

But Some of Us Are Brave---In Support of the April 28, 2007 National Day of Truthtelling in Durham, North Carolina --by Aishah Shahidah Simmons

While there are many folks who are rejoicing that Imus was fired, I fear that we may have won a battle but could have *temporarily*lost this relentless racist/sexist war against Black women in the United States. While most eyes were focused on the outcome of Imus' fate, the accused members of the Duke Lacrosse team were exonerated. Very, very tragically, many of the same Black (male) voices who were demanding the firing of Imus, haven't said a peep about the recent dropping of charges against the accused members of the Duke Lacrosse team. Additionally, in the ongoing mainstream media discussions about Imus calling the predominantly Black women's basketball team at Rutgers University "nappy headed-ho's," there hasn't been any mainstream media correlation/analysis/commentary/discussion about the fact that:

1. Some of the (White) Duke Lacrosse team members called the two (Black) women "niggers" and "bitches";
2. One of the (White) Duke Lacrosse members threatened to rape them with a broomstick;
3. Another (White) Duke Lacrosse team member spoke of hiring strippers in an e-mail sent the same night that threatened to kill "the bitches" and cut off their skin while he ejaculated in his "Duke-issued spandex;" and
4. Another (White) Duke Lacrosse team member shouted to the (Black woman) victim as she left the team's big house, "Hey bitch, thank your grandpa for my nice cotton shirt."

Instead there were subtle and not-so subtle racist implications that hip-hop is the cause of Imus' racist/sexist comments; and that the Black woman stripper/whore (not daughter, not mother, not college student, not sex worker) lied on/set up the innocent White Duke Lacrosse team members (who hired her and her colleague to perform for them).

So, in this very direct way the corporate owned media message to the American public is that Black people, especially Black women, are the perpetrators of violence against White men (and I would argue Black men too).

Based on the overwhelming deafening silence from mainstream Black (predominantly male) 'leaders' and organizations about the documented racist/sexist comments made by the White Duke Lacrosse team members, it's clear to me that no one will speak for us-- Black women--but ourselves. It doesn't matter if you're a rape survivor, a child sexual abuse survivor, a domestic violence survivor, a stripper, a prostitute, a lesbian, a bisexual woman, a heterosexual woman, a single mother (especially with several children from different fathers), on welfare, a high school drop out, college educated, working in corporate America, working at a minimum wage job with no health insurance, or working in the film/music/television entertainment industry. Yes, I placed what some people would view as very different/distinct categories of Black women in the same category because I firmly believe that if the aforementioned Black women are at the wrong place at the wrong time (which could be at any time), we, Black women, will be left to heal our very public wounds alone.

I was the young Black woman who in 1989, at 19 years old six weeks shy of my 20th birthday, said "Yes", while on a study abroad program...I was the Black woman who broke the rules of the university where I attended by agreeing to sneak out, after hours, to meet the man who would become my rapist... I was the Black woman who after breaking the university enforced rules started to have second thoughts but was afraid to articulate them and was afraid to turn around because my friends were covering for me... I was the Black woman who paid for the hotel room where I was raped...I was the Black woman who said, "I don't want to do this. Please stop." I didn't "violently" fight back. I didn't scream or yell to the top of my lungs" because I was afraid. I didn't want to make a "scene." I blamed myself for saying, "Yes"...for breaking the rules...for paying for the hotel room.

I am one of countless women, regardless of race/ethnicity/national origin, age, sexual orientation, class, religion who experientially learned that the (often unchallenged) punishment for women who use poor judgment with men is rape and other forms of sexual violence. And that the reward for those same men who perpetrate against women is the opportunity to perpetrate again and in turn say “WOMEN LIE.”

“For all who ARE survivors of sexual violence...For all who choose to BELIEVE survivors of sexual violence...For all who KNOW WE CAN end rape culture...” come to Durham on Saturday, April 28, 2007. Join the numerous individuals and organizations from across the United States who will come to Durham, North Carolina to participate in “Creating A World Without Sexual Violence - A National Day of Truthtelling.”

This mobilizing event is organized by a coalition of organizations including North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Ubuntu, Men Against Rape Culture, SpiritHouse, Raleigh Fight Imperialism Stand Together, Southerners on New Ground, Independent Voices, Black Workers for Justice, and Freedom Road Socialist Organization/OSCL).

For more information on the National Day of Truthtelling, visit
<http://truthtelling.communityserver.com/>
<http://iambecauseweare.wordpress.com/>
www.myspace.com/ubuntunc

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www.NOtheRapeDocumentary.org

www.myspace.com/afrolez

Following is a non-inclusive list of books by Black feminists who address Hip-Hop and Feminism (there are several more books than those that are listed):

Pimps Up, Ho's Down: Hip-Hop's Hold On Young Black Women by **T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting**

http://www.amazon.com/Pimps-Up-Hos-Down-Young/dp/0814740146/ref=sr_1_1/104-7242712-0915962?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1176220047&sr=1-1

Prophets in the Hood: Politics and Poetics in Hip-Hop by **Imani Perry**

http://www.amazon.com/gp/reader/0822334461/ref=sib_dp_pop_toc/104-7242712-0915962?ie=UTF8&p=S009#reader-link

When Chickenheads Come Home to Roost: A Hip-Hop Feminist Breaks It Down by **Joan Morgan**

<http://www.amazon.com/When-Chickenheads-Come-Home-Roost/dp/068486861X>

From Black Power to Hip Hop: Racism, Nationalism, and Feminism by **Patricia Hill Collins**

http://www.amazon.com/Black-Power-Hip-Hop-Nationalism/dp/1592130925/ref=pd_bbs_sr_3/104-7242712-0915962?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1176220157&sr=1-3

Gender Talk: The Struggle For Women's Equality in African American Communities by **Johnnetta Betsch Cole and Beverly Guy-Sheftall**

http://www.amazon.com/Gender-Talk-Struggle-Equality-Communities/dp/0345454138/ref=pd_bbs_sr_1/104-7242712-0915962?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1176219973&sr=1-1