

THE VISION

Spring 2014

A Petition to the Monarchy *(an intro note)*

We have a lot in store for you, our beloved readers. This issue is by far our greatest work yet. We want to do things that we've only began to scratch the surface of in our past issues. Before you begin, we have some suggestions for what shall take place.

Release your mind. This vision will break the conventional conceptions of Black identity and role within society. You will see new characters, new plots, and old themes. Whenever we make references to the past, try to imagine the form it assumes in present day.

Let pride fall, embrace diversity amongst and within us, growth is necessary.

Look beyond the aesthetics, seek truth. People (organizations) are too invested in facades and care too much for the public perception, which is based on norms that no one truly believes in.

Beware, you are not reading the same thing. This issue can be described as comedic, ambitious, stern, artsy, frivolous, passionate, real, poetic and melancholy. Multiple perspectives are articulated through a variety of personas. It is different from anything you've ever encountered in the past.

See it as a body of work. The order of the articles is designed to take you through a rollercoaster of sensations. You will first be suspended in thin air with levity...then shot through a vortex of fright and light! Don't run away. Keep going until you've reached the end. You will reach a place where we find ourselves.

Do not lie to yourselves for the sake of comfort. The worst thing good people can do is to pretend as if everything is okay when it isn't. When you smell something foul, nip it in the butt. Change starts small.

Digest in increments if need be, but be sure that you digest. Glances, peruses and false admiration from afar will do neither of us any good. We don't need make up compliments. We want engagement. Engagement that produces disagreement, conflict, confusion, love and admiration all the same. This is how we know our job has been done.

At the end of the rollercoaster there is a calm, poised conversation about the production of knowledge. For this lies at the very core of what we believe.

- The Visionaries

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How to Be a Successful Black Student at a Predominately White University

January 21, 2014

1. First and foremost, chances are you got here through Affirmative Action (AKA not through hard work, not through intelligence, not through old money and ancient connections), so know that. Remember that.
2. With that being said, know that all the white students (including the women, even though Affirmative Action works largely for the benefit of white women...) got here through hard work, through intelligence, through old money and ancient connections.
3. With that being said, never bring up how Affirmative Action disproportionately aids white women. Never. NEVER.
4. Stick together. If possible, try creating small groups of black people where your skin tones are most similar (this helps outsiders tell which groups are friendly and which aren't.)
5. Major in something simple, like African American Studies, so you can actually graduate. That should be easy enough because you're black and there isn't that much to study about African Americans, so it shouldn't be too demanding.
6. Please, join clubs! But make sure every club you decide to join is centered around and/or mainly comprised of black students. Participating in extracurriculars with white students might lead you to recognize instances of racism, which is bad.
7. When white students ask you why your clubs and organizations are "racist towards white people" and suggest that there should be a "white cultural center," nod contently. If you're feeling up to it, you can even go as far as to agree with them because on a predominately white campus, in a predominately white country where the majority of white people experience white privilege, there is very little space for white students and that's not right (white?). Go on to discuss the centuries of oppression and heinous hate crimes experienced by white people simply because they are white (both on your campus and abroad) and use every example you can to justify why there really is a need for a white cultural center on campus.
8. Don't answer questions in class (unless it's a.) an African American Studies class or b.) a discussion on issues pertaining to African Americans). Otherwise, you probably don't know the answer because you were busy all weekend smoking weed that you bought from another black student, because that's what black students do.
9. Don't question your professors, even if you're doing it politely. BLACK STUDENTS ARE INTIMIDATING, no matter who you're talking to or why or what about. Your grade will thus be lowered for being "insubordinate."

10. I know I've mentioned this already, but honestly, Affirmative Action: that's why you're here. Please don't forget that. That's how every single black person, regardless of any other factors, got here. You're not any different from any other black person because all black people are the same...they all look alike, you know? It's hard to tell the difference sometimes.
11. If your name isn't...easily pronounced...just stop the professor before they attempt to say it. I'm assuming you know your alphabet, so right before your name comes up on the list, interrupt to give your nickname, which should definitely be something easy to remember, easy to pronounce, and similar to nicknames white students might use for themselves.
12. If you're a black man, get into sports as soon as possible. It may be a little late, but if you use your summers to brush up on your skills (since all black people are born with sport skills), you can potentially make the team at your D-1 university and then go straight into the NBA or NFL and not have to worry about this academic shit anymore. You weren't built for it; you were built to run, to dribble, to tackle. That's why your bodies are like that.
13. If you're a black man, consider music too, rap, of course. R&B is for those smooth, classy light skinned brothers, like John Legend and Miguel. You're probably not sophisticated enough.
14. If you're a black man, you'll probably go to prison before your graduation day. Use that time to a.) learn from your mistakes (which are absolutely all your fault) and b.) pick up where you left off with school so you can get a job after prison. There's plenty of white folk willing to hire previously convicted black men because America is now a post-racial society!
15. If you're a black woman, chances are, after graduation, you'll end up being someone's secretary or assistant for the rest of your life, so stick with African American Studies or even English or something (English may get tricky with Shakespeare, since he doesn't write like "dis" or "dat," doe.)
16. If you're a black woman, no matter how you wear your hair, be prepared for someone to touch it, sometimes without even asking, sometimes in the strangest of settings (bathrooms, dining halls, professors' offices...). You are exotic, different, and a little less than human, so it's okay.
17. If you're a black woman, keep your voice down when you're upset. In fact, if you're upset, just don't speak about it all. Write it down somewhere private and even if it's well written and beautiful, don't try to publish it anywhere on campus. There's no space for "angry black women" at the university level — you can go back to where you came from if you're really that upset.
18. Don't call people out on their racism. If you call it, you're the racist (it's the whole "smelt it, dealt it" theory).
19. Smile at everyone. Black people are a lot less scary when they smile.
20. Thank God for Affirmative Action every day; that's the only reason you got here.

Best Regards,
Martina Powell

A BLACK MALE INTROVERT

Cues ESPN 30 for 30 guy voice...

What if I told you, that I've never been to a Stafford party...

Black people across the wide open fields of UConn gasp in unison

Chill out and follow my lead real quick B... If you are one of the black people that gasped or contorted your face in confusion, you're probably wondering what kind of person I am. Off of a first impression, you're probably thinking I'm a white, nerdy, awkward guy that loves knitted sweaters, Wrangler brand jeans and some haphazard sneakers, majoring in math or science who would prefer to spend his leisure time studying quantum physics and watching episodes of "Dr. Who."

I'm afraid to inform you however, that you are wrong.

I'm a black, awkward, quiet guy majoring in English that bears a love for Polo Ruggies, Sade and Red Lobster's Cheddar Biscuits...and "Martin"...and "The Boondocks." In short, to classify myself justifiably, I am what you would call "a black male introvert".

I'm the type of person that always seems to, somehow, mess up something as simple as giving a pound. I didn't mean to start a random game of "Thumb War" with so many of my friends; my bad guys.

I'm the type of person to turn down invites to events/social gatherings because I simply have better things to do; like sitting in my four-cornered single in Connecticut Commons by myself, eating honeybuns and singing off-key to the acapella version of "If I Ever Fall in Love" by Shai with my doo-rag on. Yup, sounds like a wild night to me.

I'm the type of person who seeks the wall at a party the way a Jamaican dude seeks to catch "a nice wine" from some thick chick in crucifix designed leggings: fast and in a hurry. (Oh, this scenario barely happens because I don't party at all, except on the rare occasion when hell decides to freeze over for a day, the moon is blue, or if I see that pig from the Geico commercial flying somewhere. Then I'll go out. And grab a wall to post up on).

I can speak for other introverts when I say this; hearing phrases like...

“Why are you so quiet?”

“Are you okay?”

“You seem...stand-offish”

“Relax, you seem tense...”

...is like a repetitive everlasting life sermon done by Reverend Brown from

“Coming to America”: it’s old, irritating and you’d wish people would stop saying these things. Somewhere right now, Reverend Brown is STILL talking about how God helped Gilligan get off that island...

(THAT hair is a flagrant foul in the streets ALL THE TIME, B.)



But getting back to the topic at hand, I’ve given it some thought as to when exactly I took the “mental sword” and knighted myself an introvert. I guess I can say that the college environment set off the light-bulb realization; large crowds exhausted me and small conversations annoyed me and felt like they were a waste of energy. Then one day, while blasting music through my headphones on a walk to class with my head down to avoid eye contact...it hit me:

“Zach, you may be an introvert...”

HUH!?!? WHAT?!? *Joeski Love Voice*

And boom goes the dynamite; just like that everything seemed to make sense. Ever since then, I’ve become very comfortable with being this way...maybe a bit too comfortable. I shall explain. So it’s my senior year in college, and I’m on the verge of graduating and getting that Uncle Phil toss into the “Real World.” It’s scary, B. Like, “the barber skimped me and I know it and I’m scared to get out the chair to look at my hair” scary. And as I sit down lonely in my four cornered room staring at old pictures I took over the years here at UConn, I can’t help but feel like I’ve missed out on something, and my introverted ways are to blame for it.

I see my friends aligning career goals for the future, and at the same time enjoying the benefits of collegiate freedom. And I’m feeling like, in my senior year, I’m just now partaking in those activities. Not saying that I don’t have experiences, I definitely do (from the good, the bad and “Jamie Foxx as Wanda” ugly). But I feel like I could’ve done more in the three years prior. Metaphorically speaking, minus the old man gruff and athleticism, I’m like Greg Oden: a brother’s been here for a while, but I’m JUST now getting in the game with everybody else (P.S., I’m a Heat fan, so I hope dude plays consistently this season).

It just seems like extroverts are living the life. They’re about that life; that “I can get along and chill with anyone and not be awkward at all” life. As a matter of fact, I look at the socially-friendly, fun and extravagant people around me the same way Ace looked at Mitch in the beginning of the movie, “Paid in Full.”

You see, "Money Making Mitch" was a communally easy going, approachable, and flamboyant character. Dude's jewelry and personality were as much a part of him as the trademark half-moon part the freshest barbershop in Harlem laced him with. He had it all, plus he had a 'G for every bump on a grease-ball's face. He did everything like Bird or Magic, you know, one of those ball-playing cats: precise and elegant. As Ace put it, "he was a star." And everybody seemed to love him.



Ace on the other hand wasn't as nearly recognized as Mitch. He was an awkwardly speaking kid in cheap clothing who had little confidence and poise while working at his local cleaners. He seemed to be the kind of person who wasn't happy with where he was in life, but one that at the same time didn't have a direction in where he wanted to go; so he stayed stagnantly in the position he was in. And it didn't help that he wasn't getting ANY play from Mitch's sister, who he was interested in. It's rough out here, B.



GUESS WHICH ONE I AM!?!?!...

So how the heck does this correlate with me being an introvert? Simple, it's perspective. My inward way of thinking and perception makes me look at the more gregarious people around me as something I should strive to be; more open and acknowledgeable. Ace sought Mitch as a model of what he would want to have or become: hood rich and successful. The swagger and mannerisms, which Mitch embodied was something that Ace didn't possess at the time. In my case, I wish I had an effortless persona to call my own and flaunt around people. But much like Ace-Boogie, I'm not the Kanye of fashion, or the Don Cornelius of smooth talk, and DEFINITELY not the Billy Dee Williams of pulling chicks. I'm three and out, man.

Because of my introverted ways, I don't really carry myself like the tall black educated self-assured person that I should, and it's something that I constantly criticize myself over; girls don't like stuff like that, B. Heck, I've even wondered if being an introvert, made me less masculine in society. Society structures men as dominant, aggressive and direct individuals; and I don't see myself as "fully" fulfilling any of those descriptions.

I didn't see anything wrong with being myself...

...that is until my friends and family said they don't hear from me anymore...

And then my sheltered ways started to display itself in my past relationship...

And then I found myself in the frame of mind that I preferred solitude rather than going out with friends...

And of course, I missed out on the black epic legend that is Stafford....

Yeah, something was REALLY wrong at this point... *calls timeout, walks to sideline and sits his own self on the bench*

It was time for a breakthrough. I didn't know where it was going to come from, but I needed to "Work It Out" like Diane Williams's classic gospel song said.

And then, this happened... I had what I would like to call, "a Black Saab moment."

Mitch was doing Mitch, making money and styling on people the Uptown way. But nothing hit Ace harder than seeing Mitch cruise by the cleaners in the 1987 Saab 900 T16 Convertible; with the gold BBS joints. My man put the whole block at a standstill. Ace was astounded, ecstatic if you will. Add in a "Scarface" movie and a random rock of cocaine found in the pants of a drug dealer at the cleaners, and Ace was on his way to becoming a drug dealer himself just like Money Making Mitch. Ace achieved the money, the attention, the rides and Mitch's sister (all at a price of course, because we know no drug dealing movie ends with the bad guy escaping free from the streets...I don't think...).

Thankfully, my "Black Saab moment" didn't inspire me to sell drugs and unconsciously hurt my fellow brothers and sisters. Rather, it inspired me to stop beating myself over the head with the excuse of being an introvert, brush the dirt off my shoulders "Jigga-Man" style, and finally do something to benefit myself. So to start, I figured I'd do something I'm good at, and see where it went.



"Whatchu talking 'bout Zach!?"

"Black Saab Moment"





Well, what was I good at?

Rapping (I know, I know... cliché black kid).

On one Ike Turner cold February night, I waddled into a random cypher in the Student Union and there it was: My “Black Saab moment” was discovering Poetic Release, an established spoken word organization here on campus. Had I not joined and met the people who I met, I wouldn’t be as matured and creative as I am now.

I took the initiative on joining Poetic Release, put myself through the rigor of doing a lot of open mic performances, made their performance team, wrote more work, ended up dabbling into the realms of spoken word, performed more confidently, and eventually ended up on the Slam Team with five other students where we competed in a national collegiate poetry slam competition, finishing in the top 15 in the country. After getting a standing ovation and acclaim upon a national stage, it was enough for me to give in and take this talent I had seriously.

Now look at me...NOW I RAP AND DO SPOKEN WORD!

(“OOO KILL EM, OOO KILL EM, OOOOO!!!!”)

I hope you see my point... So! Introverts lend me your ears! I’m not telling you to convert to the other side. “NO! NO! NO!” Not at all! It’s okay to be an introvert.



Don't change that. I know I'm not. The world needs people like us. I wrote this because I needed these events to happen for myself, and I later realized my intention wasn't to be an extrovert, but to finally be comfortable enough to be myself. I feel some people, who are like me, are themselves...but aren't really themselves; if that makes sense. Some people like me may be sitting on their own gift and don't even know it because they let the "introvert cloud" simmer over them. I wrote this because there may be some sheltered and quiet individual like myself just going through the notions of life and missing out on opportunities because they're hiding themselves too much the introverted-perception. We as introverts love our bubble, but that bubble we live in can move! You can still be that awkward dude that can't dance, but paint so well that people will start paying you; you can be that girl who probably can't "shake it, like a red-nose" (TERRIBLE SONG by the way), but can organize a club to uplift women of color in profound ways. Am I making sense? Don't overthink it, but differentiate what you do and don't do...be yourself by REALLY being yourself. Never compromise. Whatever friends, accomplishments and aesthetics that comes with your presence will be genuinely received. And trust me, they will find you; admiration, respect and even some cool female friends in my case.

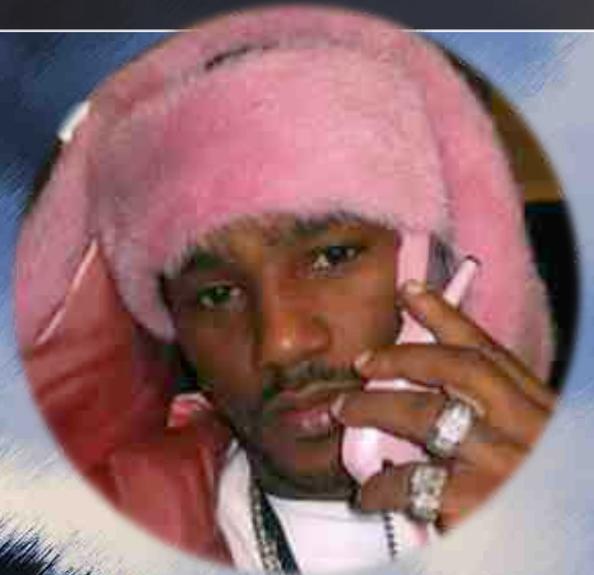
So, that concludes my long-winded message. I hope something here helps somebody, somewhere. Alright, I'm out. It's been real. One...

OH! For other introverted social media users like myself who aren't really feeling welcomed by followers or friends online, General Killa Cam in all his glorious pink swagger has some encouraging words to bestow upon thee:

"People get unfollowed on Twitter everyday B! You'll be alright". -Purple Haze 3:16

Stay woke and blessed ya'll.

- Zachary "Reggie Blanks" Johnson



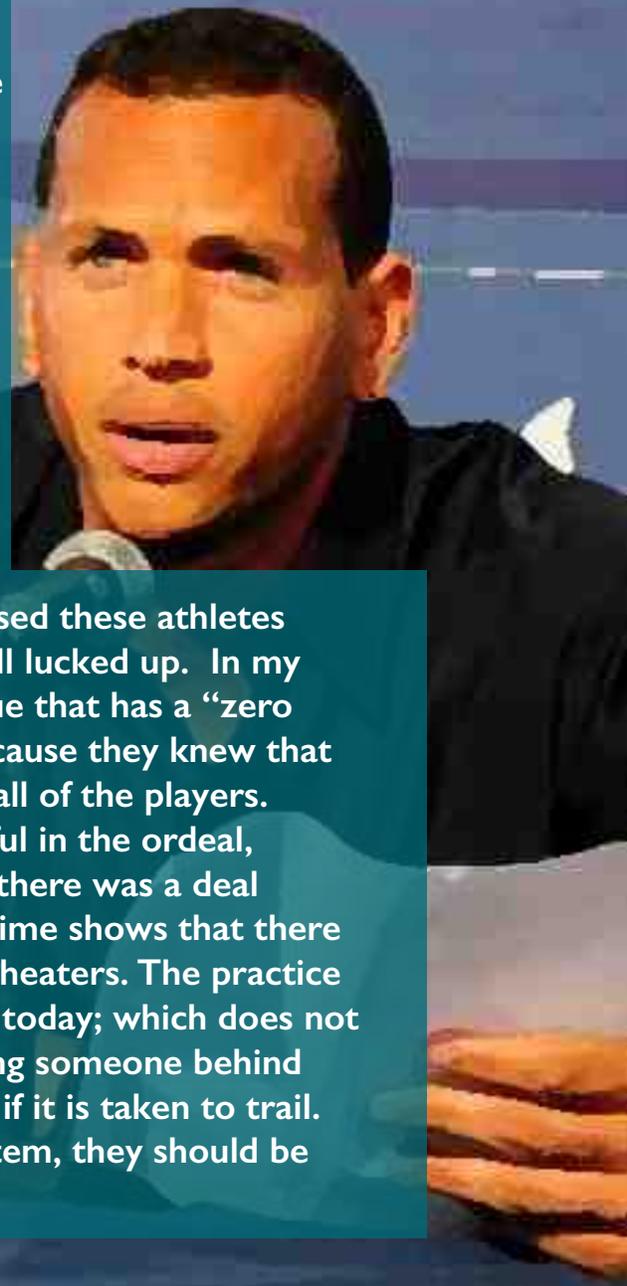
MODERN DAY ATHLETE PERFORMANCE

Sports have and will always be popular due to its competitive nature. The pressure to stay fit and be the best of the best in professional American sports this day and age is becoming more and more difficult, as just about every sport features players with unprecedented levels of athleticism. Also, injuries and droughts in performance place players under much scrutiny to maintain certain levels of excellence. We all know that every one cannot handle the pressure; and once the capacity is met, people seek short cuts. As a result, Performance Enhancing Drugs (PEDs) have become so intertwined with modern day sports that when an athlete admits that they have abused PEDs it does not bring much shock.

The label performance enhancing drugs is pretty vague so I wanted to get into the particulars of some commonly used PEDs by professional athletes. According to William Harris, B.A. in Biology from Virginia Tech and M.S. in Science Education from Florida State University, via howstuffworks.com, these are the particulars. EPO is a drug that increases red blood cell production without the need for transfusion. Athletes that usually desire this drug are athletes that participate in endurance sports. Human Growth Hormone (HGH), a well know PED, increases muscle mass. Another commonly used PED is Ephedrine, which is an over-the-counter supplement that causes weight loss. Believe it or not, Beta 2 – Agonist Albuterol is also a performance enhancing drug. Albuterol allows the muscle lining in the bronchial tubes to relax, which then allows more air to flow into the lungs. Lastly, another performance enhancing drug that is taking over sports, mainly baseball, is Tamoxifen. Tamoxifen blocks estrogen receptors, interfering with the ability for cancers to grow. Baseball players take Tamoxifen to counteract other steroid injections, so that they may keep their breasts from growing larger. (Whoops)

PEDS AND ENHANCING DRUGS

Major League Baseball has become no stranger to players using banned drugs, but baseball is the sport that supposedly has zero tolerance for PED use. Somehow, Bartolo Colon was suspended for just 50 games last year after testing positive for PEDs. Then, in another instance, he was linked to the “Biogenesis” baseball scandal. Connor Moylon, from SB Nation, wrote up the details of the incident. The “Biogenesis” scandal was a leak that several major league baseball players were using PEDs, specifically HGH. Other big time players like Melky Cabrera, Alex Rodriguez and Ryan Braun were included in the scandal. Ryan Braun struck a plea deal with the MLB and was suspended for 65 games as the evidence was clearly not in his favor (Braun reportedly owed the Biogenesis Clinic \$20,000 – \$30,000). As a result, Alex Rodriguez was suspended a total of 211 games due to his past involvement in using PEDs. The rest of the players involved in the scandal agreed to a deal of a 50 game suspension, barring they did not pursue an appeal. I wonder if this clinic would have even come out and exposed these athletes if they were not in debt with them, Major League Baseball lucked up. In my opinion, the penalties were not severe enough for a league that has a “zero tolerance” policy. It seems as if the MLB was giving in because they knew that they might not have been able to find more evidence on all of the players. Everyone agreeing to the bargain made the MLB successful in the ordeal, because everyone was convicted. However, the fact that there was a deal between the players and MLB regarding less suspension time shows that there are still flaws within the system of finding and punishing cheaters. The practice is similar to the plea bargain deal our justice system uses today; which does not always convict the right people, but just focuses on putting someone behind bars without having to take the chance of losing the case if it is taken to trial. With MLB having arguably the strongest PED testing system, they should be the best at revealing the truth behind cheaters.



Basketball on the other hand has been known for having a weak performance enhancing drug system. The player's union has fought for banning blood tests, which is the best way to detect drugs in your system. David Stern was fighting to put blood testing in the policy for the 2013-2014 season according to Sports Illustrated NBA. That leaves urine tests as the only test for finding illegal substances in the athletes. Too bad society knows how easy it is to fake a urinary exam. On the bright side David Stern is adding blood testing to his agenda. Another obstacle for the professional athletes is that everyone that enters the Olympics has to have a blood test for human growth hormones. So we can assume that our top tier athletes are not in fact using that substance. There are indeed rumors that the league's reigning Most Valuable Player, LeBron James, has acquired performance enhancing drugs from the Biogenesis clinic, the same clinic that those Major League Baseball players were investigated for. At this point it is only a rumor but it still should be checked out, there is often some truth to every rumor. The fact that players have fought for no change in the drug testing system suggests that, if there is PED use going on, it is being used to attain competitive advantage on the court, as opposed to an injury recovery process.

The National Football League also has a weak drug testing system, which can be viewed on the NFL Player's Association website. Players know when they are subject to tests. They test at the NFL combine and before they sign contracts with any team, then they can be tested if there is a contract provision put in place after agreement between the player and the team. During the season players are subject to test just once, which occurs in the preseason, and once in the off season at the discretion of an independent administrator.

Though repeat violators of performance enhancing drug usage can be tested through "reasonable" suspicion. As you can see there are many loops and holes within this system. The NFL also does not conduct blood tests, and human growth hormones are not detectable in urinary exams. Another rule players take advantage of is that they do not have to tell what they were tested positive for. So some players take a less heinous drug like Adderall, which enhances your ability to focus, and use that as the base drug for what other drugs they may have used. In fact, according to Judy Battista of the New York Times, in her article "Drug of focus is at center of suspension", Adderall is becoming the NFL's new popular drug, since they are easily accounted for by the doctor that prescribes them to that specific player "for their health issues".

In conclusion all professional sports should have a stronger drug system simply to expose those using PEDs for competitive advantage, which is not being done. On the other hand, it would make sense to allow players to use PEDs if it were more so used for a recovery process. Injuries happen all the time and some PEDs would allow for a player to get back to full strength. If the leagues allow for this, and players are actually using PEDs for a recovery process, then there should be no problem in telling the truth and letting it be known why they are using instead of letting the media world speculate as to why they are using PEDs. Then there will be no confusion as to why an athlete has been using certain PEDs. Everything comes down to honesty.

Lafayette James Jr.



Nothing Was The Same

album review

So, two years ago "Take Care" induced half the world into the autumn craze of "Boo loving." If you are not familiar with this viral disease, it is one that impairs your judgment worse than alcohol does. And I'm not talking that package store Dubra, no; I'm talking that bootleg grain that makes your body go numb. However, after all the YOLOs and re-kindled relationships gone wrong, Drake returns with a follow up album that gives the people yet another reason to say "Fuck that [racial slur] you think you found."

And while I can't say any song on this album is as good as "Marvin's Room," I can say Drake has finally discovered the type of artist he wants to be. In his past two albums we witnessed him struggle with whether or not he should just flat out rap or sing. And people often criticized him for his indecisiveness, myself included. But now it seems as though Drake has become his own brand of music, and his following is colossal because of it.

"Nothing Was the Same" is by far, Drake's finest work, not including "So Far Gone." The album's production just makes you want to blast each song at the highest volume possible, because who doesn't like to watch their rearview mirror shake? Hell, I'm almost certain the person in the car next to you would thank you for blessing them with catchy songs like "Own It" and "305 To My City."

My personal favorite would have to be the second track on the album "Furthest Thing" even though "Too Much" is a close second. While "Too Much" has the bass you're looking for while chilling at a stop-light in your car, "Furthest Thing" is just downright dope. The hook is catchy as hell and Drake just sums up his whole career up to this point throughout it. "Somewhere between psychotic and iconic," is just one way to describe the lifestyle this artist has chosen to lead. Yes, he subjugates himself to the ignorance of Young Money, but he is steadily scheming his way to becoming an icon for generations to come. And of course the whole idea of living "on the low" is something anyone can relate to, especially in a country where the drinking age is 21 years old if you know what I'm saying.

Its as though Drake has created a formula of his own on how to create hits. While Kendrick Lamar, J. Cole and Wale compete with one another on who's the most lyrical; Drake is lulling people with a quiet storm of music, with the occasional burst of thunder in songs like "Worst Behavior" and "All Me." The track list is solid with only a few unneeded songs such as "Wu-Tang Forever" and "Started From the Bottom." Those two songs could have easily been replaced with tracks like "The Motion" or "Enough Said" and the album still would've been great. Instead, Drake forces us to listen to "Started From the Bottom" for the millionth time as though he wasn't pump-faking dudes in the "Degrassi" theme song. I have to admit that I was a little annoyed by the constant repetition of hooks and phrases throughout the album. Take "305 To My City" for example, it's a great song but the repetition of "I get it, I get it" is just a giant contradiction. I mean, if you truly do "get it" then why must you keep saying so. Are you unsure about something? Is there something you want us to see through your use of repetition? What am I supposed to get out of this, Drake?

The use of repetition is something that plagues the entire album from start to finish. Now, I'm the type of guy that likes to believe music and poetry can be very similar if not the same thing so when I see the use of literary devices, such as repetition, in music I like to believe there is a specific meaning to it. Take Adele's "Someone Like You" for example. In the song she says "Never mind I'll find someone like you, I wish nothing but the best for you too." A couple of times, and contrary to popular belief I like to think the word is actually "two" instead of "too" and here's my reason. Repetition in poetry and any other type of literature is often used to drive home a point. Adele repeats this

line three times but on the third and final time she says, "I wish nothing but the best for you," omitting "two" from the song. I considered this to be an intelligent use of repetition because it brings to question whether the voice in the song actually cares for the significant other that her former lover is with. Now maybe I'm wrong, maybe it is "too" instead of "two" and I'm just a spiteful individual, but the point is repetition is nothing you should abuse unless there is a meaning behind it. Drake however seems to use this literary device consistently throughout the album as though each and every song were jingles for popular brand name commercial. Its as though he's saying there is no underlying meaning to the hook, and instead he just wants his music to be infectious to the point where it gets stuck in your head for weeks. Now, commercially that is probably a genius move on his part, but lyrically this comes off as being just plain old lazy.

However, as I stated earlier, I don't believe Drake wants to be known by his lyrical content at all. I think his mission is like that of any major commercialized company, and that is to stay relevant and forever in the minds of his audience. If that is indeed the case, then "Nothing Was The Same" was an absolute success and I more than willingly christen it with a rating of 8 out of 10. The album definitely portrays human emotion and all its complexities while finding ways to keep listeners coming back to its catchy hooks and smooth beats. Drake truly did "Derrick Rose the knee up" before releasing this record, and while it isn't a championship caliber album it can easily be a 3rd seed in a very strong conference of the recent Rap albums we've seen this summer and fall.

Michael Jefferson

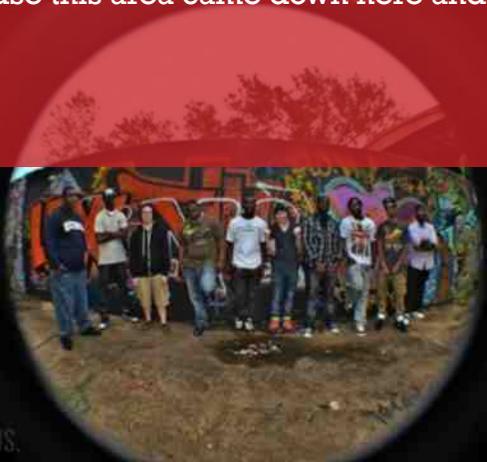
A MEMOIR:

September 30th, 2011



So, the date was set and I was pretty excited: our first collective music photo-shoot...on September 30th.

“A couple more photos and we’re good to go,” said an anonymous voice I couldn’t pinpoint from out of the background. All twelve of us were in a dark, wet, restricted alleyway zone laced with graffiti, brick walls and obscure corners, and we were taking group collective photos for our music page for about two hours. I was ready to go; I had landscape architecture assignments due and wanted to get my sophomore year of college off on the right foot. I could smell the oven toasted aroma of Subway sandwiches from the nearby plaza, which reminded me of the one back home in Bloomfield. I talked with a few new people about networking and possibly doing a couple songs together; while the five of us, a group of black kids (including myself) and a lone white kid, walked back up the steep blank hill to leave the vicinity and head back to the parking lot. In the midst of chit-chatting I noticed a white, large construction truck deserted far along a set of trees unattended to, which ultimately reminded me that this area was still in use, and God forbid anyone with their rights to use this area came down here and found us.





Just as the thought trickled slowly down from my mind to every nerve in my body, my walk picked up pace and the little voice of reason in my head began to question whether or not it was such a good idea to agree to such a strange event as this. Suddenly, we heard the sound of heavy hefty vehicles, slightly getting louder and louder as we walked. We then saw several big white trucks, of the same exact model as the white abandoned truck I previously saw, turn down the hill and begin to head straight our way. Nobody seemed shaken by this occurrence but me, as the four other accompanying members calmly continued their conversation.

A white truck leading the other cars moved straight towards our way, while the others aligned along the perimeter of the area and seemed to be unloading. The truck moved right by us, but circled back in a U-turn and directed its movement back to us. The white truck stopped. We did too.

The window rolled down and exposed the face of a bearded, overweight, white male with a cast on one of his arms. I froze up, stiff and still, wanting to move but I couldn't, and because of it I could feel my breathing become claustrophobic, boxed in by unpredictable possibilities that could turn into fear.

“What the fuck are you boys doing here?!” the white male exclaimed rather vigorously.

The minute he spoke my whole world shook, plus the ground underneath me. Something hidden and deep within his voice didn't seem normal, but rather dark and uncaring. Chills crept up my whole body to the point that the hairs on my skin were so firmly straightened it could balance a penny and my current fear on it. My feet wanted to move but they couldn't.

One of the members responded and said, “We were just leaving right now sir.” The white male responded, “Well take you and your little friends and get the fuck on out of here!”



Stunned, the same kid spoke up and said, “Ok...um, you don’t have to talk to us like that sir, we’re leaving and that’s unnecessary to talk to us like that.” The conversation was a back-and-forth between the two only, and no one dared to interfere. Things were getting incredibly tense in the air, the atmosphere filled with brewing conflict on the rise. And even though the strongly antagonizing language was directed at all of us, for us people of color, the feeling stung heavier than an outsider of our kind could imagine.

All of a sudden one of the members amongst us besides the spokesman had enough. “Man fuck is you to talk to us like that!!!,” he yelled. Overweight and profound in size, I saw this same young black man quickly setup in fighting stance, sleeves rolled, feet spaced apart. In sequence, the white male was no longer behind the wheel, but out of his vehicle and slowly approaching. My feet finally moved and I ran away from the overwhelming scene unraveling before me.

All I could think of while speed-walking up the hill was, “these guys better hurry their asses up or we can get arrested.” I noticed that the other workers strangely didn’t acknowledge the events taking place, as they continued their separate activity, while the sore thumb of this confrontation existed without much attention from anyone besides the ones involved. As I was walking, I was in a tug of war with myself. I struggled to decide whether I should return to stay and support those I came with, or head away from what was occurring. My nerves, my heart rate, and an abundant flow of fear circulated my body rapidly like injected poison; poison in the sense of racial tension that was occurring before my eyes, a lethal injection that kills and confirms the “all-knowing-but-never-boldly-evident-truth” about racism in America. I was atop the hill shadowboxing with myself, fighting the fear and logic that I created in my head. What if he had a weapon and decided to kill us? What if he called the cops and had us arrested? He was right. We were trespassing the property. But the way this was being handled wasn’t sitting well with me.

My eagle eyes scoped from the peak of the hill as I saw the overweight young black male yelling furiously in the face of the white male driver, who along with a cast on his arm, held a beer can in hand. I saw the small, lone white kid amongst our group trying to hold him back, his presence quiet until this point of interaction. I could hear the faint screams from the overweight black male, but not much from the white male driver, staggering in this bizarre standoff.

In a quick instance, I felt my sheltered, protective mold that wrapped around me fall away, as I jogged back to the scene, hoping to God in my head we'd get out of here. And still the rest of the group, far in the back of this restrictive area didn't come out yet to witness the fiasco.

The aroma of Subway swiftly came and went in the breeze of wind as I ran, sweeping under my nose and fading away into unimportance. I hit the scene and all hell had broken loose.

"Sock me nigga! Hit me! I'll lay your ass out!" the overweight black male belted as he was held back.

"Nigga!?", the white man proclaims slyly with a devious smirk.

"Nigger, what do you mean by this, nigger?",

"YOU HEARD HIM?!?! HE SAID NIGGER RIGHT?!?! FUCK THAT MAN!!! FUCK YOU! DON'T YOU EVER CALL ME THAT! THIS AIN'T SLAVERY MOTHERFUCKER!!!!," the overweight black male roars with a cracking voice.

A premature swing was caught before reaching within the bubble of the white male driver, as we were holding the overweight black male back.

"YOU AIN'T SHIT!!! YOU DON'T RUN ME!!! YOU AIN'T GOD!!!!" the overweight black male bawls.

And look whose coming: the rest of the gang of people, who saw the hysteria from afar and were now running towards it. At this point, an immense sense of shock hit me harder than the reality occurring. It was unreal, but true. It's like a flashback time-travel circa 1960's south environment, with black and white rightfully engaging in bout. What stood before me was a boiling point of rebellion, and a heat of hate from one end finally spilling over. All that was missing were the wild dogs, fire hoses and police force to harass and damn near kill us. But this wasn't 1965, this was happening "now," in 2011, in the North; in the town of Manchester, Connecticut.

After ceasing some of the tension surprisingly and finally gathering the rest of the group, the organizer of the shoot spoke and came forth.

"Excuse me sir, we are extremely sorry and we are leaving right now to get out of your way. It won't happen again," he stated.

"Well get your asses out of here before I have the police arrest all of you! NOW!" the white male driver said unsympathetically.

With no comments or responses said, we headed up the hill in silence. As we arrived at the cars we came in, reality began slowly sinking its way back into our worlds: the sight of traffic on the road, birds flying, people walking on the sidewalks and the smell of the Subway sandwiches became increasingly more prominent again. I can't help but think circularly, like this presence of life and movement was excluded and unaware of what just happened, as if its purpose was to stop and come to a screeching halt on our behalf. We comforted the overweight black male, and to our courtesy he was miraculously fine after something that I considered life-changing and traumatizing. We all discussed what happened, and reiterated to ourselves and to those that were present that this shit called racism was still alive, and will attack whenever it feels like it.

I left to campus in the car of a fellow UConn student. The overweight black male in the group jokingly made a remark despite the tremendous seriousness of the day's proceedings:

"Yo, that old white guy wished he was black, I'm convinced. I mean who wouldn't want to be black?"

A few chuckles echoed, and even a smirk somehow scattered across my face rather forcefully, as if to join the ambiance of slight laughter and to help ease the tightness, but more importantly, the smirk was to chin-check myself that I was ok.

I got to my dorm, uneasy and still in a cloud of amazement. My roommate was there and was aware that I went to this shoot. He asked, "How was the photo-shoot?" My response was quite fabricated, as I responded like my life hadn't been flipped and spun in a mentally-reconfiguring cyclone: "Went great, glad I went." Later that night, as my roommate slept, I stayed up to the haunting truths that I wished were disbeliefs.

I'll never forget September 30th, 2011

Zachary Johnson

See No Evil

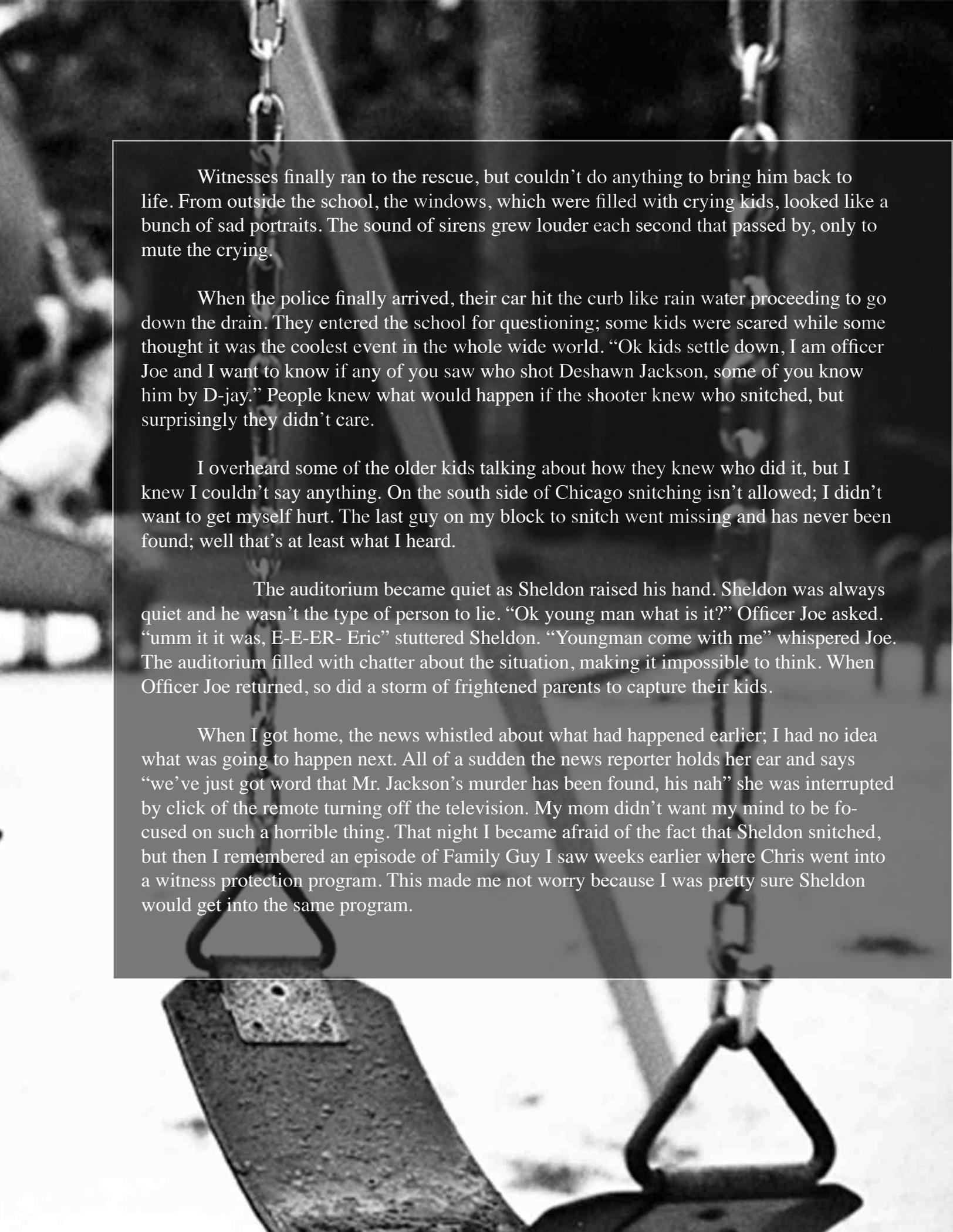
CHAPTER 1

School can teach a person so much, but everyone has to relax their mind; after lunch there is a beautiful moment in time called recess. Recess was always amazing because I was free to play and talk to my friends. During this time everything was erased from my mind, I didn't worry about anything: food, life, pain, not even love. Playing sports with my friends was always funny because of the amount of time we tripped and fell due to the rough cement. It's funny how a great day can turn into something life changing.

On a sunny April afternoon in the school park, all you could hear was the sound of laughter and basketballs bouncing. Ping... Ping... Ping... Whoop... Bang, the basketball bounced in a musical rhythm and kids on the other side were playing football and injuring one another like UFC fighters. The gates of the playground swallowed up laughter, fun and kids full of joy as if it were Christmas day and there were tons of presents under the tree. This day that seemed like Christmas quickly turned into a vivid memory.

Suddenly the laughter broke, Bam! Bam! Bam! Screams lingered from down the street and kids migrated behind the handball court wall. My heart raced as I ran into school looking for the first classroom I could find.

A strange voice muffled through the classroom windows. From the window all you could see was someone walking, leaving a trail of blood. "Help... Ha... Hel", not even getting a second chance to say "Help", D-jay collapses to the ground and dies. On the way down his arm hit the gate like a kid running with a stick across the gate to hear the sound it makes. His head bounced like a basketball that wasn't rebounded. He then turned his head and his eyes at the kids watching from the first floor. Looking at what just happened sank my heart like a submarine because D-jay was always nice to the kids in the community and he was never afraid to give us a dollar when we asked.



Witnesses finally ran to the rescue, but couldn't do anything to bring him back to life. From outside the school, the windows, which were filled with crying kids, looked like a bunch of sad portraits. The sound of sirens grew louder each second that passed by, only to mute the crying.

When the police finally arrived, their car hit the curb like rain water proceeding to go down the drain. They entered the school for questioning; some kids were scared while some thought it was the coolest event in the whole wide world. "Ok kids settle down, I am officer Joe and I want to know if any of you saw who shot Deshawn Jackson, some of you know him by D-jay." People knew what would happen if the shooter knew who snitched, but surprisingly they didn't care.

I overheard some of the older kids talking about how they knew who did it, but I knew I couldn't say anything. On the south side of Chicago snitching isn't allowed; I didn't want to get myself hurt. The last guy on my block to snitch went missing and has never been found; well that's at least what I heard.

The auditorium became quiet as Sheldon raised his hand. Sheldon was always quiet and he wasn't the type of person to lie. "Ok young man what is it?" Officer Joe asked. "umm it it was, E-E-ER- Eric" stuttered Sheldon. "Youngman come with me" whispered Joe. The auditorium filled with chatter about the situation, making it impossible to think. When Officer Joe returned, so did a storm of frightened parents to capture their kids.

When I got home, the news whistled about what had happened earlier; I had no idea what was going to happen next. All of a sudden the news reporter holds her ear and says "we've just got word that Mr. Jackson's murder has been found, his nah" she was interrupted by click of the remote turning off the television. My mom didn't want my mind to be focused on such a horrible thing. That night I became afraid of the fact that Sheldon snitched, but then I remembered an episode of Family Guy I saw weeks earlier where Chris went into a witness protection program. This made me not worry because I was pretty sure Sheldon would get into the same program.

The next day, as I got ready for school I grew more anxious to leave the house each second. I wanted to talk to Sheldon and ask him why he snitched, but I would have to get there early for breakfast. "Max, Let's Go!!" my mom shouted. I left with my book bag hanging on for dear life while I finished buckling my belt. "Give me your hand boy!" my mom shouted again as she snatched my hand to cross the street. While crossing, I saw a huge pole on top of a van, it was pretty cool, looked like the toy car my stepdad got me for Christmas. The van read NEWS 5 on the side, and the reflection of cop lights hit the side of the van like rain hitting metal.

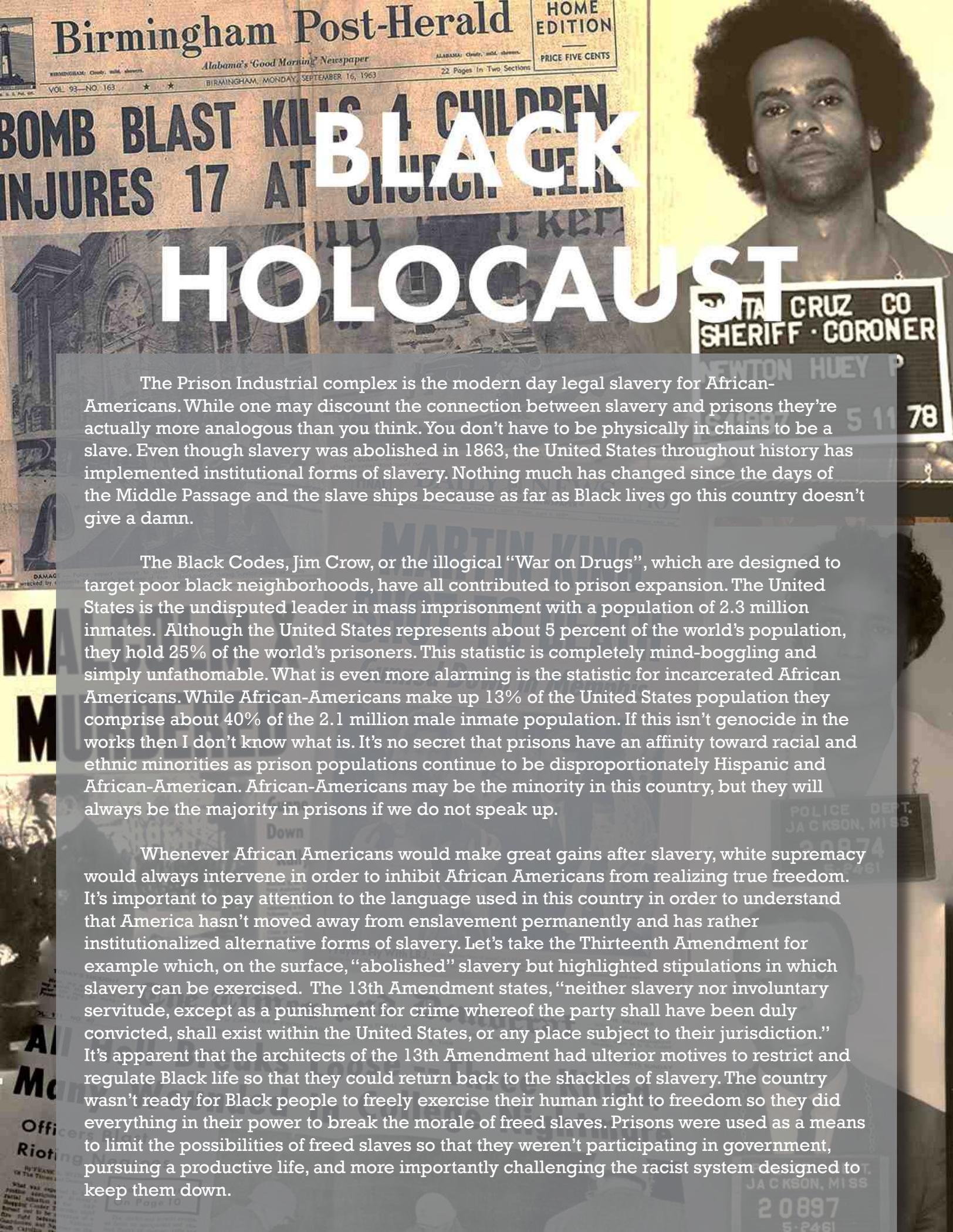
As we walked into the building my mom questioned the officers: "what's all of this for?" The officer replied, "Move on lady." Before my mom had the chance to reply to the officer's comment I heard a loud scream that whistled throughout the block, "MY BOY, WHY MY BOY?" I saw the officers covering a woman in tears; I could only see her shoes, black, shiny high heels. The officer rushed me into school and told my mom to go home, her eyes glistened in worry as she let go of my hand. I ran to my class cutting corners, hopping over steps, and sliding into my first period class as if it were the World Series, 9th inning, and the scores were tied.

My footsteps were the only noise in my class, the teacher had the whole class sitting down, and this class is usually like a stadium when Jordan shoots a 3 pointer. She told me to sit down as she closed the door, "ok everyone listen up, I want you guys to close your eyes and imagine the whole world in your in your hand, come on cup it." Milik argued, "This is stupid." Ms. Green shouted, "Milik! Now everyone imagine that everyone you love was on this earth, if a few people were to leave this earth it will still be a good place, a place where you still have people who love you, now open your eyes." My heart raced when I opened my eyes and saw the tears dripping from missing Ms. Green's face. "This morning while walking to school one of your classmates Sheldon was shot and killed... I want you guys to stay focused on school so you can get out of this neighborhood..." ...I grew deaf as she continued, I had so many questions, that lady had to be his mom, why would they do this?

Featured Contributor

Antan Mills was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. He experienced the toughness of the concrete jungle which sparked a fire of ambition in him. Antan is of Jamaican descent. Being one of eighteen children with his father having 14 and his mother 4, Antan grew interest in many things such as poetry, music, sports, math, and writing. Out of these interests, math would bring him to where he is now. Antan is an Accounting major at the University of Connecticut. He has chosen to do so because of his love for numbers and data. In high school he dreamed of playing sports and doing community service, but he had to accommodate his little sister after school. However, during school he excelled at a great rate and also inspired underclassmen to follow in his footsteps. Antan loves children and he often says, "The main reason why I'm in college today is to provide and make sure my future kids live a financially and emotionally stable life." This is why helping the youth is very important to Antan and he strives to make the world around him a better place. He is the chief financial officer of Good Year Quality (GYQ), an organization which he co-founded along with his close friends. Antan loves to write short stories and poetry in order to relieve stress and express his talents.





BOMB BLAST KILLS 4 CHILDREN
INJURES 17 AT CHURCH HERE

BLACK HOLOCAUST

SANTA CRUZ CO
SHERIFF · CORONER
NEWTON HUEY P
5 11 78

The Prison Industrial complex is the modern day legal slavery for African-Americans. While one may discount the connection between slavery and prisons they're actually more analogous than you think. You don't have to be physically in chains to be a slave. Even though slavery was abolished in 1863, the United States throughout history has implemented institutional forms of slavery. Nothing much has changed since the days of the Middle Passage and the slave ships because as far as Black lives go this country doesn't give a damn.

The Black Codes, Jim Crow, or the illogical "War on Drugs", which are designed to target poor black neighborhoods, have all contributed to prison expansion. The United States is the undisputed leader in mass imprisonment with a population of 2.3 million inmates. Although the United States represents about 5 percent of the world's population, they hold 25% of the world's prisoners. This statistic is completely mind-boggling and simply unfathomable. What is even more alarming is the statistic for incarcerated African Americans. While African-Americans make up 13% of the United States population they comprise about 40% of the 2.1 million male inmate population. If this isn't genocide in the works then I don't know what is. It's no secret that prisons have an affinity toward racial and ethnic minorities as prison populations continue to be disproportionately Hispanic and African-American. African-Americans may be the minority in this country, but they will always be the majority in prisons if we do not speak up.

Whenever African Americans would make great gains after slavery, white supremacy would always intervene in order to inhibit African Americans from realizing true freedom. It's important to pay attention to the language used in this country in order to understand that America hasn't moved away from enslavement permanently and has rather institutionalized alternative forms of slavery. Let's take the Thirteenth Amendment for example which, on the surface, "abolished" slavery but highlighted stipulations in which slavery can be exercised. The 13th Amendment states, "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction." It's apparent that the architects of the 13th Amendment had ulterior motives to restrict and regulate Black life so that they could return back to the shackles of slavery. The country wasn't ready for Black people to freely exercise their human right to freedom so they did everything in their power to break the morale of freed slaves. Prisons were used as a means to limit the possibilities of freed slaves so that they weren't participating in government, pursuing a productive life, and more importantly challenging the racist system designed to keep them down.

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White supremacy still lives and breathes in our system; however it is not out in the open and visible as it once was. It is now clandestine and only those who are awake can see the oppression and racism that continues to exist. Slave owners used to maintain white supremacy in form of a whip to terrorize African Americans. Today, the criminal justice system uses police officers and prisons in order to maintain racial order and white supremacy. It seems like the validity of the US justice system declines gradually every year. Writing down all of the injustices African Americans suffered in the courtroom is going to take an entire lifetime so I'll discuss the ones I found to be the most alarming. South Carolina is responsible for the youngest person to ever be executed. Before there was a Troy Davis, of 2011, there was a 14 year old boy by the name of George Stinney Jr. who supposedly "confessed" to killing two precious white girls in 1944. Despite the fact that there were no written records of a confession, any substantial evidence, or any witnesses were called to the defense, George was executed. Not to mention the fact that the jury deliberated just ONE day before they decided, within minutes, to carry on with the execution. Then you have cases like the Jordan Davis and Michael Dunn, and Trayvon Martin and George Zimmerman where supposed white fear is more important than Black lives. These instances where it is deemed ok for a white man to racially profile, or lash out and fire rounds of bullets towards unarmed kids because loud music was an inconvenience to his life constantly remind POC that black lives generally don't matter in this country. Officers like Johannes Mehserle feel like they can act out in aggression and shoot unarmed individuals like Oscar Grant simply because they "resisted" arrest (you know of course that's after the officers provoked them). Cases such as these are nothing more than modern day lynching.

Police officers play a devastating role in enforcing white supremacy nowadays. Recent stop and frisk policies in New York City remind me in many ways of the Fugitive Slave Acts of 1793 and 1850. The Fugitive Slave Acts were federal laws that permitted the capture and return of runaway slaves to their masters. These laws were dubbed the "Bloodhound law" as dogs were used to track down the escaped slaves. If you were suspected of being runaway slave, even if you were free, there was nothing you could do about it as the laws denied "slaves" the right to a jury trial. Bounty hunters (or as I like to call them police officers) would feed the cotton machine in the South by capturing and returning "slaves" to their owners. These acts were extremely controversial as many free blacks were kidnapped and brought into slavery; one of them being Solomon Northup who was held as a slave in Louisiana for 12 years. The NYPD's stop and frisk program is no different from the fugitive slave acts of the past. Police officers in New York stop and question hundreds of thousands of pedestrians (who are disproportionately African-American and Hispanic by the way) and frisk them for contraband. Stop and frisk policies give police officers the authority to racially profile POC and fulfill their arrest quotas (which just so happens to involve massive amount of African-Americans). Recent reports in the news have indicated that 90% of the people who get stopped and frisked in New York over the last two years have been innocent, and the police have attested to that as such.



For the past 30 years police officers have been basically bounty hunting vulnerable drug dealers from the ghettos. It is a wonder how all these foreign produced drugs find their way to poor black neighborhoods; but more importantly no one seems to take into consideration that the environments these young black people live in make them susceptible to attempting to gain prosperity from drug dealing. The “War on Drugs” scheme, which began in the 1980’s, was designed to exploit this perfect situation to get more black bodies in prison. It is particularly noteworthy that during 1970s there were only about 250,000-300,000 people incarcerated in the United States. Fast forward to 2013 we are now looking at 8X THAT NUMBER. It is obvious that the US government shifted public policy in a way that has contributed to the prison boom. Policies like “get tough on crime” under Reagan has made it easier for poor people of color to get incarcerated. In fact the reason why the prison population is the way it is today is because of Reagan’s exploitative “War on Drugs” policies. These policies have not brought down drug use and have only contributed to the expansion of prisons.

There aren’t enough people questioning as to why private prisons exist. Companies like the Corrections Corporations of America (CCA) literally run prisons for profit at the expense of human beings. The use of prisons has created a profitable punishment industry where bodies, specifically black ones, are viewed as cash cows. Private corporations own the deeds to prisons and charge states for prison services. The CCA has expressed that they need the status quo in the criminal justice system to remain the same so they can maintain the demand for their services. In other words they need to maintain the influx of black bodies being put behind bars. If prisons did what they were supposed to do, which is to help those who have done wrong, prison populations would decline significantly. But prisons however are committed to punishment rather than correcting the fundamental problems that lead to incarceration. The criminal justice system is designed to create criminals so that prisons profit more. There are far more negative effects to incarceration than there are positives for inmates and society, but prison capitalists and other corporations who benefit from mass long-term imprisonment won’t allow us to move towards a rehabilitative system.

The current criminal justice system isn’t the answer and it should be corrected. Mass incarceration and overrepresentation of people of color will continue to persist, thus making it difficult for former prisoners to integrate back into society, engage in active citizenship, and compete for jobs. Also, a lot less kids in inner cities would be left fatherless, which would help to break the cycle of imprisonment of misguided young black youth. I am going to keep saying this until it sinks in your minds: This world generally doesn’t care about Black lives so we must take care of ourselves. We need to look out for one another and define our own terms so that we are not stigmatized as criminals. I sincerely hope this piece inspires people to look into prison privatization and the dirty practices of prison capitalists.

Aden Aden



Human(ity)

Human has been taken out of humanity.

We will kill each other

Pitch rock to the pregnant lady up the block
as we lose sense of our tick tocks

No regrets for pulling out the glock

Then be in shock when approached by cops

Cause we're handcuffed within our own mind

Modern day incarceration

Trial and error

Lead to trials and tribulations

& to think this is why our ancestors escaped that
plantation

Does this not make sense?

Would you like a translation?

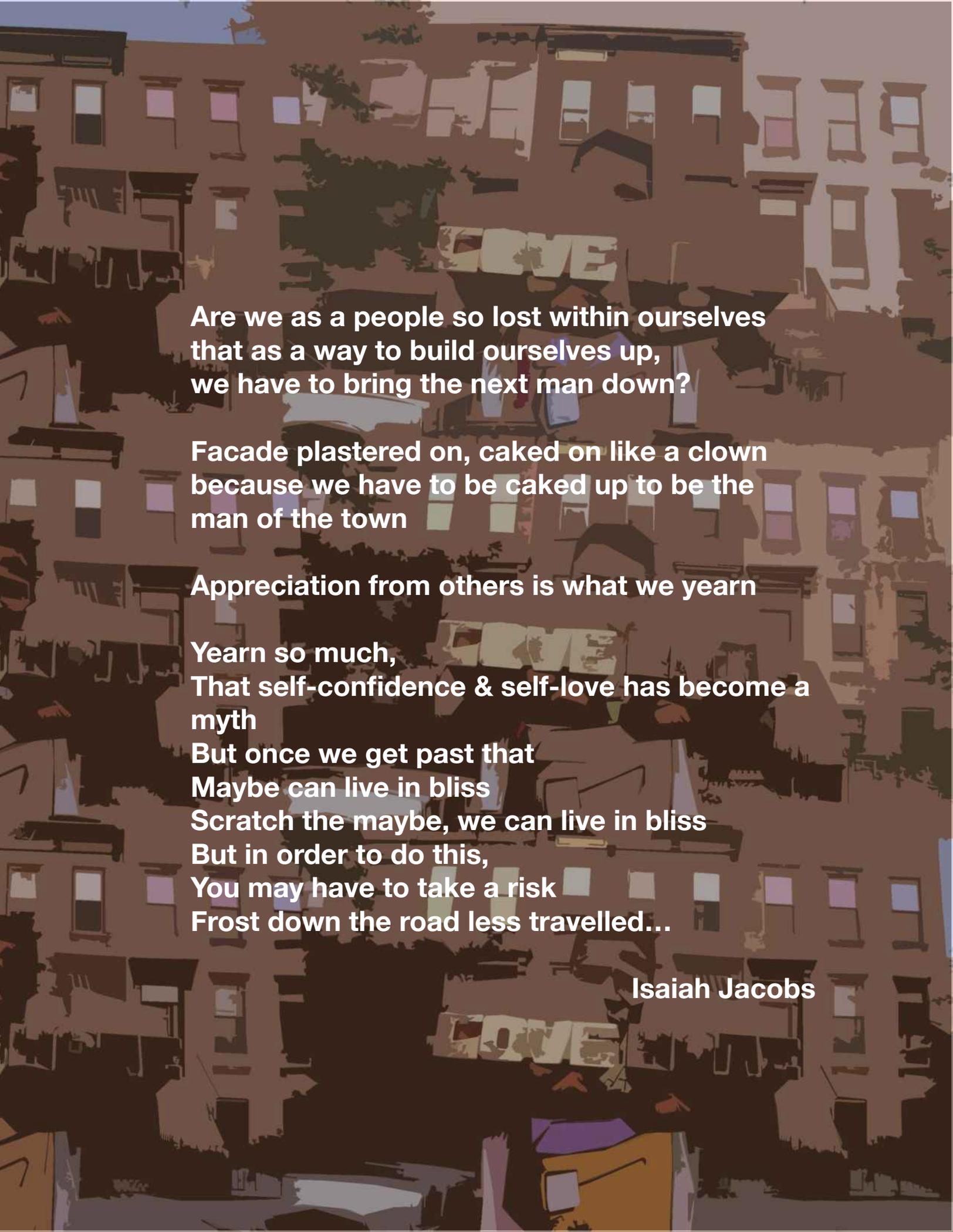
A breakdown of this composition of the words I
compose,

or would you rather let your mind rot in the compost
& lose your soul?

No illuminati, but let me illuminate

Take your thought process to an unknown plateau

Watch it levitate



**Are we as a people so lost within ourselves
that as a way to build ourselves up,
we have to bring the next man down?**

**Facade plastered on, caked on like a clown
because we have to be caked up to be the
man of the town**

Appreciation from others is what we yearn

**Yearn so much,
That self-confidence & self-love has become a
myth**

**But once we get past that
Maybe can live in bliss
Scratch the maybe, we can live in bliss
But in order to do this,
You may have to take a risk
Frost down the road less travelled...**

Isaiah Jacobs

MY DREAM, the morning of November 15th

It doesn't get any realer than this...

I was somewhere, in the bay of some sea, under bleak skies, standing atop mounds of land surrounded by water; but it felt like an abyss. I was yearning to be on land, but I was afraid to go into the water because it was dark, possibly deep, and I knew I couldn't swim. There were white men surrounding me. They were wondering why I was apprehensive to get into the water. I got the feeling that they were mocking me amongst themselves as time passed. Without conscious effort or experience, I eventually reached the land and I was at the coast. It was the site of an old plantation.

They were conducting some sort of ceremony, to pay homage to the old inhabitants of the plantation. The Black people were performing various tasks. The white men were jeering in jubilation, egging it on. I had to run, jump over a patch of sand, and claw out the beach. They said it was to redeem the blood of the slaves. The first time I tried, I was nervous and scared; and I didn't jump far enough. Another man did it and he clawed it out. The sand was well dug and he left a mark. White men were also doing rituals to pay homage to the ancestral slave owners. Except they seemed to be paying homage to the plantation workers that worked in the field to shepherd, abuse and discipline the slaves. They were raving amongst us out on the beach, they revered the field work. They claimed to be descendants of those men. A man threw something like a spear at a hanging board, and it splashed with blood. There were cheers: everyone agreed that he justly paid homage to his ancestors.

It was my turn to go again. I was inflamed with so much passion and disappointment. It became my every desire to complete the task, fulfill redemption, provide reparations and pay just homage to the slaves. So I got ready to make the leap and a white man told me to move forward to make my jump shorter. I insisted that I could make the jump. He continued to urge me, and eventually convinced me to step further; the entire time I felt, deep down, that I could make the jump. But I moved up, and I ran, and I jumped, and I passed the mark; but I still felt as if I had come up short. It wasn't satisfying. I didn't fulfill my potential and all my ancestors deserved of me.

There were cheers. I vehemently, aimlessly scraped and clawed the land. The white man said it was our way of leaving our mark, to let people know we did this for the slaves. I clawed as hard as I could. When I was done I looked at the sand and there were ugly lumps. They weren't beautiful slashes like I'd seen from the other man. I clawed a few more times and it didn't make it any better, just more lumps. Meanwhile in the background all the white men cheered, as if we were celebrating together, as if we were friends.

Davin Campbell



I was fully intending on leaving this piece by itself, to have the readers interpret it for themselves; after all it is literally a dream and not a figuratively constructed piece of my imagination. But there is something rather confusing, episodic or missing from the piece. It just seems to be suspended somewhere in an abyss, like I was during the episode. But that is the point, that was where I was, this is where we are. Be keen to the references that cannot be distinguished between past and present. Contemplate an activity as physically invested but inevitably erasable such as clawing the sand. This was my task. Ultimately, this dream was a vivid sensation and I tried to paint that for you; try to imagine the scenes.

Remove the Curtains, Our Windows Face Darkness: The Truth Behind United States Education Schemes

by Davin Campbell

Waiting for Superman

Our nation is quietly undergoing a dramatic change in our public education system. The resulting changes have the ability to shift the very earth beneath our feet if we do not awaken to the scent that is underneath our noses. Currently there is a great wave of advocacy for the privatization of public school administration as inner-cities continue to struggle to retain, graduate and elevate students to the performance level of suburban school systems; but there is more on the agenda of soon-to-be public school owners than the prosperity of inner-city children. We have pretty much accepted that money dictates everything in this nation, but we should be all the more infuriated when the minds of children are at stake.

An episode from my hometown, Bridgeport, CT stands as a testimony to the reality of privatization. A scheme was devised in 2011 to overthrow Bridgeport's elected Board of Education. The CT post followed these events very closely and their articles have provided points of reference for the following explication.

An email sent to Allan Taylor, the Chair of the State Board of Education, from a Meghan Lowney read "a small group of us are strategizing a Bridgeport charter revision campaign that would

result in mayoral control of the schools. This is a confidential conversation of course." Then in July 2011, the board split votes 6-3 in favor of placing control over the board of education into the hands of Mayor Bill Finch who then handed it over the State. The State then appointed a new Board of Education which, in turn, hired Paul Vallas in December, to begin the following month, as the interim superintendent. Due to an investigation on the matter, the State Supreme Court voided the state takeover of Bridgeport's public schools in of February of 2012 and, in July, impeached the state-appointed Board and ordered a reelection.

The failed coup was engineered by the incorporators of an "education enrichment nonprofit," Excel Bridgeport. The list of perpetrators include Lee Bollert, who is a member of Bridgeport



Mayor Bill Finch's staff, Nathan Snow, who failed to win an election onto the Board of Education after being a Teach for America teacher for two years, and of course the sneaky special agent Meghan Lowney. This gang was reportedly always present at Governor Dan Malloy's State Board of Education meetings. Again, in November of 2012 Bridgeport voters—who were clearly not in favor of having a board of education imposed upon them--rejected a "charter revision" proposal that would allow the mayor to appoint the Board of Education.

Ironically enough, the man the state bureaucrats were trying to forcefully usher into the superintendent position without the voters' approval, Paul Vallas, was not even qualified for the position. But fortunately in July of 2012 a law from the State Board of Education, which required educators to complete a thirteen month school leadership program for qualification to be a superintendent in the state was

revised to allow the Commissioner of Education to make the requirement a matter of discretion. So in March of 2013 Paul Vallas completed a three-week, three-credit "independent study" course courtesy of your very own UConn Neag School of Education and received a promotion from interim superintendent to a three-year contract with the Board of Education. Proving that good things do come in threes.

Annoyingly enough, on April 1st, 2013 activist Carmen Lopez filed a lawsuit over Vallas' contract on the absurd notion that he lacked qualification to serve as a superintendent in CT. Of course, fifteen days later the State Board of Education approved the "special" school leadership program that certified Vallas. But on June 28th Judge Barbara Bellis had the nerve to rule that Vallas didn't have proper certification. Justice would prevail however, following an appeal by Vallas and his supporters, the CT Supreme Court renounced the lawsuit

challenging Vallas' qualification on the 14th of November. But this "justice" came a little too late though, because the ungrateful residents of Bridgeport rejected their savior on November 5th in favor of an elected board of education that was sure to oust Vallas. No sweat off of Vallas' back though: three days later the Governor of Illinois, Patt Quinn, announced that Vallas would be his running mate as lieutenant governor for the next Illinois gubernatorial election.

Just like that. He left in a blaze...just as a trail of fire blazed on the path, on which he arrived. Before being anointed in Bridgeport, Vallas was the superintendent or CEO of the Chicago, Philadelphia and New Orleans school districts, even though he has never been certified to be a superintendent ever, in any of his locations. Many proponents of privatized education reform view his journey as a success, as they hailed his arrival to Bridgeport as the dawn of a brighter day. But a more holistic view of all of his endeavors since he began his career shows the muddy downside of an agenda bent on privatization.

According to a report published by Parents United for Responsible Education, since 1996—the advent of this illustrious crusade—Chicago public schools have retained 100,000 3rd, 6th & 8th grade students due to a standardized test score quota that Vallas implemented.



The Chicago Public School system is still struggling to remove a standardized test policy and a complaint was sent to U.S. Department of Education regarding the matter. Vallas has even recently admitted that such a system does not work, but he is long gone; too bad, so sad. The Chicago-based community group has also reported that these retentions lead to problems later in life, as Chicago students were 25% more likely to drop out by age 17. To cap it all off, failing students has led to the closure of 50 of Chicago's public schools since Vallas' reforms were implemented.

His next stop was Philadelphia in 2002. Unfortunately, privatization hasn't worked out financially there either. Philadelphia's school district is currently facing a \$304 million deficit and 20% of the total staff has been laid off since his arrival. But on we go towards privatization. Recently 10% of Philadelphia's public school district—a total of 23 schools—were shut down to be replaced by charter schools. Joshua Connor, a Villanova University Education Professor, weighed in on the situation: “Were it not for the deliberate underinvestment and disinvestment in Philadelphia schools by the state, and the misguided investment in an oversized and exceptionally costly Charter school sector—the district could easily be enjoying a multibillion dollar surplus instead of a deficit.”

A long time enemy of privatization and corporate control has been unions, so under public school reforms, teachers unions have also been targeted. In 2007 Vallas became the superintendent of the ‘recovery district’ in New Orleans. Coinciden-

tally, the new school district administration broke down what was the largest and most powerful, largely African American, union in Louisiana, the United Teachers of New Orleans. Most of the public schools in New Orleans were turned into charter schools and the remainder of the public schools were under the supervision of Vallas.

Amidst this storm of education reforms that have been hurling public schools into the distance, vacuuming money out of them with cyclone winds and crumbling them on top of unionized teachers, for better or worse, a curious shadow appeared behind catalyst Paul Vallas. “The Vallas Group”. No public school superintendent is complete without his own private company that sells educational services. The Vallas Group has an official corporate partnership with Cambium Learning Inc. which owns other educational service companies named Voyager Learning, Cambium Learning Technologies, and Sopris Learning. Through “The Vallas Group”, Vallas' schools have purchased educational services from all of these companies. Vallas' advocacy of the “diverse provider model” in Philadelphia is a testimony to this, where he hired these private companies to provide various services to the schools.

In the richest county, of the richest state, of the richest country with the one of the greatest achievement gaps (96% of Bridgeport elementary schools perform below state average) it was inevitable that education reformers would try to infiltrate the public school system and ‘fix education’. At that moment, Bridgeport became the localized epicenter of the political struggle between the public, and private entities trying to gain power over public education. Paul Vallas' arrival marked the beginning of Bridgeport's episode against the power of the almighty dollar, but this is a war that is bigger than Paul Vallas and that had begun long before Bridgeport, CT ever crossed his mind.



Leaving the Children Behind

The No Child Left Behind act of 2001 set the stage for privatized education reform as it established improved standardized test scores as the primary measure for school success. Thus, bound teachers' job security and the ability for the school to remain public to those scores through its Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and High Quality Teachers (HQT) clauses.

Herein lies the first problem, it does not identify or prioritize LEARNING as the measurement of student success. For years teachers have protested that "teaching-to-the-test" does not foster learning, and the National Research Council has confirmed multiple studies which show that standardized tests do not measure student learning accurately. It is doubtful that the law's objective is to improve learning.

Nonetheless, Schools are required to define success as progress on state standard assessments and, essentially, all students across the state are required to show "improvement" based on the same standards. Ironically, that undermines the entire premise of the Elementary School Education Act and NCLB: students in racially, or economically, segregated urban districts have been performing worse than their suburban, predominantly white, counterparts.

The law is structured this way because of what will happen

if kids don't make AYP. If a school doesn't make AYP for a 6th year in a row, then the school is closed down and turned into a charter school; or a private company is hired to run the school, or it is given directly to the state board of education. Sound familiar? Since six school years after the NCLB (2006-2007), according to the Department of Education's school closure statistics, the rate of public school closings has been well above that of the previous six years, which was an increase in the era before that. The '07-'08 year saw a record 1,450 public school closures. There are now roughly 6,000 charter schools in the United States 3,500 more than there were 10 years ago.

In a parallel manner, the HQT clause contributes to the increase in teacher turnover rates. In summary the law asks that the teachers have a full teaching certification, a bachelor's degree, demonstrate competence in subject knowledge and teaching of subject, has completed state-wide exams, and can be held accountable for the exams records. Nothing on that list voids the qualifications of our current public school teachers. The law primarily serves to place emphasis on teachers as the primary ingredient to underperforming schools. Unionized public school teachers are quite simply an obstacle to privatization, so engineers of this transformation then tried to promulgate alternatives...

Behind the Screen Acting

Teach for America has apparently just sprouted out of the ground, planted its seeds all across America and faithfully devoted its entire existence to be the peace corps of American education. Unfortunately, the teaching program itself is carelessly put together and it gravely underprepares these pseudo-teachers for the task at hand. That is because it has an elitist, racist, condescending premise that is illustrated in everything about its brand. Their motto is "teaching as leadership based." Substance-less rhetoric. They say, teaching as leadership is "based on the knowledge that teachers whose students make the kind of progress that puts them on a different path of life operate like great leaders in any context." The problem with what that statement implies and not directly states (because it doesn't make sense) is it's simply not true. Just because someone is a great leader doesn't mean they will put kids on "a different path in life", or simply be a great teacher if that matters; but the truth is that they expect the greatness of the pseudo-teachers they place in inner-city neighborhoods to just rub off on their students as they stand before them.

My apologies, they refer to their pseudo-teachers as "corps members", as if they are valiant warriors heading into to a fatal warzone. Fitting, the strategy is "first to go last to know" anyway. It is certainly not the case that these teachers are going through

TRADITIONAL TEACHERS

- COMPLETION OF 4-YEAR DEGREE
- TWO-YEARS OF EDUCATION SCHOOL FOR TEACHING CERTIFICATION
- MONTHS OF IN-CLASS EXPERIENCE DURING CERTIFICATION PROGRAM
- LIFETIME COMMITMENT TO BEING AN EDUCATOR

REAL LIFE QUOTES FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF TFA TEACHING PREP. PROGRAM

- “AS CORPS MEMBERS YOU DRIVE YOUR OWN DEVELOPMENT” (HEY, TEACH YOURSELF HOW TO TEACH!)
- “I’M GOING TO GO OUT THERE AND FIND THE RESOURCES I NEED TO BE A BETTER TEACHER.” (TEACH YOURSELF ON THE FLY!)
- “MENTORS ARE SUPPOSED TO REFLECT WITH YOU ON YOUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES AND HELP TO REMIND YOU THAT YOU HAVE THESE STRENGTHS.” (REALLY? HOW HELPFUL IS THAT?)
- “ALTHOUGH THEY [MENTORS] WON’T BE STANDING NEXT TO YOU EVERY DAY *AWKWARD CHUCKLE* THEY ARE STANDING TOTALLY AROUND YOU”



a rigorous, substantive training program that holistically prepares them to be impactful teachers. If closely examined, we can see that the preparation program for TFA is a joke and it is disrespectful to the experience of the true students of education.

I happen to know a student of education at the University of Connecticut that has worked alongside a “corps member” who left her students after two years. His observations told him that they were absolutely heart-broken by losing the teacher they were making progress with. It all chalked up to another person walking out on their lives. So even if a corps member does make an impact as a teacher, the possibility or likelihood of their departure makes them carry a tainted presence, especially for those who are anticipating the end of their deployment, and it leaves a bad taste in the mouths of their students if that day does come.

Charter Schools are another public school alternative that was a product of the “increasing accountability” front of the early 1990s that sought to blame

TEACH FOR AMERICA TEACHERS

- COMPLETION OF 4-YEAR DEGREE
- 6-WEEK OVER-THE-SUMMER CRASH COURSE TO EARN “CORPS MEMBERS” CERTIFICATION
- FIRST IN-CLASS EXPERIENCE AS A FULL-TIME TEACHER THE FOLLOWING FALL
- 2-YEAR STINT, WITH HALF DECENT RETENTION STATISTICS (43 % LONGER THAN TWO AND 15 % AFTER FIVE)

teachers in public schools for the underperformance of students. Reformers proposed to fix the problem by providing privatized schools to public school students free of charge. But for all the hoopla that has been made about the superior quality of charters schools, the assertions have been quite simply not substantiated by empirical evidence. Even in their most emphasized aspect of improved student performance, test scores. The only comprehensive comparative study done on charter Schools was by Stanford University in 2009, which found that 83% of them performed worse or, no better than, public schools in standardized testing. In reading, 25% delivered better scores, more than 50% showed no improvement and 19% fared worse. For Math, 29% scored better, 40% showed no improvement and 31% performed worse.

That is really disappointing considering the fact that Charter Schools filter out English Second Language learners and special education students because they are technically not public schools and are not obligated to provide those accommodations. They also send

low performing students with disciplinary issues back to traditional public schools so that they don't tarnish their good name. In fact, in the nation's capital, which boasts one of the weakest public school systems in the nation, traditional public school inbreeds are not being tolerated in Charter schools. They are expelled at 28 times the rate of children in the public schools. All of that and Charter schools still can't inflate higher test scores to validate themselves on their own grounds.

The last piece of the puzzle is the Common Core standards of education, which every state that desires to be eligible for Race to the Top grants is required to adopt. The CCS is set to be implemented at the beginning of the 2014-15 school year. These standards, as you may suspect by now, are hell-bent on teacher evaluation and the strategy for improvement is the application of standardized assessment, by which the teachers are being evaluated. This curriculum plan was produced in 2009 by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers (two private entities) after private conventions, sealed by confidentiality agreements, in 2007. Shady.

It is clear to me that The CCS, TFA and charter schools have flourished only because they have been funded and promoted by the wealthiest people in the nation. The big three players in this game of education reform are the Eli Broad Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Walton Family Foundation. A snippet of the control they have bolstered over legislation, how we understand the achievement gap and what we need to do about it is illustrated in a chart I have composed that speaks to simplistic but insightful Wu-Tang Clan acronym.

The Gravy Train Runs Through the City

These are all schemes to amplify the closure of public schools and open the door for privatization such as the opening of charter schools, which are owned and run by private entities. Charter schools are ideal, the public capital is already privately controlled and they, at most, feature company unions. Teach for America and teacher evaluation agendas help to eradicate tenured, unionized teacher's bureaucracies that have significant leverage with the public school administrations. TFA

provides non-unionized alternatives to obtaining labor, which continues to drift the control over the capital in the industry to education boards that they seek to replace with appointed boards 'because publically elected boards just aren't doing enough for the kids.'

The people who fund these initiatives really want to transform school board members into employees of private firms who purchase all of the school's educational services from other private firms that the executives and funders have investments in. The entire process transfers public school tax money into the pockets of the wealthy investors. The Arizona Republic found that charter schools bought goods and services from the companies of board members or administrators, including textbooks, air conditioning repairs (really?) and transportation services. With this blueprint, schools are on their way to becoming hallow vessels, for hallowed minds with nothing to show for their education but the scores of standardized tests imprinted on their brains.

The worst part of this is that tons of money is being put towards diabolical schemes while the public money, tax dollars, THEIR MONEY, the little money they have, is not even being put towards financing the education of urban communities properly as it is. The National Association for Educational Opportunities' study on the achievement gap has concluded that many states continue to unfairly allocate education funding relative to the needs of their most disadvantaged students, and schools serving high numbers of those students. "In some states and regions, the shortfalls in school funding are reaching crisis level."

New Colonialism

A crisis indeed. Everyone, and the black community especially should awaken themselves to the racial undertones of these schemes. We need to understand that educating the majority of African Americans has never truly been an objective in the United States, because education is power. During slavery it was not permissible for slaves to be literate.



WALTON FAMILY

\$700 M
Spent on voucher programs, charter schools, and policy advocacy between 2005 & 2010.

\$100,000 donation to IFF Research Institute to conduct a comparative study on Public & Charter Schools. Study shuts down 30 public schools in D.C.

\$3 M to Washington State for bill to lift ban on charter schools. Donates \$800,000 after bill passes to build charter school.

Gates donated grand total of \$105 M to NGA & CESSO for the development and implementation of the Common Core Standards.



BILL GATES

Spent \$11 M to pass a bill that limits the amount of money that can be contributed to Teacher's Unions.

His foundation's Mission Statement says U.S. Department of Education with Obama & Arne Duncan (Race to the Top Grants) has an "agenda that echoes our decade of investments in Charter Schools and Teacher Accountability.

\$320 M Spent education reform since 1999.

The decades following emancipation has only found new ways to marginalize education within the black community—black codes, Jim Crow laws, War on Drugs—and, subsequently, restrain the community as a whole. Former FBI director J. Edgar Hoover said it best. Huey Newton's free breakfast program was the greatest threat to internal security in the U.S. Really, it was. It wasn't because black children were eating (though Edgar may have had a problem with that too) it was because masses of children in the ghettos would be learning from a college educated black man. They had reliable leadership that was steering them in the right directing and starring them in the face. That is powerful. It is dangerous for the masses to understand how the white power structure keeps itself in power and what needs to be done to overcome that power, which is educating themselves about it. What's worse is that the one way we can "make it out" of our neighborhoods—which we shouldn't have to do—is through education, but now education is the new site of oppression and capitalistic exploitation.

\$15 M to "Parent Revolution" in California - lobbied for law that decreases the power of Teacher's Unions and allows public schools to be turned into non-union charter schools.

**6 members of Walton Family rank among top 10 contributors to Governor of Wisconsin Scott Walker's campaign:
\$300 M cut from public schools
\$107 M in funding for worker programs in private schools**

**\$600 M
Spent on teacher quality agenda between 2006 & 2010.**

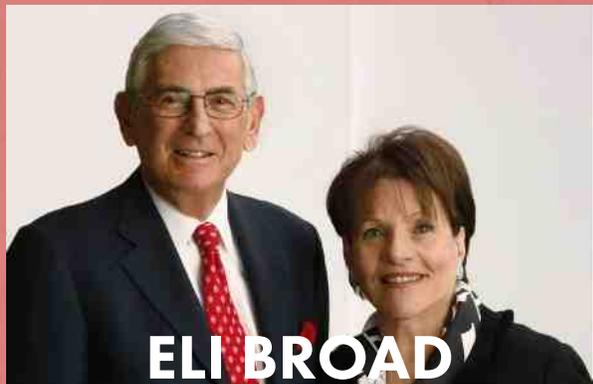
Donated \$1.6 M to "Parent Revolution."

Donated \$2 M to "Waiting for Superman" film.

Gates has donated \$12 M to TFA since 2009.

Paul Vallas signs \$777,000 contract with TFA while in Bridgeport, without BOE consent.

Nathan Snow, CT TFA Director, Good Schools Bridgeport Board Member, conspirator for getting Paul Vallas elected.



It is true that our public school systems need change, but I assure you that change is not privatization. There is no way having a privately appointed board of Ed is off the best interest of a black community. As ex-judge Carmen Lopez pointed out, "If appointed boards are consistent with best practices, one might wonder why no one proposes this method in the enlightened towns of Fairfield, Trumbull, Easton, Westport or Stratford." That's because it's not. Those residents will not allow an outsider, who is not accountable to them, determine the fate of their children; regardless of whether or not they are under suspicion of being inadequate to do so by those same people. But people of color are just assumed to be incompetent, not deserving of autonomy and are quite vulnerable to exploitation, which ultimately makes it more acceptable to do so. These schemes are fraudulent excuses for extraction, just as the efforts of colonialism were meant to civilize the non-Western world. Look how that turned out.

(A)mending the Academy: The Importance of Race and Queer Studies

About a year ago, I internally celebrated a decision that would be controversial in several spaces in which I inhabit(ed) and, simultaneously, one of the most liberating and satisfying decisions of my life: I decided to double major in Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies and African American Studies. I decided to major in these two fields of study at a predominately white university (both in student and faculty populations) in New England. I made this decision as a queer black woman radical hip hop feminist writer outspoken student who had never learned the value of her own culture, hoping these studies would be sites of knowledge production and promotion. They are.

Within these departments, institutes, classrooms, and conversations, there is a constant give-and-take of knowledge, of exchanging experiences, of deconstructing differences, and building bridges between communities. Each conversation is an assemblage, an ontological practice that requires both parties to shed preconceived notions and beliefs (some unconscious) that have been mercilessly hammered into us since birth. Each field requires me not only to "open my mind" but to, concurrently, open the wounds I've stitched for myself, for my mother, for my ancestors. They ask me to remove parts of myself I've thought irremovable and they ask for that process to be absolutely excruciating but, simultaneously, emancipating.

Over the past year, I've watched this process play out; I've seen the way it has reformed my thoughts and my thought progression, the spaces I choose to occupy, the words I choose as labels and non-labels for myself. I've watched the way it has shaped my friend groups and my family, the way it presents itself on my Facebook and Twitter, the way it has made me reconsider everything I once knew as "Fact" and as "Truth." So the question is, how could two fields, heavily criticized for their seeming "non-importance, invalid placement" in the academy, be so powerful? How could they create these conscious students who carry with them this potentially naïve passion for solving "the problem[s] of the twentieth [and, arguably, the twenty-first] century"?[1]

People tell me it must be easy to major in fields directly related to my identity, and that being a queer black woman must make it easy to pass classes on sexual identity politics, white racism, and America's historically hierarchical systems of oppression. But, there's little truth to that belief. Of course there are classes where I'm nodding my head profusely, thinking, "that's that shit I'm talking about", but equally, if not more often, there are moments where I'm grappling with what the professor is saying, working diligently to shed that impermeable skin that systemic racism, homoantagonism, and sexism has built. I'm not saying that it isn't problematic to academize experience. It can (and has, in some spaces) ended up looking like "Truth" instead of "truths." Sometimes this process of implementing and studying society becomes exclusionary, creating an elitist environment that eliminates individuals who have not and will/can never be active participants in the academy. Even folks who have been active participants in studying or creating academically-acceptable work view the studies as a submission and assimilation to privileged culture, which in turn, can potentially produce sites of violence.

I am saying that Queer Studies puts that too-neat, concise "LGBT" on the bench; African American Studies retires the notion of black culture as separate. Both fields intersect in interdisciplinary manners: one cannot (or should not) exist without the other. The reason why I, as a queer black woman, am not an expert in these fields is because they both expel single experience as total and "Truth." They both say that "queer" is one thing and "black" another—that these identities are not easily reflected symmetrically from one individual to another. Similarly, they dismantle the ideology that queers cannot be black and blacks cannot be queers.

They do all of this and more within an institution/system recognized societally as "valid," as "important," as "Truth."

Because academia is highly regarded as valid, scientific, legitimate knowledge—although queer and race studies often are not—their positions within the academy work against that stigma. By codifying societal experience using "structured disciplines" like history, English, political science, sociology, and geography as equal parts to make a whole, these fields operate within in a framework that is "respectable" and, more currently, "safe."

With that, I'm also not saying every professor who has taught me has been an uproarious radical with sentiments similar to my own and sensitivity to the ways in which oppression attacks on multiple fronts of my identities. In fact, more and more, I've found professors in these fields who are complacent and compliant to "stick to the rules" and perpetuate white supremacist and trans-antagonistic ideologies (i.e. adamant refusals to teach about Malcolm X or expressing thoughts on what "type" of trans folk are "eligible" for transitioning). I've found that operating in this "safe space" (versus rally/protest/field work activism) can turn a former Black Panther into someone sort of sheepish in their activism. The censorship both in writing and in action that accompanies academia and the people within it can become a struggle when what the world really needs are rightfully enraged radicals.

The existence of, and the enrollment in, these fields, however, symbolizes struggles manifested in a way that does comfortably fit into "proper society" but equally challenge hegemonic academia in a way that sits uncomfortably with large populations. Even when the amount of students enrolled is small, the studies have "impact beyond numbers"[2] both on their respective campuses and nationwide. Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies and African American Studies affirm my existence, my history, my culture. They provide me with the knowledge I wouldn't have otherwise; every wound unstitched is worth this new skin. They say, very loudly and extremely clearly, "we are the ones we've been waiting for." [3]

Martina Powell

[1] W.E.B Du Bois refers to the "color line" as the problem of the 20th century in his work, *The Souls of Black Folk*.

[2] Dr. Jelani Cobb, director of UConn's Institute for African American Studies, claimed that, despite the numeric student-size of programs such as African American Studies at UConn, the impact of the actual programs on campuses exceeds that calculation.

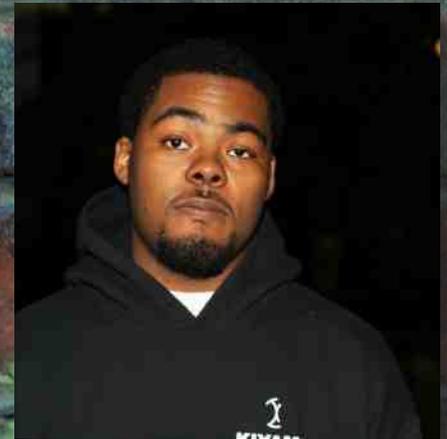
[3] Last line of June Jordan's "Poem for South African Women."

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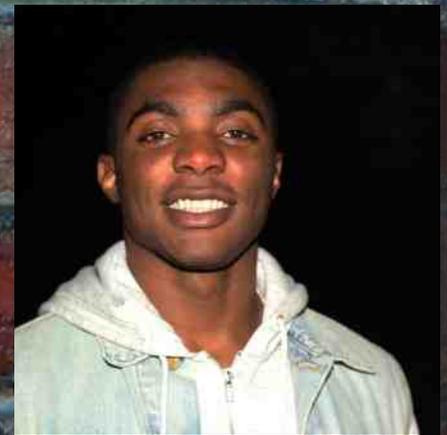
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