

# Film broaches U.S.'s ethnic cleansing of Blacks

By Kam Williams  
Sentinel-Voice

Have you ever noticed how many 20th century African-American trailblazers are referred to as the first to achieve this or that feat "since Reconstruction"?

For instance, Edward Brooke, R-Mass., is known as the first Black elected to the U.S. Senate "since Reconstruction." Douglas Wilder, D.-Va., is celebrated as the first Black to serve as governor of a state, again, "since Reconstruction."

Why was that "since Reconstruction" qualifier so frequently attached to modern African-American accomplishments? Simply because Blacks had briefly made significant inroads after the Civil War only to have everything taken away in the wake of the rise of the Ku Klux Klan. For between the late 1860s and the 1920s, Black people were subjected to a form of "ethnic cleansing" that Hitler would later use as a precursor for the Holocaust.

The reign of terror that transpired partially helps explain the geographical demographic pattern that left Black people packed into the country's urban centers. The heartbreaking documentary "Banished: How Whites Drove Blacks Out of Town in America" blows the sheets, pardon the expression, off this long-hidden aspect of



American history is rife with stories of Blacks forced to move from their communities.

U.S. history.

The picture was directed by Marco Williams, an intrepid researcher who has crisscrossed the South and Midwest, often putting himself in harm's way, to ask the tough questions and to unearth proof of a widespread pattern of purging Blacks from rural communities, which persists to this day.

Typically, the evictions began with a lynching, followed by a threat being leveled against every remaining African-American in the county at gunpoint. They were forced to flee before sunrise with little more than the clothes on their backs, often abandoning homes, businesses and farms they owned.

Told never to set foot on their own property again,

unless they also wanted to be lynched, these refugees left, feeling lucky just to be alive. The expulsions were invariably followed by the adoption of a Whites-only residential policy, and in the movie, Marco accompanies some still-frightened descendants of the disenfranchised back to visit their ancestors' estates.

We see that many of these counties remain lily-White, such as Forsyth County, Ga. There, Williams interviews Phil Bettis, an unsympathetic attorney who admits to helping Caucasians take legal

title to the lands once owned by Black citizens.

"They slept on their rights," he rationalizes, blaming the victims. Ironically, this same man is the head of the local "Biracial Committee" which is looking into whether the relatives of the banished Blacks ought to be eligible for any reparations. I wouldn't hold my breath.

They say the South has changed, but you wouldn't know it from this jaw-dropping shocker you have to see to be believe.

Excellent (4 stars). Currently unrated.

## 2 New York emcees sued over royalties

NEW YORK (AP) - A record producer has sued rappers 50 Cent and Lil' Kim and two record companies for \$2 million, claiming they failed to pay him royalties on a song that sold 2 million copies.

Carlos Evans says in papers filed in Manhattan's state Supreme Court he contracted with Rotten Apple Records in January 2003 to produce, engineer and mix a rap track called "Magic Stick" to be performed by 50 Cent and Lil' Kim.

Evans says he was to get a \$7,500 advance and royalties for working on the song. His court papers say that he was paid the advance and nothing else and that his requests for a royalties audit have been ignored.

Evans, 36, said recently the song track first was intended for 50 Cent's breakout album, "Get Rich or Die

Tryin'," but instead became a track on Lil' Kim's 2003 album, "La Bella Mafia," which was recorded and distributed by Atlantic Records.

The "Magic Stick" single hit No. 2 on the Billboard Hot 100, and the compact disc album was certified double platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America, Evans said.

"It was one of the hottest tracks on that album, and I didn't collect my royalties," said Evans, who calls himself "Phantom of the Beat" and says he has worked for rap acts Busta Rhymes, Wu-Tang Clan and Ghostface Killah.

Rotten Apple Records lawyer Theodore Sedlmayr, speaking for the company and 50 Cent, said the late royalty problems arose because Evans put a large sample of someone else's music in "Magic Stick" and the segment had to be licensed and paid for.

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