

## OUR VIEW

## Be vigilant

Breast cancer and Black women have an unenviable relationship. The statistics are depressing—and have been for quite some time. October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Now is as good a time as any for Black America to take inventory of the health of Black woman because we're losing our sisters to this disease.

Some scary data: roughly 95 out of 100,000 Black women in any given year are diagnosed with breast cancer, compared to 112 out of every 100,000 white women. White women are likely to develop breast cancer after age 50; Black women are more likely to develop the disease before 50. Though White women have a higher overall risk of breast cancer diagnosis—13.8 percent vs. 10.1 percent for Black women—more Black women die from the disease: 31 out of every 100,000 Black women compared to 27 out of every 100,000 White women.

The news gets scarier: A June 2006 article in the *New York Times*, citing a study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, reported that “young Black women with breast cancer are more prone than Whites or older Blacks to develop a type of tumor with genetic traits that make it especially deadly and hard to treat. ... Among premenopausal Black women with breast cancer, 39 percent had the more dangerous kind, called a ‘basal like’ subtype, compared with only 14 percent of older black women and 16 percent of non-Black women of any age. Researchers are not sure why.”

Scariest of all: Black women are less likely to get treatment that could restore and/or save their lives, according to a study whose results were published in an article on *medicine.net*.

“Black women with breast cancer that has spread to the lymph nodes are less likely to undergo supplemental, potentially lifesaving, therapies such as tamoxifen or chemotherapy than White women with the same level of disease are,” the article notes. It cites research done by study author Mousumi Banerjee, a research associate professor at the University of Michigan School of Public Health, in Ann Arbor. “When cancer has spread to the lymph nodes, we are seeing that African-American women are not getting the optimal therapy as often as are Caucasians.”

Black America, we must do better. Black men: encourage your grandmothers, mothers, daughters, sisters, aunts, cousins, nieces, loved ones, girlfriends, friends, associates, business partners, colleagues, co-workers—essentially every Black woman in your life—to make early detection a priority. Self-detection, screening exams and mammograms are important. So is genetic history. Push them to research family history and genetic history, to eat right and exercise, to regularly visit the doctor, to take an active role in their health. Tell them that you love them and you want them around for a long, long time.

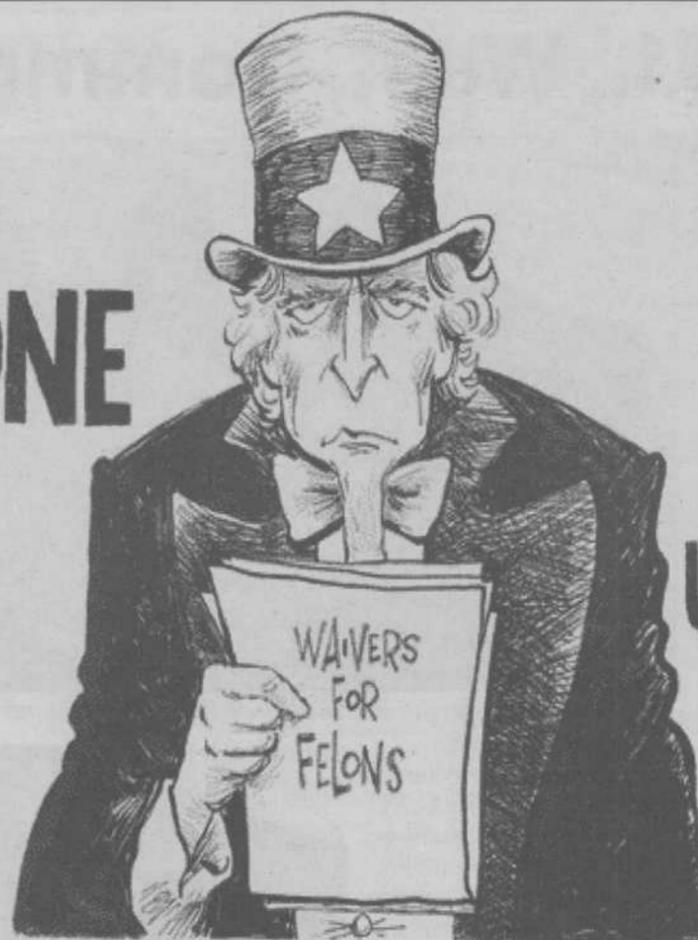
## Time to atone

“We have to come out of the thinking of a slave and come into the thinking and acting of free men and women. We cannot depend on others for what the horrible condition of our people demands now that we do for ourselves.”

With those words, former Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan told a crowd of 5,000 gathered at the Atlanta Civic Center for the 12th anniversary of the Million Man March/Day of Atonement, to take the future of Black America into their own hands. Twelve years ago, the air was pregnant with excitement about the Million Man March in Washington, D.C. Would it be a seminal moment in Black America, the rallying cry or a feel-good event with no lasting resonance? It's been a little of both. Farrakhan wants that to change.

“I want to talk to my gang-banging family. You make it very difficult for me. In the '60s we knew who the enemy was. But in 2007 you are the enemy. How can I do what is right by you while I watch you do wrong by one another? ... It's time for you scared-to-death Negroes to bite the dust,” he said later in the speech, urging against complacency. “Our people must be free. This peaceful coexistence with the murder of our people has to stop.”

APPARENTLY  
I'LL TAKE  
JUST ABOUT  
ANYONE



FOR THE  
U.S. ARMY  
THESE DAYS...

## Why are jail calls expensive?

By James Clingman  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Ever thought about that? Many of us have heard that recording telling us the call is coming from a jail, the cost of which is \$1.50 or more for the first minute or so, and that we should say “Yes” to accept the charges. Why do local calls from jails cost so much?

I thought all calls were pretty much the same. Long-distance calls from prisons are expensive enough, and we know the phone carriers are ripping us off for them; but local calls? Why the exorbitant charge? That's a rhetorical question, brothers and sisters; I know you know the answer.

Like other greedy, unethical, money-grubbing, corporate thieves, the phone companies that charge those outrageous rates for jail phone calls are among the list of profiteers that are steadily taking advantage of this country's prison industrial complex by exploiting prisoners and their families.

Why do some local calls cost more than other local calls? The answer: because the phone companies say they do.

I don't know, but I would imagine that one of the rationales used to justify the high cost is the number of men and women who would be on the phones if the costs were normal. But, couldn't that be solved by prison officials regulating the number of calls and the time spent on



JAMES CLINGMAN

the phone by each prisoner?

This is probably a trivial point to many of you, but my reason for writing about it is to illuminate the fact that Black folks are, in many cases, allowing ourselves to be used as wealth creators for others, even to the ridiculous extent of doing stupid stuff that will land us in jail or prison. Then when we get to jail we want to call our friends and families, at usury phone rates, to help get us out or just to “stay in touch.”

Of course, that does not excuse the greed of the phone companies, and the only thing we can do about it is what Nancy Reagan said, “Just say no” to accepting the charges; but you know that's not going to happen. We are going to continue to go to jail, and we are going to continue to accept the charges for the millions of phone calls that go out from jails and prisons everyday. Thus, a trivial thing like a phone call becomes a billion-dollar advantage.

A close look at the jails will reveal that Blacks occupy the cells at a disproportionate rate.

Black people are not building jails, supplying the needs of the jails, doing the maintenance in the jails, or selling hair grease, toilet paper, tee-shirts, jumpsuits, flip-flops, books, or anything else to the jails.

A multi-billion dollar industry located in our hometowns, in many cases funded by our tax dollars, and we have no economic interest in that industry. All we do is fill the cells.

Phone companies that charge \$1.50 for a local call are ripping us off, but filling their coffers with the easiest money they have ever made.

No increase in their cost of goods sold, no added cost for personnel, and no additional expense for advertising and marketing; they are just sitting there raking it in, hearing cha-ching every minute of the day. Who's the sucker in that scenario? We have given new meaning to the term, “phone home.”

It's all about economics. The prison-jail system, both

supply and demand, has grown exponentially, because of the high profit from prison-building and prisoner warehousing. We already account for the profit margins of many consumer product companies — that we do not own, spending our \$800 billion willy-nilly on whatever someone else makes.

Now, we are providing a huge profit margin for the prison industrial complex as we do our daily Bataan Death March into court rooms to stand in front of corrupt prosecutors and judges and be accused by “testi-lying” cops, in many cases. And the first thing we want to do when they escort us to that cell is make a phone call that costs the person on the other end an arm and a leg.

That's stupid, as I have said before, especially if you intentionally do a crime or neglect to pay your child support or fail to show up for a court appearance for an outstanding warrant or traffic (See Clingman, Page 9)

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