

HEALTHWIRE

NOT IN OUR HOUSE...

PART II

By Tara Roberts

African American women must also deal with the racist assumptions of the larger society, Evan Stark says "authorities regulate violent behavior among blacks mainly when it overflows into 'public' areas shared by whites, but not in and around the home where most violence occurs. By normalizing the violence between African Americans," Stark continues, "health and protective service workers accept levels of interpersonal assault that they would not accept among other groups. Violence is allowed to escalate before intervention is deemed appropriate."

Why are African women and men not enraged by this war against womanhood, specifically African American womanhood? In the African American community, sexism receives scant attention or is peppered by disdain or even dismissal. Sexism plants

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the seed for domestic violence. "Our history of thinking about struggle is so shaped by our experience with white American racism that when we begin to talk about oppression, we invariably get sidetracked into talking about racism only," comments author Pearl Cleage. "We are, of course, encouraged in this by brothers, who much prefer the more familiar and acceptable status of oppressed victim to the less admirable role of violent oppressor."

The gender-related incidents in New York and New Jersey this past summer indicate how early sexism and violence become real for young people.

Sexual assaults by groups of teenagers in public places prompted a series of interviews with more than 50 teenagers in the NY and NJ region by the New York Times. In the article, teenager James Fauntleroy of Stamford, CT concluded that a lot of guys see sexual harassment — and worse — as a bonding ritual. "If you dis a girl you get respect. If you see people slapping their girl they probably get respect from their boys."

Young boys and men gain popularity by yelling propositions

and fondling women. They are even more favorably rewarded by their "boys" when using violent sexual terms like: "I knocked the bottom out of her," or "I tore her s—t up." Men view sexual harassment and abuse as their given right and relay it loudly and clearly specifically in pop culture symbols:

Within a racist and sexist culture, African America men attempting to gain access to the patriarchal hierarchy find the easiest and most accessible expression of that power in sexism. "Men are told they should possess the assertion of sexist domination as their gendered birthright," explains bell hooks, Distinguished Professor, City University of New York Graduate Center. "This cultural celebration has found it's most contemporary voice in misogynistic rap music."

"Her body's beautiful so I'm thinkin' rape

Shouldn't have had her curtains open so that's her fate...Slit her throat and watched her shake"

—"Mind of a Lunatic" the Geto Boys

"Bitches ain't shit but hoes and tricks"

H E A L T H

—"The Chronic" Snoop Doggy Dogg

"Violence against women makes young men feel more masculine, more manly and more powerful, particularly young black men who don't have reflections in the culture that make them feel good about themselves," argues social critic and Vibe magazine contributing writer, Greg Tate.

J. Musa Moore-Foster, multicultural educator and human rights activist, believes the reaction to The Color Purple (which met with extreme resistance) indicates how much some Afri-

can American men refuse to entertain discussions of sexism within the community. The little changed reaction today to the Mike Tyson/Desiree Washington trial or Anita Hill/Clarence Thomas hearings reveals how that position has not changed and even how much stronger it has become. And yet sexism and gender violence represent real and pervasive problems in the African American community.

How can we stop the violence? Women can do their own homework by beginning to recognize the signs of potential

abusers and learn more about available legal and political resources. Men can begin questioning their assumptions of male-female power and engaging the women in their lives in discussions about oppression. In addition, both groups can work together to strengthen and increase support services and force more serious responses from the police, health, shelter and justice systems. With these efforts, eventually we can stop the murder and abuse of African American women by the men who say they love them.

Tara Roberts is on staff at Essence Magazine

SUNRISE HOSPITAL CONTRIBUTES \$50,000 TO SO. NEVADA'S COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER



Allan Stipe (right) and Dee Hicks (left) of Sunrise Hospital and Medical Center present a \$50,000 donation to the chairman of Community Health Centers of Nevada, W.J. Fields (center). The center's newest location at 916 W. Owens opened to the public in November 1993.

Sunrise Hospital and Medical Center recently contributed \$50,000 to the Community Health Center, the only federally qualified health center in Southern Nevada. The donation was presented by Allan Stipe, President and Chief Executive Officer of Sunrise.

"The Community Health Center is a valuable resource. They were in need of financial assistance and Sunrise believes it's important to support them in any way we can," said Stipe.

The center offers a comprehensive primary care program with Family Practice, Pediatrics,

Women's Health Center, Mental health, Homeless Health Care, Alcohol and Substance Abuse, and others. Of the 30,000 patients who received care at the facility annually, approximately 72% are at or below the federal poverty level.

"This contribution demonstrates Sunrise's dedication to the community as a whole," said W.J. Fields, Chairman of the Board for Community Health Centers of Nevada. "It shows their willingness to reach out and care for a large percentage of our population who desperately need medical attention and cannot afford traditional assistance."

KNOWING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A HEART ATTACK AND HEARTBURN...

Knowing the difference between a heart attack and heartburn could prevent a trip to the hospital, says a gastroenterologist at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

"Many people mistake the burning feeling in the pit of the stomach for a heart attack," said Dr. Fred Sutton, a Baylor asso-

ciate professor of medicine. "About 20 percent of emergency room patients who thought they were having a heart attack actually suffer from heartburn."

However, Sutton says it is better to be safe than sorry.

"If you have any doubts, seek medical attention immediately," he said. "A physician can better

determine the cause of your pain and possibly save your life."

Heartburn, or acid indigestion, is caused by a backflow of stomach acids into the esophagus, the long tube connecting the throat and stomach. As food travels through the esophagus, the muscle at the bottom of the esophagus weakens, allowing acid to flow back into the stomach.

Nearly half of all adults will have at least one monthly episode of heartburn, most of them preventable, according to Sutton.

"If you smoke or eat a big meal before going to bed, the (See Difference, Page 26)

**Audrey M. Edwards, Phd ACSW
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CPR WORKSHOP

The Johnson Community School, 7701 Ducharme Ave., in cooperation with CPR Plus will present a CPR workshop at 5:30 p.m., Thursday, March 3. The program is designed for teens and adults and will include testing for certification.

Registration for the four-hour workshop continues through March 2 at a cost of \$11. The Johnson Community School is operated by the City of Las Vegas. Call 229-6175.