

Last Call (10:38) long version by Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa (David Rice)
I'm Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen We Langa, Mondo for short, calling from the state joint in
Lincoln, Nebraska.

The last time we talked I explained that the reason that it had been so long since I had called in
was, you know, health problems related to this COPD, and having to make a couple of trips
downtown to the hospital on the outside.

But I also mentioned that I had seen the new documentary of the Black Panther Party "Vanguard
of the Revolution", and it was really pretty good. I was, of course, not surprised, but
disappointed, that there was no mention, that I thought, of the Midwest chapters, namely,
Omaha, Des Moines, Iowa, and Kansas City, Missouri. And, this is not atypical. Most of the
books, documentaries, and so forth that we see or read of the Black Panther Party, do seem to
ignore the existence of the Midwest chapters – almost as if, we not only did not function, were
not relevant, but did not even exist.

Fortunately, there is an article that just came out a couple of weeks ago. It's on the Buzz Feed,
called "The Forgotten Panthers", which does talk at least about my and Ed's case, here in
Nebraska. Maybe that will get some people's attention. I certainly hope so.

The woman, Elena Carter, who did the article, was operating under some miserable conditions,
to say the least. For whatever reason, she was unable to operate as a normal journalist. She had
to conduct interviews with me without benefit of a recording device, or a pen or pencil. We did
have a few conversations over the phone. She was able to talk to some other people on the
outside, but, and then also we were talking about a case that is very old and, as I mentioned last
time, as of this past August, Ed and I have been locked up for 45 years and as of this April, we

will have been in prison for 45 years. So, it was a hell of a challenge for her to take on. Some things are pretty factual. Some things are not so factual. It's just a lot of material. But I think it's going to inform people and raise people's interest and so forth.

The next thing I want to move on to - I mentioned the business about the red carpet and some of the discussions that were going on about this red carpet. First, related to the Grammys and then to the Oscars.

I was thinking, there is a real, how can I put it, a real similarity between the way the women are paraded around on the red carpet and the way the dogs are paraded around at the Westminster Dog show! And I'm thinking, if I'm a woman, which I'm not, and I have no intention of doing a Bruce Jenner and putting together a bunch of money to try to see what it's like to live on the other side.

But, if I were a woman and I was up on the red carpet, I think I would wear some cheap jeans, a tee shirt, some inexpensive sneakers, no makeup, and maybe make some attempt to force the silly reporters to ask something more relevant than "Who are you wearing?". And, maybe remind them that you cannot wear a person. Just like a person can't have a brand, a person can't have a brand! A thing has a brand.

But when we live in a society like this one, where everything is so commercial, where there is so much greed, so much vanity, so much of a desperate necessity in a lot of people's minds to be noticed, to be paid attention to. And, where people are running around talking about how many twitter followers they have, we live in a situation where commercial media have a lot of us in its grips.

So, last night when we see that the African folks and other people of color I think, maybe but one, at the Oscars, we should not be surprised by that and not only should we not be surprised.

Why would we want to be a part of that?

How often do we, in talking about the music industry or the entertainment industry, hear words like beauty, like insights, like inspiration? How often do we hear these words in describing a movie or a song? It all seems to be about how many units sold. And, under that set of circumstances, the whole matter of whether or not people are properly portrayed, whether they are appropriately portrayed, whether they are portrayed at all! All that gets thrown to the bottom of the barrel, because it's all about the money and marketing.

It seems to me that African people, so-called blacks, that we ought to want a different kind of value system representing any kind of efforts we think we should have to reward our work.

That's something we should do. Let those other folks have their Oscars, let 'em have their red carpets, let 'em have their pretensions, and all that goes with that.

Let us have some kind of program that rewards imagination, that rewards relevance, that rewards historical films, that talks about people that America never talks about, for us. Let us have some kind of awards presentation that recognizes African folks who are **not** portraying roles that make us look like Stepin Fetchit, and so forth, from 50, 60, 70 years ago. That makes us look like court jesters. Let us have some kind of awards projects that really makes some sense and really ties us to some values that can move us forward.

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