

When Marsa Comes Calling with Trinkets

I received a bit of a shock in May 2004. I picked up a small pile of letters that lay on the doormat and as I quickly flicked through them to see if there was anything worth opening before I went to work, I noticed an envelope with 'On Her Majesty's Service' printed across the top and marked URGENT PERSONAL above the address window in which was written P. Grant Esq. followed by my address. I thought, this looks interesting and opened the letter to discover that the Prime Minister wished to submit my name to the Queen to receive an MBE (Member of the British Empire).

Now you could perhaps imagine my surprise, even shock, to be put forward for such an award, especially if you have read my first book! My first thought was that it was some sort of intricate practical joke by someone who wanted to test whether I would live up to my rhetoric. My second thought was that none of the civil servants involved in this process had heard of my book and that they definitely needed to tighten up on their vetting procedures! My third thought was whoever nominated me for this award was no doubt well intentioned but clearly did not know me very well. My fourth thought was that I needed to check myself to see what sort of persona I was projecting at work – I presumed the nomination could only have come via someone who knew me professionally, and this seemed to be confirmed by the mention of my job title in the citation that they proposed to publish in 'The Gazette'. However my job at the time of this nomination was not focused upon young people and the nomination was for 'Services to Young People' so it remains a mystery.

All in all quite an amusing mystery. My thoughts as I set out for work that day were all centred upon what I should say in refusing this offer of an MBE and a contemplation of how Afrikans who proudly accept these awards reconcile the slavery which was at the heart of the British Empire with their own tacit celebration of Empire as they bow before the Queen when receiving these awards.

There follows below a copy of the letter inviting me to accept the offer of the award followed by the letter I wrote in reply to this proposed nomination and finally the response on behalf of Downing Street. You may notice how Mr Chapman ceased to be *my obedient servant* once I had rejected the MBE!



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

SECRETARY FOR APPOINTMENTS

W E Chapman

IN CONFIDENCE

4th May 2004

Dear Sir,

The Prime Minister has asked me to inform you, in strict confidence, that he has it in mind, on the occasion of the forthcoming list of Birthday Honours, to submit your name to The Queen with a recommendation that Her Majesty may be graciously pleased to approve that you be appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) .

Before doing so, the Prime Minister would be glad to know that this would be agreeable to you. I should therefore be grateful if you would complete the enclosed form and send it to me by return of post.

If you agree that your name should go forward and The Queen accepts the Prime Minister's recommendation, the announcement will be made in the Birthday Honours List. You will receive no further communication before the List is published. Recipients will be notified of the arrangements for receiving their award within five months of the announcement.

I am, Sir
Your obedient Servant,

William Chapman

WILLIAM CHAPMAN

X8 XXXX Road
XXXXX
Nottingham
NGX XXG

7 May 2004

William Chapman
Secretary For Appointments
10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

Dear Sir,

RE: Recommendation for submission for appointment as a Member of the Order of the British Empire

Thank you for your letter dated 4th May 2004 in relation to the aforementioned matter.

I am writing to inform you that I do not wish my name to be submitted for consideration by The Queen and have completed the form you enclosed accordingly.

Whilst I recognise that it is not necessary to explain my reasons for this decision, and indeed, they may not be of particular interest to the Prime Minister, I thought your correspondence presented a useful opportunity to convey a message the Prime Minister is unlikely to hear from his coterie of advisers, including those Black functionaries who advise him on issues of Race.

Afrikan (Black) people are suffering in Britain, and indeed all over the world, be it in Afrika itself, the United States and Americas, the Caribbean, India (yes we are there in numbers) or anywhere else in the world we find ourselves in numbers. This suffering is a direct result of the Maafa (misnamed Black Holocaust by some) perpetrated against Afrikans by Arabs and most particularly Europeans. The kidnapping, torture, enslavement and murder of tens of millions of Afrikans was a Crime Against Humanity and the British Empire was at the forefront of this genocidal act. I would therefore be at the least a hypocrite and at worst a traitor if I accepted an honour which glorifies that period of British history which centred around the use and abuse of my ancestors.

In order for there to be true reconciliation there must be justice, and justice for Afrikans requires, firstly a public apology by The Queen on behalf of the British Government to all Afrikan people for the aforementioned Crimes Against Humanity committed by the British Government, British private companies and British citizens on behalf of the British people and nation. Secondly, the British along with the multitude of other European nations (including the United States) should pay adequate reparations to Afrikan nations and individuals as a gesture of recompense for the physical, psychological, and spiritual destruction these heinous crimes have wrought over many generations, to this present day.

If the Prime Minister truly wants his Africa Commission to do useful work, the above points would present useful areas for consideration and action.

Obviously, I am aware that these demands will not be met in my lifetime, however the Prime Minister will see in the years to come that the flag of Afrikan liberation still flies high and that I am by no means a singular or unusual voice.

I thank you for considering me for this award.

Yours faithfully

Paul Grant

In the spirit of Ma'at

With the purpose of Auset



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Secretary for Appointments
W E Chapman

11 May 2004

Dear Mr. Grant,

Thank you for letter of 7 May and for returning your completed form.

The Prime Minister is sorry not to be able to include your name in the recommendations which he will be submitting to The Queen for the Birthday Honours List, but he will of course respect your wish.

I can assure you that your comments have been carefully noted.

*Yours sincerely,
William Chapman.*

WILLIAM CHAPMAN

Mr P Grant
58 Sunnydale Road
Belconnen

Now what is the purpose of this chapter? Is it an indirect act of boastfulness; to say look at me, I get offered awards even when I don't want them, as some readers may be thinking? Is it an attempt to 'prove' my Afrocentric credentials, as another group of readers may be thinking? Well, my purpose was to provide a concrete example of how Caucasians offer carrots and inducements to make us psychologically indebted to them and to show us that there is an easy path along which they have laid out material rewards and status if only we will come over to the 'pale side of the force'. It was also to explore the question of the appropriate response by Afrikans – who feel any level of commitment to other Afrikans – to these trinkets offered by 'Marsa'.

The psychological relationship between the oppressed and oppressor is complex and full of contradictions and ambiguities. The oppressed has strongly ambivalent feelings towards the oppressor, both loving and hating them simultaneously. The oppressed often scorns other members of the group who nakedly kiss arse, but yet spends a great deal of time unconsciously mimicking and copying the values, mores, philosophy, speech, mannerisms, physical appearance and general ways of the oppressor.

The oppressed who try to resist psychologically often end up fighting the oppressor in their heads from sun up 'til sun down. They can become experts at what they are against, but some have little idea what they are for, having not taken the time to relearn what it is to be Afrikan. The oppressed often end up doing exactly what the oppressor wants, which is fighting amongst themselves and not against him/her. The oppressed uses the oppressor as his reference point and group, as her yardstick, barometer and compass, the only valid measure of worth and achievement. The oppressed comes to yearn affirmation from the oppressor even as s/he complains about the oppressor's oppression.

The corollary to this is the need of the oppressor for the oppressed. The oppressors can only obtain the ego gratification they need as a 'superior' if there is an 'inferior' to be looked down upon with contempt and scorn. In order for there to be a first there has to be a last. The oppressor also experiences feelings of ambivalence in relation to the oppressed. On the one hand experiencing feelings of disgust, loathing and contempt when the oppressed is in close proximity, whilst contrarily feeling a tremendous surge in self worth and pride as s/he observes the pitiable condition of the oppressed. In many senses the oppressor is lost without the oppressed who becomes their wanted/unwanted shadow. The lowliest members of the oppressor group experience these feelings of ambivalence to the greatest degree since they often live in closest proximity to the oppressed and hence feel the greatest degree of resentment at their presence, but also 'need' the oppressed the most since they are at the bottom of the Caucasian pile and need someone to feel better than. This is why the Caucasian working class get so angry and resentful when they see non-Caucasians with 'flashy cars' and other signs of material wealth.

The oppressor cannot bear to observe let alone acknowledge even the slightest sign of development, creativity or innovation amongst the oppressed and hence adopts a standard routine of, Condemn, Copy, Co-opt, Steal (Grant 2003). Contrarily the oppressed is honoured and reacts with almost childlike glee at any sign of acknowledgement, or blatant copying, of their cultural production by the oppressor, feeling that this recognition bestows legitimacy and credibility upon their efforts. The oppressed will gladly handover their cultural legacy to please Marsa. So, for example Negroes have no problem with Black Music becoming Music of Black Origin and Music of Black Origin becoming Urban Music. As long as Marsa is pleased Tom and Gemima are happy.

The Caucasian oppressor knows the value of his/her trinkets and crumbs in maintaining control over the oppressed group and they generally award them to three types of people. The first are the *Confirmed Negroes* who have been happily picking up the soap for years and who need to be rewarded for their treachery. The second are the *Misguided Afrikan Resisters* who although they have been fighting White Supremacy – though they may not always acknowledge it as such – for years, still cannot shake off the 'brotherhood of man' rhetoric that Caucasians have been pumping into our heads for years. These Afrikans are often Christians or Christianised. The third group are the *New Resisters*, people who have recently

come to the attention of the Establishment and whom they hope they can 'buy off' and groom with the right inducements.

Caucasians know that having 'successful' Afrikans clamouring for their awards and hence their affirmation, is an act of voluntarily handing over psychological power from Afrikans to Europeans. They know it reaffirms Afrikan inferiority in the mind of the Afrikan **and** the Caucasian. It says the only judgement that counts is the Caucasian judgement.

When you look at film and television awards you see the points I have raised set before us exquisitely. Let us take three examples: Halle Berry, Ving Rhames and Denzel Washington.

Halle Berry, who seems to think of herself as that strange creature 'A Woman of Colour'; produced, even by Hollywood standards, a ridiculously over the top wailing and gushing performance in which she acknowledged all those Afrikan actresses who had gone before her and whose sacrifices had made it possible for her to be standing before the assembled glitterati in receipt of an Oscar for Best Actress. What she failed to acknowledge, and probably even consider, was that Caucasians are happy to acknowledge and celebrate Afrikans playing roles of self-denigration, such as Hattie McDaniel in 'Gone With The Wind'.

Similarly, Berry was 'recognised' for her part in the film 'Monster's Ball' in which she plays a woman who falls in love with a racist redneck prison guard played by Billie Bob Thornton (very appropriate name) who has put her Afrikan-American death row prisoner husband to death. Ms Berry engages in some graphic sex scenes with Mr Thornton – which is one of her specialities – just to put the cap on her performance. Through her love - and pum pum - she redeems the racist Thornton and enables him to see the error of his ways and they live happily ever after whilst her Afrikan husband rots six feet under. Any messages in this plot do you think? Do you think she would have been recognised if she played a proud sister who wreaked revenge on racist Caucasians?

There is a clear reason why Ms Berry was 'honoured' for her role in Monster's Ball and it has nothing to do with racial acceptance or progress.

What can you say about Ving Rhames? Does the man know no shame or have no pride.

One of Rhames' 'classic' roles was in the Quentin Tarantino – now there is a Caucasian who hates Afrikan men – film 'Pulp Fiction' where he plays a tough gangster whose Caucasian girlfriend Uma Thurman takes a shine to one of his hired hitmen, John Travolta. Near the culmination of this film as Rhames searches for Bruce Willis, whom he intends to kill, he enters into a shop owned by a Caucasian redneck who with an accomplice ties up Rhames at gunpoint and takes him down into a cellar. Rhames, unable to move or cry out is then raped by a leather clad Caucasian moron. During the rape Bruce Willis enters the shop and kills Rhames' captors. In gratitude Rhames promises to cancel the 'hit' on Willis if he leaves town and does not tell anyone about the rape.

Now apply 'The Law of Flip'. When was the last time you saw a Caucasian gangland boss played by a physically powerful ultra-masculine looking Caucasian male raped by Afrikans and then saved by an Afrikan hero? Tarantino knows the impact of depicting a physically powerful Afrikan male being raped by Caucasian males. Rhames does not care as long as it 'helps' his career. Also if you know your history you will know that '*buck busting*', the process of breaking the will of enslaved Afrikan males, often involved the public rape of the most powerful and resistant Afrikan male on a plantation.

Rhames' true Negro status was highlighted by his pitiful behaviour when accepting an award for his part in a television show. Upon hearing his name announced Rhames proceeded to genuflect and profess shock and disbelief. To my utter amazement he refused to accept the award and insisted that Jack Lemmon, who was also nominated, come up on stage and jointly accept the award with him. Lemmon initially smiled with mild embarrassment thinking that Rhames was simply acknowledging his reputation as an eminent actor, however as it became clear that the Negro Rhames was grovelling for real, and truly believed that he was not worthy of winning the award, Lemmon began to squirm with embarrassment. Eventually

Lemmon was forced to go up onto stage and accept the award with Rhames. By this stage I was hiding behind the sofa in utter embarrassment. It was a truly cringe inducing moment. With such displays of his inferiority complex Caucasians will always leave crumbs – and even some crust – from their table for Rhames.

In his book 'Why Black Men Love White Women' (2004) Rajen Persaud comments upon both Rhames rape scene in *Pulp Fiction* and Halle Berry's role in *Monster's Ball*.

"...This was the most talked about sex scene in Black America until Ving Rhames was cinematically sodomized in *Pulp Fiction*. One interesting note about *Pulp Fiction*: both Blacks and whites invited me to see this movie because of the Ving Rhames "pound in the ass sex scene". But they had different reasons. The whites thought it was an amazing scene and Brothers thought it was racist. (It is also truly important to note that many Blacks "loved" this movie. Some still call it a classic).

Today, at the height of another very desirable sister's career, she is sexually exploited on a nine foot screen while her desirability was destroyed in the eyes of many Black men. Halle Berry's performance in the film *Monster's Ball* further degraded the image of the Black woman. I was also invited to see this film based on this sex scene. Everyone who told me about this movie said I had to see it because of how "*she played herself*". The scene had the beautiful Berry volunteering her vagina to the man who executed her husband. She tore her clothes off, positioned herself "doggie style" and was banged on screen for what seemed like an eternity.

Unlike *Pulp Fiction* most Black People who saw this film were shocked, disappointed and disgusted. These portrayals depict the false erosion of the Black woman's emotional and sexual discretion. They show beautiful Black women desperately seeking sexual salvation in white men." (Persaud 2004: 36)

Whilst I would not automatically take as read Persaud's belief that his circle of Afrikan-American friends provide an accurate barometer of the views of the whole of the Afrikan-American community in New York, let alone the United States, he does make some cogent points; some of which I touched upon in my previous book (Grant 2003) and which lead into the broader examination of miscegenation later in this book (see chapter 'The Race is Over'). One has to ponder why Caucasians would consider scenes depicting an Afrikan man being raped as 'amazing'.

Now back to the Oscars. Why did Denzel Washington finally get an Oscar as Best Leading Actor for the film 'Training Days'? Denzel Washington has produced many excellent screen performances, so what was different about *Training Days*? Was it a far superior film to any he has starred in? Was his performance clearly better than any he had produced previously? Well, the answer to the latter two questions is No and No. However, what was different about this film is that Washington was playing the Baddie. He was playing a cold, cynical, corrupt individual as opposed to the heroic type figures who the Academy of motion pictures usually like to honour as leading actor at the Oscars. When you compare the film *Malcolm X* with *Training Days* there is no logical reason – if you are naïve enough to believe in Caucasian objectivity and colour blind approach - why Washington was recognised for the latter and not the former. Of course everything in life is political; it is just a case of whether it is with a big 'P' or a small 'p'. Caucasians understand instinctively the meaning of self-interested practice.

I think it was no coincidence that Halle Berry, Denzel Washington and Sidney Poitier (who received a lifetime achievement award) were all recognised in the same year. I believe the subconscious Caucasian drive was to pull Afrikan-Americans back into the fold with the offering up of some high profile crumbs in the aftermath of September 11th. Also the roles of Berry and Washington were the type of roles Caucasians feel comfortable in recognising – as exemplified by the Academy's previous recognition of that full blown 'Tom', Cuba Gooding Junior, who responded appropriately with a proper kiss arse acceptance speech – and Sidney Poitier has long proven his Negro credentials, including getting rid of his Afrikan wife to marry a Caucasian.

Everything people do has a motivation, whether that motivation is consciously recognised or unconscious. Caucasians, as stated earlier, are the masters of self-interested practice. Awards should never be taken at face value and should always be viewed as, to a greater or lesser extent, politicised.

So what am I saying? That Afrikans should never accept awards developed by Caucasians? Well, perhaps, but the real point is that some awards should never be accepted by Afrikans who love Afrikan people and all others should be considered with extreme caution before acceptance. Afrikans have to break the habit of seeking and valuing Caucasian recognition. When you are at war you don't worry about persuading your enemy to recognise you ...do you!

