

## Jim Brown -- A Real Man

### The Ray Willis Report

By: Ray E. Willis



Ray Willis

There aren't very many macho African-American male celebrities who evade the close scrutiny of the news media. In fact you can count on negative press to follow virtually any African-American male who makes independent achievements in society. Just look around us in this community and you can see several instances of what I mean.

On those infrequent occasions when a black male does rise to prominence and maintains a decidedly masculine posture, invariably he becomes a target for "put downs." Case in point is Jim Brown, undisputedly in my opinion the greatest running back ever to play professional football. Retiring from pro football after having never missed a game due to an injury, while still at a youthful age, he embarked on a very successful film career.

Through it all, Jim Brown remains true to form -- bold and macho. Even though along the way he has been saddled with a few albatrosses around his neck, he has emerged from the negative criticism as an almost god like figure -- a black man who went against the grain, stood on his own merit as a human being, and did things his way.

Everyone who has listened to a Richard Pryor album knows the legend of Jim Brown. You know the story line -- a man would be a fool to try and mess with Jim Brown. In real life Brown was at Pryor's side as a friend and confidant during Pryor's well-publicized bout with drugs. Brown was Pryor's rock of Gibraltar.

Now, in a tell-all autobiography available in

hardback at bookstores, Brown further sets the record straight on a number of topics including: his relationships with women, his political viewpoints, and so forth.

Concerning women Brown said he never tossed his girlfriend from a second-story balcony as was erroneously reported in the media. He attributed the negative press accounts of the incident to love affairs he was having at the time with some of his more famous movie costars -- affairs which he said were definitely frowned upon by movie industry moguls.

In an effort to control him, they attempted to discredit everything he did and stood for. The results were some pretty scurrilous attacks on Brown's character. Read the book through, and you'll get his own clarification of these allegations.

To this day, Jim Brown says he has difficulty finding work as an actor because of his independent, macho persona. If it were not for a successful film company that he owns and operates, and the wealth he has amassed during his football and acting careers, he might find himself relegated to virtual obscurity.

I guess you could sum up

an expression of the true greatness of Jim Brown in his own observation of himself. He said "I never fully realized the impact my independent spirit had on other African-Americans until I was asked by the family of Black Panther founder Huey P. Newton to deliver the eulogy at Newton's funeral." He said it was an honor beyond words to have been asked to do this, especially since he didn't personally know Newton or any of his family. "To have been asked to be the principal speaker at Newton's funeral and to be held in such high regard by a family I did not have a personal relationship with is truly one of the greatest rewards I could ever receive in this life," Brown is reported to have said.

Then there's the Fakhkan matter. During a recent appearance on the Arsenio Hall Show, Brown quickly pointed out his support of Fakhkan. In the same breath he asked Arsenio if he indeed also supported the Muslim minister. Arsenio replied weakly, "Let's take a station break." Enough said!

Yes indeed, whether you agree with Brown's philosophy and way of handling things or not, you just have to admire an African-American man who has such definite values and who sticks to his guns -- especially in today's society.

#### Election Reflections

-For the first time in U.S. history the nation's largest city, New York City, has an African-American mayor, David Dinkins. Also, Virginia as well became the first state to elect an African-American governor, Douglas Wilder. Did you read any of the numerous newspapers accounts concerning their respective victories? Almost to the letter the articles stated: "...Dinkins, grandson of slaves," and, concerning Wilder, "...a descendent of slaves..."

Considering that the overwhelming majority of African-Americans are progenitors of slaves anyway, it seems like a moot fact. Yet the news media invariably includes a prominent reference to slave lineage whenever an African-American achievement is noted.

It's another not-so-subtle reminder, lest we forget who we are, especially during a rare moment of triumph against the odds.

## Democrats Score Major Victories In Elections Across The Country

David Dinkins won election Tuesday as the first black mayor of New York City, propelled by a multiracial coalition drawn to his message of social conciliation.

Dinkins, the Manhattan borough president, defeated Republican Rudolph W. Giuliani with the support of white liberals who had enabled him to retire three-term incumbent Mayor Edward I. Koch in the Democratic primary.

WCBS-TV reported that surveys of voters leaving polling places showed Dinkins won nearly unanimous black support--98 percent--along with a solid 32 percent of the white vote and more than seven in 10 Hispanic voters.

L. Douglas Wilder of Virginia, the grandson of slaves, clung to a slender lead Tuesday over J. Marshall Coleman in his bid to become the nation's first elected black governor.

Mayors Coleman Young of Detroit and Kathy Whitmire of Houston led in bids for new terms.

Democrat John Daniels was elected mayor of New Haven, becoming the first black mayor of his majority-white city.

In Seattle, city councilman Norm Rice battled opponent Doug Jewett in his drive for a similar distinction.

Cleveland picked a new black mayor, with state Sen. Michael R. White leading City Council President George Forbes in a particularly bitter race. Forbes called his rival a "slumlord." White said his opponent was a "master of sleaze."

Democratic chairman Ron Brown proclaimed a "great day for Democrats but an even better day for America."

"We Democrats have taught ourselves a lot about working together, and pulling for mainstream America," he said, looking ahead to the 1990 elections.

## Rowe, Inc. Received Navy Contract

African American defense contractor Rowe, Inc., which is located on Owens Ave. on the Westside, finally received a U.S. Navy contract which will get the company moving again and will put at least 10 employees back to work for six months to a year.

The company was awarded a \$370,000 contract to convert 16 engines and transmission assemblies over the next six months.

This contract, however, is not the long-awaited 5-year Navy contract that Rowe, Inc. still hopes to receive. This anticipated contract would revive the dormant plant and provide about 100 new jobs for the economically depressed Westside.

In anticipation of Rowe, Inc.'s receiving the 5-year contract, the City of Las Vegas has been subsidizing the minority-owned company with federal loans and grants for over two years, hoping that when the contract is received, it will help improve the Westside's depressed economic condition.

## Seniors "Call Home For The Holidays" Free Of Charge

"Call Home for the Holidays" is a Thanksgiving Day project undertaken by American Distributing Company's owners, Steve Sisolak and Dave Farris. It involves free telephone calls for seniors on their wats lines, all 30 of them, to anywhere in the country on Thanksgivings Day from the hours of 7 a.m. until 1 p.m. Yes, FREE calls for seniors. All you have to do is go to their location at 2959 Industrial Road behind the Stardust and Westward Ho

Hotels during these hours and you can talk for 10 minutes to your loved ones wherever in the country they may live. Depending on the turnout, you might even be able to make more than one phone call.

Volunteers are also being sought that day so as to help serve refreshments to the seniors and perhaps assist them in dialing, should they require it.

American Distributing Company is affiliated with the

National Telemarketing Association and it is hoped that if the local "Call Home" Thanksgiving Day is a success, it will be picked up by the national group throughout the country and seniors will be permitted to use their wats phones, not only for Thanksgiving but for Christmas and Easter as well.

No reservations are needed but if you wish to volunteer your time, call 369-8779.

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Nevada's only black community newspaper  
Published every Thursday by the Brown Publishing Co.  
Inc., 1201 South Eastern Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada 89104  
Telephone (702) 383-4030.

Serving Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, Reno, Carson City  
Sparks, Hawthorne, Henderson and Tonopah.

Betty Brown, President, Publisher & Editor; LeRoy Brown,  
Marketing Director; Willis Brown, Production; Don Snook, Graphics;  
Delores Feemster, Reno General Manager.

Members: National Newspaper Publishers Association,  
West Coast Black Publishers Association.

This newspaper is audited by Community Papers  
Verification Service, 6225 University Avenue, Madison,  
W153705 (608) 238-7550.

Subscriptions payable in advance

Six months \$15.00

Twelve months \$25.00

The rates apply to Continental United States only



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