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UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS
OHIO ADVISORY COMMITTEE

IN THE MATTER OF:

HATE CRIMES IN OHIO

TESTIMONY OF MR. SAMUEL GRESHAM, JR.
President and CEO, Columbus Urban League

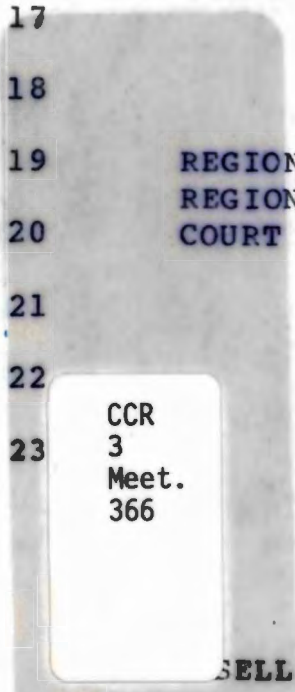
EXCERPTS OF THE REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS,

taken in the above-entitled cause, taken before MR.
LYNWOOD L. BATTLE, Chairman of the Ohio Advisory
Committee to the United States Commission on Civil
Rights, taken on the 13th day of August, A.D., 1993
at the Hyatt-Saks Fifth Avenue Center, 151 West Fifth
Street, Cincinnati, Ohio, at the hour of
approximately 10:30 a.m.

APPEARANCES:

CHAIRMAN: MR. LYNWOOD L. BATTLE
COMMITTEE MEMBERS: MR. JAMES L. FRANCIS
MS. FRANCES CURTIS FRAZIER
MR. ROBERT M. JIOBU
MS. MELANIE M. LACKLAND
MR. RAYMOND L. LEVENTHAL
MR. KENNETH D. OYA
MS. GRACE RAMOS

REGIONAL DIRECTOR: MS. CONSTANCE DAVIS
REGIONAL ANALYST: MR. PETER MINARIK
COURT REPORTER: HALSELL & HALSELL REPORTERS
BY: MS. VERNITA HALSELL-POWELL



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Meet.
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1 CHAIRMAN BATTLE: Good morning, Mr. Gresham.

2 MR. GRESHAM: Good morning, how are you.

3 CHAIRMAN BATTLE: Welcome again, and would
4 you move the microphone over a little closer to you,
5 so we'll be able to hear you clearly.

6 SAMUEL GRESHAM, JR.

7 Ladies and gentlemen of the Ohio
8 Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on
9 Civil Rights, my name is Samuel Gresham, Junior, I'm
10 President and Chief Executive Officer of the Columbus
11 Urban League located at 700 Bridden Road, Columbus
12 Ohio. I am also a 20 year resident of the State of
13 Ohio. I'm honored to speak before this Advisory
14 Committee on this day.

15 Racially motivated violence has been a
16 long and indigenous part of the history of this
17 country. There's been a great deal of speculation
18 about the reason for it's increase in racial
19 violence. There are three major factors that I'd
20 like for this group to consider. Unequality, poor
21 economic condition and health of this country,
22 continued racist attitudes and increase in racial
23 hatred and hate organized groups activity. The three

1 or four aforementioned reasons create a base for some
2 sort of understanding. However, the database that's
3 needed to examine the issue is lacking. At present
4 there's no conference of national statistics compiled
5 on the incident of racially motivated violence and
6 there's no <EUG> lay <TEUF> <TPHFPLT> mandate
7 requiring law enforcement agencies to maintain
8 records on this phenomenon. Not surprising, many
9 such incidents go unreported. Additionally, the lack
10 of a uniform definition of what comprises racially
11 motivated crime leads police to make the subjective
12 determinations, a great source of recording error.
13 Moreover, the speculation on the imposition of
14 racially motivated violence concentrates solely on
15 the individual level of prejudice and attitude, often
16 ignoring the broader social economic content. And I
17 believe this is a major error that results in our
18 true lack of understanding of this phenomenon.

19 Available data leads, no doubt, that
20 racially motivated violence is a growing phenomenon
21 here in Ohio. As reported by the Anti Defamation
22 League, over the past three years, incidents of
23 ethnic intimidation have nearly doubled, anti-semetic

1 incidents in Ohio have rose by 33 percent in 1991
2 over 1990. Moreover, as in most reports in Ohio,
3 African-Americans continue to be the primary targets.
4 Asian-Americans, Arab-Americans, have also become
5 targets because of their perceived relationship to
6 their mother country at given times in economic
7 difficulty of America.

8 During the last five years, Ohio
9 experienced the following: On 12-29-92 in north side
10 Ohio, two white youths erected and attempted to burn
11 a cross on a vacant lot. North side Ohio, a suburb
12 of Cincinnati. The teens who were shouting racial
13 epithets and were chased away from the scene by area
14 blacks. In 1-2-93, Murray, Ohio, a man was arrested
15 in Murray, Ohio and accused of aggravated menacing
16 after he allegedly burned the cross in the front yard
17 of a black woman's home. 1-15-1993, Wilburforce,
18 Ohio, a plot to blow up the National African American
19 Museum and Cultural Center was thwarted by undercover
20 government agents who learned of the plot several
21 days before it was to be executed. It was scheduled
22 to coincide with the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther
23 King. 1-23-93, Cincinnati, Ohio, a black women was

1 harrassed by having her tires slashed, car windows
2 broken, having eggs thrown at her home and having
3 dead animals left in her vehicle. 1-29-93, Oxford,
4 Ohio, a black student at Miami University of Ohio was
5 running for a student position of Vice President of
6 Minority Affairs found one of his campaign flyers
7 outsid of his dorm room in a puddle of urine.
8 Earlier he found racial slurs scrawled on his dorm
9 room door. 5-2-93, Dayton, Ohio. A black women was
10 watching a basketball game Sunday afternoon in a
11 black owned bar in a white neighborhood was shot in
12 the head by one of several bullets that was shot
13 through the window by a passing car. 1-9-88,
14 Columbus, Ohio, young white men were indicted on a
15 total of 49 counts of ethnic intimidation. These men
16 were accused of menacing black teenagers outside of a
17 movie theater. Two of those facing charges were sons
18 of Columbus police officers. They were accused of
19 hitting a 15 year old black youth with an aluminum
20 baseball bat. The black youth sufferred a fractured
21 skull and a loss of sight and hearing. Finally, in
22 1988 the State of Ohio was found to have suspended
23 more black students from public school than any other

1 state in the union by a national report issued by the
2 Department of Education. You will probably ask
3 yourself why did I include this in this report? This
4 information, coupled with the fact that
5 African-Americans comprise 50 percent or more of the
6 prison population, that there are only ten percent of
7 the state population, and the fact that 80 percent or
8 more of the youths institutionalized at the Ohio
9 Department of Youth Services for drug offenses are
10 black is devastating.

11 My point is to attempt to strain a
12 portion of the social economic context in which hate
13 crimes exist and evolve in the State of Ohio. Studio
14 racial attitude and racial relations have looked at
15 the issue at two levels; the micro level which is
16 attitude of individuals developed toward others of
17 different race and ethnicity and 2, the second, the
18 macro level going beyond individual levels to
19 identify structural systematic features of a society
20 that sets the stage for the perpetuation of racists
21 views. This is the area that I feel we lack the
22 proper emphasis or interest because it's difficult to
23 measure. Moreover, the stage that allows behavior to

1 develop is very important and we must continue to
2 work on it.

3 The messages that people receive about
4 a particular group from leadership and in the general
5 public easily manifests itself in the behavior. And
6 this is where we need to emphasize behavior, not
7 attitude. I don't care what people think, it's how
8 they manifest their attitude, that's what's
9 important. One can carry an attitude, but if the
10 attitude is not allowed to manifest itself in
11 behavior, hate crimes stop or they're mitigated from
12 happening.

13 Given this as the back drop, these are
14 my following recommendations: One, that leadership
15 in Ohio and America must send a message that hate
16 crimes will not be tolerated. The governor, the
17 state assembly, mayors of cities, city council and
18 business leaders must send a message that we will not
19 tolerate hate crimes in our community. And let me
20 elaborate on that. In American society we are a
21 conforming entity. We follow the leader. If
22 leadership is saying like they are saying the economy
23 is the major issue like they are saying in large part

1 that women issues are important, if leadership is
2 talking about it, if leadership is re-enforcing it in
3 all aspects of our business and our conduct in
4 schools and churches, in business centers, then it
5 becomes a part of the norm. If leadership is not
6 talking about it, then people are left to make their
7 own determination. I believe that extremely
8 important. 2, there must be a national uniform
9 definition of hate crimes. There's no national
10 uniform definition. The State of Ohio has one
11 definition, State of California has another
12 definition on what it means. So, when I look at a
13 report from the City of Columbus, which I retrieved
14 before I came here, and you know what I saw in that
15 report, that the largest group that were professing
16 hate crimes were African-Americans against white
17 people. Now, my first look at that report said
18 there's a problem with that reporting system, you
19 know, because I know that's not true. I get too many
20 reports coming in my office. But the police reports
21 said that the group doing the most hate crimes in the
22 City of Columbus are African-American, and I know
23 there's a problem with that. I know it's a point of

1 interpretation of the police officer on the beat,
2 what type of crime is this? I think we need to do
3 something about that. And we need a comprehensive
4 system for reporting detailed information about each
5 hate crime. We don't get the comprehensive
6 information that we need; was this hate crime
7 manifested by ethnic, racial or was it a personal
8 thing? It had nothing to do with the ethnicity or
9 the color of the individual. We need to get more
10 detailed information on that. 3, that the broader
11 socioeconomic context of hate crimes must be
12 researched in greater detail.

13 I talked earlier about messages. I
14 think messages in the environment in which people
15 operate from the standpoint of legitimacy in one's
16 behavior we overlook. Let's take for an example, I'm
17 from Greenwood, Mississippi and 40 years ago the
18 message that was sent by the county commissioner and
19 the sheriff in LeFlore County, Mississippi that it
20 was acceptable to kill black folks. 40 years later
21 there's a black sheriff and majority of the county
22 commissioners are African-American and there are a
23 different set of messages that are going out

1 altogether. That's important, that's very important.
2 We continue to overlook that the broader social
3 context in which hate and a hate situation eventually
4 evolves. 4. Law enforcement agencies must be
5 informed and instructed by national, state, and local
6 laws to treat hate crimes with as much emphasis as
7 murder and any other crimes. States should be
8 mandated to report these crimes rather than be
9 allowed to do so on a voluntary basis. We have laws,
10 but they are very loosely enforced. They're not a
11 priority to people. You know, if I got three
12 murders, one rape, you know what falls at the bottom
13 of the pile in getting any involvement. You know
14 what division you don't want to be in, the violent
15 crimes unit. You don't want to be in that because
16 you want to be on vice, you want to be on bunco, you
17 want to be on something else, SWAT. It's a throw
18 away and we need to change emphasis on that from a
19 legal standpoint.

20 We need to engage the community in open
21 dialogue about the problem. As long as we continue
22 to deny that the problem exists, this problem is not
23 going away. Multicultural awareness and educational

1 workshops should be held periodically. Community
2 residents and others should push for schools to
3 develop multicultural curriculums. 6. State and
4 local, national governments must develop and
5 implement systematic long and short range methods to
6 bring about structural changes that will reduce
7 inequality and social economic conditions. For me,
8 besides the context of the law, that's very
9 important. But, it's much more complicating and
10 probably beyond the jurisdiction of this body, but I
11 think the recommendation needs to be made, it's quite
12 simple, the economic situation which
13 African-Americans find themselves in, America is
14 dictated by and large by racist behavior and
15 discriminatory practices which allows us to end up at
16 the end of the stick with poor housing, which allows
17 us -- with poor education. All this feeds into what
18 I call the broader social context of racism. There
19 are messages that are being sent. Let me give you
20 one of the messages that I think is very detrimental,
21 and people would fight me about that, athletics. I
22 think it's a detrimental message for the gentlemen
23 and ladies on the board, on this commission. How

1 many white cornerbacks are there in the NFL, starting
2 cornerbacks? How many starting white cornerbacks in
3 the NFL? So you don't ramble your brain, there are
4 none. Are there any international white young men
5 who run in the 110 yard dash? No, who are of some
6 prominence? Now, that's not to say that these young
7 men cannot play these positions and not that they
8 can't train themselves to run in the 110 yard dash,
9 it's that we have sent the message and that we have
10 accepted it so much that we made those black
11 positions. Now, when you do that, you accept
12 everything else that goes with racism, when you do
13 that. And we as African-Americans forget that
14 because we really are playing into the trap. We're
15 playing into the trap of stereotypes. There's no
16 starting cornerbacks in the NFL who is other than
17 African-American. Why? Because it's a highly
18 vulnerable position. They don't stay long and it's a
19 high mortality rate. What does that say? What type
20 of message does that send over to our kids? I think
21 that broader context we really don't understand, we
22 don't make people sensitive about it.

23 I have one other recommendation,

1 actually two other ones that the Office of Civil
2 Rights develop an office on hate crimes and that the
3 civil rights office begin to monitor and file an
4 annual report on hate crimes and do indepth analysis
5 at the Office of Civil Rights. I don't want the
6 Attorney General's Office to do it or HSS. I think
7 it should come from a group of people who are
8 interested in the subject matter and will acquire the
9 proper resources to get it done. Not saying those
10 other people won't, but I have the belief that the
11 Civil Rights Commission will do that much better.
12 And I think that office needs to be established and
13 on an annual basis it does research to deal with hate
14 crimes covering across all the latitude.

15 Finally, in summary, racism is
16 distasteful. By definition, racism means social or
17 government policy based upon racial, ethnic or
18 religious differences. And at a societal level, it's
19 a set of fulfilling prophecies that create political,
20 economic, social structure which denies equal access
21 and opportunity to **out prove member. Results are
22 socially accepted practice where legal or quasi legal
23 forms of out segregation or discrimination. It

1 causes people to react in a negative way or in a
2 positive, oftentimes depending on their point of view
3 on the subject.

4 In a social gathering people are polite
5 about the subject for we, you know, know and
6 understand it's existence. We feel powerless in
7 addressing it, but why? We know how to resolve
8 racism. The question is, do we have the will? Floyd
9 Murdaw in his monumental survey on race relations and
10 American dilemma, predicts slow improvements in the
11 educational, political, and social status of
12 African-Americans. A worsening of economic
13 situation, arising self-confidence and assertiveness
14 among African-Americans and impending breakdown among
15 whites on normally accepted beliefs and attitude of
16 white race dominance. Murdaw correctly anticipated
17 increased African-American solidarity and dissention
18 over racial practices among wite and the national
19 movement towards legalitarian reforms. However,
20 Murdaw did not correctly forecast the strong
21 resistance to full equality for the African-Americans
22 that will remain after the old system of legalized
23 segregation had been eliminated. A quarter of a

1 century later, the urban uprising of the '60s
2 prompted another major **inquiry report of the
3 National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorder. The
4 Kerner Report in 1960 also emphasizing the American
5 dilemma of a nation continuing to move towards two
6 societies, one black, one white; separate, but
7 unequal. The Kerner Report emphasized how a legacy
8 of past discrimination in the form of segragation and
9 poverty had created a black community whose
10 environment was destructive to many of it's
11 inhabitants, to a community largely contained by
12 white institutions and condoned by white society.
13 Two decades after the Land Mash Report in the African
14 massive upheval in Los Angeles, we now try to find a
15 disparate, but important changes needed to be made.

16 There's a striking resemblance between
17 the destructions of 1968 and the position of
18 African-Americans today. Black status continues to
19 be derived from the persisting basic condition not
20 yet removed by either private initiative or national
21 action. And have been taken much less by those
22 repeatedly proposed, but not fully understood.

23 Most recently, LA follows a typical

1 pattern. There's a long overdue sole searching a
2 long with an attempt at political manipulation on a
3 deadly serious issue. On both sides, black and
4 white. At each of the incidents there's a hardening
5 of positions. I would like to describe it as a dance
6 between hope and betrayal. When these incidents
7 occur, there's a sadness and a hope in the
8 African-American community, hope that leadership will
9 move to solve the problem and sadness because of the
10 destruction and the death that happens to the
11 African-American community

12 From the perspective of the
13 African-American in recent history, the dance of hope
14 and betrayal symbolizes the hardening outlook about
15 the potential resolution of the situation.
16 Conversely, in the white community, there's generally
17 empathetic reaction, followed by sole searching,
18 questioning of each other, groups, discussion in
19 schools and churches. Just as generally, this is
20 generally followed by a visceral reaction, symbolized
21 by the call for law and order. The statement is
22 always made, rioting is not the way to attone or
23 express one's dislike. This issue is bantered back

1 and forth, back and forth with emotionalism. Then
2 the cycle starts all over again. The rioters must be
3 punished because they destroyed property. Second,
4 the Court and the police reaction. And then there's
5 the general community backlash and the denegration of
6 the African-American rioters in the media. The
7 subject becomes a political issue. The lines are
8 drawn, the white community becomes more hardened.
9 The result is the issue is not addressed in
10 proportion to the seriousness, and in reality an
11 opportunity is lost. Months after Los Angeles, the
12 astonishing disappearance of the event from the
13 public dialogue is a testimony to just how painful
14 and distressing it is to engage in a serious
15 discussion about ending the racial problems of
16 America. For men, public discussion of race stresses
17 the best of who we are and what we are as a people,
18 because we fail to confront the complexity of the
19 issues in a candid and critical manner. Thank you.
20 I will entertain any questions that you may have.

21 CHAIRMAN BATTLE: Thank you, Mr. Gresham.
22 Questions from the committee?

23 MR. GRESHAM: By the way, we have copies of

1 my presentation for each one of the commissioners.

2 MS. FRAZIER: The committee is aware that
3 this organization that in October the Klu Klux Klan
4 has applied for application to assemble. Can you
5 tell us a little bit more about that and what kind of
6 plans you are aware of that is going on in Columbus
7 to deal with that?

8 MR. GRESHAM: I'm a member of the Human
9 Relations Commission in the City of Columbus and we
10 have appointed a committee, the Committee Chair being
11 Reverend Clark, First Church of God. Members include
12 Alan Katchen, myself, Ms. Nichols from the King
13 Center. I can't think of all the other members, but
14 we are planning a counter rally which we are looking
15 for a name for a day of hope, a day of freedom, and
16 especially freedom which we are going to conduct a
17 counter rally probably at Vince Memorial at the Ohio
18 Center. We are planning to counter their efforts.
19 We're making the special appeal in this case to
20 people around the State and to particularly young
21 people around the State. We remember what happened
22 last time the Klan visited our capital city and we
23 are trying to fill the void that we know that will

1 happen if someone doesn't take any action. So, we're
2 appealing to young people to come to our event.
3 We're trying to structure our event so it appeals to
4 young people to let them take the energies that they
5 have and use them in a constructive way to deal with
6 the issue of racism and hate groups. That's all I
7 know right now. We're trying to galvanize the white
8 and black community as well as what we call all
9 public, *stamp positive human relations in the City
10 of Columbus.

11 MS. FRAZIER: Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN BATTLE: Other questions? Mr. Oya?

13 MR. OYA: You mentioned the need to have
14 uniform definition of hate crimes and also for the
15 reporting and for law enforcement officials to be
16 trained on that. We've heard testimony previously
17 from the law enforcement community or two
18 representatives that reporting is honerous as it is
19 just in general all the forms that they have to fill
20 out and training is a resource issue. What can we do
21 to help them out there because it sounds like if
22 there is legislation, a mandate, you shall do this,
23 it's not going to be met with open arms and smiling

1 faces. What can be done to help the law enforcement
2 community understand the importance of this and
3 incorporate the changes that need to occur to have
4 uniform reporting?

5 MR. GRESHAM: You know, you raise that
6 point. I've had 2 years of experience with law
7 enforcement community working out at the police
8 academy to develop sensitivity program for police
9 officers 24 hours. We tried to get them to do that
10 from the Governor's Commission on socially
11 disadvantaged black males to do that voluntarily, so
12 I've had going on 37 years of experience in that and
13 let me tell you that when we got down to the end, the
14 issue became resources; whether a new officer would
15 have to take 24 hours, and it would be 21 hours of
16 inservice for existing officers, and the question of
17 overtime and how they would be paid became a very
18 serious issue. I think it's a red herring. If there
19 are hate crimes as a priority as determined by the
20 Chief of Police and the State Safety Director in
21 those communities, they already dealt with, and if
22 they're not, they will not be dealt with. Those
23 things that are priority from the top will be dealt

1 with. I don't want to hear that if the chief feels
2 that domestic violence against women is an issue they
3 will be dealt with. So, when police tell you we
4 don't have enough resources, that's a code word for
5 we don't want to do that, and if you want us to do
6 it, then pay us something extra.

7 Let me point out to you what I pointed
8 out to them. It costs them so much in suits each
9 year for Rodney King type incident in their
10 community, it cost them a ton of money because they
11 don't win all of them. If you do these things in the
12 area of sensitivity first of all, and if you do these
13 things in the area of hate crimes, you reduce the
14 possibilities of that cost to yourself. I also
15 believe, be honest with them, over the long term your
16 cost will appreciably rise in the area of race
17 relations. If you don't begin to form a program to
18 deal with it, it's going to cost you more money.
19 Whether it's a Klu Klux Klan or the Black Panthers.
20 And that's another issue I want to tell this
21 Commission about. I'm telling you African-America is
22 ready for charismatic militant leader, and if
23 African-America get a charismatic militant leader, a

1 large part of African-America is going to follow him.
2 Now, the only person on the scene right now is Louis
3 Farakhan, but I'm telling you paramilitary units are
4 being developed all over this country and there will
5 be unified efforts in the future. Now they're
6 responding to what they consider the onset of
7 circumstances. They are responding to what they
8 consider the lack of government involvement, the lack
9 of the sensitivity on the part of government to their
10 issue. They are organizing and the one thing I will
11 tell you, they have read Mein Culp, they know the 7
12 principles of Kumesaba, they know all the history of
13 the Black Panthers, they know what not to do, which
14 is to become a public issue of dissention. They
15 understand the weather men, they understand SDS, they
16 understand Symbalese Liberation Army, they're
17 learning their history out there, and if you thought
18 that's going away, it hasn't gone away. And the
19 other factor I want to tell you about it too is
20 technology racism, the whole spectrum. The United
21 Nations building did not only give ideas to
22 international terrorists, okay. Don't be naieve, it
23 did not. It gave ideas to domestic terrorists and

1 people who want to cause havoc within the context of
2 America, and I wanted to put that on the table
3 because I get it everyday. And I want to tell you
4 this point blankly, and I want you to record this,
5 they're not going to listen to me because I've -- I
6 represent an institution that they don't believe
7 represents them. We work on that, but I'm a part of
8 the suit generation. They're not going to listen to
9 me. They're not going to listen to the NAACP, and I
10 hate to say this, they're not going -- they're going
11 to have their own efforts, their own rules, their own
12 ideas and their own beliefs. And I'm going to tell
13 you another thing, the cycle is about to come again,
14 what is it, 30 year cycle. It's about to come again.
15 So I'm hoping that this Commission, in particular
16 under this administration, can begin to save us a lot
17 of problems in the year 2000 and beyond because I
18 think the issue that you're working on is going to be
19 very important. Black folks are not going to turn
20 their cheek in the year 2000, Asians are not going to
21 turn their cheek in the year 2000, Latinos and brown
22 people, they are not going to turn their cheek. And
23 L.A. also point out another thing, if you didn't know

1 it, there were selective targeting in L.A.. 53 black
2 folks died, but that was different than any riots
3 that we've ever seen before in the history of this
4 country. Now, they don't have a charismatic leader,
5 that was a spontaneous reaction. Give them a
6 charismatic leader and we going to have a problem.

7 So bunk on what the police say. They'd
8 better do something about this because if not, it's
9 going to cost them a lot more.

10 CHAIRMAN BATTLE: Other questions? Yes, Ms.
11 Lackland?

12 MS. LACKLAND: Sam, I know the Human
13 Relations Council was just recently established in
14 Columbus, but what role does the Police Department
15 play on that Council, if any?

16 MR. GRESHAM: None.

17 MS. LACKLAND: Are they represented?

18 MR. GRESHAM: The Safety Director is
19 represented, but that in itself caused controversy
20 because we will be reviewing complaints with that
21 department. Some part of the community thought that
22 would be having the fox in with the hens. The mayor
23 appointed him ex officio at the last part, but

1 there's a great deal of liaison with them and I
2 suspect in the City of Columbus, for those who don't
3 know, the City of Columbus did not have a
4 comprehensive affirmative action plan in government
5 whatsoever. One of my missions on the Human Rights
6 Commission, Human Relations Commission is to put such
7 in place. So I think we're going to have a lot of
8 interaction with the Columbus Police Department. And
9 just to add fuel to that issue that you raised, the
10 City of Columbus is now talking about privatizing its
11 refuse collection and you know 3 percent of the
12 employees in refuse collection are who,
13 African-Americans. So, it really set up a whole
14 series of issue with the City of Columbus, and they
15 do have a \$34 million projected deficit for the year.
16 So the City of Columbus is going to be facing a whole
17 series of problems, police being one of many, fire
18 department, too.

19 If you didn't know, it was reported,
20 not recently of a practice of people buying people
21 out. Have you heard of that practice? For the rest
22 of the Commissioners, if you were on a list to be
23 promoted and you, and say you were Number 2 and I

1 was -- say you were Number 1 and I was Number 2, I
2 could go down to the bank, make a withdrawal and buy
3 you out. That means you would withdraw from being
4 Number 1 on the list and then I automatically move
5 up. We didn't even, the black folks didn't even know
6 such a practice existed, but people were buying
7 people out on the list. I think that's a serious
8 problem. The City Attorney says that it's legal, but
9 given the seniority that exists, and given previous
10 oppression, black folks are where on the list? We'd
11 have to spend millions of dollars to buy people out
12 in order to get promotions. So I think what you're
13 saying the service director of the City of Columbus
14 are going to be facing a lot of issues and the police
15 department is not yet at a point where it should be.

16 MS. LACKLAND: I guess one of the things
17 that concerned me the last couple of days we've heard
18 a lot of testimony about the critical role that the
19 police department on the local and state level should
20 be playing in dealing with hate crimes and yet you
21 hear such contrary information about the role they
22 are playing and, in fact, I keep thinking about the
23 Lutesville incident where security guards are openly

1 members of Arian Brothers and other hate groups and I
2 don't know, it seems to be a thread.

3 MR. GRESHAM: You know something, we have
4 amnesia, historical amnesia. I did a t.v. show
5 program not too long ago and I said to people we have
6 historical amnesia which is we don't learn and
7 remember the painful things that went before. We
8 don't, historically African-Americans did not start
9 to enjoy vestiges of freedom in America until 1964,
10 and in real cases it took until 1974 to actualize
11 what the 1964 Civil Rights Bill, public accommodation
12 and all that did. If you do the math on that from
13 '64 to now, that's less than 30 years. So, what we
14 are asking people to do is make between 1619 and 1964
15 is 385 years, we're asking them to forget 385 years
16 in 30 years, and the attitude, behaviors, informal
17 systems. It's not going to happen all of a sudden.
18 We are at a point where in America everything says we
19 should be equal, bunk. It's only been 30 years and
20 in some cases it's only been 20 years. How in the
21 heck can we be equal? How do we get rid of all these
22 institutionalized practices, attitudes and behaviors,
23 all of a sudden? Now we're supposed to come up to

1 the starting line and run a race fairly? Bunk.
2 Can't be done, too many land mines in the track, too
3 many behaviors, too many attitudes, simply cannot be
4 done.

5 Police Department, Columbus Police
6 Department. We didn't start to get on the Police
7 Department until 1979, am I correct, not until then.
8 That's less than 15 years. So there's not a lot of
9 history in which people are involved with. We assume
10 that police officers, they have their own biases,
11 they have their own weaknesses in the Police
12 Department.

13 My view is that a police officer cannot
14 be on the Police Department unless he or she holds a
15 bachelor Degree in sociology. That would be my rule.
16 Now, we'd get a different police department, then
17 wouldn't we? What you do is you see the movies on
18 homicide, that's the last thing that people do on the
19 Police Department. The primary thing that they do is
20 domestic runs. So why are you sending somebody who
21 will spend more time on shooting guns and
22 fingerprinting and you spend the less amount of time
23 on the things that they do the most of which is

1 domestic runs, breaking up a family fight, breaking
2 up wife and husband fights. They spend the less
3 amount of time on that. Why, because it doesn't
4 appeal to those people in high school. The position
5 would not appeal to certain people unless it had all
6 those caveots; the gun, the power, the intrigue. But
7 if I say you must have a Bachelor's Degree in
8 sociology,, I'd get an entirely different type of
9 person, different type of police force. I think
10 that's one of the problems we are battling today is
11 what is the purpose of police, for the police force
12 is to maintain order, not to kill people. How you
13 maintain order in England is entirely different than
14 in the United States. As you know in England they
15 don't even have guns. Why can they get away with it
16 for all these years and we can't? Well, we have too
17 many guns. I don't want to get into that debate, but
18 fundamentally what I'm saying is police departments
19 style have their racists attitude and behavior and we
20 still -- if you assume that they aren't, you're
21 crazy. And what we still need to be doing is working
22 on changing them, remembering Columbus it's only been
23 since 1979, and how did that happen, because

1 African-Americans sued them and they're still
2 fighting them on that.

3 So, police departments are the last
4 bastion of hope, and in reality on the hate crimes
5 because a lot of their people are sympathetic to the
6 hate crime perpetrators. I don't want to say, make
7 it a sweeping generalization about police officers,
8 but I think my anecdotal information and my actual
9 facts can support it. It's not pulled out of the
10 air, okay because of the personality on the police
11 department and there are black police officers who
12 are just as racist as white people and they're on the
13 police department, too, all right? As my friend
14 Patrick Bucannon said the other night -- I watched
15 Crossfire and as he talked to someone about the
16 police issue. He said they are the last line and I
17 also ask the last line for who, okay, and that's how
18 people see them, as the last line between the venom
19 and the ignorance and the death out there and my nice
20 safe neighborhood. Interesting view.

21 CHAIRMAN BATTLE: Other questions? One
22 question that I have, Mr. Gresham, and it concerns
23 the role of not only the Columbus Urban League, but

1 community-based organizations in general that whose
2 focus is on helping the community and people. You
3 mentioned in your recommendations that you saw the
4 U.S. Commission having a role in perhaps dedicating a
5 certain group to hate crimes. What do you feel the
6 role of community-based organizations such as the
7 Urban League and others has and could come in this
8 same issue?

9 MR. GRESHAM: I think two things I want to
10 point out. The main line civil rights organization
11 in America are going through a change, they're going
12 through a transition now. I've been in the Urban
13 League for 7 years. There are 113 affiliates, a
14 Quarter Century Club which is the group of men and
15 women who have been in there for 25 years or more is
16 now down to seven people. The organization is
17 changing. Fundamentally what that answer is, there's
18 going to be a shake out period in the NAACP as it's
19 going through with Ben Chavis there now, they're
20 going through the shake out shortly they'll probably
21 transition the National Urban League and then they'll
22 be a shake out. But what I think will come out of it
23 is much more professional individual leading things,

1 volunteer organizations and non profit organizations.
2 I think what you will see is the evolution of
3 accepting responsibility for identifying these types
4 of crimes within the context of our community more
5 readily.

6 I was embarrassed to ask my director
7 for the central leadership when I was preparing my
8 letter to call ADL to give me some information and I
9 said, goddamn it, that's it, I'm not calling ADL any
10 more, we're going to find a way to report this, to
11 retrieve this information ourselves. Historically
12 ADL has done a good job, but ADL in itself is not
13 going to attract certain type of people. A lot of
14 black folks aren't going to ADL. A lot of blacks
15 don't go, aren't going to come from Urban League and
16 NAACP. In reality we as an Agency haven't said here
17 that -- we haven't we said come bring us information,
18 we're compiling this data. Most of those
19 organizations, particularly Urban League, has moved
20 away from race relations and has moved more into job
21 training. You're going to see the Urban League move
22 back to race relations more so because I think it's
23 the center piece of the year 2000.

1 John Jacobs was at the National
2 Convention said don't get mad, get organized. Don't
3 get mad, get organized. And I think you're going to
4 see that as a buzz word. We are organized, we are
5 spending a lot of time organizing. What used to be
6 our forte in our community has become our weakness.
7 We have become what I call Hollywood civil rights
8 leaders. We do everything by fax machine and
9 cellular telephone, and we fly into Little Rock for a
10 demonstration, then we fly down to Jackson,
11 Mississippi for another demonstration. That's not
12 how it's done. You've got to rub elbows with the
13 people. You've got to work with people. You've got
14 to get dirty. You've got to get out of that. I
15 think you're going to see a heck of a lot more of
16 that. Hollywood is gone. I think you're going to
17 see a new brand of leader in these institutions. In
18 short way of answering your question, we have to take
19 more responsibility for the subject ourselves. We
20 have to educate our people to the vestiges of racism.
21 Black kids don't know enough -- there are black
22 adults that still don't even know when they're being
23 discriminated against. They really don't. They just

1 accept what people are doing to them. I give you an
2 example. We were with some young people and we were
3 in a restaurant and we said we should get certain
4 types of services and the person who said, that's
5 young, no, don't ask for that. Why can't you, you're
6 paying for it? And that upset us that that person
7 didn't insist on that. We've got a lot of work to
8 do. We assume we're passing on to our kids and our
9 institutions, but they haven't. The Urban League and
10 NAACP has a lot of work to do because there's a large
11 part of the community has no relationship to it
12 whatsoever because they don't, they deal with their
13 issue and race is their issue. If you want to get a
14 good conversation in a beauty shop and barber shop
15 and start talking about race in the black community,
16 everybody wants to talk about it because everybody
17 has a story. So, in essence, we're going to have to
18 change our position or we're not going to continue to
19 enjoy the support from the black community.

20 One more thing, I'll predict the
21 National Urban League will lead demonstrations in the
22 1990s. If you didn't know it, the National Urban
23 League has never organized a demonstration against

1 anything, it has been Core and it has been the NAACP.
2 In the '90s and future years, the Urban League will
3 be organizing demonstrations. You will see a
4 different type of organization.

5 CHAIRMAN BATTLE: I do remember from the
6 Urban League conference recently that John Jacobs
7 mentioned that the Urban league would be a major
8 player in the August 29th re-enactment on the March
9 on Washington, so I guess your prediction is going to
10 come true very quickly. But you were speaking I
11 think of cities across the country where the Urban
12 League will be the player in pulling that type of
13 thing off.

14 CHAIRMAN BATTLE: Are there any other
15 questions for Mr. Gresham?


16 Thank you very much. We appreciate
17 your testimony.

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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, VERNITA HALSELL-POWELL, a Certified Shorthand Reporter and Notary Public within and for the County of Cook, State of Illinois, hereby state that I reported in shorthand the testimony given at the above-entitled cause, and state that this is a true and accurate transcript of my shorthand notes so taken as aforesaid.



Notary Public, Cook County, Illinois