



SEARCH THIS BLOG

SEARCH ALL BLOGS

BlogThis!

GET YOUR OWN BLOG

NEXT BLOG»



*The Xoff Files*  
By Bill Christofferson

## The Xoff Files

THURSDAY, JUNE 02, 2005

David Clarke is no Zell Miller,  
but it's not because he's black



Sheriff David W. Clarke

As the David Clarke publicity machine begins to wind up again, perhaps it is time for a little truth telling.

After a year of licking his wounds from the Milwaukee mayoral primary, we're told Milwaukee County Sheriff Clarke is back, "energized" and ready to start offering his patented, no-holds-barred opinions on the state of the nation.

Jessica McBride's Milwaukee Insight [article](#), based on an interview with Clarke, offers some real insights -- and not necessarily the ones Clarke intended.

Clarke, appointed by GOP Gov. Scott McCallum in spring of 2002, ran for a full term in the fall, winning a Democratic primary in September and an easy general election in November.

He ran as a Democrat, and asked me to be his campaign consultant and do his media. I only work for Dems, and he struck me as someone who would give the sheriff's department the shaking-up it badly

### Previous Posts

[Our 'independent' AGs](#)

[The Presidential Highway](#)

[Green upstages Walker](#)

[This cartoon by Pulitzer Prize winner David Hors](#)

[Doyle names a campaign manager](#)

[A hospital still minimal, wage](#)

[Will Walker get a pass on poopy pollution?](#)

[Oak Creek fight makes Washington Post](#)

[Meet Deep Throat](#)

[Xoff is always looking for the local angle](#)



Archived from Fuerst v Clarke No. 05-4162

needed. A career Milwaukee cop, Clarke was well-spoken, engaging, charismatic, and seemed like just the guy to end the good-old-boy cronyism that had existed in the department.

Clarke told me he wanted to run as a Democrat, and that the McCallum people were not happy about that. I was surprised to read in McBride's article that just the opposite was true.

McBride writes: He reveals that he originally wanted to run for sheriff as a Republican but an aide to McCallum talked him into running as a Democrat, a necessary "strategy" to win in Milwaukee County, which hadn't had a Republican sheriff in 46 years.

So my relationship with Clarke was built on a lie from the first time we met.

He won the election handily, and almost immediately began hearing the siren call of those who wanted him to run for mayor. He could have learned something from Richard Artison, the last black sheriff talked into running for mayor, who embarrassed himself against John Norquist.

Many of us who helped in his sheriff's race said no to helping him run for mayor, and suggested it was a bad idea. But he was not to be deterred. One of those who said he couldn't help him got a blistering e-mail from Clarke: *"This race is going to be a war and I need to know who is with me and who is against me. . . . To win a war one must shed the weak, the dull and the pathetic. I'm looking to surround myself with men and women of courage and who believe in me without wavering."*

So Clarke was off on his jihad against the liberal infidels.

He ran an embarrassing, inept, amateurish campaign, finishing third after barely making it onto the ballot.

But he got some attention, especially from talk radio, with a series of long e-mails challenging conventional thinking, which provoked plenty of adulation on talk radio. While other candidates issued press releases, Clarke sent e-mails to Charlie Sykes.

The fact that he is an African-American gave him standing to say some things that needed to be said, but which no white person would ever have been able to do. I'll give him credit for that.

His finest moment may have been when he challenged a group of black elected officials and activists who were complaining about the handling of a suspect after a freeway chase, claiming he had been mistreated by deputies because of racism. Clarke took the wind out of their sails when he showed them photos of the deputies who made the arrest. All of them, as I recall, were black.

Now Clarke is back in action, blasting welfare programs and the poor. Why can't they do like he did -- grow up in a middle class family and attend private schools -- instead of whining and going on welfare?

Back to McBride's article: *"Why can't I be the Zell Miller of the Democratic Party?" asked the sheriff . . . Because the Democratic Party, he says, won't have him, or politicians like him. "They can't have a black guy out there espousing conservative views because that hurts them."*

*He hasn't joined either party and prefers to eschew labels, but says, "Even if I joined the Democratic Party, I'm persona non grata. They will not allow me to think independently - especially a black guy doing it."*

Actually, during his campaign for sheriff many of us in his kitchen cabinet urged him to join the Democratic Party, since he was running as a Democrat and complained they were not helping him. He refused repeatedly.

The problem for the Democrats isn't that he's "a black guy," although it's interesting -- and disappointing -- to see Clarke play the race card himself after criticizing others who blame their problems on their race.

David Clarke can't be the Zell Miller of the Democratic Party because he is not a Democrat. Never has been, never will be.

Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me.

should not have been fooled the first time. Shame on both of us for that.

Archived from Fuerst v Clarke No. 05-4162

posted by Xoff @ 9:24 AM

[0 comments](#)

0 Comments:

[Post a Comment](#)

[<< Home](#)

