

A Senator's Pain

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Most Californians know exactly what they were doing when the historical were read that acquitted the four LAPD officers, and sparked the civil unrest in Los Angeles. Anna Deavere Smith does an excellent job representing Los Angeles citizens in her theatrical piece entitled *Twilight: Los Angeles 1992*. Smith writes, "Every person I include in the book, and who I perform, has a presence that is much more important than the information they give" (Smith: xxiv). In this statement Smith tells the reader that the facts each character gives is not as important as his her presence, because anyone can give facts about an event. Smith wants the reader to pay close attention to the feelings expressed by each individual she interviewed, because feelings tell more about a person and an event than the facts. In *Twilight: Los Angeles 1992* the monologue by Bill Bradley entitled "Application of the Law" contributes more to Smith's piece than does the monologue by Elaine Brown entitled "Ask Saddam Hussein," because when a Senator notices the reality of racism it seems authentic. Although both Bradley and Brown give similar information it is ironic that a white Senator showed more anger toward racism than the former Black Panther.

When Senator Bradley begins telling his story his he points out how our society still has inequalities as he says, "I mean, you know, it's still... There are people who are, uh, who the law threatens in different ways" (Smith: 214). The following statements Bradley makes during his interview shows his anger for racial differences. When Bradley informs the reader about an African-American Harvard Law School student who experienced unjust treatment by the police. Bradley's anger is expressed through his statement, as he says, "He

pulls over. Police car pulls in front...behind...beside of him.
Police jump
out, guns, pull him out of the car, throw him to the floor, put a
handcuff on
him...All the while pointing a gun out at him" (Smith: 215). It is not
fair
that this African-American Law School student has to put up with racism
just
because his skin color and the "well-to-do" neighborhood he was driving
through.
Bradley's anger shows the reader that racism should not exist because
our
Constitution says, "all men are created equal." Bradley is an
important
character to Smith's theatrical piece because he is a white Senator who
can help
influence decision making. Bradley lets the reader know that he is
doing all he
can to make the "theory" of equality a reality for all races.

Unlike Senator Bradley, Elaine Brown's reality was growing up as
a black
woman in an "unequal" society. In Brown's interview she tries to
convince young
brothers to pick up the books instead of the guns. Brown a former
Black Panther
leader shows a personal sympathy for Jonathan Jackson, as she says, "I
think
that this idea of picking up the gun and going into the street without
a plan
and without any more rhyme or reason than rage is bizarre and so,
uh...And it's
foolish" (Smith: 228). Brown's contribution to Smith's theatrical
piece is
limited because she does not show the authentic anger like Senator
Bradley.

Even though both Senator Bill Bradley and former Black Panther
leader
Elaine Brown gave similar messages, their presence affects the reader
in a
different way. After reading Bradley's monologue, I felt elated and
anger.

When Bradley questioned the partner at the law firm as he ask, "What
did the
partner of the law firm do on Monday? Did the partner call the police
commissioner?" (Smith: 216). When Bradley begins asking question he
lets the
reader know that he is also bother by racism.

Yet in Brown's monologue racism is not the problem. Brown
wants to
convince the reader that guns are not worth his or her life. Brown
tells the
reader, "all one has to do is ask, to ask the Vietnamese or Saddam
Hussein about
the power...of the United States" and how they take down threats
(Smith: 228).
Brown wants young brothers to realizes how important their lives are to
our

society.

In Twilight: Los Angeles 1992 when Anna Deavere Smith says,
"Every
person I include in the book, and who I perform, has a presence that is
much
more important than the information," Bill Bradley and Elaine Brown are
just a
few of the characters Smith is describing. Bill Bradley was a white
Senator who
people might have thought would have agreed with the actions of the
LAPD but
ironically he was angry. Senator Bradley's monologue contributes more
to
Smith's theatrical piece because of this irony. I wonder what our
world would
like if we had more Senator's like Bill Bradley?