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Best Books

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in the midst of a corporate culture tainted by intolerance in terms of skin color.

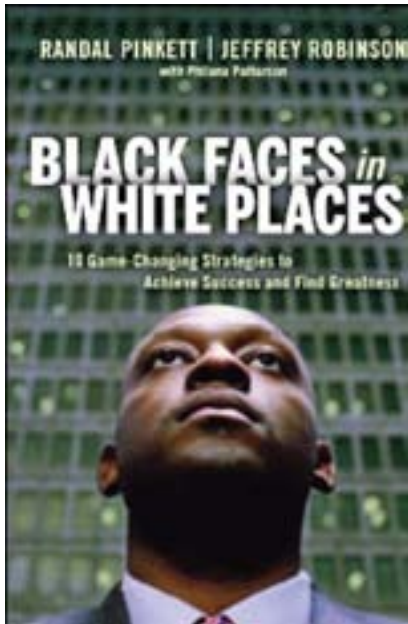
6. **The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness** by Michelle Alexander

Now that the bloom has fallen off the rose of the Obama Administration, most black folks are beginning to wake up to the fact that his election isn't about to turn the country into a post-racial utopia any time soon. To the contrary, attorney Michelle Alexander argues that in recent decades America has increasingly, and ever so subtly, adopted a color-coded caste system where minorities are targeted, stigmatized and marginalized by the criminal justice system.

Alexander, a Professor of Law at Ohio State University, makes her very persuasive case in this scathing indictment of the widespread practice of selective enforcement of draconian drug laws. Ostensibly, the aim of the U.S. government has been not only to warehouse masses of African-American males behind bars, but to relegate them permanently to a subordinate stratum of society even after they're paroled.

If the author holds out any hope for our future, it rests in raising the country's collective consciousness about the role the Apartheid-like legal system plays in perpetuating oppression along the color line. Her goal, as delin-

eated in this sterling text, is to work towards that end by generating some frank dialogue leading to a social



movement on behalf of the vast underclass of unfairly-criminalized social pariahs.

7. **Black Business Secrets: 500 Tips, Strategies, and Resources for the African-American Entrepreneur** by Dante Lee, foreword by Randal Pinkett

During these dire economic times when the overall unemployment rate in the U.S. has dipped to 9.8 percent, you can be sure that that figure is at

least double in the African-American community. And after the Democrats took what even President Obama referred to as a "shellacking" on Election Day, they've already capitulated to the Republican demand that the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy be extended.

Therefore, if you're presently out of work, I wouldn't hold my breath waiting for the supposedly-stimulative effect of that windfall for the rich to trickle-down to you in the form of a job. Instead, may I suggest perusing this invaluable how-to tome designed with ambitious self-starters in mind.

The book was written by Dante Lee, the CEO of Diversity City Media and a bona fide success story in his own right. He shares a cornucopia of practical advice based on his experiences about what's involved in getting a profitable money-making operation off the ground.

A plausible primer for financial success aimed at any aspiring entrepreneur equipped with a viable business plan and the requisite amalgam of guts, determination and common sense to make their dream a reality.

8. **Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Artist at Work** by Edwidge Danticat

This inspirational opus is a collection of essays based on a series of lectures tackling a variety of universal themes apt to resonate with any immigrant reflecting on the oppression they left behind in coming to the United States in search of fundamental freedoms, particularly Freedom of Speech. A 2009 winner of a MacArthur Genius Fellowship, author Edwidge Danticat's focus is explained by the fact that she was born in Haiti and had to spend her formative years under the thumb of the ruthlessly repressive Papa and Baby Doc Duvalier regimes.

The book opens with a gripping description of a public execution in the Sixties of a couple of Haitian political dissidents in a crowded Port-au-Prince town square aired live on TV, on a specially-declared national holiday when schools and businesses were closed in order to enable everyone to observe the grisly deaths by firing squad. But Edwidge points out that the true purpose of Duvalier's turning the event into such a spectacle was to discourage the populace from ever voicing their discontent with the status quo.

Obviously, in the case of Ms. Danticat, such attempts at intimidation ultimately backfired, for the inveterate firebrand grew up to stake her career on exposing injustice and challenging authority. The magical musings and flowery phrasings of a gifted wordsmith who, it must be noted, writes not in her native French but in the English of her adopted homeland.

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