



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on July 1, 2021

BET Founder and First Black Billionaire in America Calls for Reparations for Black Descendants of Slaves — and Includes Himself

Robert Johnson, 75, who started Black Entertainment Television (BET) in 1980 and is America's first black billionaire, says that America owes black Americans — including him — \$14 trillion in reparations.

A man who — by capitalizing on his “blackness” and that of the consumers of his network — was fortunate enough to become a billionaire, is now capitalizing on his “blackness” to demand reparations to the tune of \$350,000 to each of this country's 40 million “black descendants of slaves.” That payout comes with an individual price tag that is more than a little hard to calculate, since no one — including billionaire Robert Johnson — seems to know who exactly would pay it.



AP Images

If only white people paid the bill, it would come out to about \$55,000 for every white man, woman, and child. If black people are included in the splitting of the check (which is much more likely, since it must come out of the common till into which all Americans pay), it drops to about \$42,000 for every man, woman, and child in the country.

To compound the problem and ladle ignorance upon error, no one — again, including billionaire Robert Johnson — could even begin to figure out which black Americans are “descendants of slaves” since Americans are such a mix of people who have been here hundreds of years and newcomers, and of people who have a wide makeup of racial parts that go into the mix of who they are. What percent black would a person need to be to qualify for their “reparation” check? Five percent? Ninety-five percent? Somewhere in between? And would genealogical records be required showing that a person was actually the descendant of a slave? Or would a person's “blackness” be sufficient to get on the list?

Johnson does not offer any type of answers to those questions, but this much he knows for certain: He belongs on the list of beneficiaries. “If you're a successful black business, the idea is you've had enough,” Johnson said in a recent interview with *Vice*. He added that no one would make that claim to a successful white person. Well, of course not — because white people don't have the founder of White Entertainment Television demanding reparations.

Johnson's plan — though just as likely to be a publicity stunt aimed at pandering to viewers of BET — is far darker upon deeper examination. Rather than calling for the whole \$14 trillion all at once, he would have it doled out at \$10,000 to \$11,000 a year over a 30-year period. That makes it another in a long list of unfunded liabilities that never really appear when America's debt is calculated. It also creates



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another couple of problems. First, inflation will eat away at the value of \$10,000 to \$11,000 per year over the next 10, 20, and 30 years, meaning that the \$14 trillion price tag would likely grow as those payments are adjusted for inflation.

Second, it would almost certainly create a “welfare mentality” to many of those recipients, meaning that once the 30 years had come and gone, it would be “unfair” to end the payments and cut those people off. It would have to continue *ad infinitum*.

That the founder of an all-black, all the time network who rode that all-black wave to become America’s first black billionaire is a race hustler likely surprises no one. And this is not a new idea for Johnson. He pitched this idea last year, telling Fox News:

You want a big idea: white America, what would happen if you said, “please forgive us and accept our apology. And by the way, we think we owe you what was taken from you for over 300 years of slavery, Jim Crow, segregation and denial of economic opportunity and rights.

Will someone please show Johnson a statement of his net worth? Because he has certainly not been on the receiving end of any “denial of economic opportunity and rights.” While he certainly grew up less than wealthy, he also certainly overcame his humble beginnings. For instance, he was an honors student in high school, graduated from the University of Illinois in 1968 with a bachelor’s degree in social studies (also joining the Beta chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity while there), and received a master’s degree in public affairs from the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University in 1972. After Princeton, he landed a job as the public affairs director for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. And less than eight years after graduating from an Ivy League school, he founded the network that made him a billionaire.

This writer would love to be so disadvantaged.

But Johnson — who knows how to ride a black wave when he sees one — is clearly capitalizing on the momentum of the BLM movement. The last year has seen the advancement of more than a few insane ideas that have reversed many of the gains in race relations over the past 60 or 70 years. Among those insane ideas is Critical Race Theory (CRT), which has gained a foothold in schools across the country — sometimes officially, other times *unofficially*. But either way, school kids are being taught that white people are oppressors and black people are oppressed — and that such is invariable. It is true of all white people and all black people. Period.

Johnson is pushing the idea of reparations at a pivotal moment. House Resolution 40 — first introduced in 1989 — is a bill to set up a Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans. For the first time since its introduction more than 30 years ago, H.R. 40 has passed out of the House judiciary Committee.

It is still a long shot. There is quite a difference between getting a bill out of committee and getting it voted on, much less passed. Even then, it would need to go to the Senate and travel all that distance again. But passing the bill does not appear to be the point: The point seems to be the further stirring up of racial strife.

No one who is alive today ever owned a black slave in America. No one alive today was ever a black slave in America. That all ended more than 150 years ago. America has spent most of that time —



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especially the past 60 to 70 years — making great strides in race relations. It is a painful shame to watch all those gains undone as race hustlers such as Robert Johnson drive a wedge deep into the heart of this country for their own selfish gains.



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