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# OPINION

## A Real Discussion about Domestic Abuse

### An outrage that misses the mark

BY DEVIN ROBINSON

I firmly believe that women and men are equal. Get that? Equal. But if we expect real equality, then we need to be equal all across the board. We spend a significant amount of time focusing on what men should do while ignoring what women should do as well.

There are various forms of abuse: mental, verbal, and yes, physical. All abuse is wrong on both sides. Since physical abuse is more evident, we give it more attention. Because it is more detrimental when a man strikes a woman, the woman instantly becomes the victim. However, that shouldn't mean physical abuse from a woman towards a man should be minimized. Unfortunately we have become a society of "measurers".

Research has shown that

women lead violence over men in many categories including, spitting, slapping, kicking, grabbing, pushing, shoving, throwing things, damaging property and threatening harm. Men lead the charge in murders though. We commit 90 percent of all murders, but 80 percent of those murders are inflicted on other men.

Where is the outrage? I get it though. Women inflicting violence are like car accidents while men violence is like plane crashes. Car crashes happen more often with less chance of injury, while plane crashes leads to automatic investigations and fatalities. But does the physical outcome make it right?

There was literally zero outrage when Beyoncé's younger sister Solange physically attacked Jay-Z in that now infamous elevator video several months ago. Beyoncé even went on the joke about the

ordeal in her new song "Flawless." Why was it a joke? Because Jay-Z didn't hit her back. So it became okay. The only rhetoric and outrage that existed was the public's desperation to know what happened; for gossip's sake.

Whether the abuse leaves a physical mark or not, they all leave emotional wounds. A real man doesn't hit a woman, is the new rhetoric, while a woman hitting a man is comedy. When can we begin the new rhetoric of "real humans don't hit humans?" I believe no one should hit anyone. I oppose abuse and violence in all context, one reason why I oppose the death penalty. We simply don't have the right to strike one another.

There is an element we woefully ignore. When we are hard at work telling men to walk away, let's also focus on what he is being told to walk away from; which, obviously, is abuse. We are ignoring the taunting, antagonizing, provoking, and ver-

bal abuse that leads up to many physical abuse cases. We are constantly telling men to "take it," walk away but eventually all that bottling up is gonna come out somewhere, at someone or something. It's human nature. It's the abuse from abuse syndrome.

America keeps missing the mark when it comes to this topic. If women are going to fight for equality, then they must also be the change they would like to see. My fear is for my three sons with ages ranging from 19-14. They could possibly face this issue in the future and I would hope that society and justice fairly deals with it.

Here's the thing. Just like blacks spend so much time proving we are not racist that we make it easier for the racist to be racist, women spend a lot of time unconsciously proving they are not equal (with the wrong rhetoric) that it makes it easier for the chauvinists to be chauvinists.

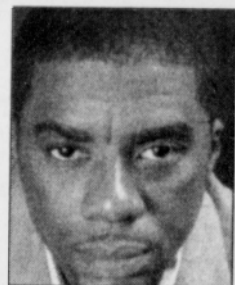
But I get it. In this country of

"who has less are automatic victims" it also holds true in the world of domestic violence; who loses the battle is the victim, forgetting that we are in the middle of a bigger war of mankind.

When we overlook taking responsibility and verbal restraint all we are really subliminally saying is women aren't equal. We are saying women have less control over themselves than men, making men the superior being, which I don't believe. It's just a cop out.

Emasculating of men and dehumanizing of women both have lasting consequences. But when we fail to have a real discussion and insist on real responsibility from both ends, and fail to focus on real equality, all we simply are is a bunch of perpetual hypocrites.

Devin Robinson is a college professor and the author of "Rebuilding the Black American Infrastructure: Making America a Colorless Nation".



## Children Incarcerated: A Father's Perspective

### Inhumane system doesn't benefit society

BY NABEEH MUSTAFA

A parent, a father, should not have to face this kind of consideration: Would his son be better off in prison, with all of the psychological damage to that



individual and family - or - free in the larger society struggling to survive while at war with himself as manifest in street gun violence in addition to being the preferred target of malicious

police and vigilante forces?

Now, if while in prison, a young man could attain a college degree and/or complete certification as a technician in a field for which society states a

need, the rate at which our young men are incarcerated might be less problematic. But that's simply not the case in the present "corrections" system.

You have all these young men in the system with Measure 11 sentences (7 1/2 year minimum) who will be released at some point. They face the very real prospect of being released back into the larger society with a huge deficit and no ability to compete in a job market that is

already difficult for those with college degrees.

It appears to be a "set-up" where the only beneficiaries are those employed by the prison industrial complex, the judiciary system and their respective owners and investors. Society does not benefit and is in fact injured and devalued by this inhumane system.

While some of us ponder this situation, trying to ascertain what an individual or organized group can do to address this issue (which affects the whole of society), daily, more young men (and increasingly, young women) are being devoured by this system and more being vomited back out.

Nabeeh Mustafa is a writer and community activist who has written three plays: "Vanport," "On Life's Terms," and "Guilty." He helped found Occupy North East to address housing and police accountability issues; is executive Secretary of X-Convicts Embracing Life, and is a spoken word artist with a just released CD, "Urban Proze." He is a retired father of three children. His daughter, Zarinah, is attending Spelman College in Atlanta. His youngest son, Warith, is serving a mandatory minimum sentence of 7 1/2 years at McLaren Correctional Facility.

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