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Civil Rights Tour

By Veronica Ford

So what does it mean to be an African American? What does it truly mean to be "black"? What is our history? What made us who we are today? What contributions have we made to the world and to this country? We cannot find the answers in our history books; the bloody and cold side of the United States' history cannot be revealed because it contradicts everything for which "we" stand. For the African American, and any other racial group, it is difficult to take positive steps into the future without first knowing the past. It sounds like a cliché, but truth is truth. Truth is the same as the unrevealed, the unrevealed becomes a denial of something that molded us into the people we currently are. So, we have two options. One is to remain in darkness and the captivity of our own ignorance, while the other is to find out what the truth is so that nothing and no one can tell us what we are or are not.

I had the opportunity to go on the Civil Rights Tour, in which was a blessing but left a bitter taste in my mouth. During the tour, emotions became a mixture of frustration, anger, grief, and disturbance. The mood of the trip was set on the first day, in Atlanta, GA. Kimberley Todd, president of WJM (William J. Mayo) Innocence Coalition, Inc.,

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*To contact The Black Perspective staff in regards to opinions, responses, and to become a guest/permanent writer contact us at: BlackPerspective@yahoo.com
told our group about William Mayo, a wrongly incarcerated man who has been serving two life sentences, two twenty-year sentences, and twenty years probation for armed robbery, burglary, and aggravated assault. The next day, we visited the Ebenezer Baptist Church Horizon Sanctuary and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Visitor Center, which depicted the roles of Dr. King, children, and the Jim Crow laws, among other significant things and events during the Civil Rights Movement. The following day, in Selma, AL we visited the Slavery Museum and the Voting Rights Museum, where a woman who took part in the Civil Rights Movement at the very young age, described her experiences during and near the time of “Bloody Sunday”. Later that day, in Montgomery, AL, we all visited Dexter Baptist Church, where Dr. King was a temporary minister, and the Southern Poverty Law Center, where the many hate groups of today are tracked, and materials about tolerance are produced and exhibited. The day after, we traveled to Birmingham, AL where we visited the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, where a bomb planted outside of the church by a KKK member in 1963 killed four little girls and injured twenty-two others.

Learning about all of these events and activities has moved me one step closer to what I want to do with my major's human rights concentration. More importantly, it has made me aware of my history, the history of African Americans, important aspects such as voting, are place in history, and where we need to go. I would recommend this trip to anyone of any background, especially African Americans because this is a part of our legacy.

For more information on the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Innocence Coalition Inc. check these websites.  
Southern Poverty Law Center website- www.tolerance.org  
Story and Petition for William J. Mayo- www.freemayo.com
I’ll never forget the disastrous chain of events that have put me in the place where I now stand. It all started with a nightmare I had the night before. I never saw the feminine mystique I was following through out the dream sequence. All I saw was the back of her head. Inevitably I was drawn to her like a crack addict. I was running incessantly after a need, an addiction. I could feel my body slowly deteriorating as I kept on. I was growing more and more tired as though I was dying. And finally the figure was about to turn and show me her hopefully beautiful face. Then of course I awakened to the sound of an irritating beeping.

I got up groggy and grumpy. I was not looking forward to the uneventful day that lay ahead of me. I took off my clothes and prepared to take my morning shower to hopefully lighten up my mood. It was the best part of my day other than the part where I fall asleep after throwing back a glass. But, of course, the shower was wonderful. As I let the hot water beat down on me I think I might have even let a smirk come across my face. It lasted for a few seconds and I went on with my grumpy feelings.

I got in my car and I tried starting it. Nothing happened. I glanced once at my dash bored and I saw the battery light blinking on and off. I dropped my head down with a sigh because my car battery was dead. I just knew by the way things were going for me already, my day was about to be an interesting one.

I stood outside of my car and waited two hours for AAA to come and jump-start my car. The attendant arrived bitterly on what was supposed to be, a sunny May morning. I cordially got into my car while the attendant slammed my car hood down and walked off with a dreadful wincing on his face.

The fluorescent lights in the basement of the Crew Tower were a pale mildew green. They blinked like an uncoordinated strobe light. I took in a deep breath before I walked into the doors that read “Sherman-Keyes Insurance Co.” I got to my desk throwing my briefcase down onto the floor and took my jacket off. The flickering lights made it hard to concentrate on the work at hand. So my eyes began to wonder around our crummy office. As they glided from desk to desk I finally came to the shared office of Sherman and Keyes. My sight stopped there because something was out of the ordinary. They were starring out of the window talking and pointing in my direction. The next thing I knew Mr. Sherman began to stroll out of the office. As he opened the door the pit of my stomach fell to the ugly tile flooring. “Ira, how ya doing?” Before I could answer he went right into the run down of things.

Continued on next page
“Yeah... We won’t be needing you services here at Sherman and Keyes any longer. It has been decided that your sales are dropping and your attitude is consistently negative. We don’t need that in our growing business, so if you will please pack your things and remove yourself from the office it would be greatly appreciated," He callously added, “Just think of this being the vacation you have died for in the past three years you have been with us. Thanks!” He walked away with his teeth shining and his beady eyes shot around in his alien shaped head.

In my sickened jubilation I thought I might go to my favorite place in all of Cincinnati after the great day at work I had, which was Fifth and Vine. It was a small, comfortable, hole in the wall bar on the corner of Fifth and Vine Streets. It lies right across from Cincinnati’s pride and joy... Fountain Square. I entered the glass doors right at noon. The drinks flowed cheaply and the food was free. For it to have been during the lunch rush, the bar was freakishly uninhabited. There were three of us, me, the bar tender and some female that I hadn’t paid much attention to at first. I sat down and ordered my usual. The circumstances also called for my favorite drink. It really didn’t matter what chased what. The effects would be the same in the end. I was about to take a sip of my drink when I heard a woman scream, “I got your hoe right here!” The Jerry Springer show was ringing in the silence so I turned my head to watch. I finally saw the mystique.
She was short and petite, about 5’1”. She was wearing a small t-shirt, which allowed her belly, which was perfectly aligned with the piercing that lie in the center, to show. Her blue bandana was slightly tattered, yet it added to the atmosphere she was permeating. As I glanced, every once in a while, the skin on her neck, working all the way up to her lips reminded me of smooth, milky, caramel. I tried not to google at her. I couldn’t help but notice how every time she blinked her beautiful eyes the sun came closer and closer to shining and kissing her soft skin. She wasn’t gorgeous like a super model or Halle Berry but she was beautiful like an everlasting flower. You are in awe of its beauty but you also respect it.

Me being the man that I am I don’t sit and stare at a beauty as such continuously. I took several broken glances. I was captivated and stimulated in ways not thought possible. She was sitting in my direction so I tried not to be that obvious in my looks. I could have sworn I was being the most discrete I had ever been. Right when I was examining her beautiful eyes, she raised her head from the City Beat she was reading. I knew I was in trouble at that moment, yet I couldn’t move. I was a little boy in a candy store while being begged by his parents to leave. All I could do in the situation was shrug my shoulders and smile and hope she didn’t give me a dirty look. It happened in slow motion... She raised her head and gently smiled. My God!! Her smile was a subtle poison. It killed me softly, slowly, painfully, and it came close to putting me into the final transition. It was like heroin. I was addicted.... to her.

Continued on next page
In my moment of slow death, I noticed that she was getting up. She still kept eye contact with me as her small, petite body curved around the tables and chairs of the cluttered bar. Instead of walking to me, she walked past me to the door. I could have promised that was the end of it all. I turned my head back to my unfinished rum and coke and dropped my head with a sigh. I went through the biggest head rush ever experienced in my life. It was worse than any drug I ever tried in my youth. Just when I thought it was over I turned my head quickly to look at the place she had sat and saw that she left her glasses. I jumped out of the bar stool and ran to the table and grabbed her glasses. I fleetly out of the doors to hopefully catch her before she crossed the street.

Hastfully chasing after her, I failed to realize that I was running against the light. Meanwhile, a policeman sat at the corner looking for someone to write a ticket for something as insignificant as J-Walking. I suddenly screamed once I saw the tattered bandana just across the street at Fountain Square, “MISS! Your Glasses!” As if she had planted her glasses on the table, she turned around and suddenly jolted. Little to my surprise, the cop that was seeking to give someone a ticket, caught me. I began arguing with him and then he put his hands on me. I decked him right in his face and then turned my attention back to her. She was standing on the corner in awe of the scene that was happening. I threw the glasses into the air while being tackled by two other cops. Then she caught them in the air and said with an angelic giggle, “Thanks.”

As I was being pulled off to the police car I still couldn’t take my eyes off of her frame. I had to know one more thing. “Hey!!! What’s your name??” She said, “Laura.” As the cops continued to shove me, her attention was still focused on the scene I was making. Of course she was not the only person that I had an interest in yet, she had a different look ... she was intriguing. Soon after the police car pulled off.

Here I sit in the jail cell for three days now. They allowed me paper and pencil to write this down because the guards minding the cells think it would be a great story to document. The guards believe the events that happened were imaginable. Her sweet voice saying her name over and over again lulls me into a stupor. When I lie back in the bed and raise my fingers in the air I can feel her smooth skin beneath my fingertips. As I close my eyes Laura’s smile melts into my soul, intoxicates my brain, and kills me subtly as I transcend into my next dream.
The Truth of Words

Struggling
By Stephanie Davis

It's hard to make a way in life
It's hard to overcome heartache and strife
But I still struggle
For what I do not know,
Because by now the struggle shows
In my defeat, my anguish, and my pain
How much longer can I sustain?
But I still struggle
I know I will survive and carry on
Because I'm proud, black, and strong
But I still struggle
I know I'll never lose my way
Because God has given me another day.
But I still struggle.

Not the One
By Aprille Young

What about your superwoman?
Your superwoman is what you want me to be
The one you call on in your time of need
A woman I am
Your superwoman I am not.
I can't always be there to tell you everything is going to be all right
Pat you on your back and say 'good job'
Or even clean up your messes when you decide to trip up in the world.
You want your breakfast on the table when you awake in the morning,
And dinner when you arrive in the evening
I'm not the one.
You want your clothes pressed and laid out at the beginning of your day,
I'm not the one.
You want to lay with me when you feel like making love
You want me to be okay with you going out with the fellas every night
I'm not the one.
What about my superman?
Comforting me when the times get rough
Holding me when I need a male’s touch
You’re not the one.
Taking care of his responsibilities as a man and as my lover
Admitting to his faults and weaknesses
And ready to carry me through fire and rain
You’re not the one.
The truth is I can’t be who you want me to be
I’m a woman who can do many things
Yet I cannot be the one who rescues you from you.
You are not the man that I want you to be
I want you to be everything that I never had
But I realize that you are a man of many strengths and passions
Yet, not the one that I see only in my dreams.

Conformation
By Rachel Lawson

It's been confirmed by my actions
And I keep on wondering
Why can’t others get it together?
It's like people keep on going for transactions
Trying to buy their esteem and make something of them by offering themselves
When did being called a hoe equal wealth?
I didn’t know it was cool to say one thing and do another
If you lie in filth it won’t matter if you wash off with water
People looking at you judging you by what they heard
Nodding their head like a hypocritical person thinking they’re a preacher giving the word
If you haven’t said a word besides hi and bye
How the hell are you gonna offer to testify
Thinking you know me because of what you observed
Even thinking about that is wasting energy I want to conserve
Drama equals drama it’s a simple equation
So why the hell would you add yourself in order to do an evaluation
If you stay focused on self and achieving
You’ll find all that stress and drama leaving
It's okay I completely comprehend
That identity as a hoe and failure some people must defend
Just wanted to point out that between drama and failure there is a relation
You just received the Bank of Rachel Confirmation
Home
By Candace Watkins

Home sweet home, the place where sad memories lie.
Only to return is to dissatisfy. At least that was what I thought until we arrived in a different light.
Home wasn’t home any longer. Like a jogger in an unknown neighborhood....
I was just a passerby.
The building I know as Princeton High was now just a carcous where ghost reside. Walking through our hang out also known as the mall was the same as walking through the Congo.
Shh... Hush up as I stare at the view out the window. I’m trying to figure out if those are shadows or people. Things change so fast and constantly it’s hard to make sense of reality..... when going home.
Driving down the streets of the city. I sit back and think how it’s so pretty. What was I missing all those years? Was I too caught up in my own tears? The oak trees that used to lean into the sun beams and the children’s voices dancing through the park are still there now but covered.... In the dark.
But hush... as I try to listen to the aflutter. I am trying to figure out if those are whispers or laughter. Things change so harsh and dramatically it’s so difficult to find reality... when going home.
On our way back to the new location.
I’m not sure if what I feel is devastation. In departure, I catch a last glimpse of the place that’s filled with emptiness.
I tried to capture the senses last stimulated.
Joy, pain, fun, disdain- all a glimmer. Now stuck in situations that shimmer. Being away from that hell of a place I have found the will to take up my own space.
SHUT UP!!! I’m trying to remember if these are dreams or true thoughts. Things change full circle and whole heartedly.
Maybe it’s not that bad to find reality... when going home.

The Search is On
By Jose Juan Pomales

I loved you,
always will.
You’re in through,
but I don’t know your will.

Life is hard,
things keep us apart.
Where are you my heart?
The one thing that I love
You are out there
and so am I,
but you don’t know how hard
it is not having you in my arms.

I lived for you
because I know it’s true,
For the belief
That, my life is with you.

Alone I walk,
alone I go,
Believe my love
that you’re not so far from the shore.

My loneliness is killing me,
and my strength is limiting.
But my faith is sacredly,
healing my hearts weakening.

The search is on.
I haven’t given up.
Because I know my love,
that my faith is strong.

I am here,
Where do I go?
Night and day,
sacreblue.

A kiss, a hug,
an image or dream.
You are worth waiting for,
so please wait for me.

The one who loves,
the one who hates,
God is watching
so let it be fate.

Search in day,
search in night,
The search is on.
But, where is my life?
From the Classroom to The Board Room

By Rachel Lawson

Every day thousands of students attend classes at the University of Dayton. The major difference between them and myself is the fact that I am an African American female. While other students can freely attend classes as individuals, I find myself answering questions because I am African American. Although at times this does not necessarily upset me because it results in stimulating and informative conversations, overall I would rather be seen as an individual rather than a representative for African Americans. This leads me to ask: what will happen when I graduate and eventually enter the work force. Will I still be seen just as an African American woman? Although being African American can have benefits because companies are always hoping to increase diversity, there are drawbacks. Having more minorities can be pointless if there is not culture awareness and enforcement of no tolerance for racism, bigotry or sexism. Obviously I cannot predict the future; I can only change the present so that it might affect the future. I hope that my actions as a student at U.D. and the lessons I have learned are useful when I enter the workforce.

To BATU and the Black Community:

Many would agree that BATU has not had the best year in 2003. The reasons for this vary from ineffectiveness of the executive board to lack of participation on the part of the black community. However, one factor that holds true, regardless of personal opinions, is that there is an abundance of things to be done within our community, which includes our black community as well as our entire campus, that are not being done. Let me pose to you a few questions to bring my point across. Why do we not have an African-American senator, although SGA elections have already taken place? Why did we have the same problem last year? Why is it that we have the same people screaming and complaining about efforts to help our community and young people, yet never get involved in any community service? Part of BATU’s purpose is to affect both the UD community and outside community. I know there are students on this campus that want to impact their community.

I say all this in hopes that BATU elections are successful. Last year we had positions that people did not even run for. Out of 300 black students will there be 20 students running for various positions within BATU? Will there even be people at elections to vote? Does anyone care?
Looking out side our immediate community, that being UD, we as black people need to learn to pull together instead of tearing each other apart and what better time to begin to do so but now. It is OUR responsibly. Yes we are all busy. That is the nature of how life works, keeping you busy, but until we as black people, even more so as young adults, put our priorities in order and realize that we are to be the movers and shakers of our community our community will continue to suffer. BATU is just one source of many on this campus to get involved and make a difference. Elections will be held on April 9th. Be at BATU elections, run for something within BATU, mentor a child who really needs you, be a voice for what you believe in. STEP up and change YOUR community. Look past the writing of the article and the things you don’t like about her and really hear the heart of the article.

Lachelle Barnett
BATU president

Music Reviews
By Shannon Shelby

Ginuwine – The Senior
Ginuwine takes us to the next level with his fourth album, the Senior. He has preserved his reputation for having constantly sexy, romantic, and club hittin’ songs. In this album, he hides his goody two shoes image and trades it in for the thug appeal image. His first single off the album is “Hell Yeah” which features Baby from Cash Money, which was written by R. Kelly. He brings back the classic Ginuwine with his song, “Stingy” which was featured on the Barbershop soundtrack. The Senior shows his versatility by using new concepts and staying away from his usual formula. The only downfall on this album is all the unnecessary interludes. Besides that, this album is a definite pick-up for any Ginuwine fan.

Lil’ Kim – La Bella Mafia
Ok, honestly I thought that Lil’ Kim’s lyrical skills have weakened since her Jr. Mafia days, but I think I might have been wrong. The effort on this album is so much better than her last album, Notorious K.I.M. Her first single off the album, “The Jump Off” featuring Mr. Cheeks is very real, raw and good for the clubs. Her album would have been almost a Lil’ Kim classic, if it wasn’t for those weak thrown-ins such as “Shake Ya Bum Bum” and ”Can You Hear Me Now”. Regardless, this album is worthwhile for any hip-hop or Lil’ Kim fan.

Jay-Z – Blueprint 2.1
It was disappointing for me to go from a classic album, such as Blueprint, to Blueprint 2. Jay-Z just couldn’t make an double CD like his mentors, Biggie
or Tupac. A lot of fans were saying that The Gift was better than The Curse disc and vice versa. Jay-Z decided to put out another album, called Blueprint 2.1 with some of the best tracks on Blueprint 2 with a few new songs that have never been heard. It has fourteen already heard tracks and two hidden ones. One of the hidden tracks includes "Excuse Me Miss (remix)", which was produced by the Neptunes and is strictly for the clubs. "Stop" is another track that features Swizz Beatz. This songs kind of reminds me of DMX's "Ruff Ryder's Anthem". If one should already have Blueprint 2, I wouldn't recommend getting Blueprint 2.1, because you would already have most of the songs on the album.

Fabolous – Street Dreams
His debut album, Ghetto Fabolous brought out hits like "Young'n (Holla Back)," "I Cant Deny It" and "Trade it All". No one seemed to recognize him as an MC, because he just had punch lines, catchy hooks and his cute looks. From his not so good reviews and sales, you would expect him to come up with another game plan, but we get the same flavor in his sophomore album, Street Dreams. His first single, "Its my party", didn’t get too much radio rotation. It is obvious that Fabolous isn’t too good at putting together an entire album. Luckily, all of the downfalls of this album, is made up by the guest appearances of, Snoop Dogg, Ashanti, Lil’ Mo, and Missy Elliot.

Truth of Words (continued)

Pacified
By Cherita Borders *Winner of Poetry Contest*

We are a pacified people
Pacified even when no one is around to oppress us
We lull each other with our sneaky poisons of envy
We silence the loud passionate beat of a heart that is too full
Because we can not stand the noise of someone else
Having the guts to say it first
We crush ourselves with oppression
Blinded by that green demon’s dust
Sniffing the hate in while its potency numbs
The humanness in us
Thick daze caused by a strange drug
That pacifies us
Stripping us of love
Losing touch with reality
Massaging lies into the back bones
Of our brothers
Pacifying them
Numbing them to the reality
That they are being eaten alive
Binding them to bondage and bandaging their mouths
With the cloth of a country
That doesn’t care that sees but ignores them
Because they are pacified
We’ve become transparent seen only through our souls desires
Shot through prisms of poems
Creating rainbows seen only through eyes
That have not yet been burned with that
Sulfuric smoke that chokes dreams into oblivion
Through throbbing-popped veined eyes, we see ourselves
Through mirrors of sub consciousness and can do nothing
To help our present state because we are pacified
Dignity is lost in clouds of self-doubt
Strangers to our selves
Puzzled searching for a soul
Murdering our friends with words said in silence
Because secrets were shoved in closets torn down by
Jealousy and disloyalty
Clawed to death by hands that promised only to scratch our backs
And there we are Pacified
Chopped down to the root of our existence
Watching roots
Becoming full with a sickening nostalgia
For a past that we are constantly losing touch of, losing ourselves
With minds full of confusion we unload the anger of our souls
Onto each other – hearts still bulging with passion that has nowhere to go
The path is completely destroyed and we have lost all direction
Too lazy to make our own we stand together but alone
Caught in the branches of a wild dark forest
Afraid of the shadows of our wild oppressed hearts
Not knowing where to start, so we are finished
We can no longer tread the footsteps of great men
Because we are afraid of falling into the depths
Of self revelation
What we need is fearless men and women
Those whose legacies last those that embrace the past
We had them in Malcolm and Martin
They were men that sang to the rhythm of their
Free souls and were not afraid of that song
But they are gone - their legacies lie in the silence of our voices
Now whispers-choked back with poison
Drowning ourselves in tall bottles of liquor lamenting quietly
In caves of consolations
We try to forget their throbbing realities because
They conger up memories of a time
When our forefathers we not afraid to act
Reminding us of our passivity
So we dance and bite the worm and are hooked by its soft slithering lie
Still numbed by the alcohol of its body
Fighting each other over who gets it – still not getting it
And we are drowned in delusion
Fooled by the illusion that we have come to a conclusion
But in reality we are just swallowing passivity.

Say Happy Birthday To Me!

By Sarah Harris and Rachel Lawson

March
2- Aprille Young
5- Robert Knighton
8- Jennifer Jones
11- Khadijah Qadeer & Khaleelah Sneed & Destini Perkins
19- Williams Perkins Jr.
21- Joe Hill

April
6- Marie Pettijohn
7- Lisa Melton
29- Sarah Harris
(If you would like your birthday to be included in upcoming issues email: BlackPerspective@yahoo.com)
*We apologize for any names not included

Congratulations . . . .

All Graduating Seniors:

Marissa Joy Williams
Sakinah Patton
Joe Hill
Bernard McClellan
Maury Richardson
Wendy Spencer
Heather Nooks
Ephraim Cubol
Kristle Stewart
Marcus Miller
Lekeisha Adams
Clarissa Goosby
Thalia Leisinger
Domini Malcolm

The Men of Kappa Alpha Psi:

Ephraim Cubol
Kiffle Abebe
Charles Kellom
Jerron Parker
Ivory Penamon
Jerome Jenkins
Ryan Jones
Tim Wilson

The Men of Alpha Phi Alpha:

Demetrius Loyd
Gregory Williams
Cliffton Parks
James Carter
Robert Knighton

* We wish all of you the best in your careers and future.