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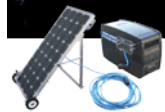
Wednesday, September 30, 2009

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FROM WASHINGTON
ELLIS WASHINGTON



WORLDNETDAILY EXCLUSIVE COMMENTARY

Safire, Kristol and 'The Spook Who Sat by the Door'

Posted: September 30, 2009
1:00 am Eastern

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The purpose of the [1973] film was to encourage blacks to create an action plan to "survive in the belly of the beast" rather than always reacting as victims of a racist society.

– Sam Greenlee, on the movie adaption, "The Spook Who Sat by the Door"

When I heard the news about the recent deaths of two great conservatives icons – Irving Kristol and William Safire, I honestly had mixed emotions. On the one hand, I am saddened when anyone dies, especially two titans of the conservative movement who helped lay the intellectual and literary foundation of conservatism in the 1960s and 1970s, leading to the Reagan Revolution of the 1980s.

These two men in a sense were my intellectual godfathers 21 years ago when I first become a conservative at Harvard during the same time Barack Obama was there being nurtured by ideological opposites of Kristol and Safire.

I remember going to my mailbox to get my weekly copy of the Conservative Chronicle and William Buckley's National Review. I remember going through used bookstores in Cambridge, in Ann Arbor, in Detroit, looking for books by William Safire, Irving Kristol and his equally intellectual wife, the enigmatic Gertrude Himmelfarb, a scholar of 19th-century Victorian England, but also a leading voice of conservative thought in her own right.

Yet, as a young black intellectual I was considered crazy by my friends at Harvard [graduate school](#) and at Harvard Law School, where I studied in the late 1980s. They would say, "Man, those racist white folks in the Republican Party don't give a damn about you!" I wanted to prove them wrong, so I reached out to all of the leading conservative writers and intellectuals including Irving Kristol and William Safire.

Well, I got a real big surprise. I wrote hundreds of letters and, later when the [Internet](#) came into prominence, literally sent thousands of e-mails with essays, [law](#) review articles and books I had written with inquiries (including to Kristol and Safire) pleading to these conservative men and women to accept me into their ranks at the Conservative Chronicle, Commentary Magazine, the National Review, the Weekly Standard and with conservative think tanks like the American Enterprise Institute, the Heritage Foundation, the Hoover Institute, the Cato Institute and the Goldwater Institute.

Their reply to this day? Silence or form letters stating that they have no openings for me. I was



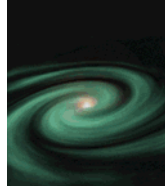
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devastated. I felt like CIA agent Dan Freeman, the protagonist of Sam Greenlee's iconic 1969 novel, "The Spook Who Sat by the Door" – a provocative book that critiqued the bad faith of liberalism (and in my case, conservatism). Dan Freeman is chosen to be the token CIA agent so the government can feign racial diversity. Unbeknownst to the [government](#), Freeman is a double agent and planned to learn all the combat secrets he could, to take that [training](#) back to his hometown of Chicago and train all the local gangs in guerrilla warfare tactics. As the "freedom fighters," the newly trained former gang bangers under the helm of Freeman become revolutionaries.

Sounds precisely like the background of President Obama, doesn't it?

I wasn't asking the GOP and conservatives for a handout or for welfare. All I wanted was a chance.

Is there no room for an intellectual, for a black man in the GOP ...? Is there no room in the conservative movement for a spook like me?

Recently, a young man named Kyle wrote me a series of letters expressing his admiration of my WorldNetDaily columns. He said just like I called Justice Clarence Thomas, Walter Williams, Thomas Sowell, Joseph Farah, Michael Savage and others my "intellectual mentors," he considers me his intellectual mentor. I said to myself, "Whoa! I had never had anybody consider me their intellectual mentor before." He also sent me one of his essays for me to critique. Here was my reply:

Dear Kyle,

Nice to hear from you. Thanks so much for your kind words. I am honored and I hope to continue to earn your respect in future articles.

I don't get many [e-mails](#) from young people like you. Please keep in touch. If you want to be a good writer, read good writers and over time you will develop your own unique style. Don't let your friends discourage you. Stay independent. Read my articles: "[Why I became a conservative](#)" and "[Obscurity was good for me.](#)" These [works](#) will give you strength during the dark days, my friend. ...

Peace,

Ellis Washington

Long story short, I recommended Kyle's essay to my friend Josh Price, founder and editor of TheConservativeBeacon.com. Josh was very impressed with this young writer and the authenticity and rigor of his ideas. TheConservativeBeacon.com became the first media entity to publish [Kyle's work](#).

My youthful charge was so overjoyed that he sent me the following letter:

Professor Washington,

I just want to let you know that my first article was published on The Conservative Beacon today. I can't thank you enough for pointing me in Josh's direction. I hope to do the Beacon justice and keep the conservative movement alive and growing.

Regards,

Kyle Gayman

(Column continues below)

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Mike Turner



Indeed, Kyle was published on my 48th birthday. What a [gift](#) he gave to me! Who knows where Kyle Gayman will go with his political, literary and intellectual gifts? One day he could become the next Ronald Reagan, William Buckley, William Safire or Irving Kristol. At least I didn't ignore him. I didn't treat this 17-year-old high school student with arrogant contempt, but respected him as my son. In other words, I didn't treat Kyle as the Spook who sat by the door –

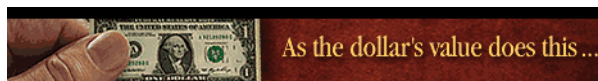
ignored, marginalized as a token and starved by a lack of encouragement by those in a position to help.

Likewise, three years ago WorldNetDaily founder and Editor Joseph Farah, like his biblical namesake "Joseph," took me from the bondage of intellectual obscurity in Egypt and delivered me to the literary Promised Land by making me a legal commentator at WND. Farah's magnanimity led directly to the conservative intellectual Michael Savage [recruiting](#) me in July 2009 to be his authorized biographer.

I hope that William Safire and Irving Kristol enjoy perpetual peace in the afterlife. Even so, I must thank them for unwittingly teaching me not to ignore the next generation of conservatives coming up, for *they*, not I, will write our final epitaph. What will they say of us? Did we treat them as the spook who sat by the door? Or did we open the doors of opportunity, encouragement and employment and usher them in?



Ellis Washington, authorized biographer for the conservative intellectual Dr. Michael Savage (see www.MichaelSavage.com), is former editor of the Michigan Law Review and law clerk at The Rutherford Institute. He is a graduate of John Marshall Law School and a lecturer and freelance writer on constitutional law, legal history, political philosophy and critical race theory. He has written over a dozen law review articles and several books, including "The Inseparability of Law and Morality: The Constitution, Natural Law and the Rule of Law" (2002). See his law review article "Reply to Judge Richard Posner." Washington's latest book is "The Nuremberg Trials: Last Tragedy of the Holocaust."



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