

CBS News
CBS Sunday Morning with Charles Kuralt
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Kerner Commission Update

(Theme music)

CHARLES KURALT: Good morning. I'm Charles Kuralt, and this SUNDAY MORNING. Nearly 50 years ago, Norman Corwin wrote, 'Brotherhood is not so wild a dream as those who profit by postponing it pretend.' Brotherhood is not so wild a dream, but we keep postponing it, even in America, where we should know better by now. Out of the Ashes is our Cover Story this morning to be reported by Terence Smith.

(Footage from riots and of the Kerner Commission)

TERENCE SMITH:*(Voiceover)* Twenty-five years ago in the wake of riots here in Los Angeles and around the country, the Kerner Commission on Civil Disorders warned that the nation was swiftly becoming what it called two societies, one white, one black, separate and unequal.

(Footage of Smith)

SMITH: Today a follow-up report released just this morning finds sadly that that prediction largely has come true. This SUNDAY MORNING...

(Footage from the streets of an inner city. Also, footage of a classroom of children.)

SMITH: *(Voiceover)* ... we'll take a look at the problems of America's inner cities and at some of the strikingly successful programs that offer hope in the place despair.

OUT OF THE ASHES

Out of the Ashes is our Cover Story this morning. It deals with race, the old American dilemma, and it is based on a new report to the nation which you will be reading in tomorrow morning's newspapers. A similar report came out 25 years ago. It was much discussed at the time and little acted upon. So in many respects, things are no better today. They are worse. Terence Smith reports our SUNDAY MORNING Cover Story.

(Footage from the Watts riots)

TERENCE SMITH: *(Voiceover)* This was Watts in 1965.

(Footage from riots in Detroit)

SMITH: *(Voiceover)* This was Detroit...

(Footage from riots in Newark)

SMITH: *(Voiceover)* ...and Newark in the summer of 1967...

(Footage from riots in Washington)

SMITH: *(Voiceover)* ...and Washington, DC, in '68.

Unidentified Man #1: *(Voiceover)* The American people are deeply disturbed. They are baffled and dismayed by the wholesale looting and violence that has occurred both in small towns and in great metropolitan centers.

Why did it happen? What can be done to prevent it from happening again and again?

(Footage of a meeting of the Kerner Commission)

SMITH: *(Voiceover)* Twenty-five years ago tomorrow, the Kerner Commission on Civil Disorders issued its famous report on the urban riots of the 1960s. That night, the late Harry Reasoner reported the findings on CBS.

Mr. HARRY REASONER: *(from footage)* Our nation, said the report, is moving toward two separate societies, black and white--separate, but unequal. If the division is allowed to widen, it says, we will find ourselves living in a state of tension and lawlessness held in check only by repression.

(Footage from the LA riots of people chanting 'Black justice')

SMITH: *(Voiceover)* And this was Los Angeles just last spring, a violent reminder of the commission's warning.

Unidentified Man #2: ...that will give them justice.

Mr. LYNN CURTIS (Milton Eisenhower Foundation): *(Voiceover)* Generally, all the conditions in the inner city have gotten worse.

SMITH: *(Voiceover)* Lynn Curtis, president of the Milton Eisenhower Foundation, is the author of a major new report, released this morning, that updates the original findings.

(Footage of Smith and Curtis)

Mr. CURTIS: Everything essentially has gotten worse. So today, if you ask the same question, I can say then, in 25 years from now, we will still be having riots, crime rates will have increased, we will be still doubling our prison population every 10 years.

(Footage of Smith)

SMITH: The report focuses on the missed opportunities of the last 25 years and stresses that the same conditions that provoked the riots of the 1960s led to the violence here in South Central Los Angeles last year.

Mr. DANNY BAKEWELL (Brotherhood Crusade): *(Voiceover)* You know, it's a pretty accurate report.

(Footage of Smith and Bakewell)

SMITH: *(Voiceover)* Danny Bakewell heads the Brotherhood Crusade, a black self-help organization that has been working to improve economic conditions in South Central Los Angeles for 25 years.

Mr. BAKEWELL: The reality is if we don't correct this problem, it's going to happen. But if it's not in Los Angeles, it's going to be in Detroit; it's going to be in Chicago; it's going to be in New York; it's going to be in New Orleans -- because the circumstances that exist for African-Americans throughout this country is the same. It's second best, it's always short end of the stick.

(Footage from LA after the riots)

Mr. ROGER WILKINS (Civil Rights Advocate): *(Voiceover)* We're heading in a very ugly direction.

SMITH: *(Voiceover)* Historian and civil rights advocate Roger Wilkins has watched the cities deteriorate.

(Footage of Smith and Wilkins)

Mr. WILKINS: Democracy presumes grown-up, responsible people who will face their problems. In the issue of race, Americans won't do that. We are still in deep denial.

(Picture of a young black boy and a police officer with the caption: 'Doing what works to reverse the betrayal of American democracy')

SMITH: *(Voiceover)* The statistics contained in this report are staggering: 33 percent of inner-city blacks live in poverty, 60 percent of their children are born into fatherless families...

(Footage of Smith)

SMITH: ...one in four young black males is either in jail or under arrest. But, the report insists, proven solutions exist to all these problems.

(Footage of children in a Head Start class)

Mr. CURTIS: *(Voiceover)* We're saying that we have the resources to do this if we want to, and we have the political will...

(Footage of Curtis)

Mr. CURTIS: ...that what we need to do is replicate what works on a larger scale, like Head Start, toss out what doesn't work.

(Footage of children in a Head Start class)

SMITH: *(Voiceover)* The report cites Head Start as a model, as the nation's most successful program to help the inner cities. It feeds and teaches 700,000 preschool kids nationwide. But Head Start has never been fully funded and only a quarter of all the eligible lower-income children are enrolled.

(Footage of Curtis)

Mr. CURTIS: For every dollar invested in Head Start, you get five bucks in benefits -- less crime, less drugs, less school dropouts, less welfare dependency. It makes economic sense.

(Footage of a school bus)

SMITH: *(Voiceover)* But Head Start is not enough. The report stresses that to be effective, similar support systems need to be extended to schoolchildren, teen-agers and young adults. In South Central Los Angeles, kids pour in after school at Lou Danzler's Challengers Boys and Girls Club.

(Footage of children getting off a school bus)

SMITH: *(Voiceover)* The club sends buses to the schools to make sure that the kids get there safely.

(Footage of Smith and Danzler)

Mr. LOU DANZLER (Challengers Boys and Girls Club): It's safe, it's secure. Kids feel like this is theirs. It's like an oasis. We call it the Oasis of South Central Los Angeles.

(Footage from a computer class)

Unidentified Woman #1: ...turn around. You see how we have two, RST?

SMITH: *(Voiceover)* Tutors conduct after-school classes -- here, in computer skills -- and make sure that homework gets done. It's a simple formula and an effective one.

(Footage of Danzler)

Mr. DANZLER: That's right. You don't have to have a master or a Ph.D. in order to understand what goes on around here. I mean, you've got to have commitment, you've got to care. I mean, those things are so simple. You've got to have love, you've got to have discipline, you've got to set standards.

(Footage of students studying)

SMITH: *(Voiceover)* Lynn Curtis.

Mr. CURTIS: *(Voiceover)* Well, if we had 100 boys and girls clubs of that nature...

(Footage of Curtis)

Mr. CURTIS: ...in that part of Los Angeles, we'd be cooking. We'd be - we'd be doing something based on what works.

(Footage of Danzler talking to students)

Mr. DANZLER: This is a class about life, brothers. This is a class about life. Working, choosing a career is life. If you want to be in this class, you want this career, you've got to discipline this.

SMITH: *(Voiceover)* For inner-city youths who drop out of school, the report says, programs like YouthBuild USA have already been proven to work. In Boston, YouthBuild teaches math and basic architecture, helps

students pass their high school equivalency exams and gets them jobs in the construction trades.

(Footage of a construction on a house)

SMITH: *(Voiceover)* In the process, inner-city housing gets rehabilitated.

Ms. DOROTHY STONEMAN (YouthBuild USA): *(Voiceover)* Young people want to do something that's permanent and visible and that they can show to their grandchildren.

SMITH: *(Voiceover)* Dorothy Stoneman founded YouthBuild 15 years ago in New York's East Harlem.

(Footage of Smith and Stoneman)

Ms. STONEMAN: Things work. Programs work. Comprehensive programs run by young people in partnership with adult rebuilding their own community and their own lives work. They have to be funded.

(Footage from LA after the riots)

SMITH: *(Voiceover)* Funding is the key, the report says, and funding on a scale equal to the dimension of the problem. After the Los Angeles riots, President Bush promised billions in inner-city aid but, the day after the election, vetoed the bill. The report estimates that at least \$30 billion a year, for the next 10 years, will be required to do the job.

(Footage from a meeting of the Argus Community)

Unidentified Man #3: First of all, I'd like to thank the Lord for another day of drug-free.

SMITH: *(Voiceover)* That money, the report recommends, should be used to create multipurpose urban rescue programs like the Argus Community in the South Bronx.

Unidentified Man #4: My favorite thing to do this morning is to find a job.

SMITH: *(Voiceover)* Argus takes drug and alcohol abusers off the streets and teaches them discipline and the basic skills they need to get jobs. It also serves high-school dropouts, pregnant women and people with AIDS.

(Footage of Fernando Gonzales training to be a chef)

SMITH: *(Voiceover)* Argus helped Fernando Gonzales stay off drugs and find a career. He's now training to be a chef at a New York culinary school.

Mr. FERNANDO GONZALES (Chef): *(Voiceover)* Now I see myself as learning the most I can from this school, so it can help me go into the cooking field.

(Footage of Gonzales)

Mr. GONZALES: Of course, not everybody starts at the top. You have to work your way up, you know, but at least I can see myself working at least as a head cook, making a little extra money than what I did—than what I was making in the past.

(Footage from the streets of an inner city)

SMITH: *(Voiceover)* The report says the problems of the cities have grown progressively more acute over the last 25 years and the time is running out.

(Footage of Smith and Bakewell)

SMITH: *(Voiceover)* Brotherhood Crusade's Danny Bakewell.

Mr. BAKEWELL: The basic reality is that people living in America today - African Americans, young warrior types, strong, able-bodied black men—are saying no longer are they going to sit by and watch white folk enjoy the fruits of this society while they are relegated to a position of not even being able to provide food, clothing and shelter for their families. That's not going to exist anymore.

(Footage of Wilkins)

SMITH: *(Voiceover)* Roger Wilkins.

Mr. WILKINS: If we continue to ignore these problems, things will get worse for everybody. We will dilute our democracy and we will dilute our standards of living.

(Footage from an inner city)

Mr. WILKINS: *(Voiceover)* We will have larger and larger groups of people who are not only not contributing but who are actively destroying.

SMITH: *(Voiceover)* The report concludes that none of this has to happen.

(Footage from a classroom)

SMITH: *(Voiceover)* The solutions exist, no magic is required, other than the political will to finally do what the Kerner Commission said should have been started 25 years ago.

(Footage of a group of children singing in a classroom)