

# Black leaders quiet as rappers peddle death

By Dr. Barbara Reynolds  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Singer Chris Brown's arrest for allegedly beating and biting his girlfriend, pop princess Rihanna the same night vulgar rapper Lil Wayne was being lauded with four Grammy awards is a reminder of how thug-gish rap culture creates a climate for not only male-on male violence but abuse of Black women, as well.

On one level, Brown was only doing what the environment created by hustlers like Lil Wayne and his White backers promote. When the dope-using, pornographic rappers aren't bragging about how good they are at killing other Blacks, they swagger around calling Black women "...itches and sluts" and showing their agility at dogging and abusing them.

In fact, Snoop Dogg once showed up at the MTV video awards accompanied by partially clad girls being pulled along by dog leashes.

The White establishment is applauding this behavior by elevating the thug music that glorifies killing, maiming and abuse to great fortunes. After all, the thugs are only killing Black men and abusing Black women. What a great victory for White supremacists who no longer need the KKK.

Blacks brandishing guns and a pimp mentality are destroying each other faster than White militants could ever dream of.

Mainstream *Time* magazine in their July 2008 issues headlined Lil Wayne as the Best

Rapper Alive. The magazine took great pleasure in commending him for how well he could rhyme "day" with "say" and "way."

Those sophomoric rhymes are worthy of praise for five-year-olds, but for a grown man? Give me a break. What else does Lil Wayne advocate that makes mainstream America love him so much? His "lollipop" number was honored as Best Rap Song.

It is all about having the so-called "fun and games" of oral sex, of young girls licking him like a lollipop before regular intercourse. Of course, the promoters would not honor any artist who also talks about how HIV/AIDS is epidemic among Black youth and how now 72 percent of households are headed up by single Black women, which means the boys and men are missing in action as soon as the babies come.

Another song which the Grammys saw worthy of honor was included in Wayne's latest album, "Tha Carter III." With all the media hype behind it, it sold over 1 million copies the first week.

If there is any doubt what Wayne thinks about women, the lyrics make it plain: "I ain't got no loves for broads, I grab them on they butts and all." Then he goes on to sing about how wonderful it is for his girls (sluts) to have



BARBARA REYNOLDS

oral sex with his dog.

It is not hard for me to understand why White led-media and music institutions want to honor Blacks who entertain them with low-life, illiterate rantings, while creating a climate of death and destruction for Black people.

But I can not understand why so much of the Black establishment — the pastors, civil rights institutions and universities — accept this standard without protesting their outrage at the systematic destruction of our young. The major themes of most rap songs are guns, drugs, death and destruction. And with the help of White corporations they are reaping a rich harvest. For example, homicide is the leading cause of death for Black males between the ages of 18 and 24; 94 percent of Blacks murdered are murdered by other Blacks, usually men.

Our Black women, whose images are being dragged through the mud not only in rap videos, but in movies, are increasingly being raped and beat. Black women are 35 percent more likely to be sexually and physically assaulted than White women. And one in four girls is in danger of being raped by age 18. Every 45 seconds a woman is physically assaulted, according to the National Victims Center.

Big bucks, of course, are fueling this geno-

cidal assault. Women-hating rappers whine about how the man won't fund them if they don't go violent and after all they are only giving the public what they want. The argument is that titles like "Get Rich or Die Trying" will sell, but uplifting songs won't. If that is so, why aren't Stevie Wonder and Smokey Robinson broke?

No amount of money should make Black rappers stoop so low as to scandalize Black women, whose birth canals are their very entry into humanity. They insult our mothers, daughters and sisters.

They are no different from the 19th century White slave masters who paraded half naked Black women to the public square to be auctioned off to the highest bidder.

Unfortunately, the self-esteem of so many young Black women has fallen so low that they, too, see themselves as half-nude, butt-shaking objects, who can be sold for group sex, drugs or background filth for videos. They are faceless, prideless, pitiful creatures who agree they should be treated like dogs.

In the case of Chris Brown, Wrigley is pulling his chewing gum ad and RadioNOW, a Black-owned Radio One network affiliate, is taking a stand by not playing his music. All that is good. Yet, until the Black establishment protests groups like Lil Wayne, who White corporations are paying to sing and dance the death jig, the beat down of Black women will still be viewed by many as acceptable behavior for Black men.

## Watch words when it comes to President Obama

By Hazel Trice Edney  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

It was around noon on Tuesday, Feb. 10, that I checked my cell phone messages after participating in an intense executive seminar all morning. One of the messages was from Corey Ealons, director of African-American media during President Obama's transition, who still works in a similar role at the White House.

Corey was asking me to call him immediately. The urgency in his voice befuddled me. After all, this was the White House calling.

When I reached him, I immediately knew the conversation would be intense. He was asking why I had said the Black Press was treated as "window dressing" at President Obama's first press conference the night before. I knew I had made the remark in a private conversation with three of my Black Press colleagues, but I couldn't figure out how Corey knew it.

Finally, he said, "Hazel, you don't know?"

### Walters

(Continued from Page 8)

nity would experience a fair distribution of these funds. Without the Black vote, there would be no Barack Obama in the White House. Take away the states where the Black vote influenced an Obama victory: North Carolina, Virginia, District of Columbia, Florida, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Indiana, and John McCain would have won the election. Our claim on policy fairness is strong.

Dr. Ron Walters is the Distinguished Leadership Scholar, Director of the African American Leadership Center and Professor of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland College Park.

"Know what, Corey?!" I paced the sidewalk outside the Marvin Center at George Washington University where my seminar had taken place.

He continued, "You don't know about this article in the *Washington Times* this morning quoting you as saying the Black Press was treated as 'nothing more than window dressing' at last night's press conference?"

Then, I remembered, a *Washington Times* reporter had approached me and asked me my name as I sat down on the front row in front of the podium where President Obama was about to speak. Thinking little of it, I gave him my name; then waited for the President's first press conference to begin.

The East Room of the White House was a familiar setting to me. I'd been there many times over the past eight years, covering events of the Bush Administration. Unfortunately, by the end of the press conference, still sitting on the front row with my unasked and unanswered question on my reporter's pad, that was something else that was all too familiar. Not one member of the Black Press was called upon for a question.

I had stood to leave when I suddenly found myself in the company of three other Black Press reporters — NNPA columnist George Curry, Washington Informer Publisher Denise Rolark Barnes and American Urban Radio White House Correspondent April Ryan. The frank and honest private conversation that ensued led me to speak truth as I saw it.

"We were window dressing," I said. "We were nothing more than window dressing."



HAZEL TRICE EDNEY

Unbeknownst to me, the same *Washington Times* reporter — who I now know as Joe Curl — who had asked my name before the press conference, was listening to our conversation. And there I was the next morning quoted in an article headlined "Obama Snubs Black Press."

Isn't that a twist? The press is caught off the record!

Notwithstanding the rogue article that intentionally or unintentionally gave the false appearance that I had been interviewed by the paper, I quickly made it clear to Corey Ealons that I had in fact made the "window dressing" comment. And this is the reason why:

Since 1827, the Black Press of America — now more than 200 Black-owned newspapers, 15 million readers across the nation — has fought with the pen for this moment in history. From the anti-slavery editorials of the *North Star's* Frederick Douglass to the anti-lynching campaigns of the *Memphis Free Speech's* Ida B. Wells to legendary *Chicago Defender* White House Correspondent Ethyl Payne to those modern day Black Press journalists who toil daily, we have long been the conscience of America.

Currently demanding answers on such issues as the survival of historically Black colleges, the racially disparate disease and homicide death rates, the skyrocketing Black unemployment rate and the disparate rate of police killings and profiling in Black communities, Black Press reporters have pursued journalistic excellence by raising questions from the heart of America, questions that illuminate America's creed that "all men are

created equal."

We have sacrificed the salaries of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Posts* in order to serve a loyal and specific audience that have long depended on us for the truth and to hold America accountable — even demanding the fair election of America's first Black president and then celebrating it in an inaugural gala.

I worked for newspapers of the Black Press of America for 11 years before being awarded graduate school entry to Harvard University — the President's Alma Mater — because of my impactful reporting for the Black Press. That fete alone leads me to think in the words of heroic suffragist Sojourner Truth, "Ain't I" a reporter? Must we in the Black Press sit forever silent on the back rows — or the front rows — of the White House, as if we are waiters at the head of our own table? The answer is no, we will not be treated as three-fifths of a journalist by any White House.

On Oct. 15, 2001, the NNPA News Service published an article headlined, "White House Holds Whites-Only Press Conference." It described the scene in which reporters of color from various cultures were relegated to the left side of the East Room and were not allowed to ask questions, while Bush called on 10 White reporters sitting before us.

To the contrary, President Obama and his White House press staff have shown themselves to have quite the opposite mindset. Thanks to the ingenuity and integrity of Corey Ealons and then President-elect Obama, I conducted an exclusive interview with the President-elect during his historic Whistle Stop train tour.

(See Edney, Page 10)