

ENTERTAINMENT

Ofari's newest book challenges blacks to unite

By Rene Childress
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Are American race relations in the proverbial toilet or are they great?

This political debate rages unabated in almost every quarter of the American landscape. Both sides of this debate have axes to grind.

The left and the right, the liberals and the conservatives, the integrationists and the separatists all want to be the spokespersons for African-Americans. Earl Ofari Hutchinson in his new book, "The Crisis in Black and Black" (Middle Passage Press, 1998, \$22 hardcover, \$12 softcover), takes all these groups to task.

He takes up where he left off in his previous book, "The Assassination of The Black Male Image", attempting to promote dialogue among African-Americans.

He raises some very controversial issues that affect Blacks. In chapters like "I Believe in America: Understanding Clarence Thomas," "Farrakhan: The Ultimate Dilemma," and "Afrocentrism: Whose History to Believe?", Hutchinson dissects the differences that have caused deep splits and ignited hostilities among many African-Americans.

The book discusses the schisms and conflicts between the Black middle class and the poor, Black politicians and their disaffected constituents, Black women and men, and conservatives and liberals/radicals.

He also takes on some Black filmmakers, rappers and comedians for their continued commercial exploitation of Blacks and reinforcement of negative stereotypes.

He corrects those stereotypes, pointing out

that nine out of 10 adult Black males are not in prison, parole or probation, and nearly six out of 10 young Blacks live in two parent households.

He notes that teen pregnancy rates have plunged among Black girls and leaped among non-Black girls, and that three out of four Black women have never received welfare payments.

The reader will find a legion of topics that challenge his or her notion about the status of African-Americans.

Hutchinson also chides and cajoles Blacks to be the best that they can be, urging them to move together in a positive direction.

He demands that they be leaders and crusaders in a campaign to get African-Americans to stop being the purveyors of negativism toward each other.

In the chapter "Overcoming the Crisis in Black and Black," he details some practical strategies that work.

They include: supporting Black businesses that support their communities, writing letters and sending faxes and emails to newspapers and TV and radio stations that trash the Black image, and starting more rites of passage and mentoring programs for young Black males and females.

Hutchinson's free-wheeling criticism of the attitudes and beliefs that have shackled many Blacks are bound to bring out the critics. My suspicion is that he would have it no other way.

Why? Because he believes that the crisis in "Black and Black" can never be overcome until more African-Americans are willing to turn a critical mirror on themselves.

EBONY ETCHINGS

Actress portrays father in biographical tribute

By Lanier
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Actor Greg Morris (*Mission: Impossible*) is immortalized in *For You*, a one-woman tour de force written by and starring Iona Morris (*Once Upon A Time When We Were Colored*) whose moving and entertaining biographical tribute to her father will open May 1st and run through June 14th, Fridays and Saturdays at 8:00 p.m. and Sundays at 2:00 p.m.

For You is directed by soap star/vocalist Tanya Boyd (who portrays Celeste Perault, a principle character on the daytime soap opera *Days of Our Lives* — and produced by Journey Productions, Willette Klausner, Gay Iris Parker and Edgework Productions in association with 2100 Square Feet.

Originally staged as a workshop for the 2100 Square Feet solo series, *For You* drew overwhelming attention. In addition to other characters, Iona Morris portrays her father "with ... all the passion and attitude as if he came back himself to deliver his epic!"

Greg Morris was one of the first black stars in a dramatic television series, when he was cast as the brilliant electronics expert Barney Collier on *Mission: Impossible*.

Described as "touching and directed with a theatrical flair" by DramaLounge, *For You* offers a memorable journey of Greg Morris' life — and plenty of food for thought for anyone contemplating a life in the entertainment industry.

For the past year and a half since her father's death, Iona Morris has had many dreams manifest. "I believe he's the angel who has helped make all this happen," Morris said. "It means a lot to me that in this show, I make one of his last dreams happen — to perform

on stage, one more time!"

Before *Mission: Impossible* propelled Greg Morris to stardom, he enjoyed a successful career. He also loved jazz, and recorded an album entitled *For You*.

Iona Morris won an NAACP Theater Award for Best Supporting Actress and a DramaLounge Award in 1997 for her work in Kevin Arkadie's *Up The Mountain*. She also received critical acclaim for her role as Nila Fontaine, in Tim Reid's film *Once Upon A Time When We Were Colored*. Her television credits include four years as Fiona Griffin on *As The World Turns*, guest roles in numerous television shows and plenty of cartoon programs.

A master of voice characterization, she originated the persona of 'Storm' in the *X-Men* action series; 'Medusa' in the *Fantastic Four*, and many others. As playwright, Iona's passion for writing has led her to a variety of book and television projects.

Photographs from the private collection of Greg Morris featuring family and celebrity friends will be on display during the run of *For You*.

Tineseltown Topics

The talk of the town from coast to coast is all about the Professional Women in Business sponsored 6-city National Empowerment Conference Tour that will get underway June 5th-6th, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Los Angeles before moving on to San Francisco — July 10th-11th; Atlanta, August 7th-8th; Houston, Aug. 28th-29th; Chicago, Sept. 25th-26th; and Miami, Oct. 23rd-24th.

This PWIB Empowerment Conference with the theme "Succeeding Against All Odds In The Next Millennium," will feature Tony Award-Winning

Singer and Actress Melba Moore in a dual role capacity.

Moore will serve as both a motivational speaker and panelist and also headline the entertainment line-up on all conference dates. Other outstanding authors, workshop presenters and panelists will

be Corliss Tillman, Kimberly Stansell, Wendy R. Gladney, Linda Coleman-Willis, Kawajalen D. Mervin and Dana V. C. Mervin.

Some of the books written by the authors and panelists involved in the Conference are the following: "Bootstrapper's

Success Secrets" by Kimberly Stansell; "Healing Without Hate" by Wendy Gladney; "Loving Yourself First" by Linda Coleman; "Repackaging Yourself — Success Strategies For Your Career, Business and Life" by Corliss Tillman; "The 5-

Minute Mutual Fund Investor" by Dana V. C. Mervin and "Wealth Building System" by Denise Clark.

For more information about the National Empowerment Conference Tour call (310) 669-4723 or the toll free number of 1-888-248-6354.

Jordan rides into Las Vegas



Def Jam recording artist Montell Jordan recently stopped by Odyssey Records to take pictures and sign autographs of his latest CD "Let's Ride" before performing at The Joint that evening.

Sentinel-Voice photos by John Broussard

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