

THE DAILY CALLER

Search



[Log In](#) | [Register](#)

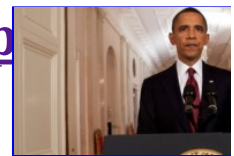


- [HOME](#)
- [POLITICS](#)
- [US](#)
- [ENTERTAINMENT](#)
- [WORLD](#)
- [SPORTS](#)
- [BUSINESS](#)
- [TECH](#)
- [VIDEO](#)
- [OPINION](#)
- [BLOGS](#)
 - [KausFiles](#)
 - [Matt Lewis](#)
 - [DC Trawler](#)
 - [HammerTime](#)
 - [Ask Matt Labash](#)
- [STORE](#)
- [SEND TIPS](#)

June 30, 2011



Michelle Obama invites rapper for poetry reading



[GOP congressman on stopping illegal immigration: 'I'll do anything short of shooting them'](#)
Published: 12:48 PM 05/09/2011 | Updated: 2:24 PM 05/10/2011

[Obama unveils new counterterrorism strategy](#)

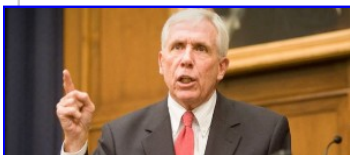


Ads by Google

[Huntsman and wife release video highlighting first week](#)



[Herman Cain unveils economic plan](#)



[APR 9/mo. Low Rate Obama Mortgage Program! \[obama-mortgage.lendgo.com\]\(http://obama-mortgage.lendgo.com\)](#)

[Congressman calls for IRS investigation of CAIR](#)

Here's an opportunity to relive your high-school poetry classes.



[out about affair](#)

[Is E-Verify bill in conflict with conservative ideals?](#)
[Sex and the City author visits](#)



[Elena Gomez](#)
[quel films](#)

[Water](#)

[Mullen links fragile states to national security, war on terror](#)



[Obama dodges ATF question](#)

I'm nobody! Who are you?

I'm nobody! Who are you?

Are you nobody, too?

Then there's a pair of us — don't tell!

They'd banish us, you know.

How dreary to be somebody!

How public, like a frog

To tell your name the livelong day

To an admiring bog!

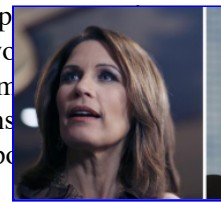
[First Lady](#) Michelle Obama has scheduled a poetry event for Wednesday, and she's invited several poets, including a successful Chicago poet and rapper, Lonnie R. Lynn, AKA "Common." However, Lynn is quite controversial because his poetry includes threats to shoot police and at least one passage calling for the "burn[ing]" of then-President George W. Bush.

Back in 2003, First Lady [Laura Bush](#) held a poetry event and she invited several poets to reprise the work of Emily Dickinson, Langston Hughes and Walt Whitman. However, none of those poets had ever urged violence against anyone. After left-of-center poet Lynn threatened to disrupt the event, Bush canceled the event.

Obama's work that could have been presented at Bush's event:



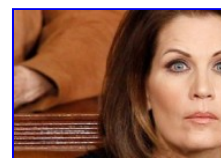
[Romney races ahead](#)
[Bachmann, backs 'and Balance'](#)



[Bachmann claims Palin](#)
[wants her to have 'mud-wrestling' match](#)



[Obama almost approved same-sex marriage](#)



[Ex-Bachmann chief trashes old boss, er Pawlenty](#)

Here's a sample of Common's work, transcribed from a 2007 video with 837,613 viewers on YouTube. Students, please compare and contrast the two poems. You'll get extra [credit](#) for counting the death threats. There is no extra credit for identifying spelling errors. By the way, 'Uzi' is slang for a compact machine gun:

A Letter to the Law

Dem boy wanna talk... [indistinguishable]

Whatcha gon do if ya got one gun?

I sing a song for the hero unsung

with faces on the mural of the revolution

No looking back cos' in back is what's done

Tell the preacher, God got more than one son

Tell the law, my Uzi weighs a ton
I walk like a warrior,
from them I won't run
On the streets, they try to beat us like a drum
In Cincinnati, another brother hung
A guinea won't see the sun
with his family stung
They want us to hold justice
but you handed me none
The same they did to Kobe and Michael Jackson
make them the main attraction
Turn around and attack them
Black gem in the rough
You're rugged enough
Use your mind and nine-power, get the government touch
Them boys chat-chat on how him pop gun
I got the black strap to make the cops run
They watching me, I'm watching them
Them dick boys got a lock of cock in them
My people on the block got a lot of pok* in them
and when we roll together
we be rocking them to sleep
No time for that, because there's things to be done
Stay true to what I do so the youth dream come
from project building
Seeing a fiend being hung
With that happening, why they messing with Saddam?
Burn a Bush cos' for peace he no push no button

Killing over oil and grease

no weapons of destruction

How can we follow a leader when this a corrupt one

The government's a g-unit and they might buck young black people

Black people In the urban area one

I hold up a peace sign, but I carry a gun.

Peace, ya'll."

The First Lady's office did not return a call from TheDC.

**Commenter notes this may be "Pac," as in Tupac Shakur*


See the video:

Ads by Google

2.37% Home Mortgage Rate

\$200,000 for \$777/mo. Top Lenders No Credit Check Needed. 2.99% APR www.HSH.com

Tags: [George W. Bush](#), [Michelle Obama](#)

 (3 votes, average: 3.67 out of 5, *rated*)

1,434

Politics

More In

512 Comments

1.  sangelique

i wonder if there is a single person on this thread that thinks Common should not have been invited to the white house who isn't white.

10:02 AM 05/17/2011 - 10:02 AM [Log in to Reply](#) | [Report Comment](#)

2.  Shara101

sigh, reading comments from the general population always makes me sad about humanity.

Mrs. Obama invited Common to the White House to perform a poem not “a letter to the law” most likely he will perform a piece that is appropriate for the time and place. The tone and lyrics were appropriate for the subject matter of that poem. FYI he was speaking metaphorically, no he does not want to literally kill Bush. But, Bush should be castracized for the atrocities that he committed while president of the United States. Yes, Obama may have some shortcomings but Bush was a straight up corrupt, heartless gangster a la mobster style.

And although this style of poetry is very different from the “poetry” you were spoon fed in high school that does not make it any less truthful or poignant.

I am quite sure we understand taht people have different dialects and Common chose to perform this piece in a dialect for artistic purposes. He is not ignorant or uneducated. Think Huckleberry Finn was written by Mark Twain and he is considered to be a great American author.

I know that certain types just want to use this as an excuse to spew your ignorant ideas about Black people, slavery and the President and no matter how intelligently a person tries to speak about this issue you will pretend like you don't get it. But, you do get it..right? you cannot be this oblivious.

I prefer if you just be honest. If you have no interest in Black culture, if you have never taken the time to try to understand the Black culture in America then just say that. The writer of this article knew exactly what he was doing when he went out and found this “sample” of Common’s work. Common also has many pieces that are enlightening and postive.

And just because the White House is not reflecting your culture doesn’t mean it is being desecrated. Please try to be understand diversity. You have a Black president so yes he and his wife are going to do things that Black people enjoy. It might make take you out of your comfort zone but that is okay. I have worked several jobs where we had to have company celebrations and because the majority of the people were White we had to listen to music by white artists. In general I have to do what the “majority” culture wants to do. Although I may feel a little akward sometimes there is no reason for me to be offended.

12:00 AM 05/16/2011 - 12:00 AM [Log in to Reply](#) | [Report Comment](#)

3.  RileyMartin

Rap music... putting the “rap” in Crap!

10:10 AM 05/15/2011 - 10:10 AM [Log in to Reply](#) | [Report Comment](#)

4.  Yahmahael

Bill O’Reilly noted that Stewart failed to mention rapper Common defended two convicted killers. What O’Reilly forgot to mention is that both convicted killers convictions are controversial in itself. The state trooper has admitted he lied and did not see Assanta with a gun, medical evidence shows she was not physically capable of pulling the trigger after she was shot. Yet an all white jury convicted her. Common lyrics not only mention that but this evidence in the trial. Essentially Common told a side of the trial that the jury did not put much stock. I wonder if a white American worker was convicted in a foreign country and it appeared he did not do it to some, would the likes of Palin, O’Reilly, and Hannity accept it as a conviction or talk about it as an injustice.

11:51 AM 05/14/2011 - 11:51 AM [Log in to Reply](#) | [Report Comment](#)

5.  DDMN

To elevate a street thug’s coded call for violence to Art is pretty much the last straw.Moderates -are you listening?

8:32 AM 05/13/2011 - 8:32 AM [Log in to Reply](#) | [Report Comment](#)

- o  Yahmahael

“Bill O’Reilly noted that Stewart failed to mention rapper Common defended two convicted killers. What O’Reilly forgot to mention is that both convicted killers convictions are controversial in itself. The state trooper has admitted he lied and did not see Assanta with a gun, medical evidence shows she was not physically capable of pulling the trigger after she was shot. Yet an all white jury convicted her. Common lyrics not only mention that but this evidence in the trial. Essentially Common told a side of the trial that the jury did not put much stock. I wonder if a white American

worker was convicted in a foreign country and it appeared he did not do it to some, would the likes of Palin, O'Reilly, and Hannity accept it as a conviction or talk about it as an injustice.”

11:49 AM 05/14/2011 - 11:49 AM [Log in to Reply](#) | [Report Comment](#)



6. trubruchez

I don't know Common so I have no idea what his work is like and, as I'm sure everyone here knows, you can't judge any poet by one piece. I guess we'll all be checking out his body of work now. On the other hand, I do know Dickinson, Whitman and Langston Hughes very well – all fantastic although I'm sure there's a lot of people who wouldn't like one or more of theirs – Hughes poems about Communism, Whitman's about his love of men, etc., but...as I recall, Laura Bush did not cancel her evening because of left wing protests (why would they protest? That doesn't even make sense) – it's because the poets were going to use the evening to protest the upcoming war in Iraq. There were a lot of authors and poets who boycotted or threatened protests during that time. Please – I am happy to hear people's opinion on current events but not based on false facts.

2:34 AM 05/13/2011 - 2:34 AM [Log in to Reply](#) | [Report Comment](#)



7. dhamilt9

<http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/wed-may-11-2011/tone-def-poetry-jam>

This sums up anything I want to say better than I possibly could. I urge anyone against common to watch the whole thing, then try to explain why he shouldn't be allowed in the white house.

1:19 AM 05/13/2011 - 1:19 AM [Log in to Reply](#) | [Report Comment](#)



8. lunchbox

You are not a poet.

You are not an artist.

You are a hater.

Hate is easy,(especially) for you.

Try for once, to use your uneducated, unenlightened, under utilized brain for something besides a hat rack.

...Asshole.

12:16 AM 05/13/2011 - 12:16 AM [Log in to Reply](#) | [Report Comment](#)



o Yahmahael

Racist are we? You don't think much of Black folk!! Then again you don't thinl much at all!!!!

11:53 AM 05/14/2011 - 11:53 AM [Log in to Reply](#) | [Report Comment](#)

@Finzi Holst:

Ugh. Your post is very bereft of facts. Allow me to inject some.

“How nice of you to demean Africans because it does not fit your narrative. Africans on a large scale participated and continue to participate in slavery.”

True, and European slavery existed long before they ever met Africans and Europeans continue to dabble in slavery by buying trafficked humans. Europe is one of the largest buyers of trafficked humans from Africa and Asia other than the United States. So, by your logic it's still part and parcel of European society to purchase human beings.

There were indeed black people, black Americans included, who owned black slaves. That does not excuse or absolve the white buyers one bit. Your argument is basically an adult version of the classical child's excuse when caught doing something wrong, “Well.....Joey did it too!” As any responsible adult will tell you, “Tommy, if Joey jumped off a bridge would you do it too? Because someone else did the same bad thing you did doesn't excuse you doing it.”

“Just out of curiosity what are you doing — personally — to help those who are still enslaved today in Africa, the Middle East, Russia, China, etc.? What is the NAACP doing?”

What are you or the Republican Party doing? Probably nothing on your part. Definitely basically nothing on the Republican Party part. Democrats too aren't doing anything to fix this. The NAACP at least does help some African-Americans who are being taken advantage of or discriminated. Though these days they admittedly rarely do anything other than waste donations. They were instrumental up until the 1970s/1980s though.

“And who controlled the South? You fail to mention the Democrats.”

And you failed to mention the Democrats of the 1800s were states' rights CONSERVATIVES. The 19th century Democrats were not liberals or progressives, the Radical Republicans of the mid-1800s were the progressives of the day. The Radical Republicans believed in federalism over states' rights, Reconstruction (which was the 19th century equivalent to the New Deal, both of which conservatives HATED with a passion), minority rights, industrialism, supported labor unions, regulated banking, etc. The Democrats were states' rights conservatives who supported anti-federalism, traditionalism, agrarianism, anti-labor union, pro-deregulation, etc. The Republicans eventually started abandoning black voters starting with the Compromise of 1877 and backing off of Reconstruction. In the 1880s they became the party of Wall Street and started becoming conservative between the 1890s and the beginning of the Progressive Era at the turn of the century. Republican Teddy Roosevelt embraced Progressivism and wanted the Republican Party to embrace it as well. The Republicans rejected Progressivism under President William Taft and Roosevelt started working on a separate progressive “Bull Moose” Party. The Northern Democrats picked up Progressivism starting under Woodrow Wilson and took it to the next level under FDR. This is when the black vote started shifting from Republican to Democratic as the Northern Democrats started championing the growing third Civil Rights movement while the increasingly conservative Republicans backed away from it (the split was made more intense by the Smoot-Hawley affair).

The final party switch occurred when the Northern Democrats signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 along

with the Northern Republicans. The Northern Dems signed it in higher numbers than the Northern Repubs, actually. The conservative states' rights Southern Democrats (Dixiecrats) were against it except for a few along with the Southern Republicans. The Dixiecrats left the Democratic Party in disgust in 1964. LBJ knew it because he told his Cabinet, "Gentlemen, we just lost the South for a generation" after the Bill was signed by the Northern Dems. This is when the traditionally blue Dixiecrat South went red and started voting Republican. The Republicans took in the Dixiecrats in 1964, welcoming the extra votes and new conservative brethren. The movement was largely encouraged by top Dixiecrats like J. Strom Thurmond, Jesse Helms, etc. switching to the GOP. This is when the Republicans lost most of the black vote for good.

Now most black Americans vote Democrat. 85%+ of black Americans vote Democratic because: the Republican Party has been the party of choice for hoodless Klansmen and the Archie Bunkers of America since '64; Every GOP Presidential Candidate has played the Southern Strategy since Barry Goldwater and continues to push governors and Congresspersons to power like Haley Barbour; The GOP hasn't really done anything for most black communities since co-signing the 1964 Civil Rights Act along with the Northern Democrats. Some things they've done has outright hurt black people – such as Ronald Reagan (and Bill Clinton too) cutting welfare programs while doing basically nothing to create jobs in urban areas for low-income and unemployed minorities to flock to so they can come off welfare. Not to mention championing the failed "War on Drugs" which has largely served to lock a lot of black men up for non-violent offenses such as drug possession (what the majority of inmates are in jail for).

Trying this weak whitewashing of facts by pretending the Republicans are still the Party of Lincoln is lying and historical revisionism at worst and historical ignorance at best. Of course, if 85%+ of African-Americans were still voting Republican like they did prior to JFK and LBJ I have a feeling you wouldn't be complaining and accusing them of being on a "plantation". Would you? There ARE black conservatives but the majority of black conservatives either vote for conservative Democrats or vote Independent. For the reasons listed above as most black conservatives don't want to join a party where they will be rubbing elbows with sheltered white bigots who are prone to viewing blacks as criminals or leeches.

I don't know how Republicans expect to garner black votes by accusing them of being too stupid to think for themselves, accusing them of voting Democrat because they're lazy and telling them they're on a "plantation" with the Democrats and holding up black men who have never done anything for black people (and some who have outright hurt black people like Clarence Thomas) as a reason why they should vote GOP.

"And who controls the Black vote today? Again, you failed to mention the Democrats."

No one controls the black vote. No one forces black people to vote Democrat. Black voters, like most voters in general of all races, are weekend warriors when it comes to Politics and tend to vote for the opposite of whatever party they think is screwing them over or will screw them over. Most black people can't think of anything the Republicans have done for them since 1964 so they vote Democrat by default. It's also because a lot of Republican politicians have shady histories with Civil Rights, some insist on employing the Southern Strategy and the GOP pushes people like Haley Barbour (Mr. Confederate History Month) to power.

I suspect the only reason you truly care is because most blacks aren't voting for your party. If blacks were voting 85-90% Republican I have a feeling there would be no criticism from you. So black people can only be on a plantation if they're not conservative? Or at least don't vote Republican?

"And who benefits from Blacks hanging on to the victim ideology and addiction to welfare?"

What is “victim ideology”? The realization that racism still exists? Black Americans are on welfare in disproportionate numbers thanks to the fact that the black unemployment rate and poverty rate are 2 to 2.5x higher than the white rate on average. Thanks in no small part to discrimination in hiring practices and thanks in no small part to the outsourcing of jobs (particularly industrial jobs in urban areas where a lot of blacks live) thanks to deregulation and tax credits for businesses that ship jobs overseas. Though in honesty both parties are to thank for that.

“Booker T. Washington knew what he was talking about”

Holding up Booker T. Washington won't bode too well for Republicans if they want black votes either. While Mr. Washington did have his contributions to black leadership and history he was an accommodationist who believed that blacks should stick to farm labor and other low-paying jobs and work up by trying to gain favor with racists and pray they'd eventually stop being racist and hopefully eventually get rid of Jim Crow on their own or with mild pleading from black people. I don't think most black people would agree with that kind of approach. Most oppressed people wouldn't. Do you think a lot of Irish citizens in the 19th century would like such an approach to deal with British control of Ireland and the British treating Irish people as second-class citizens?

11:20 PM 05/12/2011 - 11:20 PM [Log in to Reply](#) | [Report Comment](#)



10. chri5r

Here's a more accurate transcript of Common's poem, and some illuminating commentary, albeit my own personal perspective. I must say that this “news” organization has aptly demonstrated its lack of cultural awareness among the staff with this article. Not surprising, but I want to say it plainly. If you can't properly contextualize a poem—no matter what poet you're talking about, Dickinson, Whitman, Milton, Chaucer—your analysis is not valid. One would expect at least one or two English majors on staff, but I'm probably out on a limb with that assumption around here.

My personal comments are in “[]” brackets.

A Letter to the Law

Dem boy wanna talk like dem wanna gwan come

Whatcha gon do if ya got one gun?

I sing a song for the hero unsung

with faces on the mural of the revolution

No looking back cos' in back is what's done

Tell the preacher, God got more than one son

Tell the law, my Uzi weighs a ton [reference to Public Enemy's song, "Public Enemy Number 1"—often quoted by many rappers since]

I walk like a warrior, [reference to Dead Prez' song, "Walk Like a Warrior"]

from them I won't run

On the streets, they try to beat us like a drum [police brutality]

In Cincinnati, another brother hung [I'm guessing a reference to a specific incident proximal to this recording]

Again he won't see the sun

with his family stung

They want us to hold justice

but you handed me none

The same they did to Kobe and Michael Jackson

make them the main attraction

Turn around and attack them

Black gem in the rough

You're rugged enough

Use your mind and nine-power, get the government touch [if you step beyond the bounds of being black for any other reason than "for entertainment purposes only," you get the government "touch"--id est, brutalized]

Them boys chat-chat on how him pop gun [we talk about how violent black males are, but not about the violence done to them]

I got the black strap to make the cops run [self defense against police brutality]

They watching me, I'm watching them

Them dick boys got a lot of cock in them

My people on the block got a lot of 'Pac in them

and when we roll together

we be rocking them to sleep

No time for that, because there's things to be done

Stay true to what I do so the youth dream come

from project building

Seeing a fiend being hung

With that happening, why they messing with Saddam?

Burn a Bush cos' for peace he no push no button [What does Common mean by "Burn a Bush"? Is he actually calling on someone to burn him, like, at the stake? Hmm... Probably not. The meaning of three

words in a poem is hard to pin down, whether Whitman, Keates, Frost, Baraka, Scott-Heron, or Common. Could mean, simply, get rid of him; get him out of office, out of our faces... Who really knows what Common was thinking when he put those three words on paper? Bush will push a button for war, but not for peace]

Killing over oil and grease

no weapons of destruction [we're intervening in the Middle East, not because of WMDs, nor to 'spread freedom and democracy,' but for strategic access to oil]

How can we follow a leader when this a corrupt one

The government's a g-unit and they might buck young

Black people In the urban area one

I hold up a peace sign, but I carry a gun [I want to live peacefully, but I must defend myself, my property, my rights, my family, my very life against any and all threats: the 2nd Amendment speaks directly to this line]

Peace, ya'll

5:35 PM 05/12/2011 - 5:35 PM [Log in to Reply](#) | [Report Comment](#)

[« Previous](#) [1](#) ... [16](#) [17](#) [18](#)

You must be [logged in](#) to post a comment.

Ads by Google

MortgageLoan.com™

LOW RATES

2.75%

Mortgage Refinance

CONTINUE

Free Quotes - No Credit Check

SIGN UP FOR DAILY EMAILS

READ TODAY'S
THE DCMORNING

Email Address

- TheDC Links TheDC Morning
-

Video

Most Popular

Most Popular

[Most Emailed](#)



[Obama chides GOP for not giving up 'sacred cow'](#)



[Equal Rights Amendment seen as back door to same-sex marriage](#)



[Fox News psychiatrist diagnoses Maher: He 'has it in for women'](#)



[Herman Cain unveils economic plan](#)



[Lohan slams the Federal Reserve: 'Fed keeps printing money!'](#)



[Krauthammer on Media Matters: Be nasty, not subsidized](#)



[GOP congressman on stopping illegal immigration: 'I'll do anything short of shooting them'](#)



[Rhode Island on its way to legalizing civil unions for same-sex couples](#)



[Kentucky GOP Party rule change causes Tea Party uproar](#)



[Attitude Adjustment](#)

STAY CONNECTED TO THE DAILYCALLER



- [About Us](#)
|
- [Contact Us](#)
|
- [Privacy Policy](#)
|
- [Terms of Use](#)
|
- [Advertise With Us](#)
|
- [Make The Daily Caller Your Homepage](#)

Copyright © 2011 The Daily Caller