

Reparations and the Presidential Elections

Written by William Reed, Black Business Exchange
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"Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them, and these will continue till they are resisted. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress." – Frederick Douglass

Most Whites living in America today deny any tie to slavery. Most of the nation's Blacks do too.

The issue of "reparations for slavery" is America's most divisive topic. But, it's an area to which Blacks would gladly concede their "just inheritance" for the Obamas to be First Family again. Our ancestors' forced free labor totals \$100 trillion, but the majority of African Americans seem willing to forgive the debt to not have Obama rejected by the Americans. In that mode, Blacks overwhelmingly "got Barack's back" in the 2012 presidential election. Just to be able to say that "a Black man is president of the United States [POTUS]" makes them giddy.

However, the question remains, how does it benefit Blacks to buy into a system and a culture that's never worked for us, and continues traditions that perpetuate the effects of institutional slavery? Is Barry Black enough for our total loyalty? Or, has he totally eliminated any chance for justice for Blacks? When the subject of reparations came up for Candidate Obama in 2008, he didn't favor Black reparations, saying: "the best reparations we can provide are good schools in the inner city and jobs for people who are unemployed." Today, Obama will still carry Black voters despite high African American unemployment.

Instead of demanding more in terms of law and legislation, Blacks have developed a peculiar capability of separating their votes – instead of holding the president accountable for any real improvement concerning our abysmal condition. While Barry has scurried away from references to race, the effects of slavery and Jim Crow reverberate in the glaring disparities of wealth between Whites and Blacks. Median household wealth among Blacks is under a quarter of that of Whites and 80 percent of African-American children begin their adult lives without assets.

It appears that America's Blacks don't see, or experience, the difference between political "symbolism" and "substance." The same government that Blacks are so set on having Obama lead again; has from the onset, helped to create "the racial wealth gap" and has specifically designed and kept Black wealth significantly lower than White wealth.

During slavery, the elite slaveholders lived in "The Big House" overlooking the plantation, now Blacks drool over the idea of the Obamas living in "The White House" – in a mansion that was built by forced slave labor. The concept of "Blacks living in the White House" totally diminishes the debt that descendants of slaves are owed.

Let's be real, Obama doesn't spend his days in the Oval Office "watching out" for us. Sadly, no one else at the White House does either. The economic gap between Blacks and Whites has increased under Obama. Blacks' unemployment, poverty and foreclosures rates are at their highest level in a decade. With all its racist policies, why aren't Black Americans demanding that this nation support honest and direct dialogue on race and racism and its manifestations and consequences?

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Obama has assimilated past most Blacks, but should do more – not because he's Black but because of the sufferings Blacks have endured past and present. Black people have every right to make demands on Obama – because they gave him a greater percentage of their votes than any other group; and his 44th U.S. presidency is owed to them. Like any president, he should be constantly pressured to put the issue of racial injustice front and center.

To better our future in America, Blacks will have to "demand better" from all local and national politicians.

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