

# Press plays fast, loose with image of NOI's Louis Farrakhan

By Akbar Muhammad  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - It is amazing and quite enlightening how the press when it deals with Minister Farrakhan in particular, always attempts to paint a picture of someone that he is not. In the latest case of the entertainer Michael Jackson, Minister Farrakhan is now being vilified as the one behind some sinister idea of taking control of Michael Jackson's entire life and wealth.

According to the New York Times, an unnamed source said that Minister Farrakhan met with Michael Jackson and gave him "fatherly advice." Michael Jackson states he is totally innocent of the charges placed against him.

We do know Minister Farrakhan has been sought out for counseling by people who have faced difficult circumstances, in particular, in dealing with the American media's history of vicious and unrelenting attacks against African-American prominent and public figures.

It is well known also that the western media's depictions of the general Black population throughout the world is biased and negative at best.

I happen to be a person that can go back and recount Minister Farrakhan's work. I

know something of his work in defending our people in Boston in the years of 1956-1965; although I was not there with him. However, when the Honorable Elijah Muhammad assigned him to New York City in 1965, I began to work closely with him. In the ten years that we worked together in New York, I witnessed and participated in Minister Farrakhan's consistent defense of our people. He was not seeking their money, fame or notoriety, but he did it out of the genuine goodness of his heart.

In my years with Minister Farrakhan, he would constantly remind us of a verse in the Holy Qur'an that reads "Do no favor seeking gain", and from the Bible he would often repeat to us, "Not by might or power but by My Spirit, sayeth the Lord." He would caution those who have committed themselves to the work of redeeming our people, that their motives must be pure. Those that stand afar and try to judge do not know these words and deeds of Minister Farrakhan.

When Muhammad Ali was under attack for not going into the war in Vietnam, it was Minister Farrakhan who lectured in and out of the mosques around the country in defense of Muhammad Ali's stand.

Our brothers of the Black

Panther Party were imprisoned in New York in 1971. During that time a rebellion-hostage situation took place in the city jails, led by the Panther brothers. It was Minister Farrakhan who came to their aid and made it possible for a negotiation to take place to end the stand off. However, the vicious policemen/correctional officers beat the brothers viciously upon their surrender. Unbeknownst to the officers who were administering the beatings, it was filmed from a rooftop and that film eventually became public. The Minister was on point in his defense of those

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brothers. During the same year the Attica rebellion happened and again, it was Minister Farrakhan who defended those brothers. While he was on his way to help in the standoff, Governor Nelson Rockefeller called for an assault on the prisoners killing 36 of our brothers and only a few correctional officers died in the violence. Once again Minister Farrakhan was on point in defending our brothers.

Many can recall in recent history when the Chicago Black politicians and civic leaders during the "Opera-

tion Silver Shovel" and "Operation Greylord" entrapment cases were indicted and some sent to jail.

It was Minister Farrakhan who came to the aid of Mayor Harold Washington, Alderman Allen Streeter, Alderman Jesse Evans, and others. He spoke out against and attacked the way the cases were brought against Chief Malik (Jeff Fort), Charles Knox, Rev. Charles Koen, Congressman Mel Reynolds, Nasi Asiel Ben Israel and the Hebrew Israelite brothers and sisters, and he personally helped some of them in many cases financially with their

defense.

Minister Farrakhan defended Rev. Jesse Jackson during his run for the Democratic nomination for the presidency of the United States. He defended Rev. Jackson at a time when the press was ripping him apart. As a result of this defense he received the label of being anti-Semitic. As well, a series of misquotes was directed towards him during his public speeches in defense of his brother. Minister Farrakhan also defended Reverend Al Sharpton over the Tawana Brawley rape-kidnapping case. Was this for money or an attempt to get his picture in the paper or to be quoted by the press? No! This is how Minister Farrakhan responds to matters such as this. He feels it is the right thing to do by defending a brother who was standing up for a young Black woman who told him her case. Minister Farrakhan

defended O.J. Simpson after he received the innocent verdict and was attacked by the press. There are other prominent people that Minister Farrakhan has defended in the face of press attacks, i.e., Jim Brown, Vanessa Williams, Jayne Kennedy, Public Enemy and his recent counseling of Ja Rule and 50 Cents.

When Marion Barry was under attack Minister Farrakhan took a stand and defended him in the midst of Black politicians who were distancing themselves from his situation. He did not defend his actions, but he defended him as a human being. When Mayor Barry came back to run again for office, it was Minister Farrakhan who was the one who stood by him, helped and counseled him. When Reverend Henry Lyons was under attack, even though the Reverend had not been close to the Nation and was a staunch critic of the Million Man March, Minister Farrakhan still defended him. When Congressman Alcee Hastings from Florida was under vicious attack it was Minister Farrakhan who defended him. When the many mayors across the country were being indicted and charged, it was Minister Farrakhan who stood up for these political leaders in our meetings, the public and in newspapers.

Long before the press began to say good things about former President Nelson Mandela before he was freed from prison it was Minister Farrakhan that stood up in our congregation and defended President Mandela. When Winnie Mandela was under attack it was Minister Farrakhan that came forward and defended her. He met

with Winnie at her home in South Africa to discuss directly the vicious attacks that were being made against her. When the world press was arrayed against President Sani Abacha of Nigeria, Minister Farrakhan went to meet with him personally to hear his side and spoke up for the good he was attempting to do for Nigeria.

I could go on and read off names of countless individuals, both known and unknown that Minister Farrakhan has gone on record to defend. In this case Michael Jackson is not any different from any other person that the Minister has stood up for and sought to help when a crisis entered into their life. They are painting a picture in the media that we are seeking to control Michael Jackson's life and his money. They claim that we are a small cult trying to take advantage of his circumstances. This is a ludicrous statement. It is as wrong as the picture displayed in the New York Times on Saturday, January 3, 2004, where they presented a photo of Minister Farrakhan's assistant Brother Ishmael Muhammad stating that he was Brother Leonard F. Muhammad. They are so sloppy, anxious and reckless in their coverage to print something negative about the Nation of Islam. They go so far as to print half-truths about the personal life of individuals to show that they are unworthy to help, advise and support Michael Jackson in his time of crisis. This shows their hatred of Black people coming together to help one another.

*Akbar Muhammad is the International Representative to Minister Louis Farrakhan.*

## Overstreet

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gaming companies address the issue of diversity, their appointments represent measurable progress. Do you recall these appointments being reported in a positive manner by either the R-J or Sun? If not, you know what score to assign, right?

7. Can you ever recall a sheriff in this town considering the establishment of a council comprised of Black, Brown, Red, White and Yellow people to advise him on ways to improve law enforcement? Well, that's exactly what Sheriff Bill Young did. Do you recall reading about the establishment of this council in the "funny papers?" If not, can I convince you to give the R-J and Sun a one on this event?

8. Have you read about the quiet and very effective job Commissioner Yvonne Atkinson Gates is doing in prodding County Manager Tom Reilly to give positive consideration to Blacks, Browns and females to serve on his management team? The county manager has made 16 hires during his tenure. Five of these hires have been African-Americans, two females and three males, including hiring a brother from Chicago, Lacy Thomas, to head up the University Medical Center. Did you read about this major appointment? If not, you know what number to assign.

9. Another first was the selection of an

all-minority architectural team to design the new Booker Elementary School. Of the hundreds of new schools that have been designed for the Clark County School District, heretofore, not one was designed by an all-minority team. In fact, with the notable exception of the Wendell P. Williams School, no Blacks have had a partnership role in the design of a new school. Since this is positive news, there is 100 percent chance you didn't read about in either the R-J or Sun.

10. Last year, fire destroyed two landmarks in West Las Vegas. The Moulin Rouge was destroyed by arsonists. H&H Restaurant was burned by an accidental fire. A development team of African-Americans had just come together to restore the Moulin Rouge as a historic cultural and business site based on the fact it was the first integrated casino to open in Las Vegas. Here, I have to admit the R-J and Sun did a pretty decent job in covering these events.

11. Blacks are continuing to move to Las Vegas in record numbers. This growth is being fueled by retirees arriving here from both coasts and the Midwest. The reporting of this fact is our responsibility. If we can translate this demographic fact into an economic one as well, then the news for 2004 could be better for us, right?

## Fletcher

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sibly have been because they feared that some other country might decide to use the same code of conduct which it is using the next time there is an international conflict?

The American Heritage Dictionary defines the word "rogue" as: "an unprincipled person; scoundrel... A vicious and

solitary animal, esp. an elephant that has separated itself from its herd."

An elephant? Don't blame me; I just quoted from the dictionary.

*Bill Fletcher Jr. is president of TransAfrica Forum, a Washington, D.C.-based non-profit educational and organizing center.*

## Williams

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sector of society that feels permanently relegated to the underclass. Can you blame them, when they live in a country that actually unveiled an ethnically discriminatory fingerprinting and photographing program?

Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge announced that compliance is mandatory for all visitors from non-White nations (except Japan and Singapore) while exempting 26

European and Third World countries where Whites rule (like Australia and New Zealand). Such flagrantly racist profiling, while undoubtedly viewed as benign by the average American, is the sort of nails-on-the-blackboard insult which forces those of other hues to seek a separate peace with this sweet land of liberty. Who wants to be average anyway?

*Attorney Lloyd Williams is a member of the US Supreme Court.*