

Sharon Amos

(VIOLA BURNHAM'S BROTHER)

Herbert E. Harper, General Manager, Guyana Radio & Electronics Co Party 28/7/78 (was the PNC party for those who participated in the referendum, plus some others who gave donations) - we participated in the referendum and also donated \$100

- I was talking to a group of men and started talking to him, he's a thin man in his late 40's - not real loud, but likes to talk to people and he kept pursuing a conversation/ when it started raining some of us went upstairs and he went upstairs and said he wanted to talk more
- he was in London 15 years and then came back to Guyana, likes England and likes Hong Kong even tho Hong Kong is sort of a mixed situation and is capitalistic
- he met a man in Hong Kong who was kind of like a modern day Confucius and used to talk to people about their problems/ in a way Herbie (as he's called) said that this man was telling him about socialism, but his way of talking was Eastern about don't worry about troubles as they will come and so will the good times, and all that kind of harmony of the universe shit
- he said the real eye opener was when he was in Kuwait (it was called something that sounds like Cha Ja at the time) - he was entertained there by the Sheik and had anything he wanted and if the Sheik didn't have it, and he asked for it the next time it would be there
- but he wasn't satisfied to see that part of the country so one day he wandered around tho they didn't want him to do that - he saw hovels where babies had a disease in their eyes and flies were eating off their eyes and sometimes their mothers wouldn't even have the strength to brush the flies away. Swarms of flies would come - he said "you've heard of Belson (concentration camp) well this was the closest I've seen to that" - and he said he's never been able to forget that, and it is that that makes him believe in socialism
- in London he used to read books on Marx and Engels but he said in England it's just like the States, you have to feel a little bit scared reading literature of the sort
- he's a funny man, mixed in some ways as he seems to have some degree of enlightenment on some issues but is very primitive in certain notions (he is somewhat light skinned and has been able to just barely pass in certain places which he said was "fortunate" so racially he is not enlightened at all
- on religion he said that he was brought up very religious/ he's got seven in his family/ they used to spend the whole day Sunday in prayer, very religious family, they'd pray with an aunt and they'd go to service and study the bible
- he said however when he got older he started to question religion and tho there are still some things he believes in, there are a lot of things he can't accept
- I mentioned "servants obey your masters" and how that was put in by King James to manipulate and oppress his subjects and he agreed/ but I spoke of PT as trying to be Christians in the pure sense of service and living communally as he had said that was one thing that made sense about the bible
- he said he tries to help others, works in PNC and doesn't just do the administrative things, goes door to door etc as he feels he can't ask people to do things he won't do (I mentioned JJ being the same way)
- he was talking about Guyanese people having no motivation and he thinks about this a lot trying to figure it out - he says he'd like to do social work (I told him about my job in the US and in PT) but he wouldn't want this to be full time as he likes to work with scientific things too (predictable things he said as humans are unpredictable)
- he was talking about how far Guyana needs to go, I said well USSR was in very primitive state at first too, he said well that's different, we're going about it in a non-violent gradual way. I said yes, I knew and that's good but I was just meaning the early stages being primitive as they even lived in caves at first
- he said then reflectively, You know sometimes I think it would be better (over)

BB-2-iii-1

the other way (like in USSRQ) - he came back to this again later. (But the gradual revolution is very much the slogan of the PNC and he went out a little to even hint it could be the only way to go)

-later on in the conversation, I mentioned that showing of American films was the one thing I thought was a mistake as it gave people a desire for consumer goods and it made them want them the short cut way, not by working and developing the country

-he said he knows this is a problem. He said they experimented with this a lot, at first showed films from Cuba and educational films but people didn't have a taste for them/ they wanted films of action. So they even tried showing a double bill of one good one and bad one, but the people have a taste for certain things and in a gradual situation they worry if they don't give the people what they want as if they are dissatisfied they want to leave. I said "well it seems it is a catch 22 situation, as the films make them want to leave too and they line up in ~~que~~ ~~que~~ long lines to leave and I mentioned the film Sweet December I took my kids to (something like that tho the ~~title~~ may be wrong) it had some good points but it was with Sidney Pointier and showed a black doctor who was working with the State Dept to help people and he goes to England and there he meets a daughter of an African Ambassador, a beautiful black woman. They have a sad romance as she ~~is~~ has cycle cell and doesn't want to marry him as she knows she will die etc, but the background is that he has white friends in England he's staying with/ he is well fixed monetarily and has a country home ~~xxxx~~ he can take her to which is quite lovely and she is very well fixed monetarily

-he said again, that sometimes he thinks it would be better if things weren't done gradually/ he said that this transitional stage is dangerous

-he was in the States he said and he was visiting his brother in Chicago/ his brother is a very successful doctor. His sister-in-law is light skinned but is very prejudiced to whites (especially hostile to red necks) however she mostly hangs around light skinned blacks so she has her own caste system but she was made because Herbie went to an exclusive club that will not allow blacks. They eyed him over there and started questioning him about where he was from. He said when they found out he wasn't from US, they left him alone, but then a group of honky military men came in and eyed him over and were getting real hostile. They questioned him and he said he was from London, originally from Guyana and that he was in the Royal Air Force in England/ and that satisfied them and they became real buddy with him talking about the service and getting real friendly and wanted to see him again/ his sister-in-law was very mad and said he shouldn't see them again which he didn't but he wanted to because he liked them

-but he said in England people would use expressions about blacks not realizing or forgetting that he was black, and then they'd start to explain and if they seemed to sincerely mean what they said and it was just an expression he wouldn't hold it against them altho sometimes it would hurt him

-his wife was white, English

-he said women are unpredictable and then went on to say that's why they are interesting and he went into some detail about the mysteries of women

-he said he didn't feel like dancing too much (I was relieved about that)

-~~xxxx~~ said he's traveled all around the world/ I asked if he had been to any socialist countries/ said he'd been to Checkosllovakia, East Germany, but unfortunately, he said, he hadn't been to China

-we talked about Viola, ~~he~~ I said she was very brilliant, he said "yes, she's quite clever" - he said she was the one in the family who always knew what she wanted todo while Herbie didn't. She never argued, he can't remember her ever arguing/ if she had something to say, she would just say it and then not argue. but he said he tends to quarrel more. 4 of his siblings are in Guyana and 3 are out of the country.

-he used to go see Viola and the PM every month, to play with the children and be in contact with the family but ~~she~~ felt people thought he ~~had~~ went because of the connection so he doesn't go around all that much now

-however 2 years ago, the Newsweek article came out about PT and ~~she~~ took

(OVER)

BB-2-1111-2

it right to the PM's residence and he said "what are these people doing ~~in~~ in our country"

-the PM said "you really ought to go out there and see for yourself. Don't pay any attention to that kind of stuff" - he said apologetically, Herbie did, It really shows how gullible a person can be. He came to our cultural program and was quite impressed with the whole thing, with Marcie's speech and everything and it made him want to know more about PT.

-he wants to visit PT and said that if we have films at our house he'd like to be invited/ I told him we preview films so they aren't always good as we preview them and send the good ones out but if he'd like to take his ~~chances~~ chances that would be fine, we'd be delighted to have him

-I think he's kind of lonely but he's not desperate or anything/ is sinterested in some sense of peace or that kind of happiness (still searching I think for something that doesn't exist but has had a few illusions toppæed)

-he asked if I was happy. I said I was very fulfilled with my life in PT but that I think life is bitter sweet and I was sure if you asked MLK if he was happy he wouldn't exactly said yes but he was doing what he wanted to do. I said that I had at one time in my life searched for happiness and I not only was miserable but also felt that my life was meaningless, but since I have been in PT, I have never felt either miserable or that my life was meaningless and that I felt communal life was personally fulfilling as well as fulfilling in terms of what it can accomplish for others

-I told him however that the world seems so full of pain that if you start to be aware of it ~~xxxxxxx~~, it's a pretty heavy thing. I toldhim of your early committment and work ~~wixh~~ for civil rights and how you worked with MLK and some of the things you went thru, and the work with political prisoners (I didn't mention names like Angela but in general) with Chilean refugees and described some of them we met etc. I told how I ~~xxx~~ came to PT with a child, sort of beat down and a product of a very unhappy marriage and how you gave me a job and helped me and others in PT helped too and how we all take on each others sorrows and joys so no-one ever is abandoned

-told him how you are a great motivator of people - you make people feel involved in decision making/ he was worried about what would happen if you ~~xxx~~ "go" and I told him how you try to develop leadership in people/don't allow people to be yes men and women and bring out people's talents

-he wondered how we deal with people who are in anti-social patterns/ I told him about peer pressure (not violent ever but thru a common agreement about a certain ~~xx~~ standards of behavior ~~xx~~like not allowing any ~~xxx~~violence - parent to child, or parent to parent etc) and that if you ~~x~~have agreement about that and all respond with disapproval - it's a strong social force. I told him you don't find that in some places because in the States people will cheer if someone steals something and of course somepeople do that because they know you're often stealing from a big monopoly corporation, but if you can have a consistent standard and in a community like ours, if you steal you know you're stealing from each other. He seemed very interested. Told him about the positive incentives and how you have made it your business personally to praise people and point out their strengths so that people are motivated to bring out the constructive aspects in themselves. Also, that we give treats for good behavior, good work, and character ~~x~~ shown in daily life.

-I told him in the States about the program we had/ free legal advice, free kitchen etc/ how this program went back when you started it 30 years ago etc.

-he seemed to be interested in everything

-likes to philosophize too/ he seems to be at the age/ (not just chronological age but emotional age) when he wants to think his life is meaningful, that he wasn't here for nothing - and he likes to find meaning in things

-~~he~~ I finally kind of ended the conversation as I didn't want it to be too drawn out/ it seemed like I talked to him at least 2 hours/ once we invited Robert Williams to join us as Robert Williams and Robert Corbin both were dancing upstairs where we were talking but Robert was kind of high

-lot of the people at this thing were poluted drunk or pretty high

-Herbie askedif we had a ride home and ~~w~~ seemed to really want to drive us/ I told him that would g be good as he could see where we live and come by/ he said on the way home, he has seen the house, he patrols the neighborhood as there are voluntary

(over)

BB-2-1111-3

patrols. They were having some many thieves etc. and since he's been patrolling they hve stopped crime about 50% because it is known in the area when they see his car patrolling that someone is watching
-he said he knew of the person ~~xxx~~ who lived there before us
-he had forgotten who it was but knew of him - I said it was some British somebody

-he wondered if our rules ~~xx~~ were in ~~twriting~~/ I toldhim that if you have some basic standards over the years ~~like~~ like JJ has put in practice you really don't have to put them in writing - and that our rules come out of group deliberation and everybody gets a chance to discuss them and deliberate

BB-2-iii-4