

## DA VICTIM-HOOD?

Ben Kinchlow

A quote by Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas really sticks with me:

*"I have come... to assert my right to think for myself, to refuse to have my ideas assigned to me, as though I was an intellectual slave..."*

Born in a small Texas town at the close of the Great Depression to a hardworking laborer and his schoolteacher wife, I learned firsthand about biscuits and home fried chicken. We raised our own chickens and Mama rolled out biscuits on the kitchen table. Many reading this have hands-on experience with doing without and with hand-me-downs.

Today we hear talk much about *victimization*; among some African-Americans, it has become almost a *badge of honor*.

"Back in the day," in our small southern community, black children were not taught that we were "victims," "objects of pity," "disadvantaged," or "underprivileged." Yes, we knew about slavery, learned perhaps from "the old folks" and family histories. My great-grandfather, Ben Kinchlow, was born a slave. However, we were not taught, because it was not believed, that Blacks were "the gov'ment's" responsibility.

As a general rule, slavery in our community was not used as an excuse or justification for failure. Black folks' version of Affirmative Action in those days was "root hog or die."

Black pride was not about Afros, Dashikis, or boys wearing dreads. It was about the girl who did *not* get pregnant out of wedlock but finished school, and the boy who went to college or got a steady job and supported the girl he *married*, not gotten pregnant and abandoned.

Millions of words, and countless scholarly works, have been written about the "Colored," "Negro," "Black," "Afro-American," and now "African-American" experience, and I am sure that few intelligent people, regardless of race, would deny that slavery was an egregious stain on the fabric of the great American experiment. But that was then...this is now; a black President, two Secretaries of State, multiple Governors, members of Congress, a black Attorney General, a sitting Supreme Court Justice and multiple black multi-millionaires and movie stars testify to that.

Let me be clear. Black's mental capacities are not under-developed because of something that happened to our forebears over 200 years ago and, and Blacks are not destined to be the "gov'ments" responsibility.

Today many young African-Americans, youths, and unwed mothers, especially "in da hood," are being taught by so called "Civil Rights Leaders" that "it's the Government's fault... white racism is the cause... entitlements are your civil right." They tell Blacks what to think, how to act, and even who to vote for to insure the continuation of "victim-hood."

(see my ebook Black Yellowdogs at [www.benkinchlow.com](http://www.benkinchlow.com))

Perhaps it is time for many Americans, especially in the African-American community, to consider a paraphrase of Justice Thomas' quote:

*"We must all refuse to have our ideas assigned to us, as though we were intellectual slaves."*

Tragically, many in "da hood," have been victimized by ignoring an ancient Biblical warning; *"Beware... they are blind guides, and if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into a pit."*

During the 1900s, millions of Blacks changed neighborhoods, secured new addresses, and moved from the South to the North.

Maybe it's time to reconsider the address in "*da hood*" again.