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[https://www.100test.com/kao\\_ti2020/226/2021\\_2022\\_2008\\_E5\\_B9\\_B4\\_E6\\_96\\_87\\_c73\\_226354.htm](https://www.100test.com/kao_ti2020/226/2021_2022_2008_E5_B9_B4_E6_96_87_c73_226354.htm) Welfare: A white Secret (1) Come on, my fellow white folks, we have something to confess. No, nothing to do with age spots or those indoor-tanning? creams we use to get us through the winter without looking like the final stages of TB. Nor am I talking about the fact that we all go home and practice scaring dance moves behind drawn shades. Out with it, friends, the biggest secret known to whites since the invention of powdered rouge?: welfare is a white program. Yep. At least it ' s no more black than Vanilla Ice is a fair rendition of classic urban rap. (2) The numbers go like this: 61% of the population receiving welfare, listed as “ means-tested cash assis-tance ” by the Census Bureau, is identified as white, while only 33% is identified as black. These numbers not-withstanding, the Republican version of “ political correctness ” has given us “ welfare cheat ” as a new term for African American since the early days of Ronald Reagan. Yet if the Lakers were 61% white and on a winning streak?, would we be calling them a “ black team ” ? (3) Wait a minute, I can hear my neighbors say, we ' re not as slow at math as the Asian Americans like to think. There ' s still a glaring disproportion there. African Americans are only 12% of the population as a whole, at least according to the census count, yet they ' re 33% of the welfare population surely evidence of a shocking ad-diction to the dole?. (4) But we ' re forgetting something. Welfare is a program for poor people, very

poor people. African Americans are three times as likely as whites to fall below the poverty level and hence to have a chance of qualifying for welfare benefits. If we look at the kind of persons most likely to be eligible single mothers living in poverty with children under 18 to support we find little difference in welfare participation by race: 74.6% of African Americans in such dire straits are on welfare, compared with 64.5% of the poor white single moms. (5) That's still a difference, but not enough to imply some congenital? appetite for a free lunch on the part of the African-derived. In fact, two explanations readily suggest themselves: First, just as blacks are \_\_\_\_\_ likely to be poor, they are disproportionately likely to find themselves among the poorest of the poor, where welfare eligibility arises. Second, the black poor are more likely than their white counterparts to live in cities, and hence to have a chance of making their way to the welfare office. (6) So why are they so poor? I can see my neighbor asking as visions of slack idlers dance before his narrow-eyed eyes. Ah, that is a question white folks would do well to ponder. Consider, for a start, that African Americans are more likely to be disabled (illness being a famous consequence of poverty) or unemployed (in the sense of actively seeking work) and far less likely to earn wages that would lift them out of the welfare-eligibility range. (7) As for the high proportion of black families headed by single women (44%, compared with 13% for whites): many deep sociohistoric reasons could be referred to, but none of them is welfare. A number of respected studies refute the Reagan-era myth that a few hundred a month in welfare payments is a sufficient

incentive to desert one's husband or get pregnant while in high school. If it were, states with relatively high welfare payments say, about \$500 a month per family would have higher rates of out-of-wedlock births than states like Louisiana and Mississippi, which expect a welfare family to get by on \$200 a month or less. But this is not the case. (8) So our confession stands: white folks have been swallowing up the welfare budget while blaming someone else. But it's worse than that. If we look at Social Security, which is another form of welfare, although it is often mistaken for an individual insurance program, then whites are the ones who are crowding the trough. We receive almost twice as much per capita, for an overall advantage to our race of \$10 billion a year much more than the \$3.9 billion advantage African Americans gain from their disproportionate share of welfare. One sad reason: whites live an average of six years longer than African Americans, meaning that young black workers help subsidize a huge and growing "over-class" of white retirees. I do not see our confession bringing much relief. There's a reason for resentment, though it has more to do with class than with race. White people are poor too, and in numbers far exceeding any of our more generously pigmented social groups. And poverty as defined by the government is a vast underestimation of the economic terror that persists at incomes such as \$20,000 or even \$40,000 and above that we like to think of as middle class. (9) The problem is not that welfare is too generous to blacks but that social welfare in general is too stingy to all concerned. Naturally, whites in the swelling "near poor" category resent the notion of

whole races supposedly indulging over their expense. Whites, near poor and middle class, need help too as do the many African Americans, Hispanics and “ others ” who do not qualify for aid but need it nonetheless. (10) So we white folks have a choice. We can keep pretending that welfare is black program and a scheme for transferring our earnings to the pockets of shiftless, dark-skinned people. Or we can clear our throats, blush prettily and admit that we are hurting too for cash assistance when we ’ re down and out, for health insurance, for college aid and all the rest. (11) Racial scapegoating? has its charms, I will admit: the surge of righteous anger, even the fun for those inclined of wearing sheets and burning crosses. But there are better, nobler sources of white pride, it seems to me. Remember, whatever they say about our music or our taste in clothes, only we can truly, deeply blush.

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