

LIL' KIM'S PRIVATE PARTS + OL' DIRTY'S GRAND SLAM

WIRED

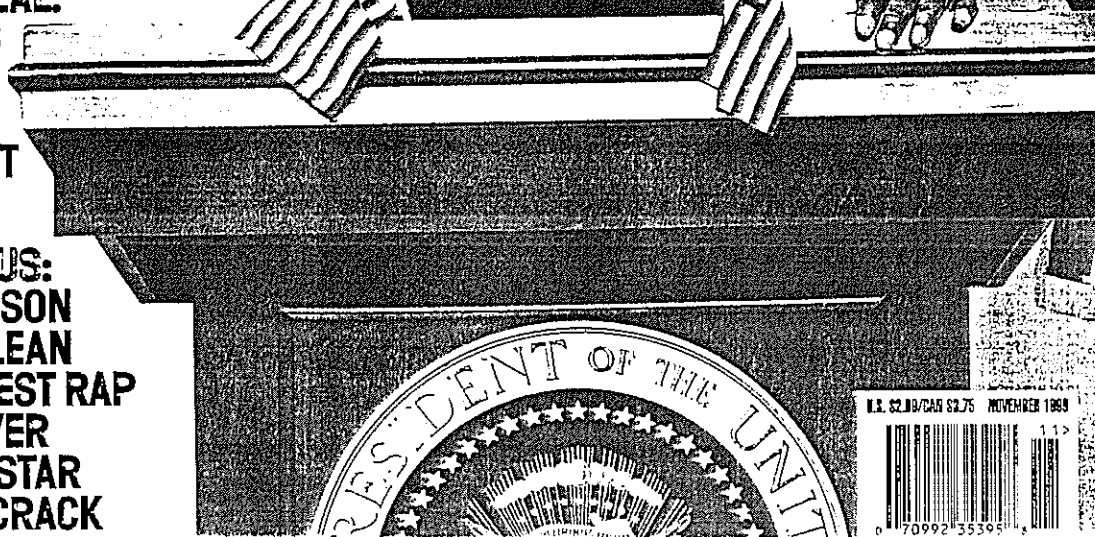
CHRIS ROCK FOR PRESIDENT

America's Comic Hero
Takes Over the World

ON THE REAL:
HOT BOYS
MOS DEF
BRIAN
MCKNIGHT

ON THE
RIDICULOUS:
O.J. SIMPSON
COMES CLEAN
THE REALEST RAP
GROUP EVER
HOT R&B STAR
SMOKES CRACK

SPECIAL
GUEST
EDITOR:
CHRIS
ROCK



U.S. \$2.00/CAN \$2.75 NOVEMBER 1999



FEATURES

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THE NEW SHOT CALLERS

What becomes a leader on the eve of the 21st century? For the hip-hop generation, it's not just about juice. It's also about knowing how to blend old-school, community-based grassroots activism with new-school political savvy. Is this the era of the hip-hop activist who is on the cutting edge of

the hip-hop generation? No, it's not. It's the era of the hip-hop activist who is on the cutting edge of the hip-hop generation. No, it's not. It's the era of the hip-hop activist who is on the cutting edge of the hip-hop generation.

THE REFORMER

Newark City Councilman Cory Booker is rolling up his sleeves to realize Brick City.

Cory Booker, 30, may have aristocratic credentials, but don't look for him at the cricket club. This Rhodes Scholar with a Yale law degree is putting it down in Newark as a Democratic city councilman of the 60,000-constituent Central Ward, ground zero of the infamous 1967 riots. "I want to let residents know that all the resources they need to be successful are right here," says the Harrington Park, N.J., native and former all-American tight end, who parlayed his football prowess into a scholarship to Stanford University.

Booker made his first run at political office last year, successfully unseating the 16-year incumbent, George Branch. For a week in August, he set up camp under a white tent in the parking lot of Newark's Garden Spire housing projects, bringing together residents, private businesses, city agencies, and religious leaders to help stop,



as Booker has called it, "rampant, open-air drug dealing" there. For now, Booker seems content applying his advanced degrees to the betterment of Brick City. But his name is already being talked about for higher office—though he says he has no comment on rumors of a possible 2002 mayoral bid.

David Wall Rice

THE VOTE GETTER

Donna Frisby, 35, believes in the power of the ballot. As the executive director of Rock the Vote from 1997 to 1998, Frisby launched the advocacy group's Hip Hop Coalition for Political Power. Aided by rappers like L.L. Cool J and Method Man, the organization gave voter registration a decidedly urban attitude, registering nearly 70,000 people of color between the ages of 18 and 24. African-Americans in that age group turned out in substantial numbers to vote in

the 1998 congressional election. This year, she also briefly served as national director of voter empowerment for the NAACP. The Philadelphia-based former junior high school teacher was a consultant for Philadelphia candidate John Street's voter mobilization project (the election is this month).

Frisby now serves as a member of the Strategic Planning Committee for the National Coalition on Black Voter Participation. The industrious activist also has a gig as

vice president of Rappers Educating All Curricula through Hip-Hop (REACH). The program, cofounded this year by Chuck D—the organization's president—and Frisby, recruits rappers for motivational talks with kids. Frisby's goal is to break down legislative and political concerns for the next generation of young leaders. "I'm the behind-the-scenes, strategic person," she says. "I'm the person that'll help to figure out what messages are important to focus on."

David Wall Rice



THE HOUSE ROCKERS

In the good-old-boy network that is the United States Congress, Rep. Jesse L. Jackson Jr. (D-Ill.) and Rep. Harold E. Ford Jr. (D-Tenn.) proudly bear the mantles of their fathers' civil rights legacies, not to mention their names. Jackson is the son of the renowned activist; Ford occupies the congressional seat of his father, the first African-American congressman from Tennessee. As two of the youngest members of the House of Representatives, Jackson, 34, and Ford, 29 (he is the youngest member of the House), have already distinguished themselves in their own right. "Being young means you often have the unadulterated courage, the idealism, the energy, and the willingness to try new things," says Jackson.

"The 'establishment' doesn't yet have its fangs in you."

While serving as national field director of the National Rainbow Coalition (1993-95), Jackson implemented a nonpartisan voter registration program that signed up millions of new voters. His congressional voting record in favor of good jobs at livable wages and equality in public education reflects his grassroots sensibility.

Ford is also a civic pragmatist. "As corny as it sounds, I'm interested in helping folks empower and enrich their lives," says the House Regional Whip, who acts as congressional spokesperson for Alabama, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Ford has used his position to secure federal funding



SEN. JESSE JACKSON JR. (D-ILL.)



SEN. HAROLD E. FORD JR. (D-TENN.)

for school construction, structure educational tax-relief packages, and push for a \$200 million increase in funding for programs that help low-income and first-generation college students gain access to higher education.

At press time, Ford was touring Tennessee, testing the waters for a

Senate run next year. And although Jackson sidesteps questions about a presidential bid, Ford says that for him "it's certainly not out of the realm of possibility." Stay tuned: This hip-hop head who loves the music of Biggie and Juvenile just might be the one to paint the White House black.

David Wall Rice

SPECIAL HOLIDAY TECH PACKAGE WITH MYA AND FUNKMASTER FLEX

VIBE

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**The Empire
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ANNOUNCING



Coretta Scott King and Tommy Hilfiger

• The Martin Luther King Jr. National Memorial Project Foundation, Inc. showcased the winning model of a national monument dedicated to the slain civil rights leader at a September ceremony in Washington, D.C. "It will represent what we, the family, would like to see," said **Coretta Scott King**. The monument will be the first on the National Mall to honor an individual African-American. It is underwritten by **Tommy Hilfiger**, and the groundbreaking is scheduled for 2003. A map of the site is available at www.mlkmemorial.org.



Eazy-E

• Documents from the two-year investigation by the **FBI** into allegations that associates of the militant Jewish Defense League tried to extort money from late rappers **Eric "Eazy-E" Wright** and **Tupac Shakur** via telephone threats were officially released in September and posted on the Web site www.the-smokinggun.com. The probe was launched on April 15, 1997 and ended on May 18, 1999 after prosecutors failed to substantiate the claims.

• Death Row Records CEO **Suge Knight** will use some of the proceeds from the compilation album *Too Gangsta for Radio*—which includes songs by **Tupac**, the **Ruff Ryders**, **Treach**, **Crooked I**, and **Above the Law**—to set up the Death Row Prisoner Appeal Fund, according to label spokesman **Jonathan Wolfson**. Each year, a committee for the fund will choose one applicant from the state prison system and one in the federal prison system and help finance legal expenses for their appeal, **Wolfson** says.



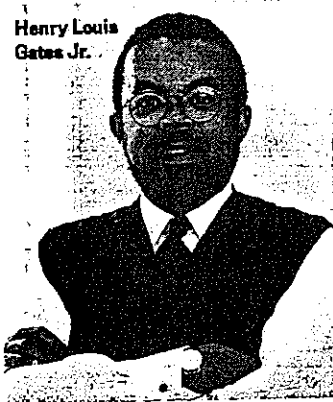
James Perkins

• After nearly four decades under the reign of former segregationist **Joe Smitherman**, residents of Selma, Ala., have elected businessman **James Perkins** as their first African-American mayor. "It is time to put the Civil War and civil rights history into a museum," Perkins said during his acceptance speech. He defeated the incumbent by 1,336 votes. "The defeat of Mayor Joe Smitherman after 37 years is a tribute to the hard work and dedication of Selma's black citizens and right-thinking white voters," **Kweisi Mfume**, president of the **NAACP**, said in a statement.



Outsidaz

• You're not going to find Redman's "Red Rum Raisin" or Eminem's "Vanilla No Ice" at Baskin-Robbins or Häagen-Dazs. The only place where hip hop meets ice cream is at Outrageous Flavors, an ice-cream parlor/deli launched by New Jersey rappers **Outsidaz**. The store was set up in the group's hometown of Newark to bring jobs into the community and raise revenue for the group. On any given day, you'll see the rappers hard at work, scooping it up. "It's not some establishment where we're getting rich," says **Young Zee**. "We just did it 'cause we all like ice cream."



Henry Louis Gates Jr.

• Shoring up support for their 'Net startup, Harvard University professors **Henry Louis Gates Jr.** and **Kwame Anthony Appiah** have sold **Africana.com** to Time Warner Inc. "The revenue model was slow to develop—let's put it that way," Gates told *The New York Times*. "I would have become worried about its future by next year unless there was some dramatic turnaround." Terms of the deal were not announced. The site is one of several devoted to people of African descent but is unique in its focus on educational content, health, and finance. Gates and Appiah will continue to work on the site as consultants.

LAWSUITS

• A federal lawsuit filed against **Sean "Puffy" Combs** by the owners of gospel song "I'll Fly Away" was

settled out of court with final details resolved in September. **Albert E. Brumley & Sons, Inc.** sued Puffy for borrowing lyrics from the song without permission for his hit single "I'll Be Missing You," a tribute to the slain rapper **The Notorious B.I.G.** "We are very pleased with the settlement," says **Bob Brumley**. The original song, written by Brumley's father, **Albert Brumley**, was published in 1932 and appears in the film *The Apostle*, which starred **Robert Duvall**. It will also be featured in **George Clooney's** movie *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* due in theaters nationwide next year.

• **Bone Thugs-N-Harmony's** **Flesh-N-Bone** (born **Stanley Vernell Howse**), 27, was sentenced to 10 years in a California state prison on September 22 for threatening a friend with a semiautomatic weapon last December. He was charged with assault with a deadly weapon and possession of a firearm.

CHARGED

• Three associates of the Boston rap group **Made Men** were charged with assault and battery with a dangerous weapon in the September nightclub attack on Boston Celtics forward **Paul Pierce**. According to the *Boston Herald*, **Tony Hurston**, 30, allegedly punched Pierce then hit him across the face with a bottle. **William Ragland**, 28, and **Trevor Watson**, 34, then allegedly stabbed the NBA star in the chest, back, and neck at Boston nightspot **Buzz Club**. Pierce was later released from New England Medical Center.

DEATHS

• Jazz-soul saxophonist **Stanley Turrentine** died of a stroke on September 12. He was 66 years old.

Reporting by David Crowley, Brett Johnson, David Wall Rice, and Samantha Wong

KING AND HILFIGER: BRAD RICHMAN; EAZY-E: HITROY BARRETT/TRENA; JAMES PERKINS: KEVIN GLACKMEYER/AP; OUTSIDAZ: ERIN PATRICE D'BRIEN; HENRY LOUIS GATES JR.: SARAH PITTMAN

COLOR ME BAD: SPECIAL ILLUSTRATION ISSUE

W

AALIYAH

A NEW ALBUM, TWO MOVIES
IN THE WORKS... THE REST
IS NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS

QUIET STORM

FOXY BROWN FACES
HER DEMONS

CROSSOVER

'N SYNC GOES POP WITH
AN R&B TWIST

BABY BOY

JOHN SINGLETON'S
CHILDISH ANTICS

HOOP DREAMS

RUCKER: THE ULTIMATE
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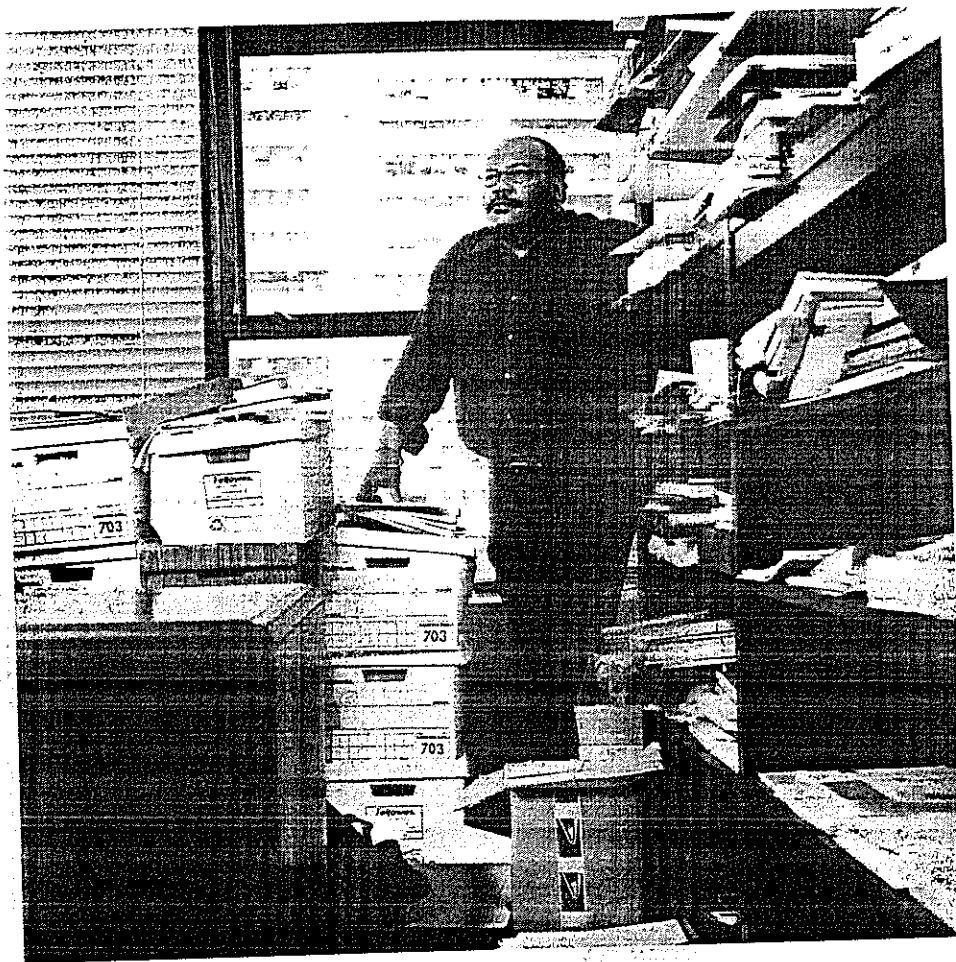
LIL' MO, JAGGED EDGE, G. DEP,
IKE TURNER, PASTOR TROY, AND
MUHAMMAD ALI VS. SUPERMAN



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PAGE-TURNER

Veteran publishing executive Manie Barron gives the African-American slant on books. By David Wall Rice

An advocate for African-American literature and hip hop-themed works, Manie Barron, 46, is the publishing manager for Amistad Press, founded in 1986, one of the nation's oldest black-originated publishing ventures, now an imprint of HarperCollins. The former Random House editor is one of a handful of literary executives who act as the essential gatekeepers for the many aspiring black authors writing on black subjects. In his one-year tenure at HarperCollins, he has been instrumental in bringing such titles as *Black Heat* by Norman Kelley, *Lest We Forget* by Velma Maia Thomas, and *When All Hell Breaks Loose* by Camika Spencer to bookstore shelves and brokering a contract for DMX's biography that will net the rapper \$1 million with bonuses. Next year, a photojournalistic tome on pimps and players titled *Pimprosis*, by Rob Marriott and Tracy Funches (inspired by a VIBE story), will be released. Here, Barron provides some insight into the realm of black ink.

How do you decide which books you are going to publish?

I came [here] from another direction, with a different skill set than most editors. I wasn't an English major, I wasn't an assistant, and I didn't go to

one of the Ivies. I came in through sales and marketing. It's no longer solely the aesthetics of a book that determine whether or not it gets done. With me, I'm looking at, Okay, how you gonna sell this muthafucker? Who is its market? I look at what the book has to say and how it says it. And most importantly, does anybody want to [read] it?

Do writers need to tailor their artistic vision to marketing needs in order to get published?

A very delicate balance has to be struck. We should not be completely enslaved by the marketplace. If you start writing for the market, you will write cynically. Writers need to write what's in their gut, but they have to understand when they submit something to an agent, to someone in publishing, that is how we are going to think—Will it sell?

Are there noticeable shifts in the industry that have allowed for more hip hop-related titles?

There has been a change, but not a lot. There are fewer than 20 black editors at major houses in all of publishing. In many instances, we're not seeing as many hip hop-related materials as we should, because we're talking about predominantly white, middle-class, middle-aged editors. Hip hop isn't a part of their reality. As a result, there is a hesitancy to have anything to do with it. We're undercapitalizing on an audience that is built on words, on verbiage, [and] it has to do with the fact that there is a culture gap. I would like to hear more about hip hop working in conjunction with bookstores, books, reading, and writing. Hip hop is a platform for change, and here is an opportunity for us to shake shit up for the better.

How do you bridge those cultural gaps and convince publishers to take a chance on a hip hop-themed book?

You're not going to get anybody to do something [by explaining], This is the right thing to do, so we should do it. Fuck that. If it was all about the right thing to do, we wouldn't have bigotry and prejudice. You may not believe there is an audience, but everybody believes numbers—here is what so-and-so sold; the number of people attending this; who viewed that. Sprite started the "Obey Your Thirst" campaign with the hip hop mindset. You know those folks didn't know shit about hip hop, so they had to see the numbers.

What do you hope readers will get from the books you've released?

First, I hope that people would stop thinking of books as an onerous chore. I'm hoping that I'll get people to read, to be comfortable with a book and to feel there's something in a book for them. I'll start with pimps, just like so many of us started with [books on street life by] Donald Goines and Iceberg Slim. After that, you'll want to go deeper, to other places. Then I'm going to guide you, because a book is a magic carpet.

Photograph by CLARA SHIN

VIBE

DMX

THE CONTROVERSIAL STREET
APOSTLE WALKS THE LINE
BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL

ALICIA KEYS

THE ARTIST TAKES THE
WORLD BY STORM

SIX FEET UNDER

IS THERE LIFE AFTER
DEATH ROW RECORDS?

ON FIRE

REGGAE MUSIC IS BURNING
DOWN THE HOUSE

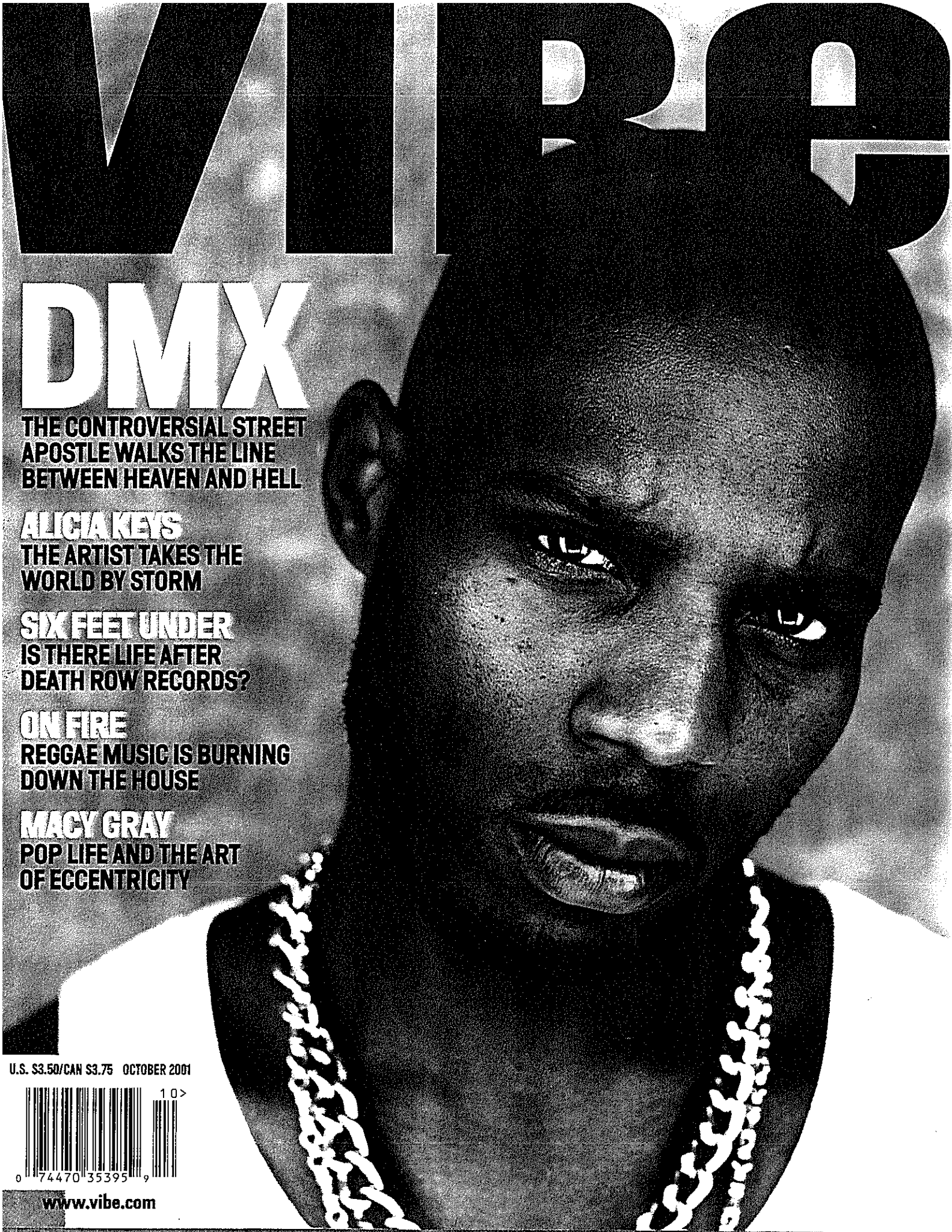
MACY GRAY

POP LIFE AND THE ART
OF ECCENTRICITY

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KING OF THE HILL

The first black male agent at one of Hollywood's biggest firms goes for the gusto.



Hollywood is still a tough nut to crack for African-Americans. But there's at least one power broker working behind the scenes to break down some of the barriers facing people of color in the entertainment industry. As one of only six black agents (out of 750) at William Morris, the oldest talent agency in the business,

William Morris, King started out with the firm in an entry-level mail-room gig. But in just two years, he showed some hustle and brought in Missy Elliott and *Celebrity Deathmatch* creator Eric Fogel. Those keen choices sparked his promotion two years ago. Now he represents the Hughes Brothers, Tyrese's new film projects, and Cheryl

dollars & sense start

Charles King, 31, helps give minorities the access and clout they need to thrive in showbiz.

The 1996 Howard University Law School graduate started his career as a legal clerk for both MTV and AOL while still in college. He even made moves toward acting before deciding he was better suited to help other actors become famous. "I looked at the dearth of representation for people with diverse backgrounds in movies and television," he says. "It's an opportunity to make an impact."

Like every other agent at Hollywood, King started out with the firm in an entry-level mail-room gig. But in just two years, he showed some hustle and brought in Missy Elliott and *Celebrity Deathmatch* creator Eric Fogel. Those keen choices sparked his promotion two years ago. Now he represents the Hughes Brothers, Tyrese's new film projects, and Cheryl

Edwards, the director of *Save the Last Dance*. "Charles moved up in the business very fast," says client Charles Dutton. "He's well liked, has an impressive client list, and is very hungry."

Last year, after King's clients Walther Latham and Spike Lee produced the multimillion-dollar-grossing *Original Kings of Comedy*, the agent brokered a three-year production deal for Latham with Paramount Pictures. This year, he's working on a tentative deal for Beyoncé Knowles. King also negotiated a deal for Dutton to direct the upcoming release *Against the Ropes*, starring Meg Ryan, which has a production budget of \$45 million. "It's important to help the multicultural marketplace grow," says King. "But I'm not limiting myself to it."

He'd also like to help bring a wider range of African-American experiences to the big screen—not just the stereotypical roles expected of Hollywood. "Coming from a multicultural angle puts me in a position to be the voice for a demographic the industry doesn't know," says King. If he continues to move on up, his unseen influence could help build new careers and affect the fare offered to millions of moviegoers. That's the kind of impact he's pushing for.

David Wall Rice

VIBE

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MUSIC ABOUT HIS SCANDALOUS
SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

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SOUTHERN RAP'S
FEMME FATALE

FAT JOE
CAN'T KNOCK
THE HUSTLE

FUNKMASTER
FLEX

URBAN MUSIC'S MUSCLE

MESHELL
NDEGEOCELLO
BASS, BOOTY, BRILLIANCE

PHYLLIS
HYMAN
THE LIFE
— AND
DEATH OF
A DIVA

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AFRICA MEDALLIONS

Do you remember the time? It was a balmy spring afternoon in 1990. Your dreads had finally grown out of the twisty stage, and your Bart Simpson shirt was fresh out of the dryer. Public Enemy welcomed you to the Terrordome, while Tribe sang the praises of Bonita's ample bum. And for five bones, you copped the leather Africa medallion you had been eyeing for weeks in the corner mom-and-pop store. Put it all together and you had the uniform of the socially conscious B-boy masses.

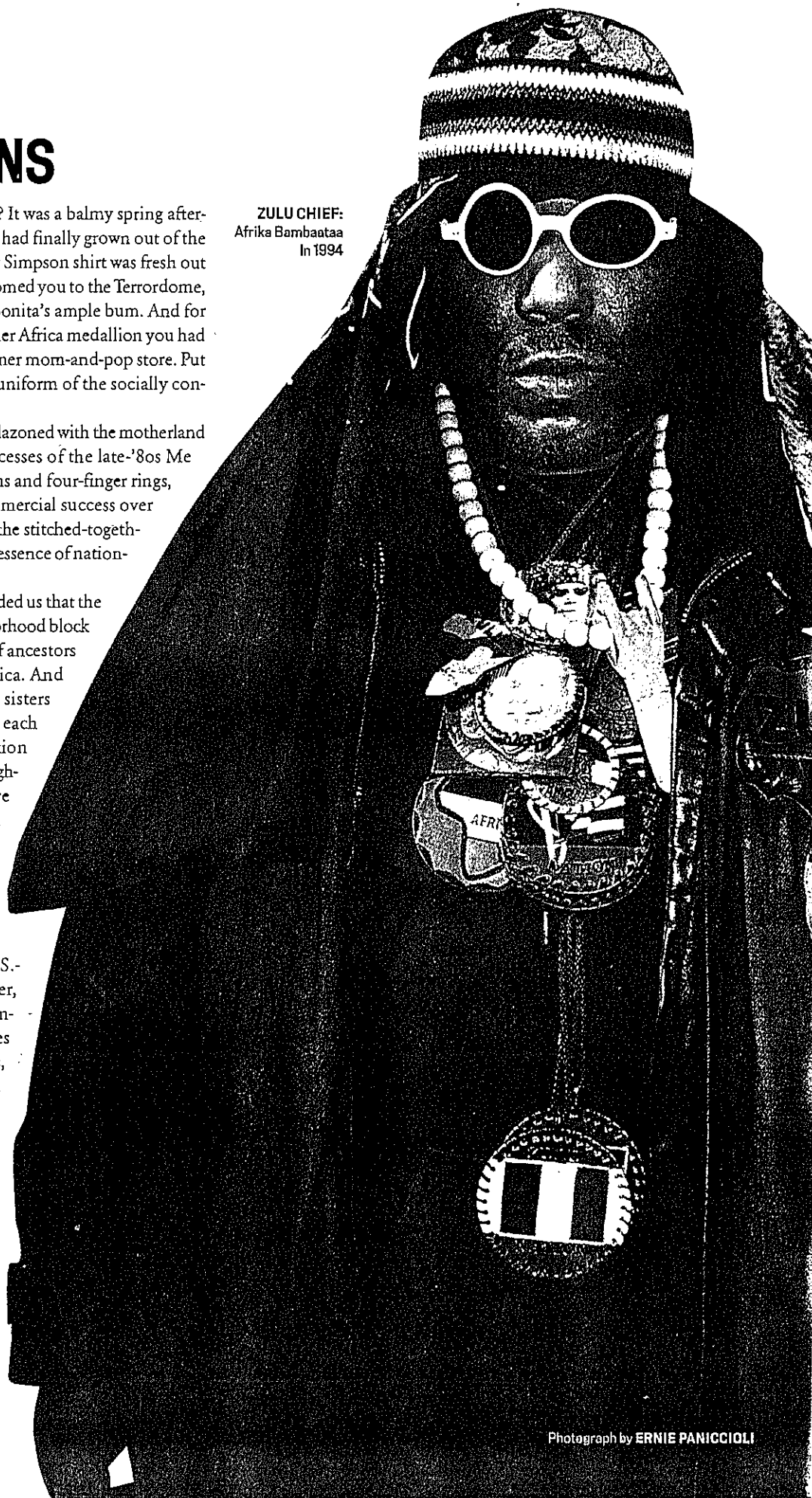
The simple leather circle emblazoned with the motherland was a wake-up call from the excesses of the late-'80s Me Generation with its dooky chains and four-finger rings, accessories that celebrated commercial success over cultural pride. On the flip side, the stitched-together emblem symbolized the very essence of nationalistic awareness.

The leather medallion reminded us that the hard beats that drove the neighborhood block parties echoed the drum slaps of ancestors torn from the west coast of Africa. And that the intricate designs that sisters around the way braided into each other's hair came from a tradition passed down from mother to daughter, originating in Africa. We wore the medallion to identify with each other and with the struggle against racism.

In 2002, things aren't all that different. Apartheid might be history, but racial injustice persists. And though the U.S.-Soviet nuclear-arms race is over, weapons of mass destruction continue to haunt us. As Jesus pieces become increasingly meaningless, the sensibilities of the Africa medallion are suddenly relevant again. At a time when folks are reexamining the strengths and weaknesses of the black community, we remember this symbol of black pride for its cultural significance rather than its dollar value. As Poor Righteous Teachers might say, it doesn't take a holy intellect to figure that out.

David Wall Rice

ZULU CHIEF:
Afrika Bambaataa
In 1994



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BLAZE

PLUS:
FEEL THE
BATTLE



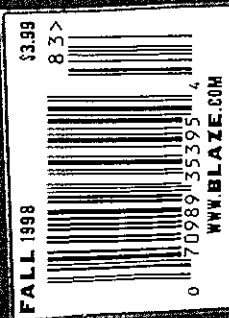
ROAD DAWGS:
DMX
DEF SQUAD
ONYX

WHO'S THE
BEST MC?

E-40
LIL' KIM
FAT JOE
BLACK STAR
FEEL DEEZ CUTZ

THE
MADNESS
BEHIND THE
METHOD

METHOD
MAN
FACES
JUDGMENT DAY



WASHINGTON, D.C. Hometown

Hit: "Overnight Scenario" by go-go kingpins Rare Essence. **SONIC IMPORT:** Big Pun's "Still Not A Player." **DJ:** Taek One is a cool Asian cat who spins at the popular State of the Union club on U Street. **Supa Funkregulata Celo** is tops on the radio. **MC:** Priest Da Nomad of the Freestyle Union. **NEXT TO BLOW:** Da Lost Generashun. **DANCE STEP:** Dancing to go-go is as close to dry humping as you can get. **CLUB:** DC Live. **FASHION STATEMENT:** ddtp WORLD gear; Da* Link* Went tees; Armegedia Global Apparel.

MARION BARRY GOES OUT HIS WAY

When it comes to politics, the resilient mayor of Washington, D.C., personifies hip hop's mantra to keep it real. In fact, many maintain that he keeps it too real. Marion S. Barry Jr. has so mastered the political machine, even haters must concede he's the MC of D.C.

But not for much longer. After an unprecedented four terms in office, Barry, 62, has announced that he will retire his microphone and sit out the November election. "Winning was not an issue," Barry said from his office in a telephone interview. But Barry has resolved that he can fight the good fight "from outside the government better than I can inside." He was vague about his future plans, though, saying only that he wanted to continue helping District residents.

Barry will be remembered as a contradiction. There was that videotaped toke on a crack pipe back in January 1990—although it was plain to see he was at Room 727 of the Vista International Hotel for a rendezvous with former lover Rasheeda Moore.

As part of a lengthy sting operation that cost taxpayers as much as \$3 million, the FBI directed Moore to lure



Barry. His sexual advances rebuffed, Barry settled for a hit off the pipe. Despite the videotape, a federal jury convicted Barry of only one out of 14 counts, a possession charge. Barry received a six-month prison term for the minor conviction, a sentence many decried as excessive.

Still, Barry long provided viable leadership. He got his start as the first chairman of the seminal Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in the early 1960s. He went on to draft legislation to help the homeless, senior citizens, gays, young people and, of course, African Americans. He battled on after the federal government in 1995 reduced his office to little more than a Milli Vanilli setup. Civil-rights activist, player extraordinaire, advocate for the disenfran-

chised—all in one dashiki-clad, balding body. Inconsistencies, to be sure.

"Barry was the man because he provided jobs for young people that were designed to prepare them for the real world," says Mossi Tull, a financial analyst who backed Barry in 1994, the year Barry emerged from jail to capture 56% of the vote. "Anyone could provide an opportunity pushing brooms. Barry taught us how to be working leaders."

But a dark shadow remains. Let's be real: The mayor of the capital of the United States was reduced to a crack-smoking Pookie before the entire world. Nevertheless, Barry, as conflicted as he was, is the truth. "People like Barry because he's a strong black man and arrogant," says Dr. Ronald

Walters, political scientist and professor at the University of Maryland's Afro-American Studies Program. "This, in addition to the fact that he was able to dispense real services, made him a peoples' mayor."

Indeed, Barry provided leadership—not from the rafters on high, but from within the condition of his people. This condition has its perversions. In spite of his travails, Barry's perseverance and commitment to D.C.'s have-nots never wavered. Barry managed not to sell his people out, even when the hinges were blown off the doors to his private life. This won't erase his great missteps, but it should help others complete the picture that he was so close to finishing on his own. "I brought a whole new spirit to Washington," Barry says. "One that said, 'You can do it.'"

O. WALL RICE

CHRIS ROCK BRINGS HIS BRAND OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO D.C. *Edutainment*. Not Kris Parker, mind you, but Chris Rock. Continuing his assault on mass media, the prodigal son of hip hop humor is looking to Howard University in an effort to school the next generation of young black comics.

In the wake of Emmy awards for his now-legendary 1996 *Bring the Pain* HBO special at D.C.'s Takoma Theatre, Rock returns to the District with a mission and a message. "Our comedic writing skills are far behind that of the white man right now," Rock said during a visit last fall. "And that's sad."

Have hope. The solution to satirical inequities might be found in *The Illtop Journal*, a joint venture with Chris Rock Entertainment, Inc. and Howard University's School of Communications. When it premieres this fall, *The Illtop* will serve as a comedy-writing boot camp similar to that of *The Harvard Lampoon*, which, since 1876, has bred alumni responsible for *Saturday Night Live*, *The Simpsons* and other comic staples.

Currently, *The Illtop* is under the creative direction of Rock, Howard University and Bill Stephney, chief executive officer of StepSun Music and *Illtop* project chair. Ultimately, it will be student-run. "We want the process to be organic," Stephney says of the hip hop-edged quarterly. But before you start thinking *Def Comedy Jam* goes to the academy, Stephney assures that *The Illtop*'s intent is to raise the intellectual bar for black comedians. Of Rock's role, he notes, "It's like going from a rapper to an A&R who's able to put you out there."

Aida Muluneh, a sophomore film student, hopes to participate. "We don't have enough contact with the industry," Muluneh says, voicing a sentiment shared by some 200 other *Illtop* hopefuls. Getting training at a Rock-inspired institution like *The Illtop* could be the golden ticket in an industry where black comedians often walk a dangerous line between buffoonery and genius. High-end comedy...What would Desmond Pfeiffer write in his secret diary about that? *D. Wall Rice*

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IN THE BOOTH WITH DJ TAEK ONE

No hype. Just calm confidence, superb selection and deft scratching. That was DJ Taek One's style on a Friday night in January at the State of the Union club in Washington, D.C. Here's his playlist—plus the crowd's reaction—during the crucial hour between 1 and 2 a.m.

D. WALL RICE

SELECTION/ REACTION

"Off The Books," The Beatnuts/ Modest bounce

"Mona Lisa," Slick Rick/ Decent response

"Electric Relaxation," A Tribe Called Quest/ Happy honeys double party participation

"Doo Wop (That Thing)," Lauryn Hill/ Fellas break for a drink

"Definition," Black Star/ Intro alone slays 'em

"Superthug," Noreaga/ Anticlimactic, but keeps up the pace

"Unbelievable," Notorious B.I.G./ Brooklyn heads get amped

"A Million And One Questions," Jay-Z/ Slight energy decrease

"5 Boroughs," KRS-One/ Slept on. Next.

"Black Cop," KRS-One/ High-stepping B-boy bravado begins

"Livin' Proof," Group Home/ Two dancefloor devotees left

"Ice Cream," Roekwan/ Domina, it's a party

"Da Bichez," Jeru the Damaja/ Finesses bench warmers to the floor

"I'll Bee Dat!," Redman/ Has crowd by the jugular

"Kick in the Door," Notorious B.I.G./ It's a party now

"Tear Da Roof Off," Busta Rhymes/ Whip out the towel; heads are soakin'

"Ruff Ryders' Anthem," DMX/ Bananas!

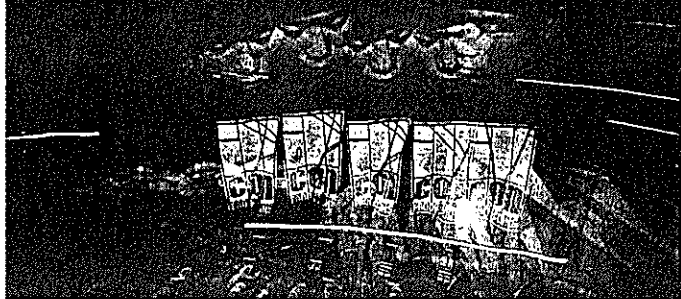
"Triumph," Wu-Tang Clan/ Uncertain if stage can take bounce pressure

"Banned From TV," Noreaga/ Hot, especially Nore's verse

"Shimmy Shimmy Ya," Ol' Dirty Bastard/ Almost lost 'em for a sec

"Win The G," O.C. featuring Freddie Foxxx/ Got 'em back

Taek One takes it there



"You Know My Steez," Gang Starr/ Sure shot

"Dat Gangsta Sh*t," Fat Joe/ Crowd still into it

"Hard Knock Life," Jay-Z/ Even bartenders on the floor

"Put It In Your Mouth," Akinyele/ Caps the set with total crowd support

50 GREATEST MCS: 2,703 READERS STRIKE BACK

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FROM THE VIBE CAMP

BALTIMORE'S NEW JACK ACTIVIST



Rev. Jamol-Harrison Bryant

From Frederick Douglass to Thurgood Marshall, Maryland has long been home to a vanguard of civil rights leaders. Keeping with this tradition, a retooled NAACP is pushing

Rev. Jamol-Harrison Bryant as the region's brightest new torch.

"My professional mission is to make the NAACP relevant to a hip hop generation," he says in a measured Southern drawl at the organization's headquarters in his native Baltimore. Add Bryant's name to a growing list of politicians positioning themselves to lead the hip hop nation—folks like Congressman Jesse L. Jackson Jr. in Illinois, Congressman Harold E. Ford Jr. in Tennessee and the Movement for CHANGE's Minister Conrad Muhammad in New York.

Bryant, 27, serves as director of the NAACP's Youth and College Division and was a key organizer for last summer's Million Youth Movement in Atlanta. Many believe he will bring dynamism to a staid institution. "In the '80s, many youths were ashamed to say they were members of the NAACP," notes Conrad Muhammad. "But Rev. Jamol-Harrison Bryant is the type of young brother that can help the NAACP become more relevant."

As the NAACP celebrates its 90th anniversary, its youngest leader hopes to bridge an obvious generation gap—the chasm between parents who come of age under the heavy boot of racism and children who grew up seeing Timberland commercials that urge "Give Racism the Boot." Still, for many young people, rhetoric alone won't suffice. "Our generation is beyond a speech and being emotionally massaged," says Bryant, who helped charter 34 NAACP youth branches last year. Most recently, he helped to launch a protest against the Supreme Court, bringing attention to what the NAACP calls a lack of minority representation among law clerks there. (Law clerk jobs often serve as a pathway to higher-paid legal professions.)

For now, Bryant is focusing on the NAACP's 600 existing youth and college chapters—plus 90 more he plans to start this year. Of course, all this seems insignificant in light of his ultimate goal. "I hope that we can put the NAACP out of business," he says. "So my grandchildren won't have to look back and say, 'We still singin' 'We Shall Overcome.'"

D. WALL RICE

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69

GENERATION
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76 COOL C speaks to *Kemp Powers* from death row.

74 THE PUNISHER Former Texas attorney general stands up for capital punishment. By *D. Wall Rice*

76 RUNNING NUMBERS Don't be shocked by these figures.

76 THE INFAMOUS Our generation's most notorious hustlers.

82 MYTHS OF THE GAME *Tone Boots* sets the record straight.



THE PUNISHER

TEXAS' FORMER TOP LAWYER DEFENDS
THE DEATH PENALTY—SORT OF

The Texas penal system splits wigs like a crazed coiffeur. Since the Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty in 1976, the Lone Star State has executed 169 inmates—108 more than Virginia, which has the second-highest execution rate in the nation. Texas accounts for almost one-third of the nation's executions. And of the 440 Texans currently on death row, 42 percent are black—while blacks comprise approximately 12 percent of the state's population.

Former Texas Attorney General Dan Morales defended 127 death-sentence convictions during his eight years in office—more than any other attorney general in modern

history. But since retiring from public life last January, a year after Texas won a landmark multibillion-dollar lawsuit against the tobacco industry, Morales has grown more critical of the death penalty—although he remains a proponent of the statute. *Blaze* sat down with Morales to discuss his concerns over the racial disparities on death row and why he still defends capital punishment.

\$ o have you changed your stance on capital punishment since your retirement?

I have always been supportive of the [death penalty] statute. However, I believe the ad-

ministration of our statute can be improved. The primary concern that has been raised recently is that there is little, if any, opportunity for the public to know what transpires during that process. Death penalty cases can serve the legitimate purposes and objectives of the criminal justice system. At the same time, we can take steps to promote a greater degree of openness in terms of what standards the parole board uses to consider applications, perhaps even going so far as to allow some type of quasi-public proceeding.

Why do people consider Texas so hardcore in its implementation of the death penalty—do Texans realize they are considered by many as pariahs?

In our state, there has always been a relatively low level of tolerance for lawlessness, particularly extreme violence. I think it reflects the philosophy of our citizens. An extraordinarily harsh offense merits an extraordinarily harsh punishment.

Do you think that that philosophy is in any

way colored by race?

I hope not and believe not. However, the argument put forth by those who simply rely on the numbers is one that bears consideration. The system meets constitutional muster. But my bottom line [is that] just because our system is constitutional does not mean it can't be improved. If enough questions are asked about the legitimacy of the administration of the system, then I think state officials are obligated to take those concerns to heart. They don't have to concede unconstitutionality—I never did as attorney general. But that's not to say the disparity in racial and ethnic numbers is not a troubling aspect of our system.

What do you think young urban Americans can learn from the situation of capital punishment in Texas?

It's extremely important to ensure that system administrators—police officers, prosecutors, judges, elected officials, legislators—reflect our diverse population.

Do you think capital punishment works

as a deterrent, or is it just a matter of punishing individuals?

I do not believe that individuals who commit these types of heinous crimes go through an intellectual process in which they can contrast committing a lesser crime with committing a murder during a felony, which means they would be subject to the death penalty. I've really never been convinced that this statute operates as a deterrent.

So it's more a matter of righting a wrong?

I am unwilling to impose an artificial limitation upon jurors, 12 members of my community, regarding their ability to mete out what they believe is justice. I think they ought to be the ones deciding about appropriate responses to these crimes, and I do not believe it is appropriate for the government to artificially restrict their ability to make these decisions for themselves. I feel much more comfortable letting a jury, after having been educated with the arguments on both sides, determine what they believe is a fair, appropriate and just punishment.

Do you ever feel any sense of responsibility or guilt?

Every execution that has occurred under my watch is one where all constitutional requirements have been met; where the individual who was executed was indeed guilty; and where the jury that imposed this sanction did so based upon all the facts, evidence and information they needed in order to come to a just decision. I have always been apprehensive about the prospect of attempting to subvert or second-guess a jury's decision. We have a system of trial by jury that deserves great respect. That does not lessen the benefit of treating seriously the disparity in the demographic numbers. I think that if we are sensitive to those concerns, and really bend over backwards to ensure that in every case there is adequate representation in terms of counsel, and that all constitutional prerogatives, guarantees and requirements are forwarded and met—we will have a system that people trust.

D. Wall Rice