

UNDERSTANDING HOLLYWOOD

PART III: RACIAL ROLE-REVERSALS*

EDMUND CONNELLY

“We had no idea that we were about to trade places with the Black man.”

— Edgar Steele¹

Blacks in early American films were portrayed in an overwhelmingly negative light. At best, they were faithful servants and childlike buffoons. At worst, they were irresponsible, impulsive, lustful, and violent. One of the first major motion picture features ever made was D. W. Griffith’s *Birth of a Nation* (1915), based on Thomas W. Dixon’s novel and stage melodrama *The Clansman*, which portrayed recently emancipated slaves rising up against the white order, raping white women, and visiting violence upon white Americans in general. Since *Birth of a Nation*, the celluloid images of both blacks and whites in America have undergone an almost perfect reversal. This installment of the “Understanding Hollywood” series examines examples of such role-reversals and explores the forces that created them.

Negative images of blacks in American films were slow to change. Despite the growth of the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 60s, “It was not until the late 1960s that African Americans began to play nonstereotypical roles, and the 1970s finally saw some serious and important films about African American history and life, like the made-for-television-films *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* (1974) and *Roots* (1975).”² By the late 1980s film portrayals of blacks had changed radically. In addition to the wide variety of serious roles for such black actors as James Earl Jones, Danny Glover, Morgan Freeman, and

* Cf. Edmund Connelly, “Understanding Hollywood,” Part I: “Hollywood’s Jewish Identity,” *The Occidental Quarterly*, vol. 8, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 37–72 and “Understanding Hollywood,” Part II: “Deconstructing Christianity,” *The Occidental Quarterly*, vol. 9, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 51–60.

¹ <http://www.conspiracypenpal.com/columns/mlk2.htm>

² Margaret R. Miles, *Seeing and Believing: Religion and Values in the Movies* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 118–19.

Denzel Washington, black directors also began contributing their own views of black life in America. Foremost among these directors is Spike Lee, who burst upon the scene in 1989 with *Do the Right Thing*. Others followed, such as John Singleton, who directed the gritty tale of life in South Central Los Angeles, *Boyz N the Hood* (1991).

Though these more realistic portrayals of a more variegated black experience were long overdue, by about 1990 Hollywood had begun to swing away from such realism and continued on in the direction of ideological exaggeration, in some cases approaching farce. This time it was blacks who were idealized and whites who became the one-dimensional villains or fools. The tendency gathered speed as the decade progressed, so much so that in the first decade of the new millennium, there is a yawning chasm between real life in America and cinematic portrayals of that life.

CRIMINALS AND VICTIMS

Foremost among these misrepresentations is the depiction of which racial group is currently visiting violence, rapine, and murder on whom. While the real-life issue in America of black violence against whites continues to be—for complex historical reasons—a challenge American society has yet to overcome, the filmic portrayal of blacks has improved very much indeed. At the same time, a profound emphasis on the sins of white men against non-whites has become a common theme of Hollywood movies.

Joel Schumacher, son of a Jewish woman and Methodist man, directed the 1996 film, *A Time to Kill*, a story about the legacy of white racism in Mississippi. *A Time to Kill* begins with a chilling though statistically improbable course of events: Southern white “rednecks” menace a black neighborhood and rape, brutally beat, then hang a young black girl.

In fact, while it is very common for black men to rape white women, the rape of black women by white men is exceedingly rare. When leftist writer Andrew Hacker published his indictment of white society, *Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal*, even he had to admit that “None of the survey respondents reported a case of rape where the assailant was white and the victim black.”³

³ Andrew Hacker, *Two Nations* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995), 190. Statistics show that for cases of interracial crimes involving Blacks and Whites, Blacks commit 90 percent, while Whites commit only 10 percent. Further muddying these waters is

A Time to Kill not only portrays white men as rapists of black women, it justifies extrajudicial murder—i.e., lynching—of such white malefactors by blacks. The father of the victim kills the two white suspects in the courthouse. He is then charged with murder and put on trial. In the climactic courtroom scene in the film, the white lawyer defending the father adopts a clever ploy to save his client. He appeals to the Southern jury's visceral revulsion toward the idea of black-on-white crime. In particular, the lawyer conjures up the image of a little white girl violated by a black predator. Having thus brought to the fore the jury's abhorrence of such a situation, he then asks them what they would do if the races were reversed and the actual predators were white men and the victim a little black girl. In this way, the jury is led to feel that the father of the black victim was justified in seeking revenge on his daughter's white attackers; the father is acquitted, sending a clear message that some forms of lynching are just.

DISPLACING WHITE LEADERSHIP

To say that the United States is a creation of white men is not an expression of racial prejudice, but merely a statement of historical fact. All the authors and signers of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, and every president until the present one, were white men. The transformation of America from a white nation to a multiracial one therefore requires that whites cede power to non-whites, and Hollywood has done its part by repeatedly scripting, filming, and promoting stories about the displacement of white leadership. Hollywood has convinced many whites that non-white leaders are not merely conceivable, but even desirable.

Eddie Murphy's 1992 film *The Distinguished Gentleman* epitomizes this sort of film. Murphy plays a con man fortunate enough to share the name of a just-deceased US Congressman, Jeff Johnson. Taking advantage of the value of name recognition, Thomas Jefferson Johnson (Murphy) shortens his name and runs for Congress. (Presciently, his entire campaign consists of a promise for "change" — a pledge we

the fact that "Hispanics are considered a victim category for hate crimes but not a perpetrator category. A Mexican who is attacked because of ethnicity is recorded as Hispanic, but if the same Mexican attacks a black or white for racial reasons he is considered white. This inflates the figure for 'white' hate crime perpetrators . . ." *The Color of Crime: Race, Crime, and Violence in America* (Oakton, Virginia: New Century Foundation, 1998), 1; see also Michael Levin, *Why Race Matters: Race Differences and What They Mean* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1997), 294–95.

would hear repeatedly from a real black politician in 2008.) Interested only in the perks of the job, Johnson is woefully ignorant of the election process and the workings of Washington. Fortunately, he is aided in the campaign by a Jewish retiree from New York and wins the election. (The two even banter in Yiddish at one point.)

Throughout the film, white America is subjected to withering critique. All whites in high-status positions are shown to be deeply flawed or hypocritical. For instance, the film opens with a reception for the original Congressman Johnson, surrounded by throngs of white supporters. Soon, however, the good Congressman is shown *in flagrante delicto* with his white secretary, an act which brings on his death by heart attack.

As the only black man in attendance at the reception, Murphy's character is mistaken for a waiter, a sign of the pervasive racist assumptions of whites. In fact, Murphy is a con man, one who employs a Hispanic and a fellow black to extort money from a philandering white company president. Once in Washington, Johnson quickly realizes that all the white congressmen and lobbyists surrounding him are con men like himself—only the stakes are far higher, so Johnson sets out to enrich himself by playing the game.

The images of the white male legislators and lobbyists are predictable: they are corrupt, immoral, racist fools. Opposite these white frauds is a whole rainbow coalition of aggrieved minorities: blacks, Hispanics, homosexuals, Asians, etc. At every turn, the image of the white is negative. Fat cat gun lovers are shown stupidly hunting ducks with semi-automatic rifles, and a white taxi driver ogling street walkers rear-ends Johnson's car, then shamelessly leaves the scene of the accident.

The moral center of the film is another black man, a theme that was still original in 1992 but is now *de rigueur* (and should be *passé*). The decent black man is a preacher intent on doing what is right. His idealism has rubbed off on his niece, an intelligent, incorruptible lawyer/activist who becomes romantically involved with Johnson. (One of her fellow activists is Ira Schechter, a humble and unassuming Jewish do-gooder.)

Exposure to her and her preacher uncle awakens Johnson's conscience. He momentarily backslides when the stakes get high, but then risks losing his girlfriend. Finally, he decides on one last scam, this time in the service of justice. In a Congressional hearing room, he exposes the white male chairman and greedy white lobbyists, humiliating them

in the process.

In the final scene, Johnson is about to be drummed out of Congress for his antics. Johnson and his girlfriend walk away from the Capitol. The girlfriend asks what he's going to do now that he cannot run again for Congress. Pondering his options, Johnson hits on an idea: "I'm gonna run for President!" Remember, this was 1992.

The Distinguished Gentleman was not the first time Murphy played the role of an underclass black man who exposes the putative immorality of majority culture. In 1983, he did a similar job of humiliating and replacing elite white males in *Trading Places*. In fact, the theme has become so common now that it is a genre unto itself.

DENZEL WASHINGTON

For more than 20 years, when Hollywood sought a youngish black actor for a role exploring white racism and black empowerment, Denzel Washington has topped the list. In 1987's *Cry Freedom*, for example, he played South African anti-apartheid martyr Steve Biko. In 1989's *Glory* he played an escaped slave who joins the Union army in the Civil War. In 1991's *Mississippi Masala*, Washington's character falls in love with an immigrant from India in racist Mississippi. Washington's big breakthrough, however, was his title role in the 1992 Spike Lee film *Malcolm X*. In 1999, Washington played the title role in *The Hurricane*, about boxer Rubin "Hurricane" Carter, imprisoned for the 1966 murders of three New Jersey whites. Other race-charged Washington films include *The Siege* (1998), *Training Day* (2001), *John Q* (2002), *Antwone Fisher* (2002), *Man on Fire* (2004), *Inside Man* (2006), *Déjà Vu* (2006), *American Gangster* (2007), and *The Great Debaters* (2007). Regarding the theme of white displacement, however, two of Washington's films stand out: *Crimson Tide* (1995), directed by Tony Scott and produced by Don Simpson and Jerry Bruckheimer, and *Remember the Titans* (2000), directed by Boaz Yakin and produced by Jerry Bruckheimer.

Power is central in *Crimson Tide*, as emphasized by the opening statement that the commander of a nuclear ballistic missile submarine is one of the three most powerful men in the world, following the leaders of Russia and the United States. The film also harks back to racism in the Deep South because it is set on a submarine named the *Alabama*. The struggle between slave and master is exemplified in the rivalry between the Executive Officer Hunter, played by Washington, and Captain Ramsey, played by Gene Hackman.

The stage for a confrontation is set early in the film when a fire breaks out in the galley, and Hunter leads the effort to extinguish it. The captain, meanwhile, takes this opportunity to run a missile launch drill. Because of the stress of the drill immediately following the fire, a black cook succumbs to a heart attack. Hunter protests the decision to run a drill at such a risky moment, but Captain Ramsey refuses to accept any blame.

This initial black vs. white confrontation quickly escalates into a major showdown. The submarine receives ambiguous transmissions seeming to order the launch of nuclear missiles against targets in the former USSR. Ramsey, who has risen through the ranks of the Navy the hard way, favors an immediate launch. Hunter, an Annapolis Naval Academy graduate, insists upon confirmation of the order before possibly precipitating World War III. Though Ramsey attempts to remove Hunter from his post so that he can unleash the missiles, he fails in his efforts by losing his temper and impulsively straying from standard operating procedure. The cool-headed Hunter then takes advantage of this lapse and has the captain himself relieved of command. Captain Ramsey relinquishes command and walks off stage, old and tired. Metaphorically, this can be interpreted as an attempt to read white males out of the story of a new America, one in which blacks are set to assume their turn at the pinnacles of power.

Perhaps more than any other Hollywood movie, *Remember the Titans* (2000) reveals the template for the planned replacement of the American majority. Ostensibly a heart-warming tale about a group of high school football players working to overcome racism in turbulent times, the barely buried subtext is that whites should gladly—altruistically—hand over everything that they value to blacks. The football team represents American society in microcosm: black, white, and tense. Subtlety is not this film's forte.

The film opens in the present with a mixed group of well-dressed blacks and whites arriving at a cemetery. A voiceover tells us that in 1971 their school in Alexandria, Virginia had been forced by the school board to integrate. The action then fades back to that time. As Hollywood routinely does, it depicts violence coming only from whites, with the narrator telling us that a white store owner has killed a black youth, precipitating violence in town. Bill Yoast, the white coach of the all-white football team, establishes his credentials as a moral person when he prevents his boys, including his star quarterback who hates these "black animals," from heading into town to protect the

white store owner.

Into this tense situation comes a new black coach, Herman Boone (Washington), who moves his family into an all-white neighborhood. At the recently integrated school, the men find out that Boone will replace Yoast as head coach, a proposition that the white coaches find unpalatable. The white players, too, object, threatening to boycott the black coach. Yoast, however, convinces them that the right thing to do is play ball.

Play they do, beginning with a bus trip to summer camp. To no one's surprise, the bus scene is used to highlight segregation. Coach Boone is eager to establish his dominance and does so when Gary, the white quarterback, tries to act as master of the coach. Boone neatly turns this around by humiliating Gary (and all the white parents watching), badgering the boy with taunts of "Who's your daddy?" Meekly, Gary gives in and rides the integrated bus.

Upon arrival at the camp, Boone demands that white and black players share rooms. Clashes erupt over tastes in music as well as responses to a poster of black athletes giving the Black Power salute at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics. An obese white lineman confesses to all in the cafeteria that he is too stupid to go to college. To remedy this, a brilliant black player volunteers to tutor the grateful white, who acknowledges that he is nothing but "white trash."

Injecting historical seriousness into the film, Boone runs his charges through the dense woods, coming upon a fog-shrouded battlefield cemetery. He then speaks of the background of the Civil War and its attempt to erase the wrongs of slavery. Let us not, he intones, forget those goals and sacrifices, nor let those past hatreds persist.

The second white character to become a moral center for this film is Gary, the quarterback. Unlike Coach Yoast, Gary harbors racist feelings toward blacks. He will be one of three examples of whites who come to terms with the new conditions in America, finding it unthinkable at first but slowly coming to see both its inevitability and rightness. After sharing a room with a black teammate, Gary returns to town more open-minded. His girlfriend, however, remains a segregationist and refuses to shake hands with a black player. She, too, will change, though, becoming another white character on screen to lead reluctant whites in the theater audience to make the same transition.

At the Titans' first game, one in which the whites in the stands segregate themselves, the mixed Titans defeat an all-white team. Celebrating after the game, Gary's white friends expect him to join them

for some fun, but Gary sticks with his black and white teammates. Hungry, they look for a restaurant. A newly arrived teammate from California promises to treat them at a local restaurant, but the black players balk. Finally, they all enter, whereupon the simian-looking and unshaven white owner refuses to seat them at any of the open tables. After all, this is the segregated South.

Meanwhile, back in school, the issue of interracial dating is hinted at but is quickly turned into an opportunity to castigate whites for their racism. When a black player moves in close to a group of white girls, teasing them about who's good looking, white students begin a scuffle. Gary, growing ever more certain of the evils of racism—including white solidarity—steps in to threaten his former friends.

Yoast's young daughter is the third major character to revise her feelings toward blacks. At first she sees Coach Boone as a black interloper who is taking her daddy's job. Later, she reluctantly allows that Boone isn't such a bad coach. Later still, after befriending Boone's daughter, she is at the Boone home when racists throw a brick through the front window. Now she too takes sides, going so far as to tell her father that she hates living among "rednecks."

The racial conflict grows in intensity. For instance, a white player deliberately misses a block during a game, resulting in an injury to a black player. Again taking the movie-constructed moral position, Gary ignores white solidarity and has the white player thrown off the team. Next, in the regional championship, the opposing coach and referees are openly racist, making ridiculous penalty calls, but still the Titans prevail. In the line-up after the game to shake hands, though, the other team's white coach refuses to shake hands with Boone.

By this point in the film, the proper position for the audience to espouse has been firmly established. From here on out, characters either get with the program or get relegated to the realm of the hopelessly racist. Gary's girlfriend is one of the first to repent, coming down to the field during a game to shake hands with a black player.

Her boyfriend, Gary, however, takes the symbolism to a new level: that of Christ-like martyr for the sake of his black teammates. Driving his '69 Chevy Camaro through town after another Titans victory, his car is broadsided by an old pickup truck, and he is permanently paralyzed from the waist down. In the hospital, Gary watches on TV as his team fights its way to victory in the Virginia State Championship. Director Boaz Yakin sets up a shot where white light from above shines over the prostrate Gary, who then lifts his arms into a Christ-like

pose. He has given everything so that his black teammates may play.

In the film's climax, the Titans are losing. At halftime, Coach Yoast makes a rousing speech, telling the team that they have taught him that people really are to be judged by their character not race. Fired up, the boys return to the field to do battle. Another white player gives up his starting position to a black teammate voluntarily and without prodding. The decision turns out to be the right one, for the black player recovers a fumble, then later sprints 75 yards downfield for the winning touchdown, while the new white quarterback blocks for him. No opportunity is missed to show that the world is a better place when blacks replace whites. The lesson for American society in general is clear.

MORGAN FREEMAN, THE "NUMINOUS NEGRO"

The concept of the "numinous Negro" was coined by Richard Brookhiser.⁴ Numinous Negroes are not just leaders and heroes. They are paragons of wisdom—moral and spiritual exemplars. Morgan Freeman is Hollywood's favorite actor for Numinous Negro roles. Ever since his breakthrough role as chauffeur Hoke Colburn in *Driving Miss Daisy* (1989), Freeman has consistently been cast as a man of rare intelligence, sensitivity, and moral grounding, usually paired with younger whites who admire him for his superior wisdom and seek his guidance.

In *Driving Miss Daisy*, Jessica Tandy plays Miss Daisy, a wealthy Jewish widow who is burdened by her son with a personal chauffeur. At first, Hoke seems to be the stereotypical step-and-fetchit. Illiterate and seemingly simple, he has no greater goal than to minister to a white woman and her family. As played by Freeman, however, these qualities are transformed into a moving account of a quirky but true friendship, as both Hoke and Miss Daisy grow old together and become increasingly detached from a changing world. The languid pace and soft focus, combined with first-rate performances by Freeman and Tandy, explain why the film won the Academy Award for Best Picture.

Freeman's next film is *Glory* (1989), the story of black soldiers fighting for the North during the Civil War. As Sergeant Major John Rawlins, Freeman acts as advisor to hot-headed former slave Private Trip (Denzel Washington). Rawlins also offers counsel to Colonel Shaw, the white Northern abolitionist who commands the troops.

⁴ Richard Brookhiser, "The Numinous Negro," *National Review*, August 20, 2001.

In the 1990 adaptation of Tom Wolfe's *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, Freeman was cast as the judge "when the studio decided to change the judge's ethnicity from Jewish to African-American in order to moderate criticism of the film's racial politics."⁵ In addition, in keeping with Freeman's appointed role as moral exemplar, dialogue was added which allowed him to preach to the flawed main characters.

In 1991's *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*, Freeman played Azeem, a "dignified Saracen warrior with superior judgment," whose achievements include "employing a telescope, delivering a breach baby, and initiating gunpowder into a decisive battle."⁶

In *The Shawshank Redemption* (1994), Freeman played an imprisoned murderer who becomes the friend and mentor of a younger white prisoner played by Tim Robbins—a rather far cry from the usual relationship of black and white men in prison.⁷

In 1995 Freeman appeared in *Outbreak* as Brigadier General Billy Ford, the counterforce to the corrupt Major General McClintock, who plans to blow up a small American town to contain a pestilence. Freeman was next paired with Brad Pitt in *Seven* (1995) to hunt down a white, religious serial killer. On the verge of retirement, Freeman's Lt. Somerset becomes the mentor of a brash, arrogant, and undisciplined young detective, Sergeant Mills (Pitt). The two men are a study in contrasts: Freeman's character wise, thoughtful, and introspective, Pitt's emotional, impulsive, and unreflective.

In *Kiss the Girls* (1997) and *Along Came a Spider* (2001), Freeman returned to hunting white male serial killers. Freeman plays Dr. Alex Cross, a forensic psychologist who has written tomes on the psychology of serial killers and is unusually insightful in decoding ambiguous clues. In *Kiss the Girls* Freeman's character again mentors a younger white, but this time it is a woman, and there are undercurrents of romance. As with *A Time to Kill*, the plot involves the violence of white men against black women. In this case the victim is Cross' niece, who has been kidnapped by two white men. In *Along Came a Spider*, Cross again saves a young white woman. Both films also contain an abundance of black and female characters in roles that were

⁵ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Bonfire_of_the_Vanities_\(film\)#Main_cast](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Bonfire_of_the_Vanities_(film)#Main_cast)

⁶ Jack G. Shaheen, *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People* (Northampton, Mass.: Interlink Publishing Group, 2001) 399–400.

⁷ Jared Taylor, "Hard Time," a review of Joanne Mariner, *No Escape: Male Rape in U.S. Prisons*, <http://www.amren.com/ar/2002/04/index.html#article1>.

once more heavily white and male—detectives, doctors, etc. For instance, there is a black female computer expert. (Dr. Cross is also unusually skilled at using a computer.)

Freeman also combines scientific knowledge and technological inventiveness with his usual role as mentor to younger whites in *Batman Begins* (2005) and its sequel *The Dark Knight* (2008). Freeman's character Lucius Fox provides the young Bruce Wayne with the sophisticated gadgets he needs to become Batman. He also offers Wayne moral guidance and even runs his vast business empire for him.

In *The Sum of All Fears* (2002), Freeman plays the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, who mentors a younger white agent, Jack Ryan, played by Ben Affleck.

But the peak of Freeman's political roles was in the 1998 film, *Deep Impact*, in which he played the president of the United States. Here one really begins to suspect that such an image is being deliberately constructed rather than just being "in the air." As a writer for the *Los Angeles Times* wrote, "Black presidents, in fact, have been our awesomest presidents ever: Morgan Freeman in 'Deep Impact' and Dennis Haysbert in '24.' And their approval ratings . . . have been huge."⁸

After playing the US president, the next logical step up for Freeman was to play God himself, which he did in *Bruce Almighty* (2003) opposite Jim Carrey. Freeman played God yet again in *Evan Almighty* (2007) opposite Steve Carell.

RIGHTEOUS WHITES

America is still a majority white nation. Whites still hold most of the nation's wealth and power. Thus the process of white dispossession cannot continue without the cooperation of white Americans. Because of this, Hollywood cannot portray all white Americans as evil racists. That can wait until after we are extinct. In the meantime, Hollywood must also offer images of decent, moral whites: the kind of white people with whom white audiences would like to identify. It should come as no surprise, however, that the measure of these white characters' virtue is their willingness to cooperate in their own people's dispossession. Thus, although the viewer is given an image of the evils of white majority society, he is also allowed to identify with a member of the white majority who steps forward to defend the rights of non-whites. I call this character the "righteous white."

⁸ Joel Stein, "A black president? Seen a few," *Los Angeles Times*, January 11, 2008.

We have already encountered righteous whites in *Remember the Titans*: coach Yoast, who gracefully gives up his position to a black; the quarterback Gary, who breaks ranks with his fellow whites to defend blacks; etc. Righteous whites are a staple in Hollywood race films, whether the non-whites they champion are American Indians in Kevin Costner's *Dances With Wolves* (1990), Japanese Americans in *Come See the Paradise* (1990) and *Snow Falling on Cedars* (1999), or blacks in movies from *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962) to *Mississippi Burning* (1988), *A Time to Kill* (1996), *Ghosts of Mississippi* (1996), *The Hurricane* (1999), and *The Green Mile* (2000).

Late in his career, Clint Eastwood has invested a great deal in presenting himself as a righteous white, both in *True Crime* (1999), where he comes to the aid of a black, and *Gran Torino* (2008), where he champions a family of Hmong. Eastwood not only starred in both movies, he produced and directed them.

In *True Crime* Eastwood plays reporter Steve Everett, an adulterous recovering alcoholic. Sensing a travesty of justice, he looks into the case of Frank Beechum, a black man condemned to death for murdering a white woman and scheduled to die at midnight that very day.

Though Everett is liberal and non-racist, the rest of the whites in the movie are racist to one degree or another. For example, when the white warden tours the execution chamber, two white guards joke around by imitating a condemned man who finally confesses. This is in contrast to Beechum, who maintains his innocence. Later, a smarmy white pastor attempts to use the black convict for his own ends, hoping to draw publicity to himself. The pastor goes so far as to invent a last-minute confession by the condemned. The camera repeatedly intrudes on the guards' banal conversations and jokes, despite the solemn atmosphere created by an impending execution. True, one guard is black and one Asian, but they appear as props. The focus is on the more numerous white guards and warden.

In addition, the key witness to the murder comes across as a cowardly white who hopes to gain attention by embellishing his story. In any case, he and another white witness are shown to be guilty of racism in that they "naturally" pick the black man they saw at the crime scene out of a police lineup. When Everett visits the home of the black grandmother of a possible witness, she delivers a soliloquy on the pervasiveness of anti-black racism in America.

When it turns out that the woman's now-deceased grandson killed the white victim, the shooting is shown as unintentional; thus, there

are no true black criminals in this movie, only white racists. Everett's new evidence halts the execution seconds after it has begun, and Beechum survives to enjoy freedom with his doting wife and daughter. Steve Everett may look good at the end of the film, but the same can hardly be said of whites in general.

In *Gran Torino*, Eastwood plays Walt Kowalski, a retired auto worker living in a neighborhood that has been taken over by poor Hmong refugees. Walt is an angry, bitter old widower who is alienated from his family. He later learns that he is terminally ill. He also has negative, racist feelings toward the Hmong. Eventually, though, Walt involves himself in the struggle of a young Hmong neighbor, Thao, to resist the pressure to join a gang. He comes to value the family-oriented Hmong culture while remaining alienated from his own family.

When Walt repels a gang assault on Thao, the gang responds by raping Thao's sister and shooting up his house. Thao wants to retaliate immediately, but Walt first stalls him, then locks him in his basement. Once Thao is safe, Walt confronts the gang members outside their house. With a cigarette in his mouth, he asks them for a light. Then he thrusts his hand in his jacket. The gang members think he is pulling a gun and shoot him dead. In fact, he was only reaching for a cigarette lighter. The gang members are arrested for killing Walt in cold blood. By sacrificing his life, Walt has halted the cycle of violence and saved Thao and his family. But Walt does more than merely sacrifice his life for non-whites. He also sacrifices the interests of his children to them. When Walt's will is read, it is revealed that he has disinherited his children, leaving his house to the Catholic Church and his prize Ford Gran Torino to Thao. It is a model of righteousness that can only lead to racial suicide.

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If Hollywood were a predominantly black industry, these racial role reversals would be no mystery. They would merely be examples of a healthy—albeit a bit farcical—form of ethnic self-assertion. But as I have shown in the first article of this series,⁹ Hollywood is a predominantly Jewish milieu. Thus the phenomenon of racial role reversals must be understood in the context of the relationship of blacks and Jews.

⁹ Connelly, "Understanding Hollywood," Part I: "Hollywood's Jewish Identity."

Left to their own devices, black Americans could not have won their freedom from slavery, much less put one of their own in the White House. It was white abolitionists who destroyed slavery. And Jews played a leading role in the struggle for black political, economic, and cultural advancement in the twentieth century.

Kevin MacDonald argues that these efforts need to be viewed as part of a wider agenda of Jewish empowerment through the promotion of multiracialism and multiculturalism.¹⁰ Jews are most visible and vulnerable, and therefore least powerful, in racially and culturally homogeneous societies. They are less visible and vulnerable, and therefore more powerful, in racially and culturally pluralistic societies. Thus Jews have dedicated themselves to promoting multiculturalism. They have overthrown the idea of the United States as an ethnically European nation. They have promoted unrestricted immigration and the integration of racial outgroups like blacks into the mainstream of society. But Jews have supported black empowerment only to the extent that it promotes multiculturalism, while resisting all forms of black nationalism and separatism.

Jews have promoted multiculturalism not merely for ethnic self-defense, but to attain ethnic power. Multiculturalism has not produced a society where no ethnic group is dominant. It has merely replaced white hegemony with Jewish hegemony, for Jews are the arbiters of multiculturalism. For Jews, black empowerment is not an end in itself, but a tool of Jewish empowerment. Black advancement empowers Jews by breaking down white ethnic solidarity and crowding whites out of positions of power and influence. Jews have created an imaginary world of black empowerment and white dispossession because they know that movies shape the real world. As Plato said, "Those who tell the stories rule society." The host of fictional black presidents has finally made possible a real one. But the puppet masters in both worlds are the same.

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¹⁰ Kevin MacDonald, "Jews, Blacks, and Race," in *Race and the American Prospect*, ed. Samuel Francis (Mt. Airy, Md.: The Occidental Press, 2006).