

# Askia Muhammad speaks: "Behind Enemy Lines"

By Donald Muhammad  
Special to Sentinel-Voice  
Commentator Askia Muhammad's dynamic new book, "Behind Enemy Lines," stimulates a renewed interest in some of black America's most legendary figures.

By way of the distinguished black-owned and operated publishing conglomerate, United Brothers and Sisters Communications out of Newport News, Vir. and the "Black Journalism Review" in Washington, D.C., Muhammad explores the movers and shakers of black liberation from the Honorable Marcus Garvey to the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and Minister Louis Farrakhan.

Muhammad also comments on the pitiful state of relations between blacks and Arabs. Arguably, not a popular topic in white or black news circles, Muhammad, born Charles Moreland, shares his astute understanding of this thorny and complex subject.

His commentary as a veteran journalist, with a career spanning nearly 40 years, unearths an understanding point of view unique in the marketplace of ideas and culture. Unquestionably, the book-buying public has been treated to a rare gem. Muhammad, by virtue of his sensitivity of these issues, presents a strong case for the

*"Askia Muhammad is a superb political analyst. He knows both the players and the issues."*

— Congressman John Conyers from Detroit

strategic value of information. Here at the dawning of the 21st century, which has already been dubbed "the information age," Muhammad's book stands as a living testament to the majesty of one of the most important commentators to appear in the last quarter of the 20th century.

Many black professionals in the publishing world have been forced to live in two worlds. That is, one black and the other white. Muhammad, over his long career, has also faced this dilemma hence, the title "Behind Enemy Lines" has even more significance.

Since many of the works included in this collection of essays were previously published, Muhammad has cleverly repackaged them and released his original uncut version.

Indeed the broad array of Muhammad's previous publishers includes: The Washington Post, The Nation, The Baltimore Sun, USA Today, The Chicago Tribune, and various radio broadcasters.

Without a doubt, Muhammad's best chapter, "Civil War in Islamic

America," gives a scintillating behind-the-scenes commentary on what the Hanafi siege of Washington, D.C. in 1977 was truly about. It's a page turner because it's so compelling a report. After reading it, the only question that remains is when does the movie come out?

His analysis of black and Arab relations airs a controversial and taboo subject. Here, Muhammad rebuffs the Arabs for their participation in the trans-Atlantic slave trade and argues for their atonement and reconciliation through moral, spiritual and economic reparation to black America.

The Nation of Islam, a subject he has covered for most of his career, has definitely found him in the "hot seat" of controversy for his blistering but even-handed critique of several public relations miscues by a few segments of that movement.

Nevertheless, Muhammad clearly articulates his general theme of moral and spiritual renewal in conjunction with self-determination and economic empowerment.

In the early 1970s, the founder of the Nation of Islam, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, hired him as the editor-in-chief of the legendary one million copies-a-week "Muhammad Speaks" newspaper. Muhammad was the movement's first editor-in-chief who practiced the Islamic faith.

This year, 1997, marks the centennial of the birth of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, and the author has included a chapter on his reflections of his mentor's 95th birthday that had been previously aired over the Christian Science Monitor's radio network.

On the contemporary scene, Muhammad has included his work on the ministry of the national representative of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, Minister Louis Farrakhan.

The book goes right up to the "Two Million Man March." It's the type of coverage that will give even the casual reader a new and better understanding of what motivates and moves Farrakhan to do the things he does. His coverage, without a doubt, captures some of the world's little known history of

one of the black world's most important figures to appear in the last quarter of the 20th century.

Today, Muhammad is the Washington Bureau Chief of the new Nation of Islam's newspaper, The Final Call, a columnist for The Washington Informer, a panelist on Howard University Television's (WHMM) "Evening Exchange," and a commentator for Christian Science Monitor Radio, heard on public radio stations. He also remains a permanent fixture on non-commercial Pacifica Radio (WPFW-FM 89.3) in Washington, D.C.

In 129 pages "Behind

Enemy Lines" covers a lot of ground and is virtually error free. One tiny factual error has found its way into the chapter, "Media Critics Can Only Help Farrakhan."

In 1974, Minister Farrakhan addressed 70,000 on Randall's Island at Downing Stadium under the Tri-borough Bridge, according to the "Muhammad Speaks" of September that year, and not Riker's Island as Muhammad's book states on page 119. Other problems include the fact that the index is not done in a fashion for the serious researcher, nonetheless, this deficiency does not mar the overall message of this fine book.

## Money

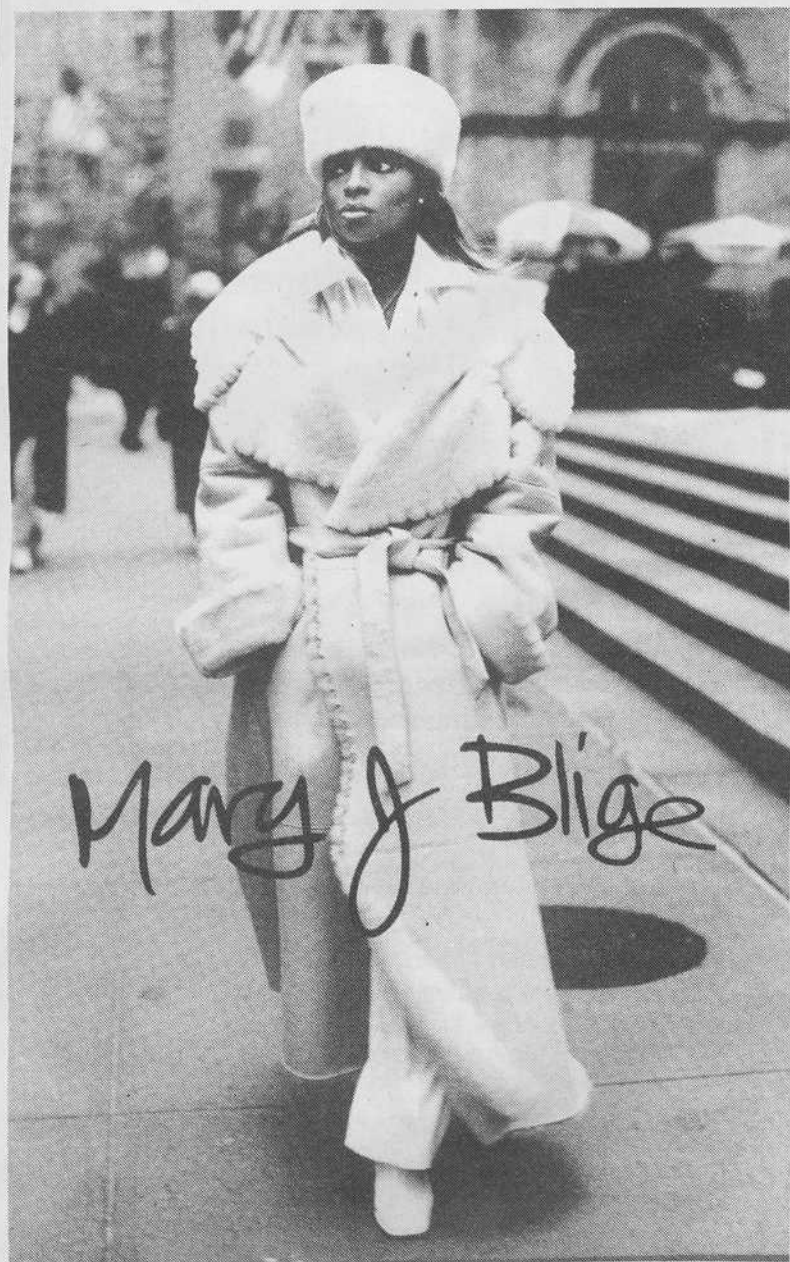
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clarifies certain aspects of the home office deduction and the classification of workers as independent contractors, two complex areas of tax law that have long been areas of contention between the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and taxpayers.

For home office workers, the law clarifies that the space used to store product samples may qualify for the home office deduction as long as the taxpayer is in the trade or business of selling products at retail or wholesale and the home is the only fixed location of the taxpayer's trade or business.

On determining whether a worker should be treated as an employee or as an independent contractor, the Act also includes clarifications and amendments and, significantly, shifts the burden of proof to the IRS in certain cases. You may want to consult with your CPA to determine how these and other aspects of the new tax law impact your business.

Money Management is a weekly column on personal finance prepared and distributed by certified public accountants.



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