

CBS “Portraits in Black” series playing right now Sunday afternoon 1-6 — that’s right now!

The Bethlehem Gadfly Jacob Blake September 6, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts responding to the Jacob Blake shooting* 

Gadfly just happened on to this series CBS “Portraits in Black” series playing as he writes. There is still time to catch more. The 4-6PM hours look especially pertinent to thinking that we should be doing locally.

Gadfly has been whining about what seems to him slow motion in the City about conversations about police/community relations and possible changes in the way we do public safety. George Floyd died May 25. Since then we have had the Rayshard Brooks, Jacob Blake, and now Daniel Prude incidents. Recently we have our Police Chief mess. Sports teams have weighed in dramatically. Businesses have weighed in. Protests abound.

We have had one meeting: August 11. And no plan for another.

For Gadfly, the bar is getting higher and higher for us to show that we are doing something. Not only show, do.

The best he could get from the last Council meeting was something about Prof Holona Ochs reporting on her study in the fall. No date set for further discussion.

Gadfly senses no urgency.

Unlike the rest of the country.

And now here’s a major network devoting a holiday Sunday afternoon to getting us to think about racism in America.

See **CBS, “Portraits in Black”:**

On Sunday of this Labor Day weekend, CBS is devoting five hours of programming to “Portraits In Black” from 1-6 p.m. Eastern, continuing the conversation on racism in sports and society. Hosted by James Brown, there will be stories on Black athletes’ courage in the face of

racism and injustice and two hours devoted to furthering dialogue on current events.

“Given what we’re going through in society right now, how divided our country is right now and how divisive the rhetoric is in the public square,” Brown said. “I’m just hoping that this will enable us to come together and that we’re able to sit down at a table, figuratively and literally, and have a conversation where we’re all listening and paying attention. To look our better selves to try to resolve what has been a persistent and unresolved problem in our country.”

The early programming will be about how sporting and societal accomplishments were achieved in the context of difficulties and challenges Black participants had to overcome.

At 4 Eastern, the programming pivots to the present day with a discussion on systemic racism, what it means to be Black in America today, and the progress that still needs to be made. Guests include Grant Hill, Lisa Leslie, Nate Burleson, Brandon Marshall, Swin Cash, Ian Eagle, Tracy Wolfson, Amanda Balionis, and Amy Trask.

The final hour is hosted by Brown, Michelle Miller, and Charles Davis, and not only looks at the Black Lives Matter movement through the eyes of athletes and coaches, but also includes a powerful interview Brown conducted with Tamika Palmer, the mother of Breonna Taylor. Brown said he couldn’t imagine the pain Palmer feels after losing her child, but he still vividly recalls her talking about how she doesn’t believe in destructiveness, looting or anarchy.

“She wants justice for her daughter, but she wants everything to be done the right way,” Brown said. “It was almost a mantra from the Civil Rights era, where Dr. King was the face of the Civil Rights movement, but advocated non-violence because the overarching aim was love. We can have legislation that may modify behavior, but it doesn’t necessarily change the heart. The heart is what needs to be changed, and we have to care for one another. It’s only when you have a relationship with somebody and see they’re just like you and we’re all to be in this supporting one another. Love is what undergirds significant change. And we’ve gotta embrace it that way.”

The final hour also includes a conversation between Milwaukee Bucks teammates George Hill and Kyle Korver about allyship, Black NASCAR driver Bubba Wallace discussing diversity in racing, Tampa Bay Buccaneers head coach Bruce Arians and offensive coordinator Byron Leftwich talking about specifically hiring diverse assistants, and Stanford football coach David Shaw discussing continuing the conversation.

“This is not a dainty conversation. It’s not a delicate conversation,” Brown said. “This is a real conversation that’s going to involve pain and hurt, and we need to display patience and understanding of what it is so we know how to go about resolving it.”

What we’re going through as a country and as a society right now is far from new, Brown said, and he hopes that CBS is looking at itself in the mirror and seeing that he and the company are making sure they stay meaningfully involved in the conversation and play a role in moving the social needle forward as it relates to equality.

“It’s not just a societal problem that affects things in business or government or academia. It runs the entire spectrum, and we’re showing it through the lens of sports,” Brown said. “The issue will not be resolved unless it is all of us involved. And I pray that’s the message that comes through on Sunday. I hope I’m playing a meaningful role to be a part of this, to see that I’m not sitting back on the sideline and watching, that I’m actively involved.”

Hold off on the barbecue!