

**THE
 RAY
 WILLIS
 REPORT**
 BY RAY E. WILLIS



WAITING TO EXHALE

Breathe in deeply. Now hold it in. Wait. Now, exhale, very slowly. What did it feel like after you inhaled...while you were waiting to exhale? Did you experience some mild constriction in your throat? Did you almost panic. It wasn't a pleasant feeling waiting to exhale. Was it?

The act of breathing in deeply and holding it in as long as you can before finally exhaling is the subject of the number one best-seller novel in America.

Waiting to Exhale, written by Black author Ms. Terry McMillan, is the story of four African American "sisters" trying to make it in the world of Black female-male relationships. In essence, these four sister-girl-friends are codependent on each other while "waiting to exhale," waiting for that perfect Black man who will take their breath away.

Waiting to Exhale is a mirthful, delightfully funny look at how Black women view themselves in terms of their relationships with Black men. On face value, the book pokes playful fun at Black males in jest.

On a deeper, darker level though, *Waiting to Exhale* follows an increasing familiar genre in film and books, a condescending, negative characterization of the Black male.

Yes, Black male-bashing has become so popular that our women are being encouraged to do a written number on us.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not knocking the book per se. It's an excellent piece of writing, well worth your time to buy and read. However, I find it interesting that artistic endeavors that put down Black men are virtually a sure bet.

Such works as *The Women of Brewster Place* and *The Color Purple* collectively fall into that category.

There's no question that Black women are becoming increasingly frustrated in relationships with Black men. Why? Because nowadays there are more of them than of us. Black men are endangered species. There are more Black men in prison than in college. Black

male unemployment is sharply higher than for anyone else. If one didn't know better, you would think all Black men are persona non grata.

Conversely, Black women's stock is higher than it has ever been. Black women get hired over Black men. Because they are perceived as less or non-threatening, women get discretionary jobs over Black men.

After attaining a degree of success in the corporate, private or public sector, unattached Black women seek fulfillment in terms of relationships. "Hmmm. Let's see. I think I need me a man."

But, alas. After searching high and low, the single African American female often comes up empty or winds up settling for less than her dreams of a Knight in Shining Armour. As a result, she may frequently become disenchanted with all Black men. "Honey, they're not worth anything," she might exclaim to her sister-girl-friends out of sheer frustration.

It's rumored that Terry McMillan has already earned more than \$2 million dollars in royalties from *Waiting to Exhale*. Would the book have gained such national acclaim had it not denigrated Black men?

Negative exploitation of the Black male in the arts has some serious deeper ramifications. Especially when you consider that the real root cause of many relationship problems between Black men and Black women can be traced to racism, pure and simple.

To attack or put down Black men in such a casual, matter-of-fact way only serves to play into the hands of those who appreciate

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By R.K. Brown
 ...the statistics show that the present system of education is failing our children.

In the history of education in Black America, there have basically been only two periods. The first I would call the "Conventional" period. The conventional period developed the classic images of the black slave tutoring children in some secret place on the master's plantation; or pre-segregated classrooms in the south. This system of education relied on the black educator, teaching the black child. Under this system of education, the greatest leaders in our history were produced. From Dr. Martin Luther King, to Fredrick Douglass, to at least 90% of you readers. By developing self knowledge, esteem, and moral character, this system illustrated

a proven model for success. The major problem with this system, was that it suffered from second hand facilities and funding. The institutionalized racism in the U.S. educational system, made sure there was a continued margin of relative deprivation. The civil rights era ended that oppression, and established full access to the better funded segregating school system.

The result is the American Schooling System of 1992; the "post Civil Rights System of Education." Basically today's schools are institutionally set up in a SINGLE RACED THEME! We have to enact legislation just to get multi-colored inclusion. Also, if and when the legislation gets enforced, you can believe blacks will receive only a 13% access, and not a drop more!

This means that for 87% of

their academic lives, black children have to focus on something that is alien to their environment and being. This is O.K. for basic sciences, however; when you sit up and listen to someone else's history and achievement for 87% of your 18 years, you can become disinterested pretty quick!

The Post Civil Rights system of education has no room for the development of self esteem, and actualization in minority students. Obviously these are the most important aspects necessary for survival and achievement. What segregated schools lacked in facilities and funding, they more than made up for with the development of self, and presenting a physical environment of intellectual mentors.

I support the move toward a more conventional system of

education, a system of education, a system of "Neighborhood Schools." The larger population wouldn't be affected, because there are still enough black suburbans to insure integration. Large urban areas however, would become Neighborhood Schools. These urban school's districts MIGHT contract independent scholars; (black historians and educators); to formulate more historically accurate text books and materials. Most importantly, these massive districts would be saturated with minority professionals, educators, administrators, and consultants. The result would be similar to the system of Black Colleges, only it would be established during Primary Education, the MOST critical time in the life of any student.

Peace...

NATIONAL ALLIANCE AGAINST RACIST & POLITICAL REPRESSION

NAARPR REPORT:

By Charlene Mitchell
 Executive Director
 National Alliance Against
 Racist & Political Repression

A shell game is being played on the public by police benevolent associations claiming to be trade unions. Unlike unions, these are not bodies that defend workers' rights, but to the contrary these are bodies that cover-up police abuse against working people.

In police abuse incident after incident, police benevolent associations generally do not undertake an effort to get to the truth of what their officers did in that incident. In this fashion the benevolent associations serve as an auxiliary for many of the nation's internal affairs divisions in police departments. Both types of bodies have a long history of covering up police crimes.

Thus trade unions have an important role to play in the fight to curb police crimes. Trade unions, which negotiate for

workers' rights, can be part of coalitions to stop police crimes. Through the participation of trade unions in these coalitions, the true character of police benevolent associations can be exposed as people will see that the police are not concerned with democratic rights.

It was this police abuse of democratic rights which was again recently repeated in New York City when a Black woman called the police to break up a fight between her two sons. As is increasingly becoming the case, the responding officers used brutal force against the

sons and their mother. It turned out in this situation that the mother, Annie B. Dodds, is a community council member and a well respected person in Brooklyn. She has also been honored by the police for her role in trying to improve commu-

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