

TV ONE, BET founder feud over TV

By Bobbi Booker
Special to Sentinel-Voice
(NNPA) — Two of the biggest names of African-American media communications are locked in a war of words over the future of minority-owned television outlets.

Robert L. Johnson, the founder of Black Entertainment Television (BET), has applied to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to approve plans for a new "urban" television network.

Johnson is joined in his application by Ion Media Networks Inc., which describes itself as "a network television broadcasting company which owns and operates the largest broadcast television station group in the U.S., as measured by the number of television households ION's stations serve." Johnson's company would own 51 percent of the new venture and Ion 49 percent.

The plans for the urban



TV One chairman Alfred C. Liggins, left, and BET founder Robert Johnson, are locked in a war of words over Johnson's application to federal officials for an urban TV network.

channel have been challenged by TV One Chairman Alfred C. Liggins, who heads the largest multimedia company that primarily targets African-American and urban listeners, viewers, readers and Internet users.

TV One told the FCC that Johnson's plan "simply would substitute a government-favored programmer (Urban) for another, such as TV One, that does not receive the government's favored dispensation."

The TV One FCC filing in opposition of Johnson's bid

to launch an upstart, urban-targeted network has drawn the ire of Johnson, who expressed his "disappointment" in both an exclusive interview with the trade publication Broadcasting & Cable and a personal letter to Liggins.

"It does surprise me," Johnson told B&C this week. "That's how TV One came to be — asking for carriage and insisting that cable operators provide more diversity. To say that cable can't afford to offer more channels is crazy. And to assume that because

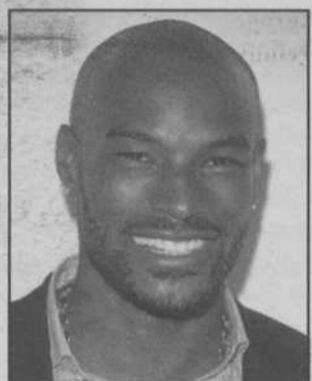
another channel comes about that they are going to drop BET makes the case that we need FCC action to get carriage. If we're the last added and the first dropped, there is something wrong with the system."

Common Cause, a non-partisan, nonprofit advocacy organization, has pointed out to the FCC that Urban Television's current application is not in the public interest and its "applications should be dismissed."

Bobbi Booker writes for the Philadelphia Tribune.

Model: Stars taking industry jobs

Special to Sentinel-Voice
NEW YORK — He's crossed over from modeling to acting, but Tyson Beckford says he wishes actors and musicians wouldn't jump into the business that made him famous. Beckford, host of Bravo's "Make Me a Supermodel," says that when they do, it takes jobs away from models.



Tyson Beckford

"You have to do a lot of tweaking and airbrushing to get the same from a celebrity that you would get from a model. A lot of celebrities — I'm gonna tell you right now — they're not 5'11"; they're not a size 2 to fit into these designer dresses, but the designers want exposure so

they're willing to make the specific dress for that actor or actress to get them to look good on the cover."

But the 38-year-old says he believes the fashion business is cyclical, and celebrity magazine covers will be out of style someday.

"It'll all come back around. One day some designer will wake up and say, 'You know what? I don't

want to use Gwyneth Paltrow. I want to use Adriana Lima, I want to use Gisele (Bundchen), I want to go back to the high fashion. I think slowly but surely you'll see that start happening."

Meanwhile, Beyonce graces the cover of Vogue's April issue, and Drew Barrymore is on the cover of "W" magazine.

West charged in airport fight

Special to Sentinel-Voice
LOS ANGELES — Rap star Kanye West was charged on Wednesday with battery, theft and vandalism in connection with a September 11,

2008 scuffle with paparazzi at Los Angeles International Airport.

The L.A. District Attorney's Office has accused West, 31, of smashing

camera equipment in the encounter. He faces up to two and a half years in prison if convicted on all the misdemeanor charges.

West, who won the Grammy in 2005 for best rap album of the year for his release "The College Dropout," was arrested after the scuffle and released on bail the same day. He is expected to appear in court on April 14. The District Attorney declined to press more serious felony charges and passed the case on to the L.A. City Attorney to consider lesser misdemeanor offenses.

Frank Mateljan, a spokesman for the L.A. City Attorney's Office, said the charges stemmed from the scuffle in which West allegedly wrestled away a camera light and then smashed it into the ground.

Book Review

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leaders from all walks of life. And their revealing responses, in the form of 76 enlightening, introspective essays, provide the sum and substance of Family Affair: What It Means to Be African-American Today.

Among the individuals contributing to the diversity of perspectives shared in this literary equivalent of a Black group therapy session are TV-One's Cathy Hughes, Actress Tasha Smith, NAACP Hollywood Bureau Chief Vicangelo Bullock, Oscar-nominee actress Ruby Dee, Hollywood publicist/film director Ava DuVernay, actor Laz Alonso, first Black supermodel Beverly Johnson, Congresswoman Carolyn Kilpatrick, Hip-Hop Doc Rani Whitfield, MD, lesbian activist Jasmyne Cannick,

Professor Anthony Asadullah Samad and the late Isaac Hayes.

The touching reflections range from Mr. Bullock's heartfelt recounting of the angst involved in growing up biracial to Leslie Bardo's equally-evocative memoir of a four-year stint in Japan where her family found itself subjected to discrimination because of fear generated by stereotypical images of Blacks disseminated by movies and rap videos.

Congrats to Gil Robertson for not only figuring a way to take the collective pulse of African-Americana but for distilling the essence of his research into an informative and eloquent cultural tapestry destined to stand the test of time.

Bits 'n' Pieces

Two recently launched shows with Black hosts are pulled from television

(TMS) Television lost two more Black male stars last week. First, CNN announced it was cancelling the D.L. Hughley show "Breaking the News" and then Comedy Central said it was dropping David Alan Grier's comedy "Chocolate News." The exact reasons for the cancellations were not immediately clear but some more highly educated African-Americans were said to have found Grier's show racially offensive while others objected to the comedian Hughley doing a news show on CNN. Hughley will continue as an occasional contributor with CNN and Grier is moving on to "Dancing with the Stars."



David Alan Grier

Michael Vick's mansion fails to sell at auction



Michael Vick

(TMS) The eight bedroom mansion of imprisoned football star Michael Vick failed to sell at auction last week. The home outside of Atlanta was being sold to settle Vick's bankruptcy case and had an asking price of at least \$3.2 million. However, only two people showed up at the auction and neither of them

qualified to bid because neither came with a cashier's check totaling \$160,000. Prior to the failed auction, the house had been on the market for more than a year. Meanwhile, Vick remains in Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary in Kansas serving a 23-month sentence for bankrolling a dogfighting ring. He is set for release July 20 but could go to home confinement by May 21.

First African-American comic book up for auction

The comic book that's billed as the first ever created by African-Americans for a Black audience is up for auction. A copy of All-Negro Comics No. 1, as it was called, is up for sale by comics entrepreneur Stephen Fishler. He says the comic is very rare — lasting one issue in 1947. All-Negro Comics sold for 15 cents and was the brainchild of a Black Philadelphia journalist, Orrin C. Evans. The comic book, featuring such characters as detective Ace Harlem and Hep Chicks on Parade, is for sale as part of the online ComicConnect Event Auction.



Police say gangsta rapper wounded at Detroit club



Trick Trick

Police say Eminem collaborator and gangsta rapper Trick Trick was shot in the leg early Monday at a downtown Detroit club. But a man claiming to be Trick Trick has told radio station WKQI-FM that he was at home "restin' and chillin'" at the time of the shooting. Police say 36-year-old Christian Mathis and another man were shot about 1:15 a.m. during a fight at the Esko Lounge. Mayoral spokesman Daniel Cherrin says Mathis told police that "he was Trick Trick." Cherrin says Mathis and 31-year-old Barry Washington were treated at local hospitals. Washington was shot in the right arm and groin area. Detroit area native and rap superstar Eminem is featured on Trick Trick's "Welcome 2 Detroit" song.
