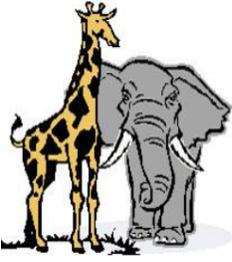


Building a House for Diversity

by R. Roosevelt Thomas, Jr. Excerpts from the book:



In a small suburban community just outside the city of Artiodact, a giraffe had a new home built to his family's specifications. It was a wonderful house for giraffes, with soaring ceilings and tall doorways. High windows ensured maximum light and good views while protecting the family's privacy. Narrow hallways saved valuable space without compromising convenience. So well done was the house that it won the National Giraffe Home of the Year Award.

The home's owners were understandably proud.

One day the giraffe, while working in his state-of-the-art woodshop in the basement, happened to look out the window. Coming down the street was an elephant. "I know him", he thought. "We worked together on a PTA committee. He is an excellent wood worker too. I think I'll ask him in to see my new shop. Maybe we can even work together on some projects" So the giraffe reached his head out of the window and invited the elephant in.

The elephant was delighted; he had liked working with the giraffe and looked forward to knowing him better. Besides, he knew about the woodshop and wanted to see it. So he walked up to the basement door and waited for it to open.

"Come in; come in" the giraffe said. But immediately they encountered a problem. While the elephant could get his head in the door, he could go no further.

"It's a good thing we made this door expandable to accommodate my woodshop equipment", the giraffe said. "Give me a minute while I take care of our problem". He removes some bolts and panels to allow the elephant in.

The two acquaintances were happily exchanging woodworking stories when the giraffe's wife leaned her head down the basement stairs and called to her husband; "telephone, dear; it's your boss".

"I better take that upstairs in the den," the giraffe told the elephant. "Please make yourself at home, this may take a while".

The elephant looked around and saw a half-finished project on the lathe table in the far corner, and decided to explore it further. As he moved through the doorway that led to that area of the shop, he heard an ominous scrunch. He backed out scratching his head. "Maybe I'll join the giraffe upstairs." he thought but as he started up the stairs, he heard them began to crack. He jumped off and fell back against the wall. It too began to crumble. As he sat there disheveled and dismayed the giraffe came down the stairs.

"What on earth is happening here?" The giraffe asked in amazement.

"I was trying to make myself at home," the elephant said. The giraffe looked around, "Okay, I see the problem. The doorway, it is too narrow. We have to make you smaller. There's an aerobics studio near here. If you take some classes there, we could get you down to size."

"Maybe," the elephant stated, looking unconvinced. "And the stairs are too weak to carry your weight," the giraffe continued. "If you go to ballet classes at night, I'm

sure we can get you light on your feet. I really hope you'll do it. I like having you here."

"Perhaps" the elephant said. "But to tell you the truth, I'm not sure that a house designed for a giraffe would ever really work for an elephant, not unless there are some major changes."

The giraffe and elephant forms a diverse mixture of animals. They are similar in important ways; they live in the same neighborhood, share several interests; woodworking, PTA involvement, have congenial attitudes toward each other, and a desire to become better friends. But they are also different in several critical ways, - size, weight, and shape, and those differences prove to be their undoing.

In our story the giraffe represents the main group; it is his house, his design, his rules. He is in charge. **The elephant is the other.** He is warmly invited and generally welcomed, but in the giraffe's home he is the outsider and always will be. **The house was not built with the elephant in mind.**

Members of the dominant component - the giraffes - are the people in control. They, or their ancestors, built the house. They decide the policies and procedures, set up the underlying assumptions for success, and establish systems to reflect those assumptions. Giraffes know the unwritten rules for success because they created them. They know how to play the game so they will win. They have a major voice in who is allowed to enter the organization and whether they will succeed or merely be tolerated.

Subordinate component members - the elephants - have little or no power. They are the newcomers, the outsiders. They lack the insider knowledge, yet they must somehow fake out the unwritten rules for success and make the necessary adaptation. Their own interests/needs are not incorporated into the organization's environment, and in fact they feel pressured to ignore them or set them aside. To get along in someone else's house, they must leave their needs and their differences at the front door.

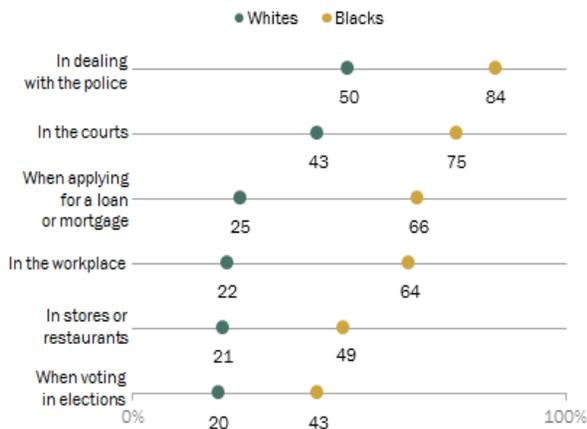
Giraffe Benefits

Ira Katznelson, the Ruggles professor of political science and history at Columbia University, enters this fray with a provocative new book, "When Affirmative Action Was White," which seeks to provide a broader historical justification for continuing affirmative action programs. Katznelson's principal focus is on the monumental social programs of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal and Harry Truman's Fair Deal in the 1930's and 1940's. **He contends that those programs not only discriminated against blacks, but actually contributed to widening the gap between white and black Americans.** Servicemen's Readjustment Act, known as the G.I. Bill of Rights, a series of programs that poured **\$95 billion** into expanding opportunity for soldiers returning from World War II. Over all, the G.I. Bill was a dramatic success, helping **16 million** veterans attend college, receive job training, start businesses and purchase their first homes. Half a century later, President Clinton praised the G.I. Bill as "the best deal ever made by Uncle Sam," and said it "helped to unleash a prosperity never before known."

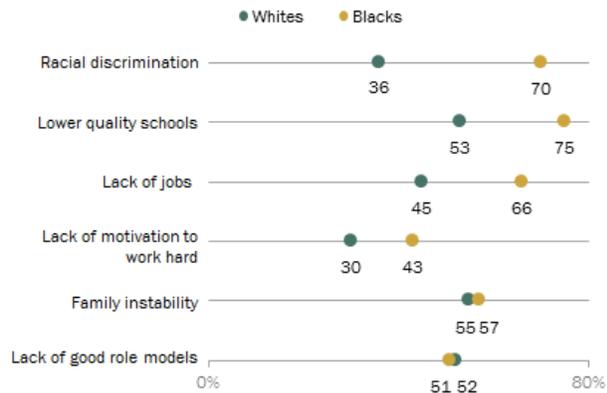
By October 1946, 6,500 former soldiers had been placed in nonfarm jobs by the employment service in Mississippi; **86 percent of the skilled and semiskilled jobs were filled by whites, 92 percent of the unskilled ones by blacks.** In New York and northern New Jersey, "fewer than 100 of the 67,000 mortgages insured by the G.I. Bill supported home purchases by nonwhites."

Perceptions of how blacks are treated in the U.S. vary widely by race **Blacks are about twice as likely as whites to point to discrimination as a major reason that some blacks have a harder time getting ahead**

% saying blacks are treated less fairly than whites in the country



% saying each of these is a major reason that blacks in the U.S. may have a harder time getting ahead than whites



Elephant treatment

“To the real question, How does it feel to be a problem? I answer seldom a word.”

– **W.E.B. Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folk**

Vera Study

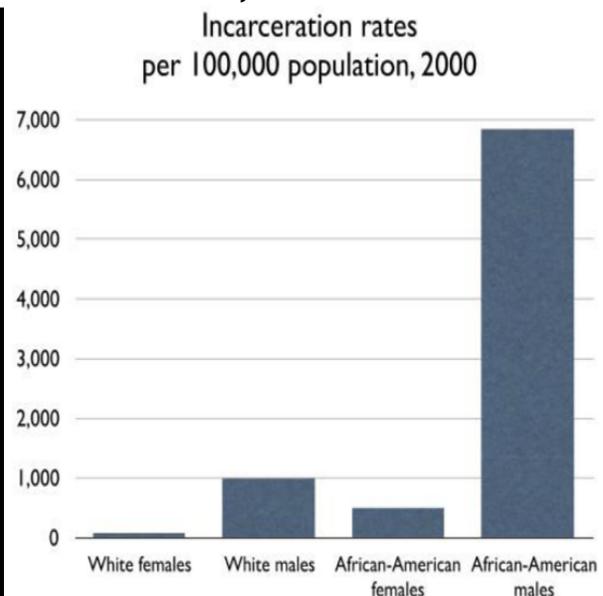
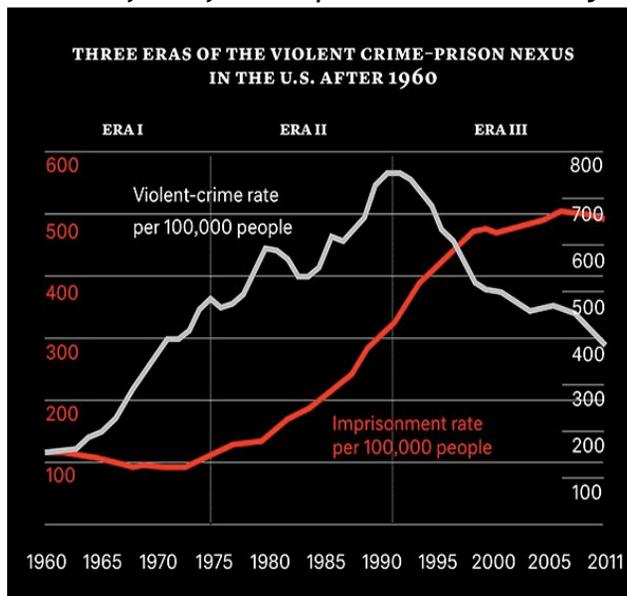
According to a Vera analysis of one week of OCPD jail bookings,¹ the most common charges among those booked into the jail by the OCPD were traffic-related: of the 622 people booked into the jail that week, 30% had non-DUI traffic charges and 30% of all charges (2035) were traffic-related (non-DUI).² The most common traffic charge was driving on a suspended license. **Only 5% of which involved crimes against persons.** Our review of booking data showed that defendants booked into the jail averaged three charges per person; those charged with a traffic offenses had the greatest number of charges on average (e.g., failure to wear a seatbelt, broken tail light, driving under suspension)

the vast majority of people detained do not leave their cells for more than 1-2 hours each day, **Oklahoma County is essentially running a maximum security correctional facility for people who are legally innocent and, potentially, largely low risk.**

DOJ’s Report On Baltimore Police

- A woman with a broken headlight was publicly strip-searched.
- A black officer with a reputation for speaking out over misconduct was harassed by a supervisor, who placed signs warning him to “stay in your lane” and “mind your own business” on his desk.

- An officer decided not to report a colleague for planting drugs because he feared retaliation.
- An officer harassed a mother and her son outside their home, ultimately arresting the juvenile for “loitering.”
- The Justice Department found that officers had been accused more than 60 times of using the word “n****r,” but the Baltimore Police Department didn’t classify the language as a racial slur.
- “Many Baltimore officers believe they are “enforcing the will of the ‘silent majority.’”
- An officer cursed out a resident who asked why she had been pulled over.
- “*She was told to ‘shut the fuck up bitch and sit the fuck down’ because they were ‘the fucking law.’*”
- *Baltimore officers themselves described stopping people without evidence of wrongdoing and detaining them.*
- *Baltimore PD’s sexual assault investigations often started by asking women “Why are you messing up that guy’s life?”*
- *A commander instructed a sergeant to tell her officers to “lock up all the black hoodies”.*
- *A form for trespass arrests already had “black male” filled out.*

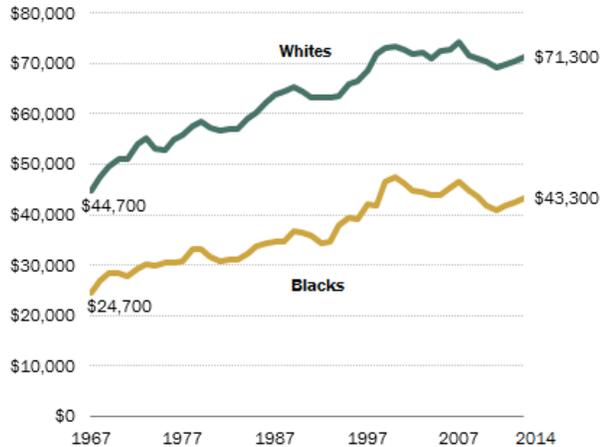


Economics

Many white Americans of good will have never connected bigotry with economic exploitation. They have deplored prejudice but tolerated or ignored economic injustice. - MLK

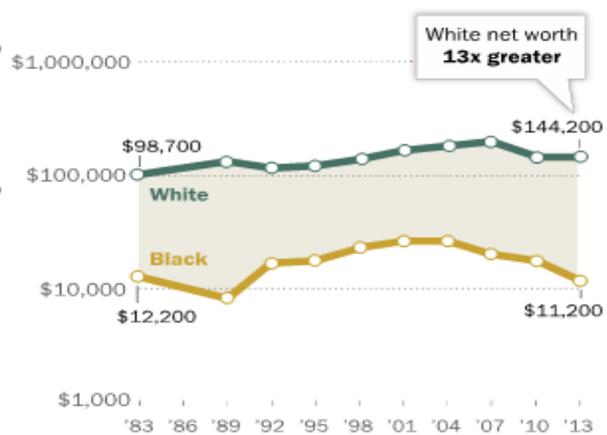
Racial gaps in household income persist

Median adjusted household income in 2014 dollars



Whites have significantly higher levels of wealth than blacks

Median net worth of U.S. households in 2014 dollars



If current economic trends continue, **the average black household will need 228 years to accumulate as much wealth as their white counterparts hold today.** It took 400 years of slavery, segregation, and institutionalized discrimination in the labor and housing markets to build the wealth gap that we see today. For example, by the time the Fair Housing Act made discrimination in housing illegal in 1968, people of color had missed out on decades of robust growth in the housing markets (and much of the next generation missed out on that wealth building in the 20 years it took to fully implement the law). “The racial wealth divide is how the past shows up in the present,” Chuck Collins tells *The Nation*. “We have a deep legacy of wealth inequality that undermines the whole idea that we have a meritocracy—that there’s an equal playing field.”

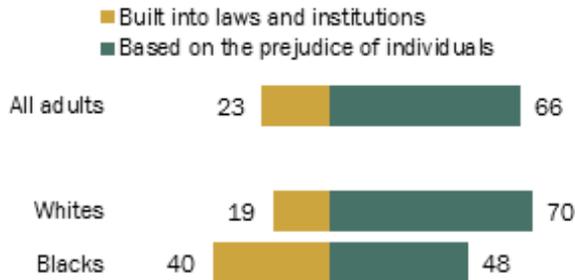
“Of the ten richest American Blacks, there is only one billionaire, Oprah Winfrey, and she is ranked 607th on the *Forbes* list of wealthiest Americans. ALL ten are in the entertainment field, and their total wealth (\$7.6 billion) amounts to less than one-tenth that of the richest white man, Bill Gates (\$78.9 billion).

By gangster force and wily deception “giraffes” aggressively sabotaged “elephant” advancement. They employed lynching, mob violence, and domestic terrorism, while simultaneously crafting policies and laws to gift themselves a vast assortment of privileges, preferences, incentives, subsidies, tax breaks, grants, awards, discounts, investments, exclusives, set-asides, exemptions, credits, quotas, deductions, and countless other benefits—hoarding the nation’s vast resources along strictly racial lines.”

“If you do not understand white supremacy—what it is, and how it works—everything else that you understand will only confuse you.” Dr. Neely Fuller, Jr.

More see individual, rather than institutional, racism as a bigger problem

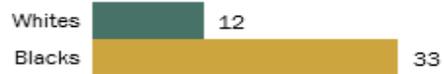
% saying discrimination ___ is the bigger problem when it comes to discrimination against black people in the U.S. today



About four-in-ten black adults strongly support Black Lives Matter

% saying they ...

Understand goals of Black Lives Matter very well



Strongly support Black Lives Matter



Think Black Lives Matter will be very effective in helping blacks achieve equality



Micah 6:8 - He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?