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DEAL

PRESS

Listening to Our Neighbors — An Occasional Series

Liberal White Folk talking about Black Folk

By Taru Taylor
Special to *The Real Deal Press*

Earlier this week, just over a dozen earnest citizens, mostly lawyers, got together over sandwiches at a downtown law firm to discuss [Serial: Season Three](#), episodes 7 – 9. The podcast, a serialized narrative of ten roughly hour-long episodes, spent this season focused on Greater Cleveland's criminal justice system. The season finale is pending. Sarah Koenig's investigative reporting defines the show.

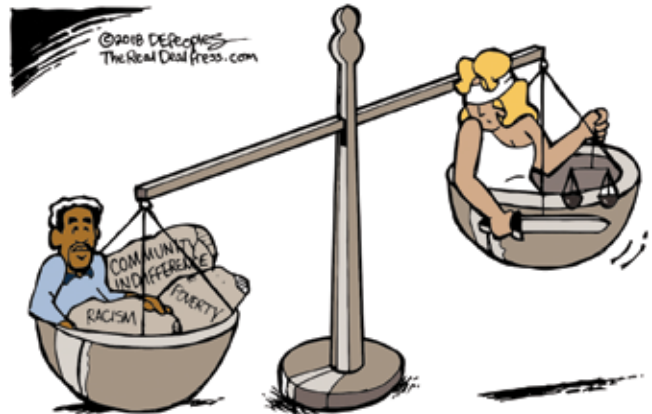
The Northeast Ohio chapter of The American Constitution Society hosted the discussion. The ACS, self-described as “the nation's leading progressive legal organization,” is the liberal counterpart to the conservative Federalist Society. [Full disclosure: I was president of Case Western Reserve's student chapter of the ACS during my final two years of law school.]

From what I'd heard about *Serial* even before Wednesday's discussion, *Season 3* exposes the racist underbelly of the local courts in a way that evokes the

conclusion of the 1968 *Kerner Report*, a presidential commission established by President Lyndon Johnson in the wake of mid-1960s riots to answer the questions: “What happened? Why did it happen? What can be done to prevent it from happening again and again?”

The *Report's* answer was essentially that white racism happened to Negroes (to use the term of the day) and had been happening to them for centuries. The *Report* concluded that to stop black rioting and rebellion, the “white power structure” must, among other things, create new jobs, construct new housing, and “provide full equality of educational opportunity for disadvantaged youth,” by eliminating *de facto* segregation.

Fast-forward 50 years to last Wednesday's *Serial* discussion. Joshua, a central character in the series, is a black youth from East Cleveland who had been a Heartless Felon gang member but was trying to turn his life around within the confines of Cleveland's juvenile detention system. He had been cooperative with police, but as a discussant pointed out, he learned



the hard way that “cooperating with police gets your ass kicked.” The system placed him with inmates who knew he was a snitch, prompting one discussant to say that the juvenile justice system exposed Joshua to “kid-on-kid violence.”

Another discussant said that although prisons should be about penitence, what Sarah Koenig's reporting on Joshua shows is that what prisons are really about is “warehousing.” All seemed to agree that poverty is the heart of the Joshua's problem. As the only person of color in the room until a black woman showed up 65 minutes into the discussion, I waited in vain for someone to say Joshua's

true problem was being in a society that remains organized by structural racism. As *The Kerner Report* made plain, the problems that Joshua faces are some 350 years in the making. To be fair, the person who had previously pointed to poverty as the key problem, later emphasized racism as the main issue. She cited redlining, segregation, and white flight as reasons why East Cleveland is a failed city.

This led one participant to suggest that Cleveland annex East Cleveland to save “the 17,000 poor people festering in East Cleveland.” Another discussant thought that East Cleveland's “holders of power

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GOVERNMENT & POLITICS - Post-Election Shakeout

November results produce intraparty leadership changes

By R.T. Andrews, Editor

Politics and government are as entwined as chickens and eggs. At some point it doesn't matter which came first. Either way, there is always activity in the barn.

After an election come the political adjustments. Elections do have consequences, and the first ones are often intraparty. Realignment is typically sharpest where there has been a shift in control between the parties. Nationally, it seems that the Democrats have picked up a net 40 seats in the House, giving them control of the lower legislative branch for the first time since 2004, and bringing front and center the question of who whether Nancy Pelosi, who has led House Democrats since 2003 as either Minority Leader or Speaker [2007-2010], would continue in the top position.

Republican national electoral strategy has typically been to find a face to put on the Democratic donkey and then demonize it mercilessly. Bill Clinton, Barack Obama, and Pelosi have been the leading targets of GOP poison darts for the past 25 years. Not coincidentally, they have been the most effective national Democrats. Unlike the two past presidents, who on several occasions supported items on the GOP wish list — welfare reform, balanced budgets, financial deregulation, NAFTA, to name a few — Pelosi has seldom if ever carried GOP water. That, together with effectiveness as legislative leader and the fact she is a woman — have made her Political Enemy No. 1 for most Republican candidates.

So unrelenting have been GOP attacks on Pelosi that even some Congressional Democrats have distanced themselves from her, vowing during the recent campaign not to support her as leader. Notwithstanding these attacks from inside and outside — including some potshots from our local representative, Marcia Fudge, (D-11, Warrensville) — Pelosi kept her cool and easily defeated her backbench challengers, in the process keeping her entire team in place and paving the way for more progressive and effective change than her internal opponents likely even imagined.

Case in point: accusations of “playing the race card” — which usually come from white people who would prefer that America's systemic and structural racism never be discussed — would have had merit had they been assigned to Fudge's digs at Pelosi. The incoming Speaker may not have an ideal record on racial equity — few elected officials do — but she masterfully outflanked her opponents by engineering the election of Rep. Hakeem Jeffries [NY] to the number five position in the House Democratic Caucus, de-



(Left) U.S. Rep. Hakeem Jeffries, (Top-Right) Rep. Ryan Smith, Speaker, Ohio House and (Bottom-Right) U.S. Rep. Joyce Beatty

feating Barbara Lee, D-Oakland, CA. The vote was 123-113. Had Lee won, four of the top House Dems would have been 78, 79, 78, and the 72 year-old Lee.

Both Lee and Jeffries are black. But by supporting Jeffries, 48, as House Democratic Caucus chair, Pelosi has put him on the inside track to becoming the first African American Speaker of the House.

Nothing that Fudge, Lee, or Youngstown's Tim Ryan had in mind would have been anywhere near as transformational.

As we consider Ohio's four Congressional representatives, it bears noting that Joyce Beatty, D-3, Columbus, supported

Pelosi all the way and is the new vice chair of the Congressional Black Caucus [CBC], which with 55 members, should be at its most powerful ever. Beatty was one of eight Democrats who seconded Pelosi's nomination to be the next Speaker.

Pelosi's return as Speaker, a post from which she engineered the successful fight to pass Obamacare, is not yet assured or official. The House will vote at the opening of 116th Congress and there is no guarantee that every member of her caucus will support her at that time. Only losers should bet against her.

Rep. Karen Bass, D-Los


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BUSINESS DIGEST

Holiday Black Business Expo set for Sunday, Dec. 2

A trio of local entrepreneurs, seeking to create a platform where black business owners can network, create, build and make money, is hosting a holiday expo featuring the wares of about 35 vendors this Sunday from 11a to 7p at the Aloft Hotel in Beachwood.

Sheena Evans said she and two friends formed The Empowerment Collective earlier this year to provide an opportunity to harness consumer-buying power “to support and strengthen our community, one event at a time.”

Expo merchants will be offering a variety of products including clothing, jewelry, organic products, skincare and beauty items, much more. Evans says there will also be giveaways, poetry readings, and raffles throughout the day.

The Expo will be at 1010 Eaton Boulevard, Beachwood, OH 44122. Those who print out a present a ticket that may be found [here](#) will be eligible for a special prize.

Core City program looking to give away \$10K in demo day competition

Five hopeful entrepreneurs will be vying to take home \$10,000 to grow their small businesses

of the sixth cohort of the Core City: Cleveland Impact Program at their culminating showcase, Wednesday, December 5.

This event will be a demo day-style competition where program participants will use their new knowledge and skills to pitch to a panel of judges for a chance to take home up to \$10,000 to grow their business.

The Core City: Cleveland Impact program participants include: Angel Washington, Consult 2 Code LLC; Karla Miller, Faithful Homes LLC; James Barnes, Immaculate Cleaning Co.; Jose Melendez, Melendez Catering Services LLC; and Daryl Anderson, Mustard Seed Development.

The competition will take place from 5:30p-8p at Jump-Start, 6701 Carnegie Ave. [44103]. The event is free and open to the public. Register [here](#).

Council for Economic Opportunities CEO is breakfast speaker

Dr. Jacklyn Chisholm, president and CEO of the Council for Economic Opportunities if Greater Cleveland, will be the featured speaker at the quarterly Faith & Finance breakfast of the Christian Business League on Friday, Dec. 7. The 7:30a event will be at Mt. Zion UCC, 10723 Magnolia Dr. [44108].

Tickets are \$20 and may be purchased [here](#) or at the door. Call 216.791.5760.

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Lordstown

News broke this week that General Motors plans to shutter several of its manufacturing facilities, including its iconic Lordstown factory, a nearly mile-long plant visible just north of the Ohio Turnpike in Trumbull County. Opened in 1966, the plant is now down to one shift, roughly 1500 employees, and manufactures a good car that not enough Americans want to buy. The announced closing is yet another body blow to the Mahoning Valley, once a manufacturing

behemoth but increasingly a depressed shell of economic woe. The area's voters turned to Donald Trump in 2016, amid his serpentine promise to make America great again. Of course, he has done little to help the area since winning its vote, and may have added a few coffin nails with his tariff war.

We lament the hardships that will befall many Valley families with this closing, but we have no tolerance for the posturing of politicians both left and right. General Motors is not a social services agency. Its sole goal is to make money for its shareholders. When it makes

bad business decisions, it loses money and heads roll. GM is a quintessential capitalist creation in a capitalist society.

This closing was entirely foreseeable but there is hardly a politician in the land of any stripe who will tell the truth about how ruthless corporations will act when their survival is at stake.

As to the complaints about the auto industry bailout that saved GM a few years ago, a line from a favorite Oscar Brown Jr. song many years ago fits both the company and the president: "You knew I was a snake when you took me in."

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CAREER

Anthony C. Peebles to Director of Diversity & Corporate Relations, Case Western Reserve University.

MILESTONES

DEATH

Franklin Delano Roosevelt Anderson. December 6, 1936-November 24, 2018. Frank Anderson succeeded founding director DeForest Brown as executive director of the Hough Area Development Corp. [HADC] around 1971. HADC was Cleveland's first community development corporation and one of the first in the nation. Anderson led HADC's efforts in manufacturing, retail, and housing for several years before relocating to North Carolina where he became a very successful businessman.

According to family history, Anderson, whose family moved north from Alabama as part of the Great Migration, was awarded a full scholarship to study engineering at Case Institute of Technology, but the offer was withdrawn

when it was discovered he was black. He became an activist, eventually leading the Midwest chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality. He was admitted to Harvard Business School based on his nonacademic accomplishments — the only student in his class without a college degree. He received his MBA in 1971 and returned to Cleveland to head HADC. Not long after, he met, wooed and married Susie Ruth Powell. Anderson left HADC and moved to Chapel Hill NC

where he developed and ran a custom molding company for almost two decades. He shared his success through his philanthropy, with major gifts to Bennett College and North Carolina Central University, where he donated \$1 million to establish the Charles Hamilton Houston Chair. His civic activities included coaching little league and participating in Sigma Pi Phi fraternity. Survivors include his wife of 44 years, and his sisters Eloise and Vivian.



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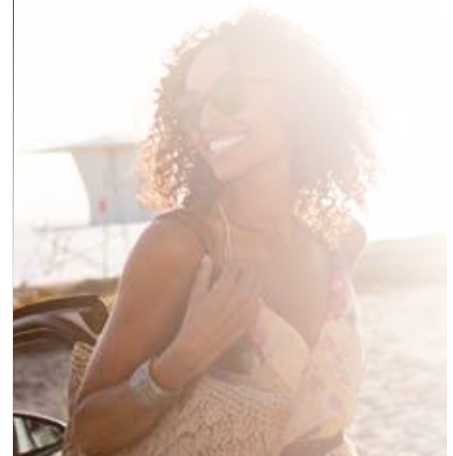
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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

MONDAY, Dec. 3, 6p

The National Black MBA Association Cleveland chapter holds its annual Scholarship and Awards Reception. Awards will be given to the member, corporate partner and community partner of the year. The reception will take place at [OEC Connection](#), 4205 Highlander Parkway, Richfield [44286].

TUESDAY, Dec. 4, 6:30p

The Cuyahoga Democratic Women's Caucus, the Cleveland Stone-wall Democrats, and the Northeast Ohio Young Black Democrats are joint hosts for a Post-Election Analysis. Confirmed speakers include state and county Democratic party chairs David Pepper and Shontel Brown, respectively; Vanesa Tey Iosue, president of Burges

and Burges; state rep.-elect Phil Robinson of Solon; and State Sen. Joe Schiavoni [D-33, Youngstown]. The meeting will be at the Heights [Recreation Center](#), One Monticello Blvd., Cleveland Hts. [44118].

SATURDAY, Dec. 7, 6p

Cleveland State University, its Black Studies Program, and the Levin College of Urban Affairs host the annual pre-Kwanzaa celebration, the Kuumba Arts Festival. This year's event, entitled Shake Spear, Urban, features a special tribute to the African Grove Theatre, the first known black theater troupe founded over 200 years ago in New York City. The celebration will take place at Levin College. The event is free and open to the public but tickets are required and can be obtained at the [Howard A. Mims African American Cultural Center](#), located in Berkman Hall, Room 137 on campus.

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Liberal White Folk talking about Black Folk

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and authority” would continue to prevent it from being annexed because they “lack vision and leadership,” he said that “community” was the solution.

One woman talked about how the police in her affluent suburban community, not having much to do, often take kids fishing. Her son admires them, she said, and sees them as the good guys and as his friends. But, she continued, she had had *the talk* with her “mixed-race son.” She said that she tells him repeatedly that if ever he’s out with friends and they get in trouble with police, he must be perfectly compliant in a way that his white friends need not be. She’s had him rehearse over and over again

how to behave around police, and that his survival may depend on it. She spoke of his lost innocence. He’s nine.

The discussion ended around the question of hope. One person said that when federal prisons give those leaving prison ID cards, it’s a hopeful gesture because an ID symbolizes a ticket to a new life, something that most local prisons don’t do, and should do. Yet another spoke again of community, that we must stop thinking in terms of “the criminal class vs. guys like me.” We must not think “we/them” but rather “us.”

The woman who identified first poverty and then racism as the source of Joshua’s problems, said that we all

have to be brave and speak out when injustice occurs. She said she had written an op-ed once that spoke out against an injustice, but that her ostensibly progressive employer refused to allow her to publish it. Someone joked that she was lucky not to have been fired.

More in wistfulness than in hope, the session drew me to *The Kerner Report’s* most famous passage: “Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal.” Fifty years later, our nation has created East Clevelands and Joshuas who are indeed separate and unequal from virtually every person in that room on Wednesday save one, perhaps two.

November results produce intraparty leadership changes

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Angeles, will be the new chair of the CBC.

A final note on the national level: Jeffries will join with new Majority Whip Jim Clyburn [D-6, Columbia, SC] and new assistant Democratic Leader Ben Ray Lujan of New Mexico [D3] to give people of color three of the top five positions in the House Democratic Caucus.

Ohio House of Representatives

Columbus has seen changes in the state legislature among Ohio House Democrats as well. Although picking up roughly a half-dozen seats, they will remain under the heel of a super-majority of Republicans in the 133rd General Assembly.

In an all-caucus vote, Democrats re-elected Rep. Fred Strahorn (D-Dayton) as

Minority Leader. State Rep. Emilia Sykes [D-Akron] and Brigid Kelly [D-Cincinnati] will serve as Assistant Minority Leader and Minority Whip, respectively, while Kent Smith [D-Euclid] will be the next Assistant Minority Whip.

Leadership in the Ohio House as a whole remains unsettled. Ryan Smith [R-93, Bidwell], who became Speaker earlier this year when Cliff Rosenberger resigned under the cloud of an FBI investigation, wants to keep the job. But former speaker Larry Householder, R-Glenford, wants to return to his old post. It is unclear if either can get the 50 votes needed to win the job.

Cuyahoga County

Closer to home, Cheryl Stephens, former mayor of Cleveland Heights, was

sworn in as a member of Cuyahoga County Council. She was unopposed in the November election after defeating Michael Houser, who was selected by County Democrats to succeed Anthony Hairston, who resigned the District 10 seat after winning election in November 2017 to Cleveland City Council. Since Houser never faced voters in a general election, Stephens was eligible to be sworn in to complete Harrison’s unexpired term as soon as her election was certified by the county Board of Elections.

Stephens is no shrinking violet and as a former county employee with a wealth of management experience, she is expected to make her voice heard quickly on a council widely viewed as docile.



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