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**SPECIAL ISSUE:
BACK TO SCHOOL**
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**LOCAL NEWS
BRIEFS**

Updated daily.



Opinion

Was Erik Killmonger Right About Wakanda?

This commentary contains major spoilers.

Marvel's big screen adaptation of "Black Panther" has surpassed all initial expectations of its debut and topped \$700 million after its second weekend.

"In terms of raw dollars, it is the second-biggest second weekend gross of all time between Universal/Comcast Corp.'s Jurassic World (\$106.5m) and Lucasfilm's The Force Awakens (\$149m)," Forbes.com reported. "It has now earned \$400m in ten days of release, which makes it the third-fastest grosser of all time (for now) behind only Jurassic World (\$404m) and The Force Awakens (\$540m)."

If anything, the success of "Black Panther" and "Girl's Trip," last year, has proven to the world that representation and inclusion is profitable.

When I went to see Black Panther during the opening weekend, the excitement from the crowd radiated throughout the theater's lobby. The joy I inhaled while standing in line to enter the theater took me higher than a preacher's Sunday sermon.

The drums and opening verse to Kendrick Lamar's "Black Panther" echoed in my head:

*King of my city, king of
my country, king of my
homeland*

*King of the filthy, king of the
fallen, we livin' again*

*King of the shooters, looters,
boosters, and ghettos poppin'*

*King of the past, present,
future, my ancestors watchin*

I loved the film, but all of us should remember that



Lynette
Monroe

NNPA Guest
Columnist

Wakanda is a figment of imagination. More accurately, Wakanda is a creation of White imagination. Killmonger is "our" reality.

A fictional Wakanda is convenient for the consciousness of the colonizer. A fictional, technologically advanced, African utopia lightens the weight of oppression by using the singular case of Black excellence, embodied in Wakanda, as the benchmark instead of a beautiful, aspirational anomaly. It then places the responsibility of reconciliation on the backs of the oppressed.

Champions of truth must not only embrace the triumphs of our history, but also the painful, complicated facts of our past.

Erik Killmonger represents an uncomfortable truth. He is the Black Panther's kryptonite. The pain of Killmonger's conflicted reality disrupts T'Challa's idealistic, progressive world. The ultimate victory of Black Panther is only secured through a cinematic miracle. Even then, the Black Panther cannot find it in himself to end the life of Killmonger; it is Killmonger himself who chooses his own end after his final battle with T'Challa.

"Bury me in the ocean with my ancestors who jumped from ships, because they knew death was better than bondage," Killmonger said in his final scene as he watched the sunset on Wakanda.

Centuries of resilience isn't some kind of honor; it is simply survival.

Although we would all like for Wakanda to exist, today, it doesn't. The painful truth is that Black people were forcefully dispersed throughout the globe, isolated from our culture, countries and families. The painful truth is that the campaign of carnage that White people have lead

“Centuries of resilience isn't some kind of honor; it is simply survival

across the globe cannot be reconciled through broad aid and well-intentioned community centers.

Partnership and collaboration, two of the many underlying themes of the film, prove elusive for Killmonger. The love between Okoye and W'Kabi ended civil war. The connection between the spiritual world and technology is the lifeline of the nation. The cooperation of M'Baku and Ramonda brought hope back to life. And, the love between Nakia and the T'Challa is slated to save the world.

Killmonger was not bestowed the privilege of partnership.

My knowledge of comic book adaptations is limited to Superman and the X-Men; in both movie franchises, characters faced deep moral decisions. These decisions are most often a test of character or weight of priority. These films, set in city centers, often display massive property damaged and presumed loss

of innocent life. However, the central internal conflict in Black Panther centered upon killing the radical pursuit of freedom.

Killmonger is a villain of White culture, the worst nightmare of the ruling class. Killmonger is the rage of a millions of people who were displaced, disregarded, and discarded. "The Black Panther" is a fictional depiction of the moral consciousness of Black people; the hope for both the oppressed and the oppressor. He is the grace of God to a people undeserving.

Mainstream dialogue on race relations in the United States naively suggests that White people simply refuse to acknowledge that the crimes of American slavery and the Trans-Atlantic slave trade continue to fuel significant disparities across the planet. I would argue that they are fully aware of their crimes, but interpret them through a filtered lens of conquest. I would argue that White people's conscious relegation of persons of color is reduced to collateral damage necessary to maintain power, wealth, and leadership.

As Killmonger fell, I longed for a Black Panther/Killmonger partnership. The partnership of rage and compassion, of power and responsibility, of justice and reconciliation deserves exploration. Resolving the conflict between the Black Panther and Killmonger is the precarious tight rope that Black folks must walk to freedom.

Killmonger's death is also a figment of White people's imagination; his conflicted fight for freedom lives on in the hearts of Black people across the globe.

Oregon House Bill Could Hurt Medical Research

Greetings I am Pastor E.D. Mondaine, a local Portland Oregon Pastor, community leader, small business owner, entrepreneur, and I am in opposition to Oregon House Bill 4005.

HB 4005, proposes to mandate biopharmaceutical companies to disclose propriety information. The passage of this could severely hurt our community and others.

My concern is that HB 4005 could hurt and severely hinder the hard work for companies to do research and development that have the potential of producing medications that could help people in the Communities of Color. Statistics prove that there are higher rates of breast cancer and other forms of cancer that affect African American communities.

There is an urgent need for these companies to be em-



Pastor E.D.
Mondaine

Guest
Columnist

powered to find cures and produce better medications for diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and sickle cell anemia.

The measures of HB 4005 disregard the fact that medicines are not the dominant drivers for healthcare-sending growth. Healthcare spending growth is due to other factors and healthcare services such as long-term care, hospitalization and provider services.

From my perspective, this bill is not truly "transparent" and doesn't require other players in the supply chain to the same transparency re-

quirements. I can't identify anywhere in it language, the benefit to patients.

There are other measures that would most assuredly help close the gap of disparity where it concerns affordable medication to marginalized and disenfranchised communities which include:

- prohibiting insurance plans that switch drug coverage in the middle of the year;
- requiring that insurance carriers offer a co-pay plan to help patients manage costs;
- requiring more transparency in drug coverage so that patients shopping for an insurance plan can understand what their medication out-of-pocket exposure will be.

All of the above listed policy options were readily available to implement this year, how-

ever, we are wasting valuable time on addressing abstract legislation that at best is unfruitful. that will deliver zero benefit to patients. Simply requiring biopharmaceutical companies to disclose pricing, which they are already required to do under federal law, will not help patients.

I fail to see where this new measure would neither benefit patients nor decrease healthcare costs.

I am in opposition HB 4005 and urge you to be as well. My hope is to encourage you to call or email any state legislator that you know and tell them to not vote in favor of this bill.

You can find your state senators and state representatives at www.oregonlegislature.gov/pages/mobile.aspx

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor E.D. Mondaine Jr.