves on the news, they're as handcuffed as  
5 African-American males are. So it's the biases that we  
6 bring into the newsrooms that get played out in our  
7 coverage and so interact with teenagers. Interact with  
8 people of color, and not just black people. Interact with  
9 people of color, have conversations, and learn, learn what  
10 the biases are that we need to talk about and then dispel

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11 before we go out and cover the same issue in our  
12 communities and run the risk of doing an incredible amount  
13 of damage because I've seen lots of damage done by  
14 journalists.

15 MR. BLENDON: Just quickly two thoughts that  
16 might be helpful. One is which relates to a point that  
17 Paula made earlier. Schools and health care are special  
18 issues. They are the two issues that it look like from  
19 polling data, people will reach across racial divides,  
20 listen and learn. So my first message is every time there  
21 are two schools and health care stories on the front page  
22 and one less crime story, you have an ability to reach  
23 across the divide. White Americans are willing to talk  
24 about those issues. They feel more comfortable. They  
25 feel more concern.

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1 Second point is the most difficult and that is  
2 in the issues of police and courts, there is a sense of  
3 white concern for fairness. But as everyone who has  
4 covered this issue or looked at letters to the editor, the  
5 bar is very high for convincing many whites about  
6 discriminatory patterns. So in order to make an impact on  
7 many white readers, you need evidence of very significant  
8 patterns of discrimination by sources that are  
9 impeachable -- I mean unimpeachable for that.

10 Otherwise, on this issue, unlike health care and  
11 schools, whites just had this very you're really going to  
12 have to work very hard to me to show that. But if you  
13 show it, they'll be instant supporters I think we'll see  
14 on racial profiling around police where whites are

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15 becoming extremely convinced that there is a pattern,  
16 there is legitimate reason to think something has to be  
17 changed.

18           But there's a very high bar on that issue of  
19 convincing people about the level of discrimination in the  
20 community and I looked at some of the data on voting in  
21 Florida and it was interesting to me how far you would  
22 have to go to convince many whites that there really was  
23 an organized pattern of discrimination. So you've got to  
24 go very far or it doesn't have an impact on white readers.

25           MR. PATTERSON: Good, thank you, Bob, and thanks

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1 to the other -- we don't have 10 or 15 minutes for your  
2 involvement but we do have seven or eight. And please  
3 join us and you must use the microphones and it would be  
4 helpful if you could identify yourself please. And we'll  
5 start with the front microphone and just work back and  
6 forth as many times as we can.

7           MS. GILLIAM: Yes, my name is Dorothy Gilliam  
8 and I'm director of the Young Journalist Development  
9 Project at the Washington Post. I just think it's  
10 important to put a little context into some of the remarks  
11 as I've heard them.

12           First of all, I think it's important to realize  
13 that there are probably only maybe two Paula Madisons in  
14 the whole country. There are probably maybe ten news  
15 directors. But in terms of major markets, I believe  
16 Paula, correct me if I'm wrong, are you the only?

17           MS. MADISON: Well, I left the rank of news

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18 director but you're right.

19 MS. GILLIAM I'm sorry. You're the President.

20 MS. MADISON: There's probably about ten and the  
21 general managers, there's probably like five or six of us.

22 MS. GILLIAM Okay. But the point I'm trying to  
23 make is this is a total anomaly that you're hearing today  
24 and that part of the problem exists because we still have  
25 the absolute refusal on the part of the white power

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1 structure to really name people of color into positions of  
2 power.

3 Now Mr. Boyd, there are very few of him. There  
4 are only -- when you look in this country, the number, the  
5 total percentage of people of color in the press today as  
6 reporters it's about 12 percent. So 88 percent of the  
7 media is white. And while of course that is an average  
8 figure, it does not include, you know, the New York and  
9 the Washingtons of the world, the metropolitan centers.

10 Part of the context of this whole discussion has  
11 to be that for those of us who have tried to battle this  
12 problem for 25 years, there has consistently been a  
13 refusal on the part of the white media owners and managers  
14 in this country to share the power with African-Americans  
15 and other people of color. There are always a few high  
16 profile people who are named into positions and certainly  
17 as you've seen, they are always excellent representatives.

18 But the problem we're facing today is that  
19 almost as many African-Americans are leaving the news  
20 industry as are coming in which means that there's not  
21 enough being done to keep them on the staffs. So I think

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22 the problems that are being discussed are urgent. The  
23 diversity is not -- we're not meeting the goals that are  
24 being discussed if we're losing the experienced people and  
25 we're bringing on very new young people.

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1 So I think that it just -- the context of all  
2 this is really urgent and it cannot all be pinned on  
3 black, you know, black people and black reporters and that  
4 diversity. We have to look at the people who own and  
5 control this who truly, truly are not from my perspective,  
6 not truly willing to bring about the changes that are  
7 necessary.

8 MS. PATTERSON: Dorothy, thank you.

9 MR. BAILEY: Yes, my name is A. Peter Bailey and  
10 I'm with Vital Issue, The Journal of African-American  
11 Speeches.

12 And I came across something in the Washington  
13 Post on June 25th. An ad, "We have a question for  
14 President Bush, working families play by the rules, why  
15 shouldn't corporations?" Now in this ad, they have a  
16 Hispanic family, Hispanic-American family, a  
17 European-American family, an Asian-American family with  
18 husband, wife and children. The black, the  
19 African-American family is a mother and a daughter. And I  
20 said this came at a perfect time to bring to the this  
21 meeting and I would like to have you respond as to why --  
22 if the Washington Post does this, I mean what else? What  
23 do you expect from the Idaho, you know, News Journal?

24 And this ad is signed by the AFL-CIO, the



1 Liberties Union, are people who have announced their  
2 support of this ad.

3 Now I said when I brought this, I said, now the  
4 Washington Post is going to claim this is an ad in which  
5 they have no control. So Sunday I read the Washington  
6 Post again in the business section. Now this is what they  
7 control and they have a what's in it for them, talking  
8 about the tax cut. Again, they show three white families  
9 with man and woman; man and woman; man, woman and  
10 children; and a black family, a woman. Just a woman.  
11 This is the Washington Post. Now if the Washington  
12 Post -- and I would have to assume there must have been I  
13 would hope that there was somebody black when these  
14 discussions were being made about these two different,  
15 these two things, and yet they run. This is more  
16 devastating to me in terms of young people and in terms  
17 of images, in terms of what the press and the media, than  
18 anything that appears in some of the more reactionary  
19 conservative newspapers.

20 And I would like to ask the gentleman who talked  
21 about context. Could you explain to me how the Washington  
22 Post in 2001 could publish something like this?

23 MR. ENTMAN: The Washington Post, not just the  
24 Washington Post -- it brings to mind for me that  
25 journalists themselves are certainly subject to

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1 stereotypes, to automatic thinking in patterns than a lot  
2 of research shows this. It does suggest that even if  
3 there are blacks, Latinos, Asians in the newsroom, that's  
4 really not enough and what's actually needed is some  
5 education of white journalists as well.

6 Now as Gerald said, journalists tend to be  
7 arrogant and be kind of difficult students. Not easy to  
8 instruct in these things, which does suggest that  
9 perhaps -- two things.

10 One that the people who run these organizations  
11 ought to do more than lip service and actually have  
12 systematic discussions of this, not only because it's the  
13 right thing to do but because it helps to insure accuracy  
14 and because it helps to guarantee future profits because  
15 the audience is increasingly diverse.

16 The second thing it suggests and something that  
17 hasn't been mentioned very much is it can't be done by  
18 journalists alone. We really need political leadership to  
19 speak out about these things in a way that is not cynical  
20 and manipulative.

21 It's one of the really fine things that  
22 President Clinton tried to do was have this initiative on  
23 race and get a discussion going and I must say that I'm  
24 doing a little research now. The media's response to the  
25 initiative on race was very hostile. Almost uniformly

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1 critical of the idea of talking about race. So I do think  
2 we have some issues within journalists themselves and I  
3 don't think we can limit our discussion to just increasing

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4 the numbers of minority journalists.

5 MR. BOYD: Well, if I could just say quickly. I  
6 think Clinton's media initiative, media on race  
7 initiative, was a joke myself.

8 I was about to say to my brother back there who  
9 I'm about to piss off, I'm sure. I was about to say that  
10 would have never happened in the New York Times. But that  
11 would be wrong.

12 What you're not -- what makes this all so  
13 complicated is there are black single moms who raise kids.  
14 I was raised by one. And so I am not offended by that in  
15 the least. The problem is does it go, does it tell the  
16 whole story? It tells a part of the story. And as we  
17 talk about race, whether it's in the ads or in stories,  
18 how do we make sure we tell the whole story and not just  
19 be PC about it.

20 MR. WILLIAMS: Hi, Damien Williams, Harvard  
21 College. We can sit under the Harvard banner and, you  
22 know, talk about, you know, these changes that are going  
23 to happen but how are they going to happen? I mean  
24 there -- we're talking about conscience of the media but  
25 money has no conscience. So how does a for profit nature

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1 of the press, how is that going to prevent these changes  
2 from actually being put into place because isn't it just  
3 more scandalous to put out, you know, a black guy in  
4 handcuffs on the 5:00 news?

5 MS. MADISON: No.

6 MR. WILLIAMS: Isn't that so?

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7 MS. MADISON: No, it does not --

8 MR. WILLIAMS: I'm playing devil's advocate.

9 That's --

10 MS. MADISON: Well, but it doesn't and that's  
11 part of what -- I mean that's part of what hopefully will  
12 become a greater discussion among the people who own these  
13 outlets. IN fact, the more we report that kind of news,  
14 the more we are driving the audiences away. There is an  
15 audience watching television. It's just that they're  
16 picking something else to watch. It's not that fewer  
17 people are watching television overall. There are  
18 significant numbers of people watching television and that  
19 daily diet of death, destruction and murder when, you  
20 know, I watched a newscast here in Washington last night  
21 where, you know, tell me that there are not issue stories  
22 in Washington, D. C. And the first five stories I saw on  
23 the 11:00 newscast last night in Washington were all about  
24 crime. And I just sat there and scratched my head and  
25 said, "How do the people who live in Washington let them

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1 get away with that?"

2 MR. PATTERSON: Well, we have another panel  
3 that's following this one and so that'll have to be the  
4 last question. If any of the panelists have about a ten  
5 second comment, I invite you to give that. If not, let me  
6 put on the note where Gerald talked about this maybe being  
7 the two millionth panel on race and the media, and he may  
8 be exhausted by them. But I do think that the persistence  
9 of the problems, what all of you have been saying about  
10 these problems, haven't really gone away all that much.

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11 Some of them in fact have deepened. I think the  
12 persistence of the problem speaks to the importance of the  
13 continuing dialogue.

14 And thank you very much for being part of this  
15 panel and we're going to fold right into the second one so  
16 your program may say a five minute break but in fact we  
17 exhausted it. We used it up. Thank you very much.

18 (Break)

19 MR. JONES: For those of you who are joining us,  
20 who joined us a little late, I'm Alex Jones, Director of  
21 the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and  
22 Public Policy and welcome to our morning's discussion on  
23 the very tricky, very important issue of race in the  
24 media.

25 We now turn to race in the media, the national

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1 story, and this discussion will be led by my colleague,  
2 Marvin Kalb. Marvin Kalb was the founding director of the  
3 Shorenstein Center. It was my honor to succeed him as  
4 Director last year. Marvin is now the Executive Director  
5 of the Washington office of the Shorenstein Center.

6 Marvin, as most of you already know very, very  
7 well, was a veteran of television news, a very  
8 distinguished 30 year career at ABC, rather at NBC and  
9 CBS, as a chief diplomatic correspondent covering politics  
10 and all kinds of delicately nuanced issues for a long,  
11 long time. Hence, has great skill as someone who, you  
12 know, takes these things in hand. His -- probably the  
13 sine qua non of his career was his years of hosting Meet

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14 the Press which I'm sure many of you also remember.

15 He's the author of many books. The newest one,  
16 One Scandalous Story, is about to be published. This was  
17 given a particularly sweet plug by Bill Sapphire recently  
18 who said it was going to be one of the sleepers of the  
19 year. It's also true that this conference itself sprang  
20 from the fertile mind of Marvin Kalb originally. Marvin  
21 Kalb.

22 MR. KALB: Thank you, Alex, very much. It's  
23 really my pleasure and an honor to have been asked to  
24 moderate this panel, the second of the morning, and let me  
25 quickly introduce the panel and get right to our subject.

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1 To my left, Christopher Edley, a Professor of  
2 Law at the Harvard Law School, the founding co-director of  
3 the Civil Rights Project at Harvard. Professor Edley  
4 served as Special Counsel to President Clinton and he was  
5 the Director of the White House review of affirmative  
6 action. He's the author of Not All Black and White.

7 To my right, Ray Suarez, Senior Correspondent  
8 for the PBS NewsHour with Jim Lehrer. Suarez has been an  
9 award winning journalist for the past 20 years, working at  
10 ABC and from 1993 to 1999, he hosted NPR's afternoon  
11 call-in show, Talk of the Nation. He is the author of the  
12 Old Neighborhood, What We Lost in the Great Suburban  
13 Migration of 1966 to 1999.

14 Deborah Mathis has been a Shorenstein Center  
15 Fellow in Washington this past year, researching and  
16 writing the paper distributed to you today called No Seat  
17 at the Table, the black-white appearance gap in the

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18 election 2000 story. Ms. Mathis is the former national  
19 correspondent and columnist for the Gannett News Service.  
20 She is a commentator for America's Black Forum, a weekly  
21 talk show dealing with issues of importance to  
22 African-Americans.

23 Taeku Lee is an Assistant Professor of Public  
24 Policy at the Kennedy School of Government. He  
25 specializes in public opinion, political behavior, racial

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1 politics and social policy. His forthcoming book, Two  
2 Nations, Separate Grooves, explores the role of race  
3 immobilizing and activating the civil rights movement.

4 Orlando Patterson is the John Cowles Professor  
5 of Sociology at Harvard, a leading scholar on slavery,  
6 freedom, and ethnic inequalities. He contributes  
7 significantly to the public discussion of racial issues in  
8 America. He's a prolific writer. Two of his books are  
9 The Ordeal of Integration: Progress and Resentment in  
10 America's "Racial" Crisis and the other is Rituals of  
11 Blood: The Consequences of Slavery in Two American  
12 Centuries.

13 And finally, Carole Simpson is anchor for World  
14 News Tonight Sunday. She's an Emmy-award winning senior  
15 correspondent for ABC News. Her reports appear regularly  
16 on World News Tonight with Peter Jennings and Good Morning  
17 America. She's done many memorable broadcasts including  
18 moderating one of the Presidential debates in 1992.

19 The previous moderator, my colleague, Professor  
20 Patterson, gave his panelists five minutes to speak and

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21 some of them went a bit over five. I'm going to give them  
22 about two minutes each. And if they go much beyond that,  
23 I'm going to stop them. Because we got to move on. So  
24 let's say two to two thirty and I want to start with each  
25 of you with a single question.

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1 And the single question for all of you is having  
2 heard the first panel and those of you who didn't hear the  
3 first panel should have, having heard the issues, knowing  
4 the issues, what in your definition is the single most  
5 important quality or factor in this discussion. I want to  
6 start with Chris Edley.

7 MR. EDLEY: I know better than to answer the  
8 precise question asked by a journalist.

9 MR. KALB: But try. But try.

10 MR. EDLEY: So let me start by just saying thank  
11 you to the Shorenstein Center for this panel. I am sure  
12 everybody joins me in feeling that way and also thank you  
13 to Mr. Shorenstein and his family for the gift he has  
14 given to all of us in creating the Shorenstein Center.

15 Marvin, I want to give you three, not a single.  
16 The first it seems to me major problem is the tendency  
17 among all of us but particularly in the media to still  
18 treat this as a black-white issue. When the diversity of  
19 the country and certainly the diversity of a great many  
20 communities makes it far more complicated. If you talk  
21 about race as a black-white problem in Los Angeles, they  
22 will look at you like you are from another planet. That's  
23 not the nature of the problem and everyone beginning with  
24 journalists as the nation's educators have to appreciate



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25 that.

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1           The second is that I'm fond of saying that race  
2 is not rocket science. It is harder than rocket science.  
3 I want to associate myself with Gerald Boyd's comments  
4 from the first panel in that respect. The notion that  
5 somebody can be assigned to a race related story and be  
6 expected to do a decent job of it based on a day or two or  
7 a month of casual reading or conversation strikes me as  
8 nuts. But there are some topics on which that is possible  
9 and I speak as somebody who spent a good part of my career  
10 being a policy wonk (phonetic) generalist, including being  
11 National Issues Director in the Dukakis campaign in '87  
12 and '88.

13           Race is way up there near the top of complicated  
14 stories to cover. It's harder than writing about the MX  
15 missile in today's newspapers. And the assiduousness with  
16 which I think people have to prepare to do a good job is  
17 often, indeed almost always, underestimated by journalists  
18 themselves and it seems to me the editors and producers  
19 above them.

20           The third and final one I'd said which is  
21 related -- I'm very tired of talking to reporters,  
22 editors, producers about race related stories and finding  
23 that I'm talking to a 20-something-year-old or even a  
24 30-something-year-old who came of age during the Reagan  
25 era and seems to believe that America's biggest race

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1 problem is the oppression of white males. I don't think  
2 that's the case. The data that Bob Blendon provided on  
3 the disparities in perceptions about the nature of the  
4 problem is certainly a compelling thing for us to focus on  
5 but there's so much ahistoricism, so much lack of context,  
6 so much lack of understanding, that because of the  
7 complexity of the race story, I think the journalists need  
8 to redouble their efforts to firmly grounded in some of  
9 the basics about America, where it's come from and where  
10 it is today.

11 MR. KALB: Education. Education. Ray Suarez.

12 MR. SUAREZ: Well, I would like to borrow  
13 ahistoricism maybe on a lateral and continue to run down  
14 field with it. I think part of the problem with the  
15 conversations we're having is that we're talking about how  
16 to do what we do better and not noticing that we have now  
17 entered a sort of post-race era in the way we do news and  
18 the way we talk about changing American culture. There is  
19 a desire to get on with it already as if all the old  
20 battles have been won, all the old dragons have been slain  
21 or have at least slunk dejectedly back into their caves.

22 So when you try to do a story that has a racial  
23 component to it, there's this feeling in the newsroom of  
24 "oh that again." You know, haven't we been doing that  
25 story in some form or another for 30 years, 40 years, 50

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1 years.

2 So there is a lot of reluctance and an openly

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3 stated reluctance on the part of people who align  
4 themselves with the demographic majority in the United  
5 States to think that well that's just not a story any  
6 more. In part, it's because of the tremendous spatial and  
7 residential segregation that still remains in metropolitan  
8 areas. So if you wake up in a totally white place, go to  
9 work in a largely white place, recreate after 5:00 in a  
10 largely white place and then go back to sleep in that  
11 largely white place and somebody says, "Hey, what about  
12 the race problem?" You say, "What race problem?" But how  
13 are you going to try to impinge on my very comfy life by  
14 telling me that there's some kind of problem here.

15 So when we are in this post-race moment where  
16 integration is not an issue not because it's been  
17 accomplished but because it's never been tried and we've  
18 sort of just given up, there is a reluctance to have an  
19 honest conversation about how all this cuts in where you  
20 live, in where you go to school, where you can expect or  
21 if you can expect to get any post-secondary education.  
22 How this affects the employment profile in the United  
23 States. Nobody really wants to talk about any of this.

24 We also in our gush, our post-census gush, about  
25 the changing face of America and the new demographic

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1 realities, blah, blah, blah, we aren't also dealing with  
2 the truth that if you jump in a car in the western suburbs  
3 of Philadelphia, you can pretty much drive all the way to  
4 Portland, Oregon without seeing a brother or seeing a  
5 Latin guy anywhere because there is a cent, a degree to  
6 which when you look at the map this is not an all over

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7 America American story in very broad terms. This is still  
8 very much not solely, not exclusively, but still very much  
9 a metropolitan and coastal and borderland story more than  
10 I think we're willing to talk about.

11 If you take six top metropolitan areas, you've  
12 accounted for more than half of all the black people in  
13 the United States and all the Latinos in the United  
14 States. So when you're trying to aggregate a mass  
15 audience for a national story, you're sitting there in the  
16 newsroom scratching your head trying to find a story  
17 teller, a vessel to carry that story that represents  
18 common humanity. Ad America isn't yet big enough or great  
19 enough of heart to have non-white people represent common  
20 humanity when it comes to things like paying a mortgage,  
21 paying a light bill, worrying about whether or not you  
22 wear your seat belt or talk on a cell phone in a car.

23 So in the coverage of things that are sort of  
24 all of us type of things, we still see a white person as  
25 the default mode regular person. And to the extent that

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1 we cover minority communities, it's only when we cover  
2 their complaints. So the overall trajectory of the story  
3 is that white people argue about and wonder about and  
4 worry about what's important and other people complain.  
5 And with those as our sort of master tropes, no wonder we  
6 get it wrong all the time. I hope that was three minutes.

7 MR. KALB: Okay, thanks. Thank you. Thank you  
8 very much. Deborah Mathis.

9 MS. MATHIS: Yes, I think that what ails

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10 journalism on this issue in particular, but as I also --  
11 our national dilemma and that is right now trying to put  
12 our hands around what is racism. You remember in Jasper,  
13 Texas, that awful story, the man being chained and dragged  
14 behind the truck, dragged to pieces literally. Everybody  
15 in the country of any decency whatsoever decried that  
16 abhorrent, that found that the most awful thing, couldn't  
17 imagine taking part of that. Had no sympathy whatever for  
18 the culprits involved in that. Many people applauded the  
19 fact that one of them got the death penalty.

20 But what that did was allow us to say, "Okay,  
21 here is racism quite obviously and it is extreme. I'd  
22 never do that. I don't feel that way. I hate that kind  
23 of thing. Therefore, I am not racist." And when we  
24 define it, only on its edges that way, we miss the story  
25 because the story is how it happens in the most subtle

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1 ways.

2 When you look in Cincinnati with the riots that  
3 occurred there just a few months ago, you think that was  
4 because one kid got killed? Do you think that that's why  
5 people put their lives and their livelihoods and  
6 everything else on the line because one person was killed,  
7 as awful as that may be? You think that the people tore  
8 up south central Los Angeles because the police officers  
9 were -- walked in the beating of Rodney King?

10 Now these were the proverbial straws. This was  
11 an accumulation of toil and trouble and heartache and fear  
12 and anger and resentment. And if we realize that as  
13 reporters, when we jump on a story and cover the crisis

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14 mode of the story, that's only the top layer of a story  
15 that actually produced that. The why is always a thing  
16 that we fail to cover best. Why something happened. And  
17 once we recognize that things don't happen in a vacuum and  
18 there's not a lot of spontaneous combustion, that there  
19 are all kinds of other chemical processes going on before  
20 you actually have that eruption, I think we will realize  
21 that we haven't really covered the story very well at all.

22           Years ago, I remember reading a little blurb,  
23 one of those little interesting in the news things about  
24 two elderly brothers who lived together and one killed the  
25 other in a fight over a tuna sandwich. Now I looked at

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1 that. It was just that little blurb. You see that and you  
2 think oh, lock him away. He's sick. That's crazy, you  
3 know. You can react angrily in this way to that. But you  
4 don't know that that was about more than a tuna sandwich?  
5 Don't you know that some other things, just as a human  
6 being, aren't you aware that other things have happened  
7 over the years? There's been a buildup and the tuna  
8 sandwich was the turning point that time.

9           Let us get to the root of the story. Let us  
10 figure out what is causing the story from stem to stern.

11           MR. KALB: Okay. Thank you, Deborah, very much.  
12 Taeku Lee.

13           MR. LEE: You know in my business I'm used to  
14 thinking in 30 minute chunks and then being told I have 15  
15 minutes to say it. Am I --

16           MR. KALB: Oh, no, 15 is not what you have.

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17 MR. LEE: Because they usually speak twice as  
18 quickly but this is not an option because I don't think  
19 anyone wants to hear me try to talk ten times as fast.

20 MR. KALB: No, that's not going to work.

21 MR. LEE: So let me try to stick to just one  
22 point and start by saying what I think the problem is now.  
23 The single most important issue on race is not and that I  
24 think the single most important thing is not what  
25 scholarship can bring to the table because it's easy for

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1 us scholars to show you that media coverage, what the  
2 media does cover and what the media doesn't cover, has an  
3 important and huge impact on the way we think about race  
4 and the way stories play out.

5 It's easy for me to show that, you know,  
6 politicians, advertisers, and producers understand this,  
7 they use this to their advantage, they exploit this when  
8 they need to.

9 It's easy for me to show you that, you know,  
10 race in the United States today is not simply about black  
11 and white and if you don't get beyond that, you're going  
12 to miss an important part of the story. It's easy for me  
13 to show that who gets to construct the news, who your  
14 sources are, who the editors are, who the actors are, has  
15 a huge role in what I see the news turns out to be.  
16 That's the easy part and it's easy to show it on a whole  
17 range of different issues. People either know this or can  
18 be convinced of this if given enough time in a setting  
19 between journalists and scholars.

20 There is no polio vaccine to this issue of race

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21 and the media's role in covering issues of race. The  
22 tough question is and I think the important question is  
23 what do media professionals choose to do given what we do  
24 know about this issue of race and the media's role in  
25 influencing public views on race? And what do we as

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1 citizens and consumers of media information expect and  
2 demand from media coverage . That's the tough part. And  
3 it's tough because it's easy to simply say that, you know,  
4 the media is a business. It deals in a competitive market  
5 environment.

6           It's easy to say that there's a lot of  
7 compassion and fatigue out there and there's a lot of  
8 apathy because, you know, this is the two millionth story  
9 on race that we've been exposed to and I just don't want  
10 to hear about it any more. Those are the easy things to  
11 do. It's really tougher to stay vigilant on this issue.  
12 To be self-critical about the way we think about this  
13 issue. To take the pathway of greater resistance. That's  
14 the tough part. It's easy to assume that if you cover two  
15 sides of a story, you're doing what's fair and what's  
16 accurate and what's professionally of you as a journalist  
17 even though some stories really don't have two sides to an  
18 issue.

19           And so the tough thing is that race and racism  
20 have really I think been thorns in the side of the kind of  
21 society that we'd like to aspire to achieve for far too  
22 long and we don't get to that kind of society by taking  
23 the easy way out and I think we get to that society by



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24 asking the really tough questions about race that we  
25 already know about.

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1 MR. KALB: Thank you, Taeku, very much indeed.  
2 Orlando Patterson.

3 MR. PATTERSON: I'm going to answer your  
4 question by asking several brief questions. What do the  
5 foreign stories have in common, really have in common?  
6 The foreign (indiscernible) Senate hearings, the Rodney  
7 King riots, the Supreme Court decision against the  
8 remanding of seats to insure the election of  
9 Afro-American candidates, the O. J. Simpson trial, the  
10 interpretation of the 2000 census data in the press, and  
11 the recent LA mayoral contest.

12 The obvious one you may say is race but there's  
13 something far more important and that is the racialization  
14 of issues which are not primarily racial, important issues  
15 of course, but which were not primarily racial and made  
16 racial by focusing on the second racial issue at the  
17 expense of the truly critical ones.

18 Never forget the Thomas hearings. Here you had  
19 two antagonists who happened to be African-Americans on  
20 both sides. The issue was not primarily racial. It was  
21 about a (indiscernible) of Thomas and the cynicism of his  
22 appointment but once saw the press repeatedly grappling  
23 their two black faces up there, this must be racial, we  
24 got to make it racial, and of course it became racial even  
25 though African-Americans were asked to not view it as a

1 racial issue. It was a gender issue. And even though the  
2 witnesses were all over the ethnic map, the press kept  
3 hollering this must be a racial issue and in the end sort  
4 of converted it to that.

5           The Rodney King case, the riots, my favorite  
6 story on that is the Newsweek story which showed a  
7 photograph in which it was perfectly obvious that those  
8 weren't black people that were throwing the stones. They  
9 were primarily, well of other ethnic groups, but was  
10 defined essentially as a racial issue rather than an  
11 eruption of essentially poor people, most of whom in this  
12 case happened to be Latinos.

13           The Supreme Court decision on gerrymandering  
14 which was the right position and any critical examination  
15 would show that it was but in fact the bottom line being  
16 that taken by the African-American leadership because the  
17 press wouldn't allow it, seeing it as a racial issue.

18           But -- and so on and so forth, the U. S. Census  
19 interpretation, the obsessive sort of racialization of  
20 those figures which I have written above but I want to --  
21 it's the recent mayoral election which I'd like to  
22 emphasize since it's in everybody's mind.

23           I was in LA when those elections were going on.  
24 I didn't see any tensions between African-Americans and  
25 Latinos. I was indeed struck by the number of mixed

1 couples, Latino/African-Americans, which I saw in LA.  
2 More than usual. But and it is perfectly clear what is

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3 going on. This was no in American politics and which  
4 had -- who had devoted his life at a time when  
5 African-Americans needed support, for 40 years, supported  
6 African-Americans. When most white folks simply saw it  
7 just is irrelevant. They saw simple American parties of  
8 payback time. Loyalty, particular loyalty.  
9 African-Americans are voting for this man because he and  
10 his family had really sort of stood up for them when they  
11 needed support.

12 The press kept seeing it as an issue of a  
13 conflict between African-Americans and Latinos. Let me  
14 recite you two headlines. One from the Wall Street  
15 Journal, "LA Mayoral Contest Mirrors Racial Tension."  
16 This is grotesque. But the same is true of the Houston  
17 Chronicle. Quote "LA Mayoral's Race All About Race," the  
18 headlines. I imagine this is typical. I'll go back and  
19 check out Lexus Nexus and a clear case where the press  
20 racialize an issue, insisted on seeing it in racial terms  
21 which in fact was far more complex.

22 And here I must agree with Deborah about this  
23 superficiality and I was going to ask her why? Why does  
24 the press do this? Partly it's intellectual laziness.  
25 No, not -- someone mentioned this earlier. Not physical

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1 laziness, intellectual laziness. It's easy to ride the  
2 race story. As a young journalist, the quickest way to  
3 get on the front page is to write a race story. So the  
4 temptation to simply see issues which do concern  
5 African-Americans and Latinos profoundly but to see it

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6 largely as a race issue rather than what it really is  
7 which may be an economic issue or a political issue or a  
8 familial issue or a gender issue, it's all it is is the  
9 way to get on the front page is to make it a race issue.  
10 And this superficial and it's like the laziness is what  
11 I'm complaining about.

12           There is one other point, however, I wanted to  
13 raise. Why does the press insist on sort of promoting  
14 this view, superficial view of race? I think the reason  
15 is a very complex one and it's the fact that the U.S.  
16 press is an institution that pretends to have a liberal  
17 bias in theory so that this may lead to demise and excuse  
18 it's conservative bias in practice.

19           We see this right now. So you can -- you can  
20 always overcompensate. I essentially, you know, they're  
21 saying well I mean we have a liberal bias so we have to  
22 overcompensate and present a conservative viewpoint.  
23 Well, you end up basically only presenting primarily  
24 conservative viewpoint.

25           We see it now with the horrendous way in which

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1 the harbor shark attack on Clinton in contrast with the  
2 pussycat approach to what is undoubtedly the most  
3 conservative president in recent memory. And why does he  
4 do this? How does race connect to this? I'll tell you  
5 and this is my final point. Race fits into this because  
6 one way in which the press maintains its charade of being,  
7 having a liberal bias, is to unpolitically cover race.  
8 This is the code that we are really liberal. This is how  
9 the press persuades itself that it really is liberal when

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10 in fact it is in practice operating in an extremely  
11 conservative way as evidenced by the really extraordinary  
12 failure to cover what is now a dangerously conservative  
13 movement in the country. Thank you.

14 MR. KALB: Thank you, Professor. That liberal  
15 bias charge is the one normally leveled against the press  
16 by conservatives by the way.

17 Carole Simpson.

18 MR. LEE: Exactly. Conservatives use it and  
19 mildly (indiscernible). It's all up to sniff liberal bias  
20 and you all keel over and say oh, yes, we overcompensate.

21 MS. SIMPSON: Marvin, I forgot what your  
22 original question was.

23 MR. KALB: What is the single most --

24 MS. SIMPSON: No, I'm going to answer other  
25 stuff per se.

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1 MR. KALB: You'll follow in a long tradition.

2 MS. SIMPSON: Right. I -- Edie Halway of the  
3 Shorenstein Center sent us some talking points before  
4 today. So I'm going to answer those questions.

5 Yes, important, inadequate, bad, badly, no, yes,  
6 yes, yes, worse.

7 MR. KALB: Thank you very much.

8 MS. SIMPSON: Seriously, Marvin, and I hope you  
9 will indulge me a little bit of time because I see a lot  
10 of young people here and I think we do need to put some  
11 context into what we are seeing in the media today. So I  
12 want to give you a little bit of the history of what is

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13 happening in television news because unlike --

14 MR. KALB: I'm not going to be that generous but  
15 go ahead.

16 MS. SIMPSON: Okay. I'll try. You are not  
17 going to see race stories on television, on network  
18 television. Okay. Number one. I always start my remarks  
19 with how glad I am to be here or wherever I am but I'm not  
20 sure I am glad to be here because while I may shed some  
21 light on the problem for you, I know that I'm going to  
22 leave here more depressed than I am when I came in here.

23 Some background is essential about where I'm  
24 coming from and where I think the industry is going. I  
25 went to journalism school in the 60's because of race.

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1 That was the turbulent decade of the civil rights  
2 revolution. There were urban riots, freedom rides,  
3 sit-ins, Dr. King's non-violent demonstrations that  
4 provoked violence, and I wanted to be a reporter so that I  
5 could tell that story. And white reporters really  
6 couldn't because they were suspect. I look at Bernie  
7 Shaw. He and I started together in Chicago at the same  
8 time and I think that's probably the reason that you  
9 wanted to go in was to help tell that story.

10 And I felt that if people understood what was  
11 going on in black neighborhoods and understood what -- why  
12 these things were happening, that we could reach some  
13 understanding of the problems and then we could have  
14 solutions to the problems. And I wanted to tell the truth  
15 and there was anger and frustration about why America was  
16 not living up to its promise of equal rights for all

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17 people.

18 I wanted the public to know that all black  
19 people were not ignorant, were not poor, and were not  
20 criminals. That we had the same desires for good schools  
21 and good jobs and for decent places to live. That we  
22 wanted access to opportunities, to live the American  
23 dream. This is not the mission which I believe my white  
24 colleagues had. They weren't living in black -- they're  
25 weren't living in black America as I was.

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1 So I entered the profession not to become famous  
2 or to make a lot of money or to go on television. I  
3 entered the profession because I wanted people to know  
4 what was happening. So for more than 30 years, I have  
5 been a reporter on my high school and college newspapers,  
6 community newspapers, then radio, then local television,  
7 and then network television where I've spent the past 25  
8 years.

9 Because of the power of the pictures and story  
10 telling, I think television has to be credited with  
11 helping end, strike down segregation laws in this country  
12 and for helping to end the Viet Nam war.

13 I loved the work until some major developments  
14 occurred in the mid-1980's and now I know I'm past my time  
15 but I got to tell them this. That's when the three  
16 national networks were bought by corporations. News had  
17 heretofore been pretty much left alone. We were to bring  
18 distinction to networks that brought you the Beverly  
19 Hillbillies and the Dukes of Hazzard. I should say

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20 Survivor today and Temptation Island.

21 But we were left alone. Just go out there,  
22 distinguish yourselves and bring distinction to this  
23 network. Now we have been bought by these corporations  
24 and it was determined that news cost too damned much. Why  
25 \$600,000 to cover the Persian Gulf War every day for

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1 television? Why did we have to charter jets to go to  
2 tornado ravaged areas? Why go with the President on every  
3 overseas trip with two crews and three correspondents and  
4 producers? The bean counters became involved in our  
5 budgets.

6 At the same time, we've got cable getting off  
7 the ground. And we've got people renting video cassettes  
8 and the networks which once commanded 90 percent of the  
9 television viewing audience were beginning to lose it. As  
10 the years went on and on, more cable stations popped up,  
11 Fox became the fourth television network, and today  
12 they're all -- there are three all news channels.

13 So ABC, NBC and CBS which once could deliver a  
14 100 million viewers saw our audiences dwindle to the point  
15 where today I think less than 50 percent, actually I think  
16 it's 47 percent of the audience, is tuned to one of the  
17 major networks. Considerably fewer for the network  
18 television news. And what does fewer people mean? Fewer  
19 people means lower revenues from advertising and lower  
20 revenues from advertising means cutbacks in personnel, in  
21 facilities, and what we did.

22 We are being run by corporations now who don't  
23 really care how many Emmys and awards we win but how much



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24 money have we saved.

25 You're touching me, I know, but I got to finish

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1 this.

2 There is no fat in where we are now. We are  
3 down into the bone and muscle and we are struggling for  
4 our survival. So how important is it that we cover race  
5 today? Been there, done that. That's the attitude.  
6 You've heard all of us say that. That's not to say we  
7 don't cover stories about race at network. Nightline and  
8 the magazine shows have done provocative and award winning  
9 work and I'm proud of what they've done. But you should  
10 know that the network news programs, the evening programs,  
11 are now in the fight of our lives and we are struggling to  
12 if not attract new audience, at least hang on to what we  
13 have and that tends to be white, older, more affluent,  
14 college educated and suburbanites.

15 So we do have focus groups to try and determine  
16 what their interested in hearing and seeing on television  
17 and they like medicine and technology. So our producers  
18 try to give them some of what they like and some of what  
19 they should have. And what they don't seem to like and  
20 what some of our producers don't seem to think they need  
21 these days is stories about race, I'm sorry to say. I  
22 disagree with that position but after 19 years at ABC, I  
23 do understand the competitive pressures that we are under  
24 and I hope, I pray that racial divisions in this country  
25 don't get so bad that we are forced again to start

1 covering race.

2 Thank you. I'm sorry I over spoke my time  
3 but --

4 MR. KALB: No, that's okay. Thank you. You've  
5 made a very good point.

6 What I would like to do in the time that remains  
7 is focus on three themes.

8 One of those themes is a study that Deborah  
9 Mathis did and a copy of which you can pick up up front if  
10 you don't have it as yet.

11 The second is a study that a former colleague of  
12 mine did, Bob Weston, about why the issue of race which  
13 we've already touched on, why black people don't get on  
14 the air as much and why black issues don't get put on the  
15 air as much.

16 And the third is to review and expand a bit on  
17 the racial profiling poll that Bob Blendon has already  
18 talked about just a little bit.

19 But I'd like to start with the first theme which  
20 takes us back to the election last year and one major  
21 issue that came up in the election last year aside from  
22 all of those that you know already has to do with race  
23 because in a very real way, blacks were discriminated  
24 against according to everything that I have read so far.

25 Deborah Mathis, please give us a couple of quick

1 headlines and what your study says and then what it is

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2 that you think it means and then I would like the panel to  
3 respond to that.

4 MS. MATHIS: All right. This is after watching  
5 158 talk shows. These were the Sunday talk shows, yes,  
6 and I did watch them. These were the Sunday talk shows  
7 and the regularly scheduled evening Monday through Friday  
8 talk shows on cable, like Hardball, Rivera Live, and  
9 O'Reilly Factor, that kind of show.

10 What I found was that there was a total of 857  
11 guest appearances on those shows. 107 of those were  
12 principals. They were people involved in the story. They  
13 were the James Bakers and the Warren Christophers, et  
14 cetera, and so the reason I pulled those out of the total  
15 or made them a separate category is of course because the  
16 producers and bookers and hosts really have not much  
17 choice in who they get -- in who those people are, what  
18 the race of those people are. But they do have choices in  
19 terms of who they have for media, legal experts, House  
20 members, Senate members, former elected officials, former  
21 Cabinet members, former administration officials, other  
22 elected officials such as the mayor of a city in Florida,  
23 scholars, Floridians, political operatives, and people who  
24 represent special interest groups. They have choices  
25 there. Of those total, if you take the 107 out, we're

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1 talking about 750 guest appearances of all those others  
2 that they had options with. And of those, 44 were black,  
3 44 appearances. 20 black individuals made a total of 44  
4 appearances.

5 I find this very questionable about the media

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6 which is supposed not just to be the watchdog but the  
7 guard dog of democracy, of the principles that this  
8 country espouses, and those that it aspires to and yet you  
9 see here to me evidence that there is a problem in the way  
10 we think about who is expert? Who speaks with authority  
11 here?

12 I also in this report give ample evidence that  
13 there are several organizations of black lawyers, black  
14 journalists, black historians, black scholars. You can't  
15 say we couldn't find any in other words. The Rolodex  
16 problem as it's been called is -- has been blamed for some  
17 of this oversight but I think that there's not too much  
18 room we can give that excuse any longer. We know that  
19 black experts are out there. This story even had a racial  
20 component to it and still you saw such a paucity of black  
21 experts.

22 MR. KALB: There was 94.2 percent of all of the  
23 appearance were by whites.

24 MS. MATHIS: Correct.

25 MR. KALB: Right?

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1 MS. MATHIS: Yes.

2 MR. KALB: How do you account for that? Take  
3 the lead. Say you were looking at this from a scholarly  
4 point of view, how would you have accounted for that?

5 MR. LEE: Well, I mean I think that Rolodex  
6 phenomenon speaks to some of it. I think the Florida case  
7 is especially prominent just because it can have decisive  
8 consequences. But I think it's a fairly pervasive

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9 phenomena no matter what issue you're looking at.

10 So I've done some similar work with the 1996  
11 campaign finance scandal where I looked across about a  
12 half dozen different media sources to try to see how they  
13 were covering this issue and in particular how they were  
14 covering this issue with respect to Asian Americans. How  
15 often were they quoted? Does it reinforce prevailing  
16 stereotypes about Asian Americans? Does it challenge them  
17 in the way that Bob Entman tells them that media coverage  
18 should.

19 And there's a huge difference in terms of who  
20 the author is in these different media institutions are,  
21 who the journalists actually are, and what their  
22 prevailing markets are. So newspapers on the west coast,  
23 in particular in Los Angeles, was covering this issue in a  
24 prominently different way than newspapers elsewhere in the  
25 country were. And then newspapers that had journalists

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1 who were Asian Americans were covering this issue in a  
2 different way than other newspapers were.

3 So I think it's a pervasive issue. You see it  
4 in a whole range of different settings.

5 MR. KALB: Ray Suarez, your experience in  
6 journalism has been with ABC but also with NPR and now  
7 with PBS. Is there a difference in the way the selection  
8 process works at for example ABC or PBS?

9 MR. SUAREZ: Well because working at PBS means  
10 you basically work for a program rather than a sunrise,  
11 Nightline news organization --

12 MR. KALB: Okay. The program.

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13           MR. SUAREZ: -- it's a very different kind of  
14 animal. You get all your key decision makers in one  
15 little room quite easily at the news hour with plenty of  
16 room to spare so it's quite different from some of the  
17 other places that I've worked.

18           The selection process does not differ all that  
19 much from place to place to place. I would agree with  
20 Deborah Mathis' analysis about how the news dropped the  
21 ball with not seeing aspects of the story in the way they  
22 booked talk shows. But I think the political operations  
23 more than met them halfway. This was a conspiracy in a  
24 sense. I know that word is used very advisedly in  
25 Washington these days. But the two were let's say

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1 enablers of each other in deracializing this story.

2           When you talk about hiring a private  
3 organization to handle the voter roll strikes for felons  
4 and switched addresses and that kind of thing and you look  
5 at who was struck and why they were struck and who stayed  
6 struck and whose votes didn't count, there is a racial  
7 aspect to that story.

8           MR. KALB: Why would they want -- why would the  
9 press want to deracialize the story?

10           MR. SUAREZ: The press already as we've very  
11 thoroughly discussed has an interest in deracializing the  
12 story from the get go but they were met in that desire by,  
13 seemingly by both political organizations of the two  
14 principle candidates who also wanted to keep the battle  
15 strictly on other terms.

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16 MR. KALB: I understand. Now but why just on  
17 the press side, Chris Edley, I know you're not a  
18 journalist but you've talked to them in the past. Why  
19 would it be in the press' interest to deracialize the  
20 story? Why would it be in the press' interest that there  
21 be 94.2 percent of the people interviewed on a story which  
22 had an obvious racial component? Be black. Be white.

23 MR. EDLEY: Well, I suspect that there a couple  
24 of things going on. The ones that come immediately to  
25 mind are these.

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1 First, there is a sense that we want to put  
2 somebody in front of the camera who will be perceived by  
3 the audience as a bona fide expert. Now of course this is  
4 vicious because it feeds on itself. If the only so-called  
5 experts the public sees, this is Bob Entman's point, over  
6 time the narrative is teaching the public that people of  
7 color are never experts. But still that's -- so that's  
8 one possibility.

9 A second possibility is that in the minds of the  
10 bookers, a person of color isn't neutral. A person of  
11 color has baggage, has a point of view, and therefore if  
12 we cast him or her, it's because we want them to be on the  
13 side of some balanced mud wrestling exercise. So that's  
14 another possibility.

15 And the third and this I think speaks to the  
16 much broader problem if I may, Marvin, Deborah's research,  
17 Bob Entman's research, I think there's an underlying  
18 difficulty in news management and that is what I call the  
19 accounting period problem. I'm booking a show for

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20 tonight. Let me figure out how to fill those four slots  
21 tonight. Who is responsible for stepping back and saying  
22 over the course of several shows, over the course of an  
23 extended time period, what does the balance look like?  
24 How many folks from Ivy League? How many folks are women?  
25 How many folks have been people of color?

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1           The mechanisms if you will to police the overall  
2 balance of the narrative are difficult to come by and I  
3 think that's true on the news side, it's true on the  
4 entertainment side, and part of the long run solution to  
5 these problems it seems to me is for journalism to invent  
6 mechanisms within itself to keep tabs on how are we doing.  
7 To do some self-auditing and then hopefully some  
8 self-correction.

9           And by the way if I can just, since I have the  
10 floor, drop a footnote. I disagree with 92 percent of what  
11 Orlando Patterson said. I don't think our principal  
12 problem is that there's too much news coverage of race.  
13 Occasionally there's a problem when something that isn't a  
14 race story is made into a race story. Acknowledged. Far  
15 more often, the problem is that there's race in the story  
16 that isn't addressed or race is addressed but it's done  
17 very, very poorly. So I think the multiple difficulties  
18 here have to be kept in proportion.

19           MR. KALB: I want to go ahead to Bob Weston's  
20 account which may in fact help answer the question that  
21 I've just raised and I'd like to ask Carole Simpson and  
22 Orlando Patterson to respond to this.



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23 Bob Weston has worked in television for about 50  
24 years and he's been at most of the networks and last year  
25 and earlier this year, what he did was embark on a

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1 specific project to interview 100 executives, producers,  
2 correspondents, researchers, production assistants, and  
3 production crews from five commercial networks then plus  
4 PBS. And he was asking them about best practices. But  
5 what he found in his exploration was not good examples of  
6 good journalism but rather one stark example that kept  
7 coming up over and over and over again and that was as he  
8 puts it, "the reality that race is a criterion for story  
9 selection." And what he then concluded was and I quote:  
10 "Every week, every day, stories about African-Americans,  
11 Hispanics and Asians are kept off the air. Racism is  
12 alive and well in many television newsrooms around the  
13 country. Race is a substantial factor in assigning  
14 stories and deciding whom and what to include."

15 All right, Carole. You have given us some  
16 autobiographical material and you have put it I think  
17 within this context in a way. But help us understand  
18 whether in your experience, race is a substantial factor  
19 in assigning stories. That means the journalist who  
20 covers the story, as well as the story covered, and  
21 whether that story then goes on the air.

22 MS. SIMPSON: I suggested to ABC some time ago  
23 that I be given -- that we create a new beat which would  
24 be race and diversity and the changing America. And it  
25 was nixed and I was told we don't want you identified with

1 one particular thing. That would be wrong to have a black  
2 person covering racial issues. So they weren't interested  
3 in that debate, yet racial incidents continue to happen  
4 every day in this country.

5 I think the problem is a problem that has been  
6 long standing at all news organizations and that is the  
7 lack of people of color in decision making capacities.  
8 They are not at the high reaches. They are not the people  
9 that decide who covers what and when and how much time it  
10 is given. And I have talked to our executives and they  
11 agree with me and I'm still hearing 30 years after I first  
12 heard it that it's still hard to find qualified black  
13 people to take these jobs, which is absurd. It's not hard  
14 to find them. If you're not looking for them, it's hard  
15 to find them. But I don't think they're looking for them.

16 So until we get more people at the table, this  
17 is your thing, no seat at the table. And that's what I  
18 say about the network news divisions all the time. We're  
19 not there to be able to make a difference. Paula Madison  
20 runs a station. She can make a difference. She can  
21 decide what the programming is going to be. But we still  
22 don't have the people there making the decisions and I  
23 think that would make all the difference in the world.

24 MR. KALB: Orlando Patterson. One of the things  
25 that Bob Weston notes in his study is that while what

1 Carole has just said is probably almost certainly the

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2 case, of Weston's experience and research, that was not  
3 what he focused on. What he focused on was something  
4 quite matter of fact. It was ratings.

5 And what they do now in newsrooms is have  
6 ratings quite literally for each minute of a program. And  
7 what I've said is what the producers explained to him was  
8 that it is their experience that when the ratings charts  
9 come up, when there is a black face, when there is a black  
10 issue, the numbers drop. And it was that that was the  
11 principle reason, not the other.

12 What is your sense as an outsider on this?

13 MR. PATTERSON: Well, it seems in many ways  
14 Weston's data supports the position I am taking and I'm so  
15 charmed to see such mutuality in my feelings towards Chris  
16 because I happen to think 100 percent of what he says is  
17 wrong. I mean the --

18 MR. EDLEY: But we're both black.

19 MR. PATTERSON: But with respect to -- this is  
20 related to the Florida issue. It may well be that for  
21 once that the press did adopt the right position in not  
22 going after the racial issue. Everyone assumes that.  
23 The --

24 MR. KALB: We're not talking about going after  
25 the racial issue. We're talking --

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1 MR. PATTERSON: But the --

2 MR. KALB: No, I'm sorry.

3 MR. PATTERSON: Sorry.

4 MR. KALB: We're not going after the racial

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5 issue in this case. We're trying to explain why what  
6 Deborah has raised in her study, what Bob Weston suggests  
7 by his work, that there is a systematic decision making  
8 process at work, not by racists but by people who look at  
9 charts and figure that the bottom line is what is central  
10 to a decision.

11 MR. PATTERSON: I thought what the point which  
12 emphasizes the absence of African-Americans --

13 MR. KALB: That's correct.

14 MR. PATTERSON: Right. And I'm saying --

15 MR. KALB: But I'm trying to explain why.

16 MR. PATTERSON: Yeah, but getting at that, what  
17 I was about to say was the association of anything having  
18 to do with African-American with a racial issue. I mean  
19 African-Americans are racialized. In other words, 90  
20 percent of the problems of African-Americans really have  
21 little to do with race. It has to do with being poor or  
22 it has to do with whatever political issues they may be  
23 facing or so on. But there's a merge -- I mean  
24 socialization of the process where if you see a black face  
25 it's race.

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1 Therefore, the problem with this tradition is if  
2 you bring a black face on, it's assumed that the audience  
3 is going to assume that you're treating the issue racially  
4 and therefore if you decided that the issue is not racial,  
5 you don't bring on a black face and it may well have been  
6 that the Florida case was not a racial one but one of  
7 poverty.

8 I'd like to see -- the data I'd like to see is

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9 whether in fact this has room for poor white people.  
10 Whether they were being discriminated against too. And  
11 there are some reasons to believe that is more about of  
12 poverty than race. But if you have a society in which a  
13 black face means race, then you have a problem as a  
14 producer or whoever and until we get away from that, and  
15 by the way this is a two way process and not that the  
16 (indiscernible) are doing this, it's also African-American  
17 and this means that only black people can talk about race.

18 And so you have here a real problem that we have  
19 to break out of that to move to a point where yes, black  
20 people can talk about the presidency or what have you and  
21 that becomes normal and conversely whites can talk about  
22 black issues and most important of all when you see a  
23 black face you don't think automatically out there that  
24 you're signaling race. And we're not there and until we  
25 break that, I think the producers are right to make that

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1 decision and I don't know how you break that logjam. It's  
2 not just the journalists going to be African-Americans  
3 changing their attitudes about how you call race.

4 It's not just among journalists and it's in the  
5 university, academy, only blacks give lectures on Toni  
6 Morrison. Only blacks can talk about black issues. It  
7 pervades the entire culture. And until we change that,  
8 that I'm afraid is the right decision of the producers.  
9 You see a black face, you deal with race.

10 MR. KALB: All right.

11 MR. SUAREZ: It can't be the right position of

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12 the producers.

13 MR. PATTERSON: Well, it may not -- it's not  
14 what I'm saying that we living in a culture in which it's  
15 become institutionalized that only blacks talk about  
16 blacks and when you see a black face, you're talking about  
17 black issues. And how will you change that?

18 MR. SUAREZ: I think it's much deeper than that.

19 MR. PATTERSON: I'm sure it is.

20 MR. SUAREZ: It's not just that you're talking  
21 about black issues because if you take parts of the  
22 coverage that have absolutely or are perceived to have  
23 very little to do with the way race is lived in this  
24 country, let's say a report in tomorrow's New England  
25 Journal of Medicine that taking aspirin in a prophylactic

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1 manner does advantageous things for your blood. They  
2 would not use a black man popping 200 milligrams of  
3 salicylate acid in the morning to do good things for this  
4 blood to be the stand-in for common humanity to illustrate  
5 that story.

6 If in fact one of the members of the clinical  
7 trial group was a black guy who had hypertension or some  
8 other circulatory related problem, they would use that guy  
9 but also find a lot of other people to crowd into the  
10 story because if it just is the black guy in the morning  
11 popping the pill, the feeling in the newsroom is that too  
12 many people will look at that story and say, "This is not  
13 me. This has nothing to do with me taking aspirin." When  
14 of course, it does, but we can't see common humanity in  
15 all Americans. Americans' own working head definition of

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16 what an American is that we show on the news in order to  
17 illustrate these stories -- I mean after all, these  
18 stories are peopled by people. But not all Americans can  
19 perform that function in a news story.

20 MR. EDLEY: Marvin, I think that both --

21 MR. KALB: Chris, I wanted to give it to  
22 Deborah.

23 MR. EDLEY: Okay.

24 MR. KALB: And then you can come in after her.

25 MR. EDLEY: Okay. Great.

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1 MS. MATHIS: I'll be real quick. Only to kind  
2 of riff off of what Professor Patterson said, you know, I  
3 do agree that there is obviously this sense that black  
4 people are there to talk, they're to be black. You bring  
5 me on as a black person. I'm supposed to be a black  
6 person today. And I'm going to tell you I am and it's  
7 always there.

8 I happen to think that race does permeate every  
9 bit of everything and to the degree that it's a class  
10 issue, well you tell me how you separate the poverty rate  
11 from race. You tell me that they are not mutually  
12 involved. And so when it is a class issue, when it is a  
13 matter of opportunity, when it is a matter of access and  
14 all of that, there is often race at the bottom of the  
15 thing. That's what we've got to come to grips with.  
16 We've got to be real and get real with ourselves about  
17 what we actually believe and what our own prejudices are  
18 about someone's capability.

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19 I'm looked at a lot of times as some exception.  
20 There's, you know, there's some fantastic brains in this  
21 room and at this table and in this city for sure. I got  
22 to tell you, smart black people are a dime a dozen. But  
23 we're treated as oh, you know, you're so articulate. You  
24 know, so -- and since we are just some really rare find. I  
25 got to tell you, there is some real talent out there that

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1 we're missing because we make these assumptions and we've  
2 got to check our own prejudices because the people who do  
3 make these decisions in media, in academia, everywhere,  
4 are after all creatures of the same society. The same  
5 society that we're covering and we're talking about that  
6 has the problems, we came from it. So in all likelihood,  
7 we will carry some of that fruit, too.

8 MR. KALB: Carole.

9 MS. SIMPSON: I just wanted to say that change  
10 can be effected in the newsroom if people of color get  
11 together and that did happen at ABC News. The Rolodex  
12 problem, we ended up producing, my bureau chief is here  
13 right now, but we ended up going through and finding  
14 experts that were Asian, Latino, and black in all kinds of  
15 categories so that Nightline and This Week would have more  
16 than their Rolodexes to go to find people of color that  
17 could speak as experts.

18 We also have made every effort to when we do a  
19 poverty story, go into Appalachia instead of down the  
20 street in D.C. to the welfare office to show that white  
21 people are poor and that is something I'm very proud that  
22 ABC has done and when we do drug problems, they're not



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23 always black people on drugs. We will go out of our way  
24 to find some Wall Street broker who has a drug problem to  
25 discuss that.

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1 So people who are in these news organizations  
2 because the white people that run them aren't going to do  
3 it, we have to if we're in there, try to make a difference  
4 and those of us at ABC did.

5 MR. KALB: Chris, you wanted to come in.

6 MR. EDLEY: Yeah, I think that it's interesting  
7 that a couple of months ago at ABC, Good Morning America  
8 created a race beat to which they assigned George  
9 Stefanopolus. Now George is a friend. I have an enormous  
10 amount of respect for him and actually think that he is  
11 exceptionally knowledgeable on race issues. But it does  
12 raise a question as to why George and not any of a  
13 number --

14 MS. SIMPSON: And why not Carole?

15 MR. EDLEY: You got it. And so I feel a little  
16 bit ambivalent about it. I think that there had been a  
17 number of interesting and I think compelling explanations  
18 for this phenomenon, the racialization issues as Orlando  
19 puts it.

20 But I do want to try to debunk one in the Weston  
21 study. The notion, Marvin, that the market is demanding  
22 it as evidenced by ratings, that that somehow provides a  
23 justification for the choices made --

24 MR. KALB: Explanation.

25 MR. EDLEY: Right, right. I understand.

1 Certainly provides an explanation. But does it provide a  
2 justification? And I think the answer has to be no.

3           If you think back to the 1964 Civil Rights Act  
4 and the opposition to for example the public  
5 accommodations, the notion that the white owner of a  
6 luncheon counter in the south could say, "But I have to be  
7 allowed to exclude blacks because if I serve blacks, it'll  
8 be bad for business. All my white patrons will object."  
9 The proper response and unfortunately one that Congress  
10 ultimately gave was that may be true. Too bad. America's  
11 got to change and you've got to shoulder some burden in  
12 helping us make those changes. I think the same has to be  
13 said of journalism.

14           MR. KALB: One brief. Go ahead.

15           MR. PATTERSON: But there seems to be a real  
16 contradiction here. I mean why did everyone laugh at the  
17 announcement that CBS or whatever had George Stefanopolus  
18 on the race beat? That was the correct decision. Also, I  
19 would have been disappointed. I mean Carole Simpson is a  
20 breath of sort of fresh air -- seeing an African-American  
21 woman discussing public issues not having to do with race.  
22 I'd have been very disappointed if she was appointed to  
23 the race beat. Why did you all laugh that Stefanopolus is  
24 in charge of race. Isn't this the problem? I can't  
25 understand what --

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1 MS. MATHIS: It's called deep background. Some  
2 of us have deep background on the issue. We don't have to  
3 get as up to speed. I mean there is a native  
4 understanding --

5 MR. PATTERSON: What about a wise person who  
6 says that I have the background in being white and  
7 therefore you stay away from white issues.

8 MS. MATHIS: No, no, no.

9 MR. EDLEY: No, I don't think the issue is that  
10 so much the selection of George as it is turning down  
11 Carole's proposal but then reaching out to do the same  
12 thing with George.

13 Now you know there could be lots of  
14 explanations. They could have decided no we'd much rather  
15 have Carole covering Alan Greenspan because she's  
16 certainly more credible as a journalist than George is.  
17 And these are mostly going to be fluff pieces. I mean  
18 whatever -- I'm just saying it does raise a question and  
19 it is symptomatic I think, it's symptomatic of this  
20 broader problem that Carole's research, that Weston's  
21 research, that Bob Entman's research points to. It's not  
22 helping unite America. It's helping I think exacerbate  
23 some of our racial divisions.

24 MR. KALB: Chris --

25 MS. MATHIS: First, there should be a team,

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1 there should be a team on that and not one person anyway.

2 MS. SIMPSON: We don't have the resources.

3 MS. MATHIS: I understand.

4 MR. KALB: I've just been told that we don't

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5 have the time but that we have just lost for reasons I'm  
6 not sure about ten minutes of our panel discussion. So I  
7 apologize to the audience for not having an opportunity to  
8 participate and ask your questions. But Taeku Lee wanted  
9 to come in on this and then we've got two minutes and I  
10 just wanted to say something and that'll be it. Go ahead.

11 MR. LEE: Sure. As Dr. Patterson's junior  
12 colleague, I feel like it's in my self-interest to say I  
13 only disagree with 75 percent of what you guys were saying  
14 and actually the point I want to touch is actually on the  
15 other 25 percent. I think even if we agree that an issue  
16 is fundamentally about race, it's not clear what the  
17 media's obligation is in terms of covering on that issue  
18 and just two quick examples is the impact of AIDS in the  
19 Latino and African-American communities is  
20 disproportionate. But it's not clear given that that's a  
21 disproportionate burden is carried by those communities  
22 and how we should think about that issue because do we  
23 want to cover this issue as a racial issues in ways that  
24 may reinforce stereotypes like a lot of Americans may  
25 already have about Latinos and African-Americans.

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1 Another case in point is an issue that's looming  
2 in our future which is the epidemic of obesity. Obesity  
3 is an issue which disproportionately affects women, poor  
4 people, Latinos and African-Americans. Do we want to  
5 treat this as a racial issue or not? It's not clear even  
6 if we have the best interests of black and Latino  
7 communities in mind, what the media should do in terms of

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8 discussing these issues.

9 MR. KALB: Okay, Taeku, thank you very much.

10 Again, I apologize to the audience. Our time  
11 has been drastically cut back. What I am asked to tell  
12 you is that when you leave this ballroom, there are three  
13 elevators outside and to take, line up, take one of the  
14 three and go on down but press LL on the elevator and that  
15 will take you to the floor that will take you to the room  
16 where you're going to be served lunch.

17 I wanted simply to thank the panelists and to  
18 make a comment that relates to the racial profiling issue  
19 which I did want to get into a bit more than Bob Blendon  
20 did earlier today. But in the Washington Post story,  
21 there's one thing that comes to me in very human terms and  
22 it says that the overwhelming majority of blacks, Latinos  
23 and Asians also report they occasionally experience at  
24 least one of the following expressions of prejudice. Poor  
25 service in stores and restaurants. Whether you have to be

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1 black to experience that these days, I'm not sure. But I  
2 can fully appreciate the idea of poor service because you  
3 are different. Disparaging comments as you walk by  
4 hearing somebody mutter something unpleasant. Encounters  
5 with people who clearly are frightened or suspicious of  
6 them because of race or ethnicity. We talked it at dinner  
7 last night on this thing.

8 And for Gerald Boyd who is tired of going to  
9 these conferences, two million of them he said have  
10 existed, he's only gone to one million, I hope and pray  
11 that you go to an additional one million because I think

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12 we all learn so much simply from the expression of the  
13 problem and what it is that different people of  
14 intelligence think about this problem. Because racism  
15 today is still the unfinished business of American  
16 democracy and it's something that is everybody's business  
17 and it simply has to be addressed.

18 So thank you all for your time. Thank the  
19 panelists for their participation.

20 (Break)

21 MR. JONES: Ladies and gentlemen. It is my honor  
22 to present the 42nd President of the United States,  
23 William Jefferson Clinton. The dog ate his speech.

24 I'm going to do something that is going to be --  
25 that is going to play to Bill Clinton's strength. I'm

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1 going to introduce him and if he has to go on ad lib, I  
2 know he'll do it dazzlingly. Saved.

3 I'm Alex Jones, Director of the Shorenstein  
4 Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at the  
5 Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. The  
6 Shorenstein Center was created in 1986 by Walter  
7 Shorenstein to honor his late daughter, Joan, who was a  
8 distinguished producer at CBS News.

9 Today we're probing the very thorny and  
10 critically important issue of the media and race. Like  
11 some of you, I was watching last weekend CSPAN's coverage  
12 of Bill Clinton receiving the Dayton Peace Prize.  
13 Americans haven't seen much of Bill Clinton's face or  
14 heard him speak since he left office and I was somewhat

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15 taken aback at what I saw. He's gotten older I thought.  
16 Though that's usually considered a curse in this country,  
17 that's not what I mean. What I mean is that I was  
18 actually seeing him for the first time in a long time. I  
19 had this image of the youthful golden boy of 1992 still in  
20 my mind. But what I heard and saw last weekend was Bill  
21 Clinton speaking in a way that made me feel like I was  
22 being reintroduced to someone who had been such a familiar  
23 presence that I had not done him the courtesy of actually  
24 seeing and listening.  
25 There's much speculation about what Bill Clinton

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1 is going to do with himself in the years to come but one  
2 thing I am now certain of is that whatever he does will  
3 include speaking out thoughtfully on the important issues,  
4 the ones that vex us and trouble us and that are  
5 difficult.

6 On the occasion of the Dayton Peace Prize a week  
7 ago, Bill Clinton spoke on a theme that is very much of a  
8 piece with our topic today. He talked about  
9 inter-dependence. The need for the peoples of the world  
10 to think of themselves as part of something that is shared  
11 and he spoke of the need for justice and fairness.

12 I doubt that anyone here would dispute the  
13 importance of the issue of race as this nation begins the  
14 21st century. The way we conduct our national  
15 conversation about this subject is largely through the  
16 media for better and often for worse. So where do we go  
17 from here? To address that quickly and difficult subject,  
18 I am pleased to introduce the former President of the

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19 United States, Bill Clinton.

20 FORMER PRESIDENT CLINTON: Thank you very much.  
21 Thank you very, very much. Thank you. Well, thank you.  
22 Thank you.

23 I am I think glad to be back. And I'm glad to  
24 see so many of you there including many people who were  
25 part of our administration and Julian Bond, thank you for

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1 coming. Helen, you can even ask me a question when it's  
2 over.

3 I can say that because nobody cares what my  
4 answer is anymore. It's great.

5 And it's -- I'd also like to thank my good  
6 friend, Walter Shorenstein. Walter just beat me to death  
7 to give this speech and so did Deborah Mathis who's a  
8 Shorenstein fellow this year. And so here I am. I thank  
9 you very much.

10 And let me say to all of you, those of you who  
11 covered me for eight years who were a part of the  
12 administration, you know what generally I think about this  
13 subject and I don't know that I have any particularly  
14 unique insights about what the media's role in dealing  
15 with the racial issue is but I will offer a few.

16 And first I would like to harken back to some  
17 things that you said in your kind introduction. I'd like  
18 to put this subject of the state of race relations in  
19 America and the obligation to the media to deal with it in  
20 the larger context of what is going on in the world today.  
21 It is true that when I accepted the Dayton Peace Prize, I



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22 said and I will reiterate that I think the defining  
23 characteristic of the modern world is our  
24 inter-dependence. It's not globalism in an economic  
25 sense.

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1 The facts that have given rise to this are  
2 obviously the growing diversity of our own society and its  
3 growing complexity, the globalization of the economy and  
4 culture, the explosion of information technology and  
5 scientific advances that have global reach, and the  
6 globalization of security threats, including AIDS and  
7 climate change, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.  
8 And it seems to me that the great question the whole world  
9 is grappling with today is whether this inter-dependence  
10 will be on balance positive or negative.

11 Clearly, notwithstanding the protesters at the  
12 economic meetings, on balance, the globalization of the  
13 economy has done more harm than good. There has been a  
14 slight decline in equality and more people have been  
15 lifted out of poverty in the last 30 years than at any  
16 previous time. The United Nations Human Development Index  
17 says that most of the indicators are moving in the right  
18 direction. On the other hand, half the people on the face  
19 of the earth, most of them people of color, live on less  
20 than two dollars a day. A billion people on less than a  
21 dollar a day. A billion and a half people don't have  
22 clean water ever. One in four people die of AIDS, TB,  
23 malaria and infections related to diarrhea and  
24 overwhelmingly these people are people of color.

25 It's not entirely or exclusively true the

1 fastest growing AIDS rates are in Russia and the states of  
2 the former Soviet Union, but the second fastest growing  
3 AIDS rates are in the Caribbean and the third fastest  
4 growing in India and obviously the biggest number still by  
5 far in Africa.

6           So I think when we think about the state of race  
7 relations in America today, we have to look back to our  
8 past, look at our present diversity, and understand where  
9 we're going in the context of an increasingly  
10 inter-dependent world.

11           Those of you who have been with me on recent  
12 occasions know that I try never at one of these talks to  
13 miss an opportunity to mention a book that I read last  
14 year that had a profound impact on me called Nonzero by a  
15 writer called Robert Wright who earlier wrote an  
16 interesting book called the Moral Animal that some of you  
17 may have read. But Nonzero is a shorthand term from game  
18 theory. A nonzero sum solution and a zero sum solution  
19 refer to the nature of contest. A zero sum solution is  
20 NBA playoffs or a presidential election. In order for me  
21 to win, you have to lose. A nonzero sum solution is a  
22 peace process or global debt relief. In order for me to  
23 win, you have to win, too.

24           And the argument of Wright's books is that  
25 throughout all of human history, societies have gone

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1 steadily more complex and with increasing complexity comes  
2 inter-dependence and with inter-dependence comes the  
3 absolute imperative of looking for more nonzero sum  
4 solutions.

5           I say that to point out the thing that I think  
6 is most important about this debate today, quite apart  
7 from the burdens of the past, which is that our ability to  
8 build a future of our dreams for our children and to lead  
9 the world toward greater peace and prosperity, freedom and  
10 security, consists in large measure on our capacity to  
11 find these kinds of solutions around the world which would  
12 be impossible unless we continue to set a better example  
13 and move forward at home. And in a world dominated by  
14 information technology, the media is going to have a  
15 profound impact on that.

16           When people of different races are presented in  
17 different programs, are they going to be talked about  
18 separately or with others. If they are part of the  
19 entertainment stream, are they going to be presented in  
20 ways that confirm or that contradict established  
21 stereotypes? When we talk about political issues that  
22 have a racial component, are they going to be treated as  
23 exclusively racial or as also economic or health or  
24 education related? And are we willing to probe the deeper  
25 recesses of our consciousness continually to try to get at

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1 the roots of this?

2           This is profoundly important because I believe  
3 almost all of the things we need to be doing require us to

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4 think in a more integrated way. For example, how do we  
5 handle the baby boomers retirement and do right by the  
6 largest and most diverse group of school children in  
7 American history? How do we handle having virtually every  
8 adult wanting to be in the work force, that's good, with  
9 their parallel obligations to raise children? Still the  
10 most important job of any society. How do we promote  
11 economic growth in a way that also advances social  
12 equality and environmental harmony? And how do we heal  
13 the racial wounds of the past and deal with our present  
14 racial issues, which are increasingly also I might add  
15 religious and cultural issues, in a way that this comes to  
16 be viewed at meetings like this not as a problem to be  
17 solved but as an asset to be celebrated in a world that is  
18 so incredibly diverse.

19 I can at least ask the questions. I think we  
20 would all admit today that the present state of race  
21 relations in America is kind of a good news/bad news  
22 story. The good news is we have come a very long way.  
23 America is recognized around the world as a successful  
24 multi-racial democracy. In a world torn by ethnic,  
25 racial, religious and tribal strife, that is a precious

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1 asset.

2 When I left office, we had and I presume we  
3 still have, I just don't follow the figures as closely,  
4 the lowest minority employment we had ever recorded, the  
5 highest minority owned business rate we had ever had, and  
6 educational progress in all racial and ethnic groups. Not  
7 what I would like but moving in the right direction.

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8                   But more important than that perhaps is that our  
9 children's generation actually believe that racial harmony  
10 and respect for diversity is the only way to live and  
11 prosper in the 21st century. That's the good news.

12                   The bad news is that racial prejudice, racial  
13 discrimination, racial animosity and dramatic opportunity  
14 gaps along the color lines still exist in America. Most  
15 evident in disparities in education, health, criminal  
16 justice, and economic well being.

17                   Therefore, the first thing I want to say to you  
18 is that this is one of those problems for which there is  
19 no single simple answer, that you in the media have to  
20 keep front and center in the hearts and minds of the  
21 American people.

22                   Dr. King once said, "Our lives begin to end the  
23 day we become silent about things that matter." We have  
24 to be able to count on you not to be silent about the  
25 things that matter.

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1                   Now I'd like to say just a word about what we  
2 try to do with the President's initiative on race and how  
3 it kind of fits into this. We ran that obviously in the  
4 White House during my tenure. I think even the critics of  
5 what we tried to do would acknowledge that we started a  
6 very serious dialogue on this issue that is of several  
7 years duration now. The commissioners I appointed  
8 traveled around the country meeting with Americans and  
9 talking about how they dealt with racial conflicts and  
10 problems in their areas. They gave me phenomenal

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11 documentation of the remarkable ways ordinary Americans  
12 are trying to address racial issues. From churches to  
13 businesses to schools to youth organizations.

14 And then after they did a lot of their  
15 preliminary work, we organized the White House Office on  
16 One America and asked them to keep the nation focused on  
17 closing opportunity gaps in fostering racial  
18 reconciliation. They did some interesting specific  
19 things. We organized a Lawyers for One America effort.  
20 Attorneys who committed to change the racial justice  
21 landscape through greater diversity in the ranks of their  
22 law firms and more active pro bono service in the cause of  
23 racial justice. We convened corporate and religious  
24 leaders who pledged to renew their commitments to  
25 diversity in their workplaces and make stronger efforts to

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1 close opportunity gaps.

2 We established this office because I thought  
3 that national efforts to build One America deserved a  
4 continuing national audience and a voice at the highest  
5 level of the executive branch and I was very pleased when  
6 the new administration agreed to maintain it.

7 I will say again, the only way we can continue  
8 to make progress is not to look for a simple line or a  
9 simple speech or a simple act but to recognize that this  
10 is a lifelong process and the journey and the integrity of  
11 the journey and the feeling that people have that they are  
12 part of the journey, that is the main thing. And we may,  
13 when it comes to work, just have to keep saying the same  
14 thing over and over again. Martin Luther King used to

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15 say, "I didn't have but one speech." And that's important  
16 in several areas of life.

17 I remember the great father of United Europe,  
18 John Benet, once said, "I only had one good idea in my  
19 life but it was good enough." And you just have to keep  
20 hammering it. One of the things all of you taught me and  
21 you actually said it in your introduction which I thought  
22 was quite a brave thing to say, I learned this as  
23 President, just because you're talking doesn't mean  
24 they're listening. And so a lot of this involves a  
25 continued effort not only to speak words but to open ears.

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1 However, talk will never be just enough and we  
2 also tried in the context of the race initiative to  
3 advocate specific things which I hope would build and  
4 generate broad bipartisan support that would advance the  
5 cause of race relations and harmony in America. For  
6 example, the empowerment zone and the new market  
7 initiatives. With the new markets effort was a big  
8 bipartisan effort. We took it to all parts of the  
9 country, to the Mississippi Delta, to the Indian  
10 reservations, Appalachia, the inner cities, to try to open  
11 new frontiers of possibilities and I was very proud that  
12 in the eight years I served as President, the first bill I  
13 signed was the Family and Medical Leave Law and the last  
14 notable piece of legislation I signed was the New Markets  
15 legislation. And now the current administration is  
16 working to do what is necessary which is to put out the  
17 regulations which will prescribe how we can get private

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18 investors to get the tax credits they should get for  
19 investing in areas of high unemployment or low per capita  
20 income.

21 But the basic idea was to say to people, we want  
22 to give you the same incentives to invest in people who  
23 have been left out and left behind in America, we give you  
24 to invest in poor areas of Latin America or Asia or  
25 Africa. And it is a way of dealing with race by dealing

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1 with the economy that I think is very, very important.

2 It's also important to deal with some of the  
3 direct issues, to deal with more diversity in the  
4 workplace, and this is an area where the media can have an  
5 impact not only by reporting on what others are doing but  
6 by setting a good example. It's important to deal with  
7 the education disparities which are still quite profound.

8 A couple of years ago for the first time since  
9 we started making these statistics, the African-American  
10 high school graduation rate equaled the white rate for all  
11 practical purposes for the first time ever. But the  
12 Hispanic dropout rate is still staggering. There will be  
13 racially identifiable problems for a long time to come  
14 until we eliminate these disparities. And we need to  
15 focus on things that are likely to work.

16 One of the things that I was most excited about  
17 when I was President was doing things that I thought would  
18 close the disparities in educational achievement. In  
19 1994, only 14 percent of our schools were connected to the  
20 Internet. In 2000, 90 percent were, no, 95 percent were,  
21 including 90 percent of the poorer schools. In 1994,



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22 there was not a single federal dollar given to help school  
23 districts provide after school programs for children even  
24 though we knew that poor kids and disproportionately  
25 children of color were left alone on the streets after

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1 school, needed extra time and instruction, needed the  
2 opportunities that could be provided. In 2000, 1.6  
3 million children were being funded by federal support for  
4 after school programs.

5           You can't talk about racial reconciliation or  
6 closing the racial divide without doing specific things  
7 that deal with specific problems in peoples' lives.  
8 Because peoples' color is not -- it doesn't exist in a  
9 vacuum. Peoples' racial history doesn't exist in a  
10 vacuum. It has a history that's embodied in the life  
11 story of every person and I feel very strongly about that.  
12 And that's why basically the last thing I did with the  
13 Congress as President, besides sign that law, was to send  
14 a message to the Congress that would establish what I  
15 thought were the challenges and opportunities of the  
16 unfinished business of race.

17           On Martin Luther King's birthday, January 15th  
18 this year, I delivered my final message called the  
19 "Unfinished Work of Building One America" and we made  
20 other specific recommendations on economic and social  
21 progress, on education, civil rights enforcement,  
22 eliminating health disparities, election reform, civic  
23 responsibility and criminal justice reform. And I'll just  
24 mention a couple. And remember what I said, you can't

25 look at somebody's color divorced from the story of his or

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1 her life, the facts, the circumstances, the context in  
2 which they live.

3           So one of the things we ought to do in this  
4 country is to reexamine the national sentencing policies  
5 in criminal justice, focusing primarily on mandatory  
6 minimum sentences for non-violent offenders. And I think  
7 we need national legislation to ban racial profiling. Now  
8 this mandatory minimum problem has to be addressed. There  
9 is a reason we adopted mandatory minimum sentences which  
10 is that the disparities cause people to think that there  
11 was great unfairness. The problem is since no politician,  
12 except people like me that don't have to run any more,  
13 ever wants to be seen as weakening in a sentence. Any  
14 time you have uniformity of standards, you always raise  
15 the average amount of time everybody's spending in jail.  
16 So now you've got a big percentage of people of color,  
17 especially African-American males who committed  
18 non-violent offenses spending long periods of time in jail  
19 during which time by and large they do not get more  
20 education, more training, more drug treatment and more  
21 preparation to succeed when they do get out.

22           At the end of my term I tried to remedy some of  
23 the more egregious of these cases through the exercise of  
24 executive clemency. But it is a highly limited tool given  
25 how many thousands of people there are that are caught up

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1 in this web. We have to make up our mind whether with  
2 crime at a 30-year low, we think the sensible thing to do  
3 for building long-term racial reconciliation is to keep  
4 warehousing large numbers of people that didn't commit  
5 violent crimes. Wouldn't it be better for them to serve  
6 in community centers or would it be better for them to  
7 serve shorter sentences? Or would it be better to know  
8 that before they could get released, they had to have drug  
9 treatment and greater education and training.

10 This is a serious thing. This is a huge block  
11 of population that is disproportionately a population of  
12 color that we have decided to treat in a certain way.  
13 That -- I don't want to pretend this is an easy question.  
14 It's actually -- since a large number of crimes are  
15 committed by a very small number of people, in this big  
16 population there are a small -- there are a relatively  
17 limited number of people who will never get well socially.  
18 Who would continue to commit crimes and that's one of the  
19 reasons the crime rates gone down because those people  
20 have been in jail. But we've been going after them with a  
21 shotgun, not a rifle, and we're taking a lot of other  
22 people out of the prospect of living productive, good  
23 lives.

24 But the media has to help with this because  
25 you -- I'm just telling you you cannot expect a politician

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1 who has to run in the next election to come up and deal  
2 with this issue without some support from the electorate  
3 based on evidence and options and new imagination. Nobody

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4 who's got to face the electorate, you know, when everyday  
5 you pick up a story and there's some other really horrible  
6 thing that's happened, is going to stand there without  
7 some support and a rational alternative. And no one wants  
8 to be arguing that serious offenders who commit a  
9 significant percentage of the violent crimes in America  
10 should be released from prison.

11           But if you look at the statistics today and the  
12 trends, it is chilling and I find I think it is literally  
13 inconceivable that there will be the political will to  
14 make any changes of any significance in this. Look at all  
15 the problems we had just trying to eliminate the crack  
16 cocaine disparity which is just one piece of this. It is  
17 inconceivable that we will do what we ought unless you  
18 help people to just deal with the facts in a calm and  
19 honest and open way. Not because people are animated by  
20 racial impulse but because nobody wants to be the victim  
21 of a crime. But it has a racial impact if we cast a net  
22 that's so wide a lot of people who have no business  
23 staying in prison a long time are there.

24           So I just give you that as one example where I  
25 believe you could play a big role.

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1           Let me just give you one other example where I  
2 think the public policy and the press functions could  
3 reinforce one another. The most recently publicized  
4 health disparity, although by no means the only one and  
5 not the one that affects the largest number. The one that  
6 affects the largest number may be the incidence of

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7 diabetes which has a crushing impact among people of color  
8 especially in the native American population. But the  
9 most recently publicized one is the fact that infection  
10 rates of HIV are going up again among certain groups of  
11 African-Americans while the overall AIDS rate continues to  
12 go down. And while the incidence of AIDS is almost down  
13 to one-half percent of our population in America today,  
14 the infection rates are up to almost 30 percent among  
15 African-American gay men which is what they are in  
16 Botswana, the country with the highest infection rate in  
17 the world.

18 Now I work with Sandy Thurman, as a lot of you  
19 know, ran my AIDS office and Andy Young and the people at  
20 the AIDS Trust and last night in getting ready to come  
21 over here, I was reading a long memo that I had asked for  
22 and not for this speech interesting, I just happened to  
23 get it last night, about why this is happening. When we  
24 are making so much progress in America on the AIDS issue  
25 and we're trying to raise up all this money to finally

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1 deal with it around the world in an adequate way, why is  
2 this happening? And I learned number one, we still got  
3 real problems talking about this in a lot of minority  
4 communities. There's still a lot of stigma attached  
5 through homophobia or fear of being rejected for some  
6 other reason. That's something you can help with.

7 Number two, an enormous percentage of the young  
8 women infected get infected because of heterosexual sex  
9 with people who are predominantly IV drug users who either  
10 don't know they're infected or have an almost coercive

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11 relationship with the women. Now we got to do something  
12 about that.

13           Number three, even though there are some  
14 brilliant examples of community AIDS clinics and I guess  
15 the one in my neighborhood in Harlem is maybe the most  
16 successful in America in that it's a real tough caseload  
17 and 85 percent of the people are taking their medicine 80  
18 percent or more of the time. So I doubt that there is any  
19 place in America, even the most up scale neighborhood,  
20 that's doing better than that. But notwithstanding that,  
21 there are still a stunning number of people that are not  
22 getting early diagnosis and treatment.

23           Okay, so this is a big problem and it's breaking  
24 down along the color line. You've got -- we're making --  
25 America needs to have the kind of moral and practical

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1 force to turn back this epidemic worldwide. We need to  
2 have it going down among all population groups in the  
3 United States. Plus which there are peoples' lives at  
4 stake here.

5           And it turns out that the things that I had  
6 assumed were true in America because we had, you know,  
7 we've been out there talking ourselves blue in the face,  
8 we had community AIDS clinics everywhere, we've got AIDS  
9 hostels all over America, we've got all this stuff going  
10 on. It turns out the things that I assumed were true are  
11 not true in terms of what a lot of young people,  
12 particularly young people of color, know and in terms of  
13 the circumstances of their lives.

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14 Now this is something where you can help. Does  
15 there need to be some public policy changes? I think  
16 there probably doubtless do. But I also believe that this  
17 is an area where you can help.

18 Now, I believe -- I won't go through all the  
19 other policy issues. I don't have much to add to what I  
20 put in my report in January, but the point I want to make  
21 is now thinking about the rest of the world. I'm glad  
22 that we tried to do the right thing to end racial and  
23 ethnic and religious hatred and destruction in the  
24 Balkans, in northern Ireland, in the Middle East, and  
25 Africa. But for America to be the world's only super

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1 power called upon to help in times of need, people have to  
2 instinctively feel that we're on their side and we're  
3 pulling for them. And they don't have to think we're  
4 perfect. They know we're not perfect. They know nobody  
5 will ever be perfect. But they got to know we're moving  
6 in the right direction on what is the oldest demon of  
7 human society.

8 I mean it's really interesting to me that  
9 there -- it seems to be almost endemic in the human  
10 condition that we are both afraid of people who are  
11 different from us and drawn to them like a moth to the  
12 flame. And a lot of the things that happened, even today  
13 in this most modern of ages, I think are deeply imbedded  
14 in sort of psychological forces of fear and excitement and  
15 hope. But we have to be realistic here. The fear of the  
16 other, of people who are different from us, has a much  
17 longer and sturdier history than the impulse to reach out

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18 and live together in harmony.

19           It is rooted in the beginning of human societies  
20 when doubtless there was some reason to be afraid of  
21 people who were different. In alien clans when there were  
22 doubtless many cases where there was limited food and  
23 shelter and things that had to be fought over or guarded  
24 or protected. But in an inter-dependent world, we can't  
25 afford fear and mistrust and as we see all over the world,

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1 it so easily lapses into hatred and dehumanization.

2           So we have to keep working to change the world  
3 and to do that, we have to keep working to change America  
4 through words and through deeds. I am convinced that we  
5 are in the process of developing a whole different social  
6 consciousness in this country and in a larger extent, in  
7 the world. One that will set new boundaries and open new  
8 possibilities for people who consider themselves liberal  
9 and for people who consider themselves conservative and  
10 those who consider themselves somewhere in between. All  
11 rooted in our inter-dependence. The simple recognition  
12 that everybody counts, that we all do better when we help  
13 each other. That no one has a monopoly on truth and  
14 therefore we have to find a truth we can all share. That  
15 we have to find a way to celebrate our diversity as the  
16 most interesting manifestation of our common humanity.

17           And I guess one of the things I ought to say to  
18 the dominant culture in this country, which is basically  
19 white guys like me over 50, I think too many people worry  
20 that this celebration of diversity will somehow diminish



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21 the meaning of people who at least at a subconscious level  
22 have always known they were on top. And I just don't  
23 agree with that. You know, if we're playing a zero sum  
24 game, that's true. When California gets to have a  
25 majority of people that aren't white folks any more,

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1 that's true. But it seems to me what people ought to be  
2 thinking who have been previously in the dominant racial  
3 and economic groups is I better get on this zero sum game  
4 deal because I don't want to be, when the numbers change,  
5 I don't want to lose here. This is just going to make  
6 life more interesting.

7 I gave a high school commencement speech the  
8 other day and I told those kids I'd give anything if I  
9 could be 35 or 40 years younger, I'd even risk not getting  
10 to be President again, just to see what's going to happen.  
11 Just to see what's going to happen. This is going to be  
12 the most interesting period in all of human history.  
13 Young women in their child-bearing years are going to have  
14 kids that live to be 90 or more.

15 Because of the human genome project and the  
16 development of detection devices with nanotechnology,  
17 we'll be finding cancers that are a few cells in size. So  
18 the whole idea of incurable cancer will probably just go  
19 away. We'll either figure out how to genetically engineer  
20 cells to put up blocks to stop tumors from growing or  
21 we'll find them when they're so small we'll be able to  
22 excise them.

23 We're working on digital chips now that  
24 replicate nerve functions in damaged spines so that people

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25 can, literally like a heart pacemaker, we'll stick a chip

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1 in somebody's spine. They'll just get up and walk. It's  
2 going to be an interesting time.

3           And it's very important, I say this that the  
4 people who have always thought of themselves as, you know,  
5 broad minded about racial matters but basically like being  
6 on top. I understand the only salvation here is to create  
7 a world where nobody's on top because of the group they're  
8 in. And it's going to be much, much more interesting.  
9 But there are a lot of sober problems out there that have  
10 to be faced. I will say again, we have the globalization  
11 of opportunity and the globalization of security  
12 challenges. And the big struggle of our time is to prove  
13 that the age of inter-dependence is on balance far more  
14 positive than negative.

15           A big, big part of that will be getting the  
16 issue of our own diversity right. It will require words  
17 and deeds. It will require us to do it together. It will  
18 require us not to be impatient. And it will require the  
19 media to set a good example in the workplace, to set a  
20 good example in entertainment, to explore everybody  
21 without stereotyping anybody, to tell the truth when the  
22 truth is bad, to tell the truth when the truth is good.  
23 And most important, to never let us forget that building  
24 One America in an inter-dependent world is our most  
25 important mission. Thank you very much.

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1                   MR. JONES: I want to thank you, Bill Clinton.  
2 The Secret Service has asked that you remain standing,  
3 remain at your seats, until Mr. Clinton has left the room.  
4                   (Whereupon, at 1:12 p.m. the session adjourned.)  
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