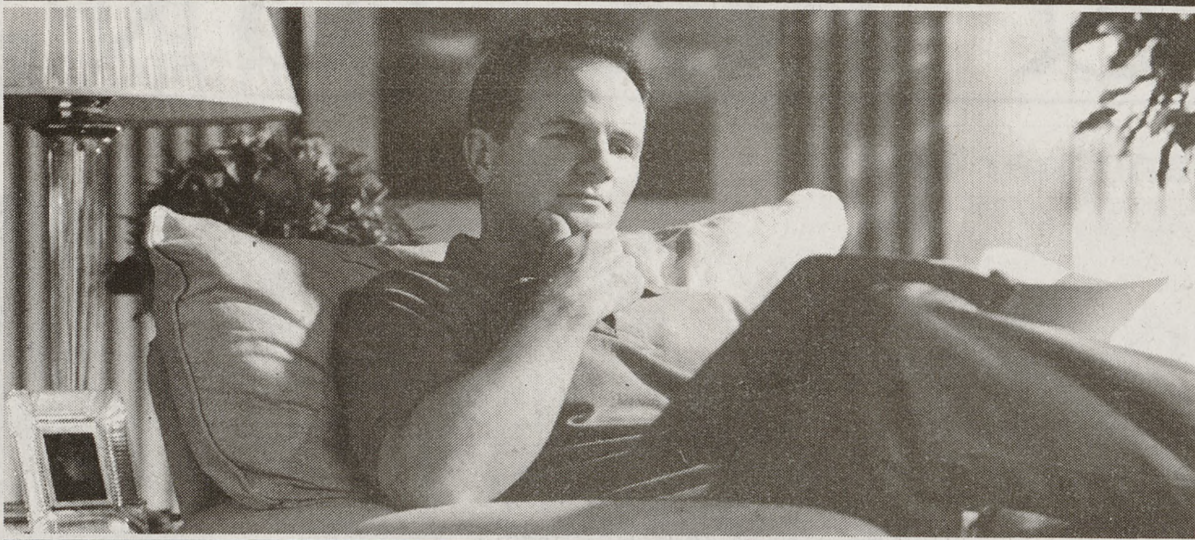


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Experts label worksheet assault on racial identity

HOUSTON (AP) — A school assignment asking fourth-graders to determine which one of four sisters was "beautiful, blond and intelligent" did not make much sense to 9-year-old Dennis Campbell, Jr.

When Dennis, who is black, showed the worksheet to his mother, she asked him what he thought about it.

"Well, no one in our family is blond," Tammie Campbell recalls him saying. "Does that mean we're not intelligent and beautiful?"

"At that time I was so upset, I didn't know what I would do," she said. Campbell discussed the matter with the teacher, who apologized.

Experts say the heart of the issue is the assault on children's racial and cultural identities in schools.

"It makes this child feel like, 'I don't belong to a group that's regarded as successful,'" said Larue Allen, chair of the department of applied psychology at New York University's school of education.

Allen, who has researched the

development of racial and ethnic identity, said although one episode will not unravel everything a child is taught at home about his self-worth, several episodes could harm

"It makes this child feel like, 'I don't belong to a group that's regarded as successful.'"

LARUE ALLEN
CHAIR, NYU'S DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY

a child's self-esteem and make them less likely to try in school.

"Imagine that you collect a series of those insensitivities and you start to get other indications that this teacher thinks that people who belong to a certain group are somehow a bit better off than are members of

say, a black kid's group," she said. "It's the kind of thing that's going to tick you off."

Dennis' assignment was a standard logic problem with a series of premises and a chart. Children were supposed to use the premises to determine the hair color of four sisters and whether they were intelligent or beautiful. The goal was to find a sister who was beautiful, blond and intelligent. A bonus question was to determine which sister was not beautiful, blond nor intelligent.

"Every child in the class who is not blond now gets to identify himself as not being beautiful and not intelligent, which is the underlying message being given to children that that kind of lesson is used," Caryl Stern-LaRosa, director of education for the New York-based Anti-Defamation League's American Council on Education, said.

Campbell agrees. "It's a form of brainwash to tell you're not beautiful because of your hair color," she said.

New book rips Republicans, Democrats

AUSTIN (AP) — And now, from the politician who made wisecracks a pivotal part of public policy, comes a new book: *There's Nothing in the Middle of the Road But Yellow Stripes and Dead Armadillos*.

With one of his best-remembered lines for a title, former Texas agriculture commissioner Jim Hightower's latest book takes a poke at just about everybody.

He skewers corporate fat cats ("They get the gold mine, we get the shaft"); the media ("Like cats watching the wrong mousehole"); and the fondness of both Republicans and his own Democratic Party for well-heeled campaign contributors.

"The two-party system has become a one-party system. It's become a money party system," he says.

"My own party is no longer a defender of the workaday majority. It's no longer a defender of the middle

class. It has, instead, run off with the same Gucci-and-Pucci set that the Republicans dance with, abandoning the Kmart crowd. Some people say we need a third party. I wish we had a second party."

After wrapping up another installment of his syndicated talk show — "Hightower Radio, coming to you live from the Chat and Chew Cafe" — the author talked Tuesday about the new book and an old favorite, politics.

The Chat and Chew is really a round, red-checked table in the corner of a popular Austin restaurant, where Hightower says his syndicated program broadcasts "from Maine to Maui."

The radio gives Hightower another platform for his populist message. But the messenger hasn't changed since his days as a U.S. Senate aide, Texas Observer

editor, or two-term agriculture commissioner.

"There's an effort to cast me as liberal, when in fact I'm a populist. The real (political) spectrum talk about is not right-to-left, top-to-bottom."

With this, his third book, Hightower says he hopes to rile people up, give them hope and give them a laugh.

"My opening quote on this book is, 'Speak the truth but ride a horse,' which is an old West cowboy saying."

"The truth that I'm trying to speak in this book is the great, speakable in American politics today — that we're in the middle of a class war. It's being waged by the powerful, by the wealthy, by the most elite, privileged folks in our country against the middle class."

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