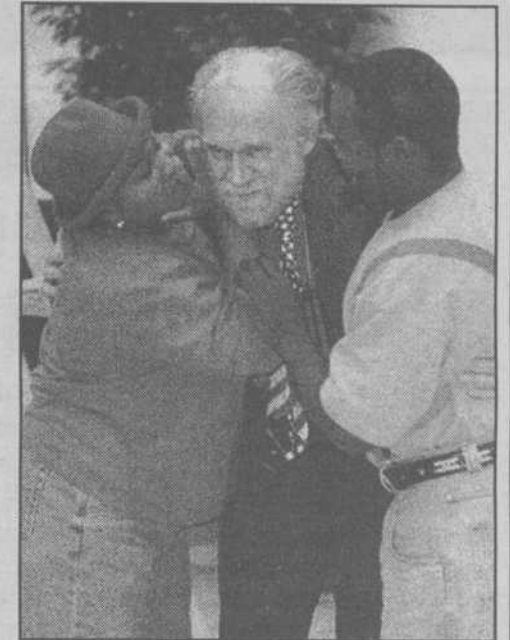




I THINK I CAN

Brothers, Anthony Meeks and Joseph Davis Jr., enjoy the happy-go-lucky characters in the Community Roots Theatre's production of "I Think I Can." (Below) Grant Harrison, portraying Fireman Beesley and Krishelle Gaines, playing a nine-year-old girl, engage in a light-hearted exchange. (Adjacent) Vaughn Lowther, playing a professor, receives information from Harrison and Lydia Harris, who also played multiple characters. Sentinel-Voice photos by John Broussard



Sony-Columbia must be challenged on 'Lil' Pimp'

By Earl Ofari Hutchinson
Special to Sentinel-Voice

The instant I laid eyes on "Lil' Pimp," I was appalled. "Lil' Pimp" is a silly, obscene, sexually and racially insulting on-line animated cartoon series. It is produced by an outfit called MediaTrip (www.mediatrip.com).

The series is based on the exploits of a 9-year-old White kid who learns his trade from two Black pimps. It ridicules, lampoons and degrades women, children and African-Americans. The website is complete with a message board (Pimpin'Board), ads for "Lil' Pimp" tee shirts, and a "Lil' Pimp" game site.

As shocked and disgusted as I was at this perversion, I did not rush to the barricades to challenge it. The Internet is jam-packed with hate-filled, sex-laced, violence baiting pictures, messages, and rants from skinheads, Nazis, pornographers, and assorted kooks. I did not want to give any more credence to "Lil' Pimp" than it deserved. So I asked friends, associates, and readers of my weekly column to check out the series and give me their impression. The reaction I got was a potent mix of disgust, revulsion, outrage, and disbelief. Even though many agreed that a legion of Black filmmakers, comedians and "gangsta" rappers had built a solid growth industry out of trashing, savaging, and assaulting the Black image, "Lil' Pimp" went much further. The universal consensus of those that surfed the series was that it wrecks this damaging colossal image.

- Family Values. There are none. "Lil' Pimp's" family is a "typical" two-parent, apparently middle-class household. Yet it produces a child who becomes a master pimp. The message is that even middle-class, loving parents are decadent, degenerate and dysfunctional.

- Children. They can be quickly and easily corrupted and turned into disgusting little SOBs who lust for money, sex, and the fast life. They will abuse and exploit women to get it.

- Women Of Color. It reinforces the ancient stereotype that Black women are sexually loose fleshpots who will instantly dump their bodies on anyone who shoves a dollar at them. They are eternally dependent on the men (and in this case, children) who exploit them.

- African-Americans. The usual suspects of Black pathology are on loathsome display. "Lil' Pimp's" sidekicks are Black pimps and many of the other characters that parade through the series are hustlers, gangsters, druggies, and other oddball caricatures.

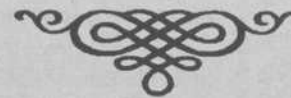
Still, as horrific as this is, I would not have scrambled to make an issue of the series as long as it was confined to a perverse corner of the Internet. However, that instantly changed when a feature column in Variety in August reported that MediaTrip had cut a deal with a production company headed by a former leading executive of the Disney Corp. to produce an 80-minute feature film based on the series, and that Sony-Columbia Pictures may distribute it.

It seemed absurdly insane that a world-renowned entertainment conglomerate would have anything to do with this pap at a time when the industry was under ferocious attack from the public for its violence, and sex-laced films and TV sitcoms. Sony-Columbia is a multi-billion dollar global mega- (See 'Lil Pimp,' Page 14)

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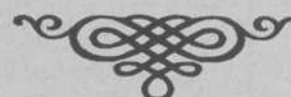


Mrs. Shirley Barber
cordially invites you to attend the
Dedication Ceremony
in the courtyard

for the **Academic Support and Community Service Center**
and **Technology Learning Laboratory**
on

Thursday, December 7, 2000
from 10:30 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.
The Service Center is located at
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Please RSVP at 799-3140 by December 1, 2000

Refreshments will be served



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