

HERS OPINION HIS

Drugs and the "White Devil" Theory

By Vickie Huges

I recently read an article titled, "Drugs and the 'White Devil' Theory" by Howard Kurtz (Washington Post-1990). The article stated that many blacks believe that white higher officials are allowing drugs to enter and destroy our black communities. There is no way that we can ever prove this belief. It is true that drugs are being brought into the country and are reaching our black communities but we cannot ignore the fact that the drugs are reaching other communities as well. We are all aware of the fact that drugs have affected many people, not just blacks. There are several statistics to back up this fact.

If whites were plotting to use drugs as a way to eliminate and destroy us, why would they allow so many of their own to get caught up in the destruction? I'm sure that they can think of better ways to destroy us without killing off their own. Many of us feel that whites own and control this country. If whites have that much power over us, wouldn't it be easier for them to ship us to Africa if they are thinking up ways to get rid of us?

In my opinion, the Drugs and the 'White Devil' Theory is ridiculous. To sell, buy, or use drugs is a matter of personal choice. You either want to get involved with drugs or you don't. If drugs are within reach, you can decide to resist temptations or accept it. No one can force you to do anything you don't want to do.

If we are going to blame whites for the drug problems in our communities, how are we going to explain the black drug dealers who are selling drugs to those in our black communities? Are we going to say that whites are making them do this? The true issue here is choice, not power! As referenced in Howard Kurtz's article, drugs are a major problem in many cities run by black politicians, with black police chiefs. If whites are trying to destroy us, these prominent black figures should be able to stop them. After all, they are in powerful

positions.

Let us not ignore the fact that drugs are present in white communities also. I know this to be true as a result of personal observation. I attended a predominantly white high school located in a community comprised of numerous white professionals making middle and upper income. Drugs were rampant and easily accessible in the schools and community for those who chose to indulge. It was in this community that I became aware of the fact that the drug problems in this country are not a black or white issue, but instead a worldwide issue. Drugs are everywhere!

In reference to the "White Devil" Theory, Benjamin L. Hooks, executive director of the NAACP, says, "It's simply the anguished cry of people who really don't understand how it got started in the first place and why it's out of control." I believe that we as a people are blaming whites for the deterioration of our communities because we have not come up with any other logical explanation that would help us to understand what is happening. Let's not "pass the buck." Whites are not the only ones bringing drugs into this country. Many minority groups, including our own people are infiltrating the country with drugs also.

It is useless to try to put all of the blame on others. That's the easy way out! Why not redirect our thoughts to the solutions of the destruction of our neighborhoods rather than the hypothesized causes of the problems. The question should not be how did these drugs get into our communities, but rather, how do we as a people keep them out or if they get into our communities what can we do to help people resist them. Although drugs have become a problem among all nationalities, let's focus on the low income black neighborhoods for a moment. Many of the people living in these neighborhoods have low self-esteem, believe that they are supposed to stay poor, and decide to sell or use drugs as the easy way out of their misery. We must unite as a people and

communicate to the poor black communities that there are other ways, out, other avenues to get out of this predicament.

I feel that the first step we must take is to motivate our people to want to be the best that they can be. I grew up in a black middle class family environment. Some say that I had it easy. I feel that no matter how "easy" a person has it while growing up, he/she may not be successful in life without the inner motivation to want to succeed. I do believe that many of my peers who are products of "black middle class" families had it too easy. Parents of these children gave them everything. Now, some of these children have fallen by the wayside because they never developed the motivation to succeed on their own. Things were handed to them on a silver platter; they had it too easy. On the other hand, I've seen so many individuals some out of poor black communities with inner motivation and high self-esteem who have gone on to become bankers, plumbers, lawyers, electricians, doctors, janitors, educators (and the list goes on). These individuals developed the attitude that they wanted to do better than their parents did. They wanted to get out of the slumps they were in because they did not want to spend their entire lives this way. So see, there is hope for those in low income black communities.

We must teach our people how to get a proper education, how to seek avenues for financial aid, how to find a good job, and how to feel good about themselves. As my dad, who is an elementary school principal, once said, "Every child can learn. He/she must have the proper environment to do so." We are that environment! We must do what we can to foster learning and self-esteem. We must keep our people off drugs, off welfare, out of gangs, and off the streets. It is up to us to help our people. We owe it to our communities. Stop blaming others for the destruction of our people and let's get busy!

By Ulysses Tucker, Jr.

... the epidemic of drugs and violence in the black community stems from a calculated attempt by whites to foster black self destruction ...

-Louis Farrakhan; Nation of Islam

"I think it is no mistake that a major-

ity of drugs in this country is being deposited in the black and Hispanic and lower-income neighborhoods across the country ..."

Film Maker Spike Lee

There is considerable speculation (among some black leaders) that the drug epidemic destroying the fabric of the black community is purposely being perpetrated by the white race or the federal government. Needless to say, I am not that paranoid or hold that opinion.

Granted, "the white (or devil as he is called by some) man" or the federal government may be powerful or aware of the routes taken by drug traffickers, but whatever happened to individual or personal choice?

Three weeks ago, Town Hall producer Frank Mungeam passed me a copyrighted Washington Post story published in the San Francisco Chronicle entitled, "Drugs and the 'White Devil' Theory" by Howard Kurtz. The story suggested that there is a conscious effort by the white establishment to systematically eliminate blacks and other minorities by allowing drugs to flow freely through those specific communities. Drug abuse was labeled as a modern day form of genocide without any concrete evidence to support his claim. This theory, in my opinion, as-

serts that blacks and other minorities have "zero intelligence" and are easily led to slaughter like sheep. Give me a break! Simply because drugs run rampant in the black community, does that mean that an individual has to partici-

pate in the lifestyle by selling the various products or the abuse? Have we as black people lost our aptitude to determine what is right and what is wrong? I give us more credit than that or should I?

Drug sales in the black community is a serious form of commerce and means of employment for many. The money is fast and the risks are very high. If you live by the sword, you shall perish by it. It is no

wonder so many blacks are dying in drug related deaths or victimized by violent acts associated with this lifestyle. In fact, 98% of all blacks killed in 1989 were killed by other black people and 43% of the total prison population are black. While some may be unjustly imprisoned, many are there because of violent acts and crimes. Regardless of race, if you do the crime, you should do the time. No one is above the law. Sure, there are some situations that provoke speculation as to whether the federal government is sincere about eliminating drugs from America, but then I remember that we live in a system that promotes net-profit-not human needs. Frankly, not suggesting that is right, drugs are big business and the only way to decrease sales in this particular business is to decrease consumption. Of the

\$8 billion designated by the Bush Administration to combat the "War on Drugs", 73% has been targeted towards law enforcement. Furthermore, is this indicative of the administration's attitude towards prevention or a problem that is perceived as a black problem? We all know that more whites use more drugs than black people (USA Today). Again, there are many things that I could dwell on and blame the "white man" for. Things like poverty, the staggering youth unemployment rate, and a host of other injustices. It's so easy to blame other people for what is wrong in our lives.

At some point, we as black people must be accountable for our actions, attitudes, and state of existence as a race. We have all (at some point) been exposed to crime, drugs, violence, and probably made a choice as to whether we wanted the lifestyle or not. Some people decide that they want more out of life than selling drugs, living in poverty, or participating in decadent criminal activities. I made a choice to be someone. I am a firm believer that a person can be and can achieve any objective they set out to accomplish. It's a matter of hard work, patience, and faith. A person's environment can shape their perception, but they do not have to be a product of those circumstances-be it a climate plagued by crime, drugs, or moral decay. It's up to the individual as to how they want to live.

The United States government is responsible for passing a large number of laws, legislation, and regulations to run this nation. However, the government can not legislate self-esteem, racial pride, values, morals, and a persons desire to be someone. Regardless of whether you think that black people (or other minorities) are being systematically eliminated economically, through drugs, the criminal justice system, or by whatever means necessary, one may give the federal government or the "white devil" credit for -- you are still responsible for your individual choices and self.

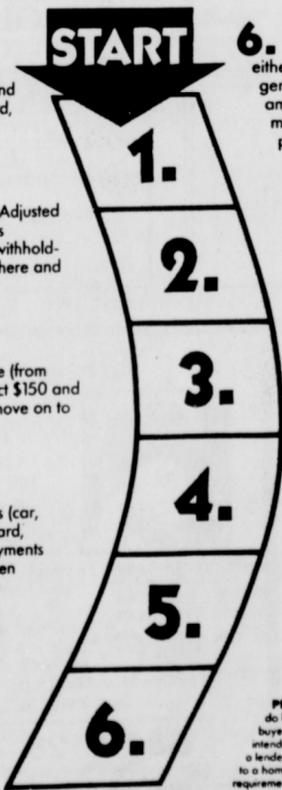


"I think it is no mistake that a majority of drugs in this country is being deposited in the black and Hispanic and lower-income neighborhoods across the country ..."

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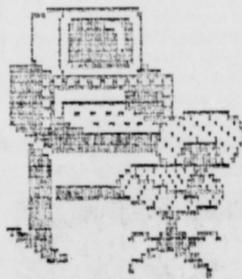
Edward Lewis, publisher of ESSENCE Magazine and Chief Executive of Essence Communications, Inc. has just been named to the TransAfrica Board of Directors. It was announced at the Annual TransAfrica Dinner held in Washington, D.C. this past weekend.

TransAfrica, America's only African-American lobby that monitors United States foreign policy toward Africa and the Caribbean, is currently working with the Congressional black Caucus to spearhead an effort to increase foreign aid authorizations for Africa and the Caribbean.

Lewis has been a supporter of TransAfrica since its inception. His company plans to honor Winnie Mandela with its prestigious ESSENCE AWARD at a 20th Anniversary celebration on October 19 at Radio City Music Hall in New York City.

This year, ESSENCE celebrates its Twentieth Anniversary. One of the fastest-growing magazines in the United States, ESSENCE has a guaranteed monthly circulation of 850,000 and a readership of more than 4 million. Its parent company, Essence Communications, Inc. (ECI), includes Essence Direct Mail, which distributes ESSENCE By mail, a catalog marketed to Black consumers, and Essence Art Reproductions. Essence Licensing, another division of ECI, includes the Essence Eyewear line and the ESSENCE Collection by Butterick, a sewing-pattern wardrobe.

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