

# NAACP president tapes TV pilot

BALTIMORE (AP) - NAACP president Kweisi Mfume, a frequent critic of networks for not employing enough minorities in television shows, said Friday that his taping of a talk show pilot for an NBC syndicator is not a conflict of interest.

Mfume said there are no deals in the works for the show, which was taped for Hearst-Argyle Television in Boston last month.

"NBC doesn't own it and I'm not seeking anything from them in any way," Mfume said. "It was just pretty much done in hopes there may be interest in any of the networks, but I've not heard any movement. I do know for a fact that Hearst-

Argyle is not shopping it."

Hearst-Argyle's television production-and-syndication unit was merged into NBC's this year.

Since 1992, Mfume has hosted "The Bottom Line," a weekly public affairs program on WBAL-TV, an NBC affiliate in Baltimore owned by Hearst-Argyle.

Mfume, 52, also has hosted a nationally syndicated series for Hearst-Argyle called "The Remarkable Journey," in which he holds sit-down conversations with successful people in various walks of life.

Mfume said he had taped talk shows for Hearst-Argyle geared toward a national audience on two other occa-

sions before the NAACP began issuing annual reports on television diversity.

"Even if something were to develop down the road, syndication is just that," he said. "It could run on ABC in one market, NBC in another or it could not be on at all."

Mfume questioned the timing of published accounts of the taping, which appeared two days after the NAACP issued a report accusing NBC, CBS, ABC and Fox of continually failing to put minorities in front of and behind cameras.

NBC showed "little to no progress" in hiring minorities since last year, with an 11 percent drop in the number of black actors in its prime-time

series, the NAACP said.

Mfume's on-air experience dates to the 1970s, when he did radio commentary before entering politics. Mfume, who was born Frizzel Gray, served five terms representing Baltimore in Congress.

"Kweisi really loves broadcasting and really has a special gift for it," said Wanda Draper, executive in charge of production for "The Bottom Line." "He's been doing this a long time. People are just paying attention to it now." Mfume has headed the Baltimore-based National Association for the Advancement of Colored People for five years, accepting a contract for a second term in February.

## Murder

(Continued from Page 8) and drama, Ms. China has written, directed and performed her one woman show showcasing these problems. "Murder In Madness & Madness in Murder - Why Women Kill" made its debut on Sunday, August 19, at the West Las Vegas Library.

The play also incorporates the poetry of The Griot, the song and spoken word of Endigo Fury and the rap of L-Boogie between the three acts of women and girls committing the ultimate act of madness - murder.

"Murder is just like child abuse, domestic violence, and drug abuse...there are always signs," according to Ms. China.

"We must open our eyes about murder. I believe we can always identify the signs before anything happens and stop it."

The first act is about quiet desperation turned to delu-

sion of a battered woman, mother of three, married to her batterer for over 15 years. It is finally the fear that her husband will hit or molest her daughter that requires her to finally take action.

But she has descended into madness as a way to cope and sees killing her abuser as the only way to protect her children.

"Women think about murder," Ms. China stated. "They analyze it, plan it and justify it. Usually, these women don't have support or help and see killing someone as their only solution."

The second act is about an eight-year-old girl feeling left out with the arrival of her baby sister.

But as this child feels more isolated and alienated, she turns her anger about being rejected toward her sibling and takes drastic action to get her mother's affection back.

Ms. China asked every-

one at the end of her performance, "to love all of your children and understand what each child is feeling when there is a new baby in the family. I want every parent to take the time and effort to make sure that no child feels abandoned because of a new brother or sister."

The third act is an indictment of society as a whole. Women's breasts must be big and firm, but lips can't be too big, skin must be light, hair must be straight and women must wear a size six, all in the name of perfection determined by a white, European standard.

One beautiful African-American woman, striving for a career in the entertainment industry, has an audition scheduled but explodes emotionally, mentally and physically striving for that "perfection."

Ms. China was inspired to create this production while

watching the news and her goal with this play was to present these issues in a different way.

As she said, "I want people to be uncomfortable seeing this play and even become disturbed at what they are seeing. Then, the problem can't be ignored and maybe then everyone will be motivated to do something." After its debut, Ms. China has been approached to present this play at other venues.

Ms. China's production company, Po'Jazz Entertainment, was created one year ago and she plans on producing other artists as well continuing with her next production due in March 2002.

The Griot has a book in production, Endigo Fury has a CD with the spoken word due to be released and L-Boogie, Ms. China's nephew, is an aspiring Rap Artist who made his first public appearance in this play.

## Pork

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Leading the charge towards more inclusion of persons of color in the gaming industry are MGM/MIRAGE and Park Place Entertainment. These two companies are taking different routes to the same commitment goal. MGM/MIRAGE has developed a comprehensive program that emphasizes the areas of workforce, purchasing, and contracting diversity as well as national relations.

The program is being monitored out of the office of the vice chairman, Danny Wade, whereas the CEO of Park Place, Tom Gallagher, has taken the route of bringing in experienced talent at

the corporate level and empowering these persons to make command decisions. Steve Bell, Senior Vice-President of Corporate Human Resources, and Lorenzo Creighton, Vice-President of Corporate Governmental Affairs, are being charged with bringing about needed change in the operations of Park Place.

Station Casinos and Mandalay Resorts would presently fall into the category: we recognize a change is coming, but we want to see how leaders in the industry fare before we jump in with both feet. Station Casinos has developed a program that makes bold statements about acceptance of alternative lifestyles as a part of its di-

versity effort. Mandalay Resorts has one person serving on its corporate board and recently promoted another to perform community outreach activities.

The most prominent property that is presently "not getting with" a diversity program is Harrah's Entertainment. This is very surprising, in that the former Mayor of Las Vegas, Jan Jones, has a good reputation for fairness among persons of color and is serving in a position of decision-making within the company. Hopefully, this company will undergo a change in attitude in the near future.

The UCC announced during its conference that it plans to ask gaming properties to

voluntarily report, on an annual basis, the progress they made during each fiscal year in areas of employment and contracting. The form the UCC developed for the properties to use in reporting on its efforts is called the "Progressive Accounting Scoring System" (PASS).

I reported to you on the issue of what gaming properties are doing to address the issue of diversity in an affirmative manner, in order that you may assess which casinos you elect to patronize and do business with here in Las Vegas and other parts of the country.

Please educate yourselves to the facts. Man, it can be a liberating and empowering feeling, just this side of sex!

## Ofari

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the horde of Simpson media commentators, legal experts and politicians who branded the legal system corrupt, compromised and inept. Even though Blacks make up nearly half of America's 2 million prisoners, the majority of Whites still loudly complain that bleeding heart judges pander to criminals and their attorneys.

### Money And Power

Simpson's pockets were expansive enough to hire a "dream team" defense, an army of expert witnesses and investigators. Since most Americans can't afford that, Simpson confirmed their belief that justice is for sale and that the rich, famous and powerful will always weasel out of punishment. In the civil trial, it was more of the same. Simpson's wealth didn't save him from being found liable for the murders, but it did not make him a pauper and a pariah. And it did not send the message that money will not always save the rich, or, even more galling to many, the Black rich, such as Simpson.

### Post-Trial Conduct

Periodic news clips show a cheerful, relaxed Simpson golfing, vacationing and making public appearances. Then, there are the several media-sensationalized skirmishes he's had with the law. This includes an-upcoming trial in Miami for allegedly assaulting a motorist. This makes him appear to many Whites to be a reckless lawbreaker, confirming their notion that he was more than capable of committing murder, and further inflaming their anger.

Many, and that certainly includes Simpson, hoped that Americans would tire of the case and move on. But the recent polls on the Simpson trial show that to be delusional thinking. The case pricked too many social and racial sores for that to happen. Nearly five years after his acquittal, it still does.

*Earl Ofari Hutchinson is a nationally syndicated columnist and the president of the National Alliance for Positive Action.*

## Prelude

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cheese," as my Vietnamese kickboxing instructor loves to observe. The name says it all: The World Conference on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance. As it approaches, conversations on the topic become claw fights gnawing away on gritty clauses and explosive phrases, bouts of unrestrained turpitude unable to reach beyond the first flare of anger. Do you actually read the words or do you instead try to feel in between them? Do you read in between the lines or do you actually see them?

The elders continue to contemplate what has happened with little consideration for Rome. Failing to understand Rome, that is. "It was what they did to us!" firing the accusatory index finger in the direction of the Roman legionnaires spying from the back of the audience. The elders, choking on vanity, fail to remember that the Romans are, indeed, well trained.

However, there is a fundamental, most tragic flaw subtle to the open eye, but frighteningly obvious to the third eye unseen and talked of in roundabout ways unheard of by those who claimed to listen. The elders continued looking at wrinkled reflections, the wrinkles through time in the ripples slashing the inward mirror and thought deep like fish with half-closed bedroom eyes dragging fins across the ocean floors. They had studied the maps, perused the time lines and drawn conclusions once they had seen the massive migrations wiggling spasmodically from the northeast, through and around the continent, falling off into the deep blue of the Atlantic towards their unusually cruel fate.

And then they miscalculated Rome's next move.

Burning questions of race presently rattle the brains of these social experts meandering the halls of the intellectual academy in search of answers. These are the ordinary and timeworn discussions on "race matters." The same ideas are thrown, screamed and whispered about in various conferences and forums. Half attending know about...half of what they are talking about. Talk takes up time, space and energy, when we could all be off actually doing something else. Conferences come and go.

*C.D. Ellison is a contributing writer for Metro Connection.net, a Washington, D.C.-based weekly, and NativeMagazine.com, an online hip-hop culture magazine.*