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# The Vision

## LIVE BEYOND SIGHT

DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS  
H. FRED SIMONS AFRICAN AMERICAN  
CULTURAL CENTER  
DIRECTOR: DR. WILLENA KIMPSON PRICE





# A NEW DAY . . .

Awaken yourself, lest the movement of the earth beneath you be your rude awakening. Remove the veils of shade, as the sun creeps through the closed curtains and stubborn lids; remaining in the dark is no means for shelter. Remaining in the dark is an obstruction to enlightenment. The threads of history are beginning to bear new linen for the bed we rest in. Our dreams are the same, but the deeds of yesterday have taken us light years away from yester year. We know that moving forces can sit atop a sea of molten passion. These forces will collide, submerge, and vulcanize to create a new land. The youth of this generation have as many burdens as they do talents; as great power is challenged by great responsibility. It is uncertain if Atlas has incurred a blessing or a curse, but a wise man once said that the ink of a scholar is worth more than the blood of a martyr. So we shall use the blood of the martyrs to be the ink for our pens. Welcome to the next episode.

Editor-In-Chief  
Davin Campbell



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# The Birth

My mind is a weapon,  
Not a Weapon of Mass Destruction,  
but a weapon of mass instruction,  
As I turn to the blackboard to teach  
you the very skills of a being a mother  
after a child's own heart.  
Dearly beloved but we depart.  
No abortion, as an option because I  
had an addiction  
I needed to be sick, ill, dope,  
But the unwise investments from my  
vest compartments, left me broke.  
If being dope makes you rich then I'm  
piss poor.  
It's funny how you can use the same  
adjective to describe a paradox.  
Opposing terms, like you learn that  
you can be  
dirt poor or filthy rich,  
But they don't tell you either way  
you're still unclean.  
Poor sanitation because summer days  
suppressed your desire for spring  
cleaning,  
The trash of being trashy in a  
trash-filled garbage-piled place,  
where,  
your mind gets consumed by dirty  
thoughts,  
thought no one knew.

The reporter started a scandal and  
impregnated me  
with words that grew in me, until I  
started to believe.  
New news, you see in secret,  
my womb conceived a growing burden.  
Hurting , 9 months of morning sickness  
with no Jehovah's witnesses  
9 months of kicking and screaming  
from  
the strains of stress and agony,  
on bended knees  
but the ground seemed so unattainable,  
pain so unbearable,  
but you see, you see,  
I touched a flowing tear drop and my  
water broke,  
Contractions got closer together,  
screams got louder,  
push, push, slippery  
but you see,  
I always come through for myself,  
Delivery.  
2 pounds and 6 inches of a new  
existence, finally substance.  
The doctors put bows on it's head,  
clothed it in a shiny wrapped garment,  
and blessed it,  
it was quick, swift,  
I named it poetry but  
Everyone else calls it a gift.

Shantel Honeyghan

**Requiem** (dear Assata,)

Don't go—

I watch your reflection in me,  
young girls with wild hair and  
frantic fingers if you want  
to make a change, you've got to move you've  
got to learn how they make  
monsters of our men and  
warriors of our women—you were—  
you are—  
a warrior.

a bounty on a head because it's  
got ideas, lightning bolts between the  
breasts between the  
breaths—how did you learn to breathe after holding  
it in for so long? i want to  
walk in your shadow until the stench  
of jail cells and unmonitored violence and  
martyrdom and sanctity and piousness and  
they say you were the perfect candidate  
because you were—  
you are—  
resilient.

may i ask you your name again?  
heart pierced by talons you want to rip you are—not  
your flesh not your hair texture bone behind skin you  
are not “I'm trying to make a change” or i'm feeling  
out-of-range, you are gone beyond belief, faintly floating  
Assata, they solicited us to killed tupac and then they  
facilitated the murder of biggie and homicidal shakes, chills,  
do they know how it feels, that i can't let my brother roam,  
because Trayvon Martin couldn't buy an Arizon-  
a, and i'm sorry about  
martin & malcolm, sorry about never knowing which  
name is mine, which name is mine, which name is mine?  
i'm sorry for wishing i was white, then  
wishing i was dead, and the only thing i've ever  
wished that never came true was that i—

wished i was you.





Dear Assata,

If you ever dare to fall in love again,

full fledge, all-in, the “i will go to prison for you” love, the “i will hold my breath and count to ten

thousand for you” love, the “i will break bones, bawling beyond basic belief” love, the “cerebral contortion, you-are-my-everything-but-i-need-to-change-you-you-are-perfect-and-its-them-who-are-flawed” love, the “i vow to never use black and ugly in the same sentence again unless there is a

*is not*

in between them” love, the “radical times call for the radicalization of a nation bent on assimilation, bent on erasing the black, til all that’s left is the blood” love,

the “i’ve never loved like this before but i promise until every inch of this brown body is scarred in my fight you,

i’ll ignite for you,

this life for you—is yours” love,

Assata, if you ever put up those scarred arms, wild hair, frantic fingers

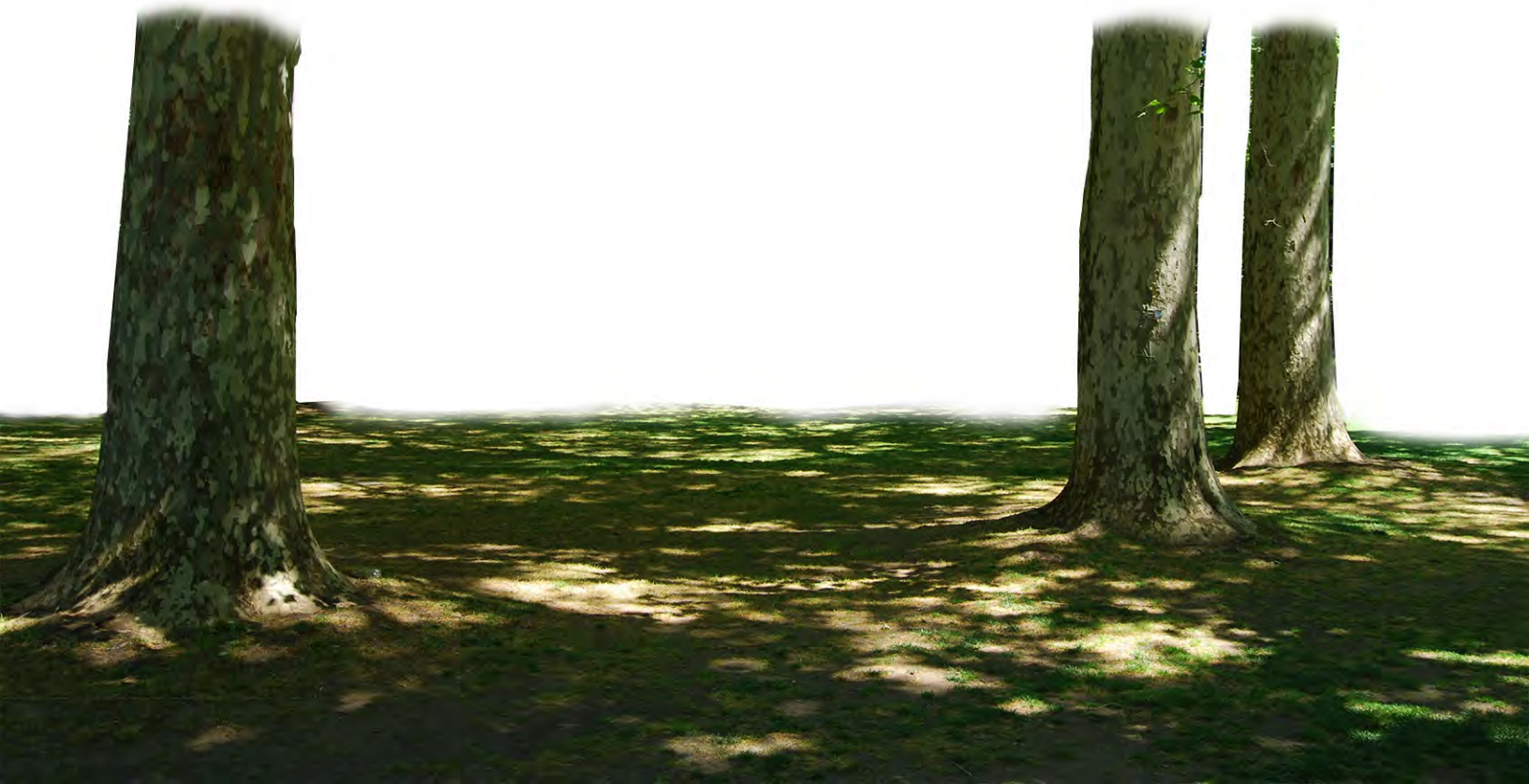
balled into a fist, the fist,

if you ever dare to fall in love again,

i promise this time

it won’t make you run away.

Martina Powell



## Consciousness

The mind speaks.

You hear it when it brings a thought to life.

Whether it screams like a symphony of infants or carefully caresses your psyche, this electrical current puts \_\_\_\_\_ into existence.

We produce a reality that's measurable and perceivable.

A thought can live peacefully confined but when it leaves your head and shows itself to the world it suddenly becomes something different.

It becomes an idea - a physical, palpable, travelling invisible that can interact with others of its kind.

It carries the weight of thought across the human landscape travelling through every light bulb and building lobby.

It is the first creation, the first tool to solve a problem.

Your problems.

Other people's problems.

But whether good or bad it exists.

You see it trend, spread, infect, distort, influence and there is nothing you can do about it.

Except have another one.

Media is not an enemy. Media is your tool.

The telephone gave us instant communication.

Social media revealed a new layer of reality – the self-perception of what piece we are within the giant people puzzle we live among.

We craft ourselves out of text, out of photos, and out of sounds on the Internet.

Unless you build your own, we take other words, other photos, and other sounds to stand in representation of our inner.

Our person is put on display.

It lives just as much as we do within the veins of the digital body.

Communication is why we exist.

To think and speak – hopefully in that order – with others.

Other people, other things.

Lovely conversations are to be had with pet animals, favorite spots in the forest, and with little nooks in the city.

There is a language you can feel.

Well okay, there are two.

One of them feels without touch or sight.

It lives in your mind and everything else's.

**By Steve Cartagena**



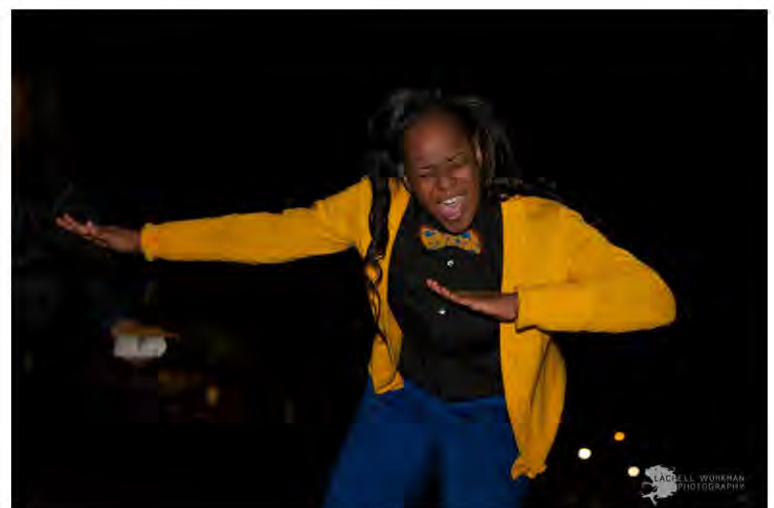
# The Coming Out Show

From the view facing the northern side of campus on the Student Union quad, ominous clouds crept on the skyline overlaying trickles of dark light, laying below the vast open night sky sprinkled with stars that lead on to eternity. A world was changed forever at 7 pm on the 29th of March. The rest of us were able to witness this first hand in front of the east entrance of the building. The occasion gathered crowds of students from every corner of campus, and a host of Greek organizations from many different backgrounds to pay their respects to the culmination of one young lady's journey. To name a few: Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority inc. (1908), Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity inc. (1914), Iota Phi Theta Fraternity inc. (1963), Theta Alpha Latin Sorority inc. (1975), Lambda Alpha Upsilon Fraternity inc. (1985), Lambda Sigma Lambda Upsilon Senioritas Latinas Unidas Sorority inc. (1987), Delta Epsilon Psi (1998). Shanti Lipscomb, the President of the Sigma Gamma Rho graduate chapter of the Greater Hartford area, was also in attendance. Lipscomb became an official member in the spring of 2007, is currently studying Sociology for her Master's degree, and governs all the undergraduate chapters in the Greater Hartford area. When asked how an interest should go about the process of becoming a sister of Sigma Gamma Rho, Lipscomb discussed the value of research, self-education, and measuring compatibility, as it was sure to be a lifetime commitment. There you have it, the stage was set. The interest was now on the threshold of the ultimate commitment and under the ultimate spotlight.



The silence and stillness was eventually cut short by a chant and steady two-step march sounding from the hill that leads up to the Student Union's quad. After just a few moments, and indiscernible grunts, there she was; wearing a gold-plated mask with the Sorority's insignia. "Solo", ready to complete her journey to her longed destination, with the support of all in attendance, but by herself.

The cold eerie feelings were quickly assuaged by the singing, dancing and spoken word performances by the young Shoshana Henry. The probate was just under an hour in length, and this gave her ample time to perform remixes to everything from "All Gold Everything" by Trinidad James, to "Real Love" by Mary J. Blige, where she had the opportunity to profess the love she had for her soon to be org, Acapella. Just about everyone in attendance got a kick out of the witty rewordings used to praise, or poke fun at, fellow Greek orgs on campus also. Regardless of the targets of the banter, the periodic laughter and squeals suggested that were all able to enjoy the brave and charismatic performance.







This courage and consistency exhibited throughout the probate by the “Solo” enticed The Vision to take a look behind the mask of the one her line sisters call “Cinemax”. So we were able to get a group interview with the new member; and her sister, the head of the Uconn chapter, Dionna Dennee Jackson.

Vision: Can you tell me about the history of your Sorority? How did it all begin?

Henry: November 12th, 1922 at Butler University in Indianapolis, Indiana by seven school teachers pursuing higher education.

Vision: Why did you [Shoshana] decide to rush?

Jackson: I’m sorry, I have to interrupt. We prefer to refer to it as a membership intake process, nothing about it is rushed. For instance, we were both in the same interest class but I became a member in the fall of 2011, and Shoshana, obviously, has officially joined us this semester.

Vision: I see, that’s news to me; but sort of a relief actually. So [Shoshana] why did you decide to go through this “membership in-take process”?

Henry: I’ve always wanted to commit to something in college, even before arriving on campus. I was also exposed to members of S.G. Rho prior to, and early in my college experience. There was just always something warm about them.

Vision: Well [Jackson], what do you think it takes to be a sister of S.G. Rho?

Jackson: Well I wouldn’t say there is a cookie cutter S.G. Rho. Individuality, confidence, strong personalities are all traits that we believe our women share however. We like to say that you can always tell when a S.G. Rho walks into the room.

Vision: Sounds like pretty recognizable qualities for sure. You both seem to fit the bill. But [Shoshana] how did you come across the line name “Cinemax”? Something tells me it has something to do with charisma and performance ability.

Henry: Actually no, but that’s an interesting interpretation. I actually got the name because I was under the microscope as the solo throughout most of my membership in-take process. I felt as if I was always being watched; and my sisters say I’m very dramatic, hence “Cinemax”.

Vision: What went through your mind during the moments of coronation?

Henry: I felt changed; the adrenaline helped to subside all my fears. The big crowd was intimidating and energizing at the same time. It just hit me: all the hard work, endless nights, long process...this was a culmination of all my experiences. It was the proudest moment of my life.





# Bigger Picture

When she still dreamed of becoming a world famous rock critic, Julie told me that music people can be divided into two categories; kids who grew up in Beatles houses and kids who grew up in Stones houses. If your parents liked The Beatles, they'll always be your favorite band and your musical interests will stem from the songs of John, Paul, Ringo, and George.

Conversely if papa was a Rolling Stone, your interests are fated to spring from Mick's showmanship, the British band's bravado, and the strange tongue without a face that always reminded me of Aaahh!!! Real Monsters.

But there was just one problem; I grew up in two homes, not one, and neither of them housed a single Beatles or Rolling Stones record. Instead, my mom and I cleaned the house to Michael Jackson. Marvin Gaye sang to us in the living room while I did math homework and mom graded sixth grade reading quizzes. Pop and soul were always fine with me, but the sound of her old disco records served as the starting gun to my race out the door.

In the months after my parents split up, I can remember dancing around my dad's living room to Parade and Diamonds and Pearls. Prince's sexy high vocal notes and funk'd out guitar distortions on "Kiss" coerced my six year old hips to swing no matter how hard I fought them. In the car, golden tones from the guitars of Duane Allman and Dickie Betts played the soundtrack to summer days, "Blue Sky" overhead and all around me. A music child I was, but a Stones man or Beatles boy I could never be.

"So who's your favorite band then?" Julie asked me after one of our first dates.

"Outkast."

"Like, 'Hey Ya', polaroid picture, Outkast?"  
"Yeah," I said, "but lately I'm really into this new guy K.R.I.T."

With the room to ourselves for the weekend, I took the opportunity to introduce Julie to the all time greats as I saw them. To the smell of incense and the flicker of exactly one Bic lighter, Andre 3000 and Big Boi started the night with sixteen bars a piece before Jay-Z dropped twenty-two two's. Notorious B.I.G., Nas, The Fugees, and Eminem's performance of "Stan" through laptop speakers finished our private concert.

"It's cool and all, but I'm not getting it," Julie said. The ballads and blues of my musical heroes couldn't touch her the way they did me. In the same way that I've never understood the British invasion, Julie couldn't fall in love with my classic rap albums.

A music child I was, but a  
Stones man or Beatles boy I  
could never be.

But I kept trying. I'd brought her through the present day in hip-hop, playing her snippets of every album that had at some point appealed my palette and helped to refine my taste. The College Dropout, Confessions, Food & Liquor, Man on the Moon, Kush & OJ, My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy, Krit Wuz Here, Section.80-- no luck.

Julie's roots were planted firmly in the Stone's while mine were scattered about soul, southern rock, and 80's pop. They say opposites attract and we did, but as we found ourselves more different than adversarial, I started to appreciate the fact that opposites at least understood, and could therefore appreciate, the ins and outs of the other point of view.

(cont.)



After a few more weeks of trying, I'd all but accepted the fact that Julie and I would never be able to bond over an album or track. And then, just as I'd given up, I heard a familiar instrumental flowing through her window as I walked by one afternoon in May. "Loft Music," The Weeknd. It wasn't rap and though it might have been the only hip-hop album to circulate indie circuits less Tyler the Creator, it was a start. My down and out dream had new light, even if it were merely a single flicker.

Julie and I spent the next ten months evenly dividing our radio time. During long rides on steaming roads, I learned to sing Fleetwood Mac's "Second Hand News" while Julie found that she could properly fry an egg when Channel Orange was thrown on repeat. By winter break, Julie discovered a sentimental bond with Kanye West's "Family Business," while I began searching through the music of my childhood, grabbing LP's by Prince, The Allman Brothers, Bruce Springsteen, or Stevie Wonder every time I stopped into a used record store. Julie started crying over the spilled milk that has become Nikki Minaj, working out to Take Care, and writing novels, short stories, and essays to the vocal notes of Cocaine 80s. Still, she never could understand my love for Outkast or Big K.R.I.T.

I should have celebrated her exploration of new genres and artists, but instead I pressed on unsatisfied. With diminishing returns, I tried to push rap music onto Julie. Maybe it was all some vain attempt to impose my values on another or maybe I needed her to understand my music so that she could understand me. Either way, any pressure I applied sent her running for the comforting decks of yellow submarines and before long, The Rolling Stones, The Kinks, Purity Ring and Best Coast filled her playlists from start to finish. The No I.D. production disappeared. The "Family Business" was alas resolved and "Pilot Jones" must have finally landed.

As quickly as Julie had accepted my music, her body had rejected my prescriptions like bad medicine. As our arguments changed from "Who contributes more to a track, instrumentalists or lyricists?" to "Who contributes more to this relationship, you or me?" our differences became just one more thing to butt heads over.

"I think we need a few days," Julie said, her head down and eyes heavy.

"A few days?"

Julie nodded, I nodded and except for the slowly scrolling bar on the screen beside me, the whole room went still.

"What's this?" Julie broke the silence, nudging her head toward my computer screen.

"K.R.I.T."

"New song?"

"On a new mixtape," I said, my head still down.

"What's it about?" she said.

"Losing sight of the things that are important. Slipping up in relationships and working to be better," I paused, "And the whole thing's told through this painting metaphor. This is--"

"--the intro, no, lead sample?" she said.

"I'll paint all the world for you, baby"

Julie smiled, I smiled, and except for our singing, the whole room went still.



We wore shoes two sizes too big for our feet. We would only pull out pants up to our knees, but it was ok because our parachute shirts never failed to touch the ground. I had one best friend, his name was Kyle. He had raven eyes and crows feet when he smiled so I shouldn't have been surprised when he sprouted wings and learned to fly. I guess jumping off swing sets and down full flights of stairs was just practice.

Our favorite game was suicide. We had arms for guns and tennis ball bullets, but we weren't murderers, just children...children trying to be rubber band bound like our feet to the ground. We could only disobey gravity for so long.

They say time will tell, but time never told me anything. Time never spoke to me. It simply acted like nothing can come between two best friends, nothing except space, but that's all it took. Time and space, best friends in their own rights, always boasting of how inseparable they are, acknowledging the rules of gravity, dismantled out friendship.

They say time waits for no man and space is hard to grasp yet we hold an eternity of space between us. We had arms like museum walls displaying countless foot race and happiness and half handstands and happiness and secret hand shakes and happiness. I never thought I'd see the day when these hands would forget fine art.

Today I can still feel the wind from the swings forcing tears away from my eyes. I can still hear my former self laughing...I don't laugh as much as I used to. I want to smile like I used to... Like finishing an hours worth of homework in homeroom, like getting that impossible fraction right on the first try, like tripping Sonya in the hallway and smiling all the way to the principles office.

# Rubberband Bound



I want to smile like a stretched rubber band reaching for the sky on both ends, that inner smile rubber band bound to forgiveness. I want to smile like U, the letter of the alphabet. Then I want to take the alphabet and write you a letter, just one letter, literally one letter..."I". And then I'd mail myself to you, hoping not to be returned to sender

I've been by myself for far too long! I've been thinking about suicide and tennis ball bullets for far too long!

I commit suicide dam near everyday since every time I put pen to paper I lose part of myself like a graffiti artist inhaling death and making his mark and inhaling death and tagging for attention and inhaling death.

So as the sun sets and my shadow ceases to exist, you will read my name and know that I was here!

Committing suicide is the only way that I know how to live and although it doesn't compare to jumping off buildings, I guess jumping off swing sets and down full flights of stairs was the next best thing, all the while wishing for that brief moment suspended in midair to last just a little bit longer in our parachute shirts, but we come crashing back down to earth. So we jump again and again hoping that one day we can finally prove gravity wrong. Mama always said that nothing can keep us down.

I wonder if Kyle ever emptied his pockets and used up all the smiles that he collected. If he saved us a pair of laughs for old times sake. I wonder if instead of miles, his pockets are filled with guns loaded with tennis ball bullets. I wonder how high his crows feet allow him to soar, if he still jumps off swing sets reaching for the sky. I wonder if he still thirst for suicide too. Just like the old days. Just like I do.





# FEATURED CONTRIBUTORS

Thomas Teixeira is a senior English major from Norwich, Connecticut. He has previously written for both The Daily Campus and The Long River Review on campus and also works as a tutor for the Writing Center. Next year, he will attend UConn's TCPCG program to pursue a masters degree and a career in education. He loves writing, hip-hop, family, friends, and most things in between.



My name is Krishna Scully. My hometown is Bridgeport CT. I Major in English. After graduation, I hope to attend grad school where I will study education. I plan to teach English at the high school level. At the moment, I guess I still don't know who I am. I never found that question to be easily answered, but among many other unanswered questions, I hope to come to terms with this in the years to come. I've never been sure of many things, but one of the few things that I am sure of is the power of words. Edgar Allan Poe said, "words have no power to impress the mind without the exquisite horror of their reality."





# The Vision Takes a Look into P.A<sup>2</sup>.S.S

Dr. Willena Kimpson Price, the Director of the African American Cultural Center, began the Preparing African American Students to Sustain Success mentoring program in 2004; in the form of a class taught right in the community room of the AACC. Back when Dr. Price was growing into her position as the center's director she, and affiliates of the Puerto Rican and Latin American Cultural Center, learned of this course being offered by the Asian American Cultural Center and they immediately noticed a grave vacancy within their own gardens. She has intimated that during that time she wanted to design a mentoring program for low-resourced High School students to bridge the gap between their educational experience and extracurricular lives. Price herself seems to be tailor made for the job, as a graduate of Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia where she earned her bachelor's degree in Music & Education (curriculum & instruction), followed by a Master's degree in Women's Studies, served as a school superintendent and finally obtained her PhD in Educational Leadership at the University of Connecticut. It seems fate has left the P.A<sup>2</sup>.S.S pupils in great hands, but this particular class covered by The Vision was led by Natasha "Truth" Hunter—quite a fitting name for a Critical Social Thought major—from Mount Holyoke University in Western Michigan where she obtained her bachelor's degree. Between the designer and director of the program and the apprentice, this semester's course is in great hands.

To begin the class, students were asked to close their eyes to imagine an important child in their lives; then asked to imagine that child being taken away permanently...After the students were given the chance to soak in the feeling, Hunter elaborated that the purpose of this exercise was to bring them to an understanding of what children meant to them. The silence in the room whispered that a bit of sadness in the hearts of the mentees was transient. The exercise also served as a great transition into the focus of the class' discussion; which was the 1963 Birmingham, Alabama Church bombing that eclipsed the lives of four innocent little girls. This process was facilitated by a half-an-hour documentary on the tragedy. Some notable scenes included the interview of one victim's grief-stricken mothers who was almost denied entrance to the church to view her daughter's body because it had already been identified, and the image of a brick embedded in the heads of one of the children.

After the screening, Truth opened the floor for discussion about what they just saw and their initial reactions. To the surprise of the instructor and some fellow students, some students indicated this was their first time hearing this story. As the conversation continued, a few of them informed the room that they were actually unfamiliar with tragic incidents that happened to African Americans specifically as a racial group in American history, as they grew up in households that were natively oriented (different West Indian and African nations) so they weren't as intimately connected to African American history. This quickly led into a discussion about the intersectionality of the African Diaspora and American history. Others responded with arguments pertaining to outside perception and fate. One student proposed, "Since we're all considered black or, African Americans, in America (regardless of ethnicity) we will always be considered one group", moreover that sort of childhood experience is misleading and inappropriate. They continued on by suggesting that the experiences of their ancestors throughout history are so similar, no matter how much distance there was between them, that all people considered black in America today share a history and destiny that is deeply interwoven. The fact that we were all sitting in the same room that day was testimony to that.



A particularly notable participant of this discussion was Ke'von Miles, a well-versed Political Science major from the District of Columbia. Miles appeared affronted by the fact that some of the students did not relate to the struggle. He clarified that he had plenty of travelling experience down south, and the things he has noticed would probably jog their comfortable notions about the world; or give them a feel for the system of universal identification or the need for unity: "Down South is not liberal. It is not Uconn 2013, where everybody is living breathing, and eating diversity", said Miles. The final comments served some healthy food for thought, and closure to the discussion.

When asked to reflect on the effectiveness of the P.A2.S.S class over the years, Dr. Price expressed that the class has surpassed all her expectations every semester, as it has consistently put her mentees in the position to flourish as students and people. A successful student was defined as a student who takes advantage of the "full richness" of the campus experience; which includes the extracurricular activities and taking advantage of the opportunity to develop skills as a leader. "It is not enough to simply obtain good grades; it's essential that students improve their interpersonal, logistical and leadership skills from High School to college".

Miles, who is currently the Treasurer for the Black Students Association, a member of the Brothers Reaching out to Society mentoring program and a Residential Assistant, is an indication that P.A<sup>2</sup>.S.S is continuing to have success.





*"I'm tired of rumors starting  
I'm sick of being followed  
I'm tired of people lying  
Saying what they want about me  
Why can't they back up off me  
Why can't they let me live  
I'm gonna do it my way  
Take this for just what it is"*



## Every girl is a hoe, that's just what it has come down to.

If I believed half the information I heard about girls, I'd be single for the rest of my life. That's why I don't concern myself with rumors. I take what a girl tells me at face value, and I make my own judgments. Of course ladies often lie, but, so do fellas... sometimes your own fellas. Let me correct myself though, I won't say they lie, they have just received false and illegitimate information from someone else (that person may have lied) and decided to pass that information along (for some strange odd reason) as the truth.

For example: you could be talking to a girl that you're really feeling, and things are progressing well, like you could really see a future with home-girl. Then as soon as things start feeling right & you're considering taking that next step, thing starts to change...

### Rumors.

You start hearing rumors from every angle about this girl, like wow, where did all this stuff come from? She's a hoe, she sleeping with all of the teams, she's burning and most of this is coming from your right hand man, so now you start questioning what you thought you knew and believing everything you hear. \*shaking my head\*

### Mistake #1

See, your right hand probably got that information from the next man who got it from the next man who got it from some broad who got it from some dude, who the girl you feeling dissed in front of his boys. Those words have travelled through the ears, and ignorant minds, of 5 people before it reached yours, so how valid and accurate do you think that information is now?

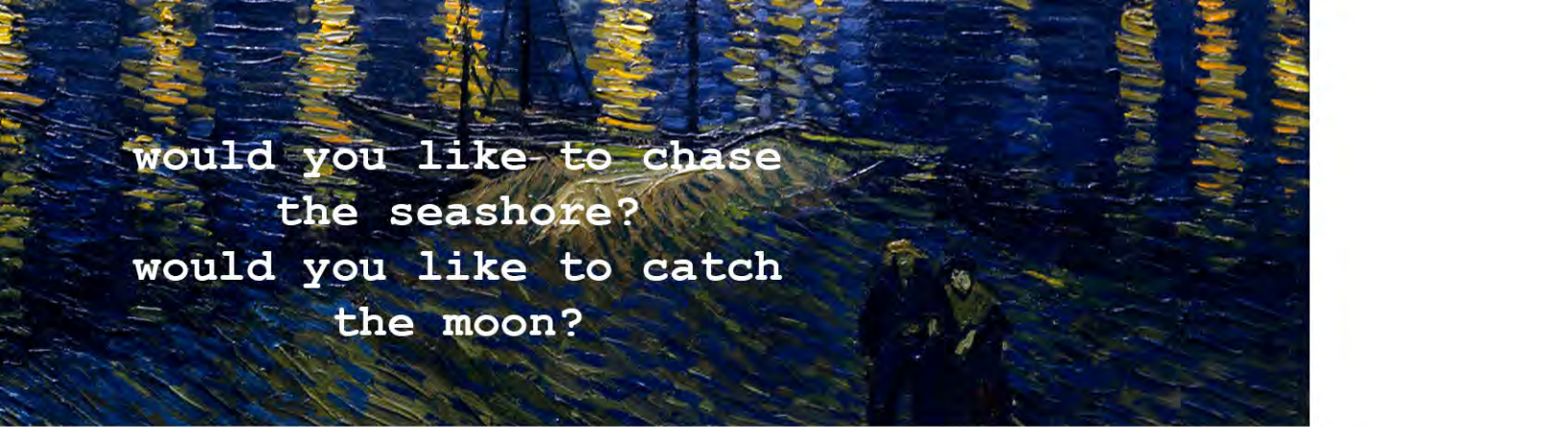
Now you go back to home-girl, and you start treating her different because of the news you just heard. You start to stray away a little bit, missing phone calls, and being dry in text messages. It's as if you're trying to make her drop you because you don't want to drop her due to the fact that you still like her although you heard what you heard.

### Mistake #2

Why are you letting the thoughts and opinions of others influence your own decisions? Eventually you're gonna have to grow up and live life the way you want to, not how the outsiders are telling you to. Living life the way others want you to, will leave you unhappy and perhaps lonely for the rest of your life.

I understand that some girls seem to carry themselves in promiscuous ways but some girls just happen to be victims of false propaganda due to the immaturity and ignorance of others. In my opinion, I feel like you shouldn't give a care about what people from the outside looking in are saying about home-girl. If the trust is there and you really like her, then go for it. You have to do what makes you happy & live life for self.





would you like to chase  
the seashore?  
would you like to catch  
the moon?

I suppose if we were still Catholic, we would've woken up, dressed accordingly, and went two blocks down, sat in the pew closest to the door, prayed silently for his mother and my redemption, and then crossed gently shaking fingers on the forehead, against the shoulders, and between the breasts. But with our odd sense of halcyon and happiness, we slept around; and there was no shadow against the wall, but The Smiths never stopped and the ashtray never fell and a thin line of concrete sunshine painted itself across the wall.

He awoke to the steam of tomato soup drifting from the kitchen, he let it hook his nostrils and drag him in, lie him against the yellow curtains that were swallowing sunlight. He breathed heavily and said, "I've got bread," and showed the first and last slices of the loaf, all covered in brown. I stirred as he sliced them in half.

He asked, "Why tomato?" as I dropped the bowl beneath his nose and the soup was so red it looked like blood and all I could picture was the Red Sea and if that was the sea Moses went to and why did seas exist if we could just watch the clouds?

I said, "That's all you had in your pantry."

There was a brief but deserved silence stemming from the blinds as my spoon sat beneath the soup and his teeth bit between the bread.

There was something about his jaw-line and the tiny, thin black hairs that lined it. *Symmetrical*, I thought to myself, *He is symmetry*.

He asked, "Do you wanna smoke in the bathroom?" And I asked if it was a little too early for that and he pondered the definition of "early" and why time even mattered and I wondered if he'd ever want to chase the seashore with me again.

I mopped his footprints from the kitchen floor while the bathroom mirror grew white with fog and I swept his skin cells from the front porch while the bathroom door locked itself and I flung his fragrance from the bedroom sheets while the toilet flushed and the shower water began to run.

There was a picture in the front room hanging against the wall of us in our Sunday clothes one summer and I remembered when his brother poured orange soda down my back so a sweet-sucking Bee stung the place between my shoulder blades but I swore it was my heart.



He asked, "Do you want to watch a movie?" And I wondered if he asked so the voices of the actors would fill our silence. I nodded my head and he supposed it was a sufficient "yes" and proceeded to the living room (there was a True Life rerun playing on MTV about people with second lives online, so we watched that instead).

I said, "Maybe we could just wait for the moon to come back," but I said it as he was walking to the kitchen to eat the last of the tomato soup.

He asked from the kitchen, "Have you heard from your mother yet?"

And I said, "I haven't."

And he said, "She's probably pissed that we weren't at church this morning."

And I said, "She'll understand."

He highly doubted that and I heard his sighs rippling off the soup.



He ordered Chinese for dinner and paid for it with the scrappy bills we found beneath sofa cushions and in his grandfather's old coat pockets. He said he would smoke again after we ate, if that was alright with me, and of course it wasn't but I said it was because you shouldn't hold people back from doing the things they want to do like chasing seashores and catching moon shine.

My fortune cookie said, "Something you lost will soon turn up," and it took me years to understand the concept of finding-and-losing and hating-and-loving and laughing-and-crying; and why everything, essentially, is interrelated and cannot be separated and why sometimes it's better to have seas instead of clouds or to have the ugly slices of bread than no bread at all.

The house smelled of him and his smoke and when he opened the bathroom door, there were no more of the tiny, thin black hairs along his jaw-line.

Martina Powell





## The Fiction Plantation

*Starring the Masters of Fictional Narratives*

What has become of Hip-Hop? Truly, since its birth, the genre was an unstoppable force—destined to permeate the airwaves, notebooks, classrooms, minds and souls of the American people...and for good reason. Clever, cutting, clean rhythmic concoctions began commandeering the party scene and domineering eclectic instrumentation, with the power to break diamonds and mend broken hearts. The same invigorating spirit that ran through the souls of the artists of earlier American generations blessed with the opportunity to be the first to soar through the skies with the vocal chords of a million silenced people dying to be heard was finally felt by the Hip-Hop artists wielding the Mic. It gave them the opportunity to give birth to a new conception of skill, artistry, wit. It gave them the opportunity to be on an intellectual platform with any member of the *Dead Poets Society*. It also gave them the opportunity to be stars...

The music itself stood as a single rose in a barren wasteland, but somehow the Sugar Hill Gang found some sunshine in their depressing abode of South Bronx, NY. Nothing has to be spoken of the crime ridden, drug infested, poverty stricken, and all together desolate breeding ground for violence which the area was—and probably still is. But ironically the artists that arose out of the first generation did not champion the desperate lifestyle which usually results from a jungle-like environment. Aside from the continuance of the old Negro spiritual and the blues that dragged its feet along the cracked sidewalks, adjacent to the crack houses and pot holes in the streets when slick rhymers relapsed from their cipher-induced highs, the musical content was actually quite positive. Imagine that! Rapping about the bleak sunny-side of life, the few things in life that brought them joy, things they were still grateful for. The likes of Eric B. & Rakim, Run D.M.C, KRS One and Big Daddy Kane consistently brought content to their lyrical narratives that bear a stark contrast to the ones you'd hear on the radio today. In fact, throughout the eighties (the beginning of Hip-Hop) gangster rap was a *novelty*. \*Gasp\*. Yes, N.W.A deterred from the mainstream flow and message with their profane "Menace II Society" approach of their first album *Straight Outta Compton*. This is funny because gangster rap is always thought of as being a product of its environment. The streets produce gangsters, and the gangsters produce gangster music; and so as long as the streets produce gangsters, hip-hop will be flooded with the likes of narratives streaming from Albums like *Straight Outta Compton*. But tell me this, were the streets of NYC, LA and Chicago any better during the 1980's than they are today? Honestly they were probably worse, so why didn't they produce an industry that was concentrated into a certain element of Hip-Hop? Wait...so is there a possibility that there has been a concerted effort fill the industry with these narratives?

Well of course gangster rap was also absolutely essential to the development of rap music. Who could forget the great feats of classic albums such as "Ready to Die", "Doggystyle", and "Reasonable Doubt"? These are all remarkable albums. The artists excelled in the skills that rap music is most coveted for, but they introduced their own spin to it: narrating and rationalizing their daily lives in the America that they knew; and people respected them for it. When it is real, substantiated and artistic, gangster rap definitely has its place, within the genre, and amongst the broad spectrum of music overall.



No, gangster rap isn't the weed (no pun intended) in Hip-Hop's garden, so it shouldn't be ridden altogether; but nowadays it is a stiflingly large flower and, since it has bloomed, it has barely allowed any light to hit the other seeds—they can't even breathe.

Even the Notorious B.I.G. said his music was not to be imitated or emulated and “there was a parental advisory sticker in the album's cover for a reason”. That message was directed to two audiences: those who wanted to mold themselves after him as an artist, or a person. He said himself that Sean Combs asked him to create an autobiography of his life, and that's what he did. The album even had suicidal elements that the title would imply because that's something that his life in Brooklyn really made him contemplate. But unfortunately for the growth of the genre and the minds of the ghetto youth who are completely enthralled by rap music, the art of exploiting the vices of the inner city and glorifying self-deprecating indulgences has set a precedent and become the blueprint for artistic identity and commercial success. They have now mastered this art. The most disturbing and discouraging component in the formula for success is the constant. The artists have a natural inclination to sing the sorrows of their struggling days with 40 acres and a mule, brag about all the chicken heads they've seasoned, and tell the triumphant feats of past, or would be, tribal warfare. This coupled with the incentive of possibly owning your own plantation someday carries a temptation that can only be surpassed by using the strength they have gained from their day-long labors in the field to live lavishly as a professional athlete.

Over the years the Masters of Ceremonies have become Masters of Fictional Narratives. This is not to say they are complete liars. They may very well have lived some of the stories they constantly profess, but then again a Fiction is not a lie. It is a storied depiction of artistically conceived circumstances that may or may not contain factual information. So they are not liars...but they are storytellers—bedtime stories for kids on the threshold of dreaming, or waking up to a nightmare. It's not just the carefully sectionalized urban areas that love the master's narratives. In fact, if that were the case, record labels would not sell enough albums and the industry would be severely damaged financially because section eight can barely keep *themselves* afloat; but these inner city ghettos are the only ones that have the fatal attraction.

Today master narratives dominate mainstream Hip-Hop: the heavily glorified lifestyle of the hard-core thug, the very successful and immaculate drug dealer, the womanizer, and my favorite the “started from the bottom now we're here” because drug dealing or rap music (and/or a combination of both) made me wealthy. Let's face it, what mainstream artist deviates from the narratives I have listed above? They have to use at least two. Owners have become well aware of the culture of rap listeners, and the nature of the most highly coveted sounds. Wealthy, or carefully sectionalized, Sub-Urban Americans will almost never be affected by the inner-city gangster lifestyle. It is quite comfortable for them to enjoy the music and be apathetic to the actual occurrences of the lyrical content. It is quite a different story—quite a different story for the “gangsta rap” consumers of the inner city. It shouldn't be too far-fetched to propose that if *they* subscribe to the lifestyle glorified by the lyrics of their favorite rappers, whom they are constantly exposed to, they will be led down a path of self destruction. For instance, let's look at the “started from the bottom, now we're here” routine. Fiction narrators LOVE to express how they used to live in such desolate, hopeless and destitute circumstances and how they rose out of it through rapping. Enough. Let's face it again: the vast majority of inner city youth who indulge in the lifestyles professed by



their narrators, or plan on ascending up the social ladder by also being a rapper will stay on the bottom (probably go to jail) and die there, but luckily this gives them hope to be successful rappers and motivation to be thugs. So they perpetuate the conditions of their environment by living out the music that they hear; which in the long run only serves to create more rappers and withhold the fellow members of their communities from achieving sustainable success. They are subjected to toil as thugs in the ghettos for as long as they live, while serving their own people. But as long as their masters reap from the cotton that is rap music, and they are lured by the glimmering hope of being a master one day, the element will continue to dominate the genre.

In larger view of careers in Hip-Hop, it is just easier to conform to these standards. It is a faster way to success. They can either fit this form entering into the industry or be molded by the record label's marketing department. I certainly don't believe that there *isn't* any room for other styles, but the industry has caught on to a lucrative business model and they plan to suck it dry. It is up to the members of the Fiction Plantation and the Masters of Fictional Narratives to realize that they are being used. Sheesh Pharaoh, it's been quite some time now, let my people go.

Davin Campbell





# *In Loving Memory of Dr. H. Fred C. Simons*

H. Fred Simons, a former academic and student affairs vice president for whom the University's African American Cultural Center is named, died on April 10, 2013, in Rockville, Conn.

Simons was part of the first generation of African American students to receive a doctorate in higher education and administration from the School of Education at UConn, and later served as the University's academic and student affairs vice president, among other positions.

At UConn, he was responsible for establishing the first full university scholarship for minority students, and was also instrumental in starting a six-week summer college preparatory program for minority students. His consensus-building leadership style helped the University with its emerging commitment to attract, retain, and graduate minority students, and with its strategic goal to expand racial and ethnic diversity.



In recognition of his early efforts in multicultural education, UConn's African American Cultural Center was named for him. Simons retired in 1989 but continued to be a role model for UConn students. In 2007, he was presented the University of Connecticut's Provost Pioneer Award for Diversity and, at its 40th Anniversary Gala, the Center for Academic Programs recognized him for outstanding commitment and contribution to access and educational opportunity. The African American Cultural Center community will miss his care and constant support, but his legacy of love and devotion will forever impact our lives. Dr. H. Fred C. Simons personified the UConn slogan, "Student Today. Husky Forever."







Aden Aden, Isaiah Jacobs, Davin Campbell, Steve Cartagena  
Takina Pollock, Mrs. Ronke Stallings, Shantel Honeyghan, Martina Powell (not pictured)



Writer, Writer, Editor-In-Chief, Graphic Designer/ Writer,  
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