

[REDACTED]
Louisville, Kentucky 40211
August 10, 1993

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Mr. Brian Lamb
C-SPAN
400 North Capital Street
Suite 650
Washington, D.C., 20001

Dear Mr. Lamb/

I was the first caller on July 7, 1993 when you had as your guest the Managing Editor of Time magazine. On July 25, 1993 an article appeared in the Louisville Courier-Journal entitled Hyphenated American, and I replied to the article. Both articles are enclosed. Don't you think another view should be aired.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

UNHYPHENATED AMERICAN

A WOMAN who identified herself as an African-American was speaking on National Public Radio the other afternoon, and she referred to what I assume are white Americans, or at least some of them, as Anglo-Americans. If she is referring to me and mine, I protest that up with this foolishness I will not put.

She can be an African-American if she so wishes. It is awkward to say, but if it makes her happy to so label herself, more power to her. But don't brush it off on me. I am not an Anglo-American.

I am a plain, unhyphenated American. It is bad enough to have to go through life with a double name such as John Ed. I don't want to have to hyphenate my nationality.

What's the point? Everybody wants a new identity. It won't change them, make them any smarter, better, richer. Some of the people we formerly referred to as Indians now prefer to be called Native Americans. All right if they want it, but it isn't very logical.

The ancient Indians were not native Americans. They were native Sioux, Apaches, Comanches, Cherokees, etc. They could not have been native Americans since America was not then in existence. I am a native American. No hyphen, mind you.

And that is what I prefer to be and to be called. I don't like the idea of hyphenated Americans. It implies a drawing apart, a separation, if not an outright hostility.

Blacks who have taken to calling themselves African Americans imply that their ancestors, far back, came here from somewhere on the continent of Africa.

That takes in a lot of territory without specifying much.

Some people called Hispanics are not to be called Latinos; they can hardly be called Latin Americans, since people south of the border already have claims to that.

It all gets confusing.

Those we once called Orientals are now, I gather, Asiatics, or Asiatic Americans — a term that embraces even more territory than Africa, and dozens of nations. Asiatics may be, I assume, Chinese, Japanese, Taiwanese, Vietnamese, Mongolians, Indonesians — and so on. (Is Asia preferable to the Orient?)

I don't know about folks from the Mideast. For that matter, where does Central Asia end and the Mideast begin? Are Central Asians — such as the people of Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan — Asians, Mideasterners or in a class to themselves?

If we must salute them as Asiatics, must we also address them as Indonesian-Asiatic-Americans? Will the Indian Hindus be happy to be lumped together with the Pakistani Muslims as Asiatics? Is there some way we can telescope the designation for Azerbaijani-Asiatic-Americans? Or Kajikistani-Asiatic-Americans?

Lord knows I want to be politically correct and acknowledge the importance of each person's proper designation, but when the wheel points my way, please include me out. For one thing, I am not sure, if I should have to become a hyphenated American, what should

go before the hyphen. I suppose you could say that I am an Anglo-Celtic-Germanic-Franco-American, but I know there was some Irish raff up in my family tree, and a Wagner, who could well have been an Austrian, or some such weird nationality. If you look long enough, you will find some strange birds roosting on the old genealogical limbs.

Let me simplify it. I am an American. I say that in no gush or blush of patriotism. My people were Americans, their people were Americans, and their people's people were Americans, 'way on back. When asked, I say loftily that the first ones came here for religious freedom (they would take anything that was free,) but I know that some of them left the old country rather hurriedly, and some came in hopes of making a fast shilling.

But where they came from, and why, makes no difference. This country was developed, if not founded, on the thesis that all who came here, no matter whence, could become and be Americans. Slaves, even more so than women, were initially denied many of the advantages and rights that were ideally part of being an American. Nor is that battle



JOHN ED PEARCE
COURIER-JOURNAL COLUMNIST

over. But it is being waged effectively by both groups.

There are few places on earth where either blacks or women fare better, including a lot of African nations. We probably won't know for another generation whether the current separatist movements will prove a help or hindrance to blacks (or those we used to call blacks) in the fight for civil rights, racial equality. It would seem that many aspects of equality, including equal education and economic opportunity, will be harder to achieve if those we called blacks pursue separation from whites, including separate designation.

You hear relatively little separatism talk today from Jews, Italians, Irish or Germans who once, after their arrival in this country, formed distinctive nationality blocs. It was a comfort and to their material advantage to stick together in a strange land where they didn't know the language or customs of the majority. But by their second or third generation, most former immigrants, while eager to preserve folkways and inherited customs, wanted to become unhyphenated Americans, part of the eventual majority.

The current separatism is, in a sense, a reversal of that historic process.

More than half a century ago there was, in my hometown and many others, a section called Little Italy, where not only immigrants from Italy lived, but those from Hungary, Spain, Romania, etc. Some had come to work

in the mines; some came to open businesses catering to other immigrants. Behind their backs we called them Dagoes (I think that was for Spaniards), Wops (Italians), and Hunks (Hungarians). The Irish were already so assimilated that they were no longer called Micks. I never heard our few Jews called Kikes, but I knew what the word meant.

But even as a boy I saw the line dime. Tall, handsome, athletic Francis Fekete (I don't know what nationality the Feketes were originally) would have been considered a catch for any girl. Frank Nard, my Roman-nosed, good-looking, muscular friend, lived in Little Italy but married a tall, blonde Anglo girl. There is no longer a Little Italy.

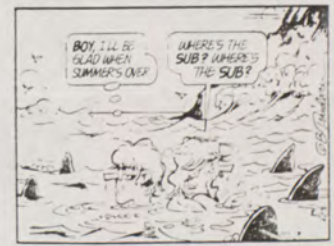
The lines yield slowly, but they yield. If the African designation makes blacks feel pride in their past and cultural background, well and good. But if it is a symbol of the desire for separation, and speeds the movement toward separatism — in neighborhoods, schools, dormitories, cafeterias — I hesitate to applaud it. Integration has not been a total success, but it is better to keep trying for it than to opt for segregation again.

If blacks want to be called African-Americans, I will surely oblige. I hope my wish to be called — and to be — simply an American, will be similarly respected. Not an Anglo-American. Not a Euro-American. Just an American. It is not a bad thing to be.

• Special to The Courier-Journal

DOONESBURY

BY GARRY TRUDEAU



to participate, for the next two years, in crafting a vision that will establish a foundation for future decisions.

In the past there have been many complaints that the Louisville and Jefferson County Planning Commission was reactive, with no strategic plan for development. Now an all-out effort is being made to create, with community input on the front end, a comprehensive plan that calls for a high quality of life, economic opportunities and equity for placement of industry and housing. When making decisions that impact the environment, the community as a whole must equally share in the advantages and disadvantages that come as a result of those decisions.

Last of all, participants were asked to evaluate the shared visioning process. The

with the support of the Greater Louisville Chamber of Commerce, Jefferson County government has launched this community on a historic voyage to revise the Comprehensive Land Use Plan for Jefferson County in an effort called Cornerstone 2020. In furtherance of this goal, Judge Armstrong has assembled over 200 citizens to develop the plan, many of whom recently assembled for two days and developed a shared vision of our community in the year 2020.

A *Courier-Journal* article of July 25 incompletely quoted me, as a member of that group, as saying, "One smart person who was well-informed could have come up with all of this (vision) in two or three hours."

My complete, thus more accurate, statement was that, for this effort, the shared group process we were using was as im-

can be as important as its outcome.

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Letters to the editor are welcomed. They should be addressed to:

Readers' Forum
The Courier-Journal
P.O. Box 740031
Louisville, Ky. 40201-7431

They can also be faxed to us at (502) 582-4290. Best-read letters are under 200 words and on topics of general interest. A letter must be original and contain the signature and address and should include the daytime telephone number of its writer. The editors reserve the right to condense or reject any letter and to limit frequent writers.

'UNHYPHENATED AMERICAN'

I would like to congratulate John Ed Pearce on his Sunday, July 25, column, "Unhyphenated American." I am black, but dislike very much the term "African American." I also choose not to be a hyphenated American. I think an individual may elect to call himself or herself anything he or she chooses, but to identify a whole group by your choice is a little bit much.

I do not think the media take into account that there are many people who resent the African-American label but are hesitant to speak out against it for fear of another label, "Uncle Tom."

Unfortunately, 374 years ago, people were brought, against their will, from Africa to this country and enslaved (with African acquiescence), a terrible tragedy that should not be forgotten by mankind. But I do not think it should be kept on

the front burner.

The key question is, who decided that the term "African American" should be used and by what authority did the term come into usage? It seems to me that insisting upon using the term helps to continue separating Americans along racial lines. The civil rights marches and the people who gave their lives (such as Michael Schwerner, James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, Mrs. Viola Luizzo, the four young girls in Birmingham, Ala., and many more) for inclusivity and change died in vain if we are going back to the same segregated format we had in the past...

Maybe we should look at the former Yugoslavia and other countries where each ethnic or religious group wants to take out its own territory instead of cooperating as a country. We are seeing the

results of cultural diversity every day on the evening news.

We seem to have become so consumed with race and ethnicity that it's almost impossible to talk about or tackle problems that are affecting all Americans adversely — such as teen-age pregnancy, drugs, welfare abuse, the decaying conditions in our public schools and crime in general — without injecting race or ethnicity. Rather than be labeled a racist or a traitor to one's race, we skirt over the problems, never trying to come to a solution. Why can't we stop being (something)-American and get about the business of continuing to enhance this great country, made up of many diverse ethnic groups who should be, in the end, Americans?...

Louisville 40211

WORDS, WORDS, WORDS

BY MICHAEL G. GARTNER

"Seal up your lips, and give no words but mum," a priest advises himself in the intrigue-filled court of Shakespeare's Henry VI.

And in Don Quixote de la Mancha, Cervantes has a fellow caution, "Mum's the word."

Why mum?

Because that's what you say when you keep your mouth closed. See for yourself. Close your mouth and try to talk. All you hear is a mmmmmmm, or mum, and Shakespeare and Cervantes knew that. And when you're mmmmming, you're not saying anything, you're speaking indistinctly, you're mumbling.

□

"Entrust it under solemn vows of

Mum, and Silence, and the Rose," Samuel Butler wrote in 1678. Mum and Silence are clear, but the Rose?

Once upon a time there was a god named Harpocrates, and, like most gods, he always seemed to know what was going on. One day Eros, the god of love, came to him and gave him a rose and asked him not to talk about the love affairs of Venus, who was sort of the Julia Roberts of her day, messing around with Mars and Mercury and Bacchus and Neptune before she took up with Adonis.

Harpocrates kept quiet, and he became known as the god of silence. Indeed, he is often pictured as holding a finger to his lips.

Eventually, though, the rose replaced

Harpocrates as the symbol of silence. A town's wise men would paint a rose on the ceiling of their meeting room, a sign to all that anything that took place in the room — any deed or word — was to be kept confidential.

That's why Butler wrote of the Vow of the Rose, and that's why today we say that something private or confidential is under the rose or, if you prefer Latin, sub rosa.

Speaking of Julia Roberts...

Did you know that pageism is a "masochistic fantasy of a man imagining himself as servant to a beautiful woman?"

That's what it says in Mrs. Byrne's *Dictionary of Unusual, Obscure, and Preposterous Words*.