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WALL STREET SIEGE

Protests against Wall Street spreads across U.S.



PROTESTING GREED – Hundreds of New Yorkers protesting Wall Street greed, corporate corruption and related issues continue their campout.

(See Story On Page 3)

Multiculturalism: The struggle for acceptance continues

(See Story On Page 3)



Iyaba Ibo Mandingo with his two younger sons, Atiba and Kofi

'unFRAMED' blends theater, poetry to tell Antiguan immigrant's story

By Donna Lamb

formance poet and writer.

While most of us would consider ourselves blessed to possess even one artistic talent, there are those rare individuals who are endowed with such a rich and varied array of talents it's mind-boggling. One such person is Iyaba Ibo Mandingo. This remarkable poet, performer, painter, playwright and budding actor brings these talents to the stage in his one-man autobiographical play "unFRAMED: A Man in Progress." It was performed most recently at the Gerald W. Lynch Theater at John Jay College in Manhattan as part of its 2011 Art of Justice Series, in conjunction with Double Play Connections and Doing Life Productions.

Basically, "unFRAMED" is the life story of Iyaba Ibo Mandingo - formerly Kenny Athel George DeCruise - who spent his early youth in his native Antigua, and, at age eleven, was brought to the United States by his single mother. Like many others who came to this country looking for a better life for themselves and their children, the family overstayed their visas, thus joining the ranks of the undocumented.

Iyaba had to grope his way to manhood in this unfamiliar country without the support and guidance of a father, finding his way in a society in which racism is so entrenched it even instills injustice towards each other in people of color. Eventually he found his niche as a visual artist and a per-

formance poet and writer. It was Iyaba's political poetry that almost got him deported. In 2001, shortly after the World Trade Center attack, he delivered a poem that included criticism of the United States foreign policy in relation to the cause of 9/11. Just three days after this performance, he was arrested by Homeland Security and scheduled for deportation.

Seeing a person trying to be honest about himself and his life is always riveting, but to see someone who is immensely talented do so is beyond amazing. During every performance, as Iyaba shares his joys, rage and struggles to redefine his humanity and accept himself, he weaves together prose and poetry, nuanced verbal inflection and eloquent body movement. I guarantee you won't soon forget the visual image of Iyaba crossing the stage in what can be called an exuberant African stroll, proud and feisty, locked hair flying, or the heartrending image of him becoming the physical embodiment of a grieving tree from which a lynched Black man is hanging. He charms us with delightful stories of growing up under the watchful eye of his loving but tough grandmamma in Antigua, then brings us to tears with his vivid descriptions of the plight of enslaved Africans and modern day immigrants. All the while, on a large white canvas, using his hands instead of paint-

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Iyaba Ibo Mandingo

NNPA-Nielsen Black consumer report seen as new empowerment tool

By Hazel Trice Edney

(TriceEdneyWire.com) - By the year 2015, African-Americans will be spending \$1.1 trillion a year on products and services.

Currently, the Black population in the U.S. has a buying power of nearly \$1 trillion - a figure larger than the gross domestic product of most countries in the world.

The number of African-American households earning \$75,000 or more has grown by 63.9 percent in the last decade, a rate greater than that of the overall population.

African-Americans shop more often than all other groups, but spend less money per trip because they make quicker/smaller purchases based on short-term needs.

These are just a few of the facts pulled from a new report compiled by the 71-year-old National Newspaper Publishers Association, known as the Black Press of America, and The Nielsen Company, a global monitor of media, marketing and consumer information.

NNPA leaders say the report, released Sept. 22, will generally empower African-Americans with the knowledge of their worth. But it will also empower Black newspapers with a new weapon - credible information about the power of Black consumers - to defeat advertising discrimination.

"Every time we go and talk to advertisers, including Fortune 500 Companies, there's always the possibility that they will ask us, 'Where did you get your information? How do you claim these numbers?'" says NNPA Chairman Cloves Campbell, publisher of the Arizona Informant. "Now we have a partner - a legitimate partner in Nielsen - that can say, 'Hey, these numbers came from us.' This is a legitimate firm that does business across the world and now we have a partner that can legitimize all the things we talk about when we talk about African-American consumers."

The 19-page report, "The State of the African-American Consumer", was released during a conference at the National Press Club.

NNPA, a federation of more than 200 Black-owned newspapers around the country, has long battled bias against the Black



Cloves Campbell, NNPA chairman

Press - in part - because of the undocumented spending power Black newspaper readers.

Now that the documentation is complete, Cheryl Pearson-McNeil, senior vice president of Public Affairs at The Nielsen Company, says it can be used for Black newspapers as well as other Black institutions.

"This report really is a valuable piece of communication that I am so hopeful that your companies, your organizations, your businesses will be able to utilize to help tell the African-American consumer story," Pearson-McNeil told the standing room only audience at the press conference.

Among those present were NNPA publishers, corporate and advertising executives as well as representatives of the civil rights and legal communities.

"This is going to have a tremendous rippling affect. The bottom line is that at the end of the day, we want to hold people accountable," said Danny Bakewell, former NNPA chairman who initiated the Nielsen-NNPA partnership that led to the study. "We spend our money. We expect you to be a good corporate citizen and return a fair share to our community at all levels. If we represent 25 percent of your market share, it's not unreasonable for us to ask for 25 percent return to our community."

Campbell says he sees the report working in three ways for the average Black citizen:

"One, making them more aware of what their buying and purchas-

ing power is. Two, giving them an opportunity to understand all the products that they use and all the services that they spend money on. And three, giving them the opportunity to empower themselves, to be more assertive when they go to spend their dollars, and make sure that people understand and respect the fact that we come to your stores, we spend our dollars, we make sure that your businesses are in business and so it's an overall affect that happens from it."

Bakewell agreed with Pearson-McNeil that the report will be used by various organizations for diverse purposes. For example, he said it will also be given as a tool to members of the Congressional Black Caucus and civil rights leaders.

But, mostly it is viewed as the ultimate Nielsen-confirmed evidence that Black corporations have downplayed the value of the Black dollar - evidence that can now be used as leverage.

"What it will do is substantiate in the minds of Black people the power that we have based on the money that we're spending and specifically allow us to direct our recognition to certain companies that we're spending our money with," said Bakewell, publisher of the Los Angeles Sentinel. "And when those companies recognize the kind of buying power that we have, it then gives us more influence with those companies. And of course the reverse of that is that to the extent that they're not supporting our communities, then why should we be supporting them?"

World Bank pushing China to open factories in Africa

Special to the NNPA from the GIN

The World Bank has opened talks with Chinese trade officials in an effort to bring labor-intensive manufacturing jobs to Africa, the Wall Street Journal reported. With the number of jobs falling steeply for Africa's displaced and jobless farmers, the Bank is aiming to persuade the Asian giant to relocate at least five million jobs. There are currently 85 million "low-value" manufacturing jobs (cheap clothing, toys and elec-

tronics) in China, out of a population of 1.3 billion, and only 10 million "low value" jobs in all of Africa, population one billion.

"For decades, Africans have produced what they do not consume and consumed what they do not produce," observed Andrew Rugasira, a Ugandan entrepreneur, speaking to the Journal.

While manufacturing in China has "peaked," according to some experts, jobs have been moving not to Africa but to other Asian countries, such as Vietnam and Bangladesh. Africa accounts for just 1 percent of glo-

bal manufacturing, compared with Asia's 25 percent, according to the WSJ. Meanwhile, China has embarked on a vocational school-building project in Rwanda.

The school will offer classes in construction and building services (plumbing and welding), agriculture, ICT and electronics.

The school will offer training in construction, plumbing & welding, agriculture and food processing (especially in bamboo, meat and fruit processing), ICT and electronics. It is scheduled to open in 2013. Caption: Chinese garment worker

(from page 14)

brushes, he creates from scratch an original self-portrait!

"unFRAMED" is directed by Brent Buell, himself an accomplished actor and playwright. For ten years Buell volunteered with the non-profit organization Rehabilitation Through the Arts, directing theater in New York State's maximum-security prisons. The play's creative consultant and executive producer is Jane Dubin, the TONY Award winning producer and president of Double Play Connections, a company committed to supporting emerging artists and playwrights in the creation and development of new works.

Like the "man in progress" this

play is about, the performance, too, has been a work in process. Iyaba, Buell and Dubin, are yet to say, "This is good enough" and call it a day. From its inception onward, they have courageously brought the play before diverse audiences throughout the tri-state area, garnering enthusiastic responses and valuable feedback that has helped the play evolve into its present form.

In an autobiographical presentation, one of the difficult things for any person of color in a white dominant society, and most decidedly for a person who has suffered from racism as both a Black man and an immigrant, is to figure out how to present one's anger truthfully, neither soft-pedaling it nor turning the whole perfor-

mance into a diatribe against white people and society.

For me, one of the most powerful things in the play is Iyaba's reaction to the murder of the East African immigrant, Amadou Diallo, in a hail of 41 police bullets. Iyaba's fury knows no bounds, and, as the father of three Black sons - his "three Amadous" - he is terrified. As he does in two other places in the play, Iyaba has a debate with his younger self, Kenny, this time about what is the solution to the hatred and how to end the killing.

Tormented, Iyaba stalks over to the canvas and gives form to his rage, slamming and splattering the paint onto the canvas with his bare hands. His back to the audience, we hear the sounds of his stifled sobs until the act of painting be-

comes more gentle. Gradually, it calms him down, and he goes back to telling his story.

When I had the opportunity to speak with Iyaba briefly about what this play means to him, he said, in a word, "Everything." He went on to tell me that an old family friend from Antigua who saw the play said he was proud of Iyaba for finally doing something with this talent that's been in his family for generations.

Iyaba's grandfather was once an enormous hit in a play but became a tailor instead, in order to support his family. Iyaba's mother was forced to abandon her dream of becoming an opera singer when she gave birth to Iyaba at age 19.

"So I feel like I'm doing this for my grandfather, grandmother and my mother," Iyaba explained. "Just

to see people appreciate and gravitate towards my work is great. Sometimes I have to sit back and kind of pinch myself."

Iyaba also said that the satisfaction he got knowing his mother was in the audience watching him pretend at moments to be her was as big as any awards he's ever gotten (and he's gotten many). "And as a father of five kids, I'm glad to be able to break that cycle: people of color can feel it doesn't make any sense to pursue a talent because it's not practical," he concluded. "Now my kids are watching me be successful at something I love to do, and I'm pleased as punch."

"unFRAMED" can be seen next at the All for One Theater Festival on Nov. 17 and 20. For more information, visit:

www.unframedtheplay.com.

Much ado about nuttin'

(from page 9)

vative talk show hosts, are having fun with the President's speech. Few have dealt with the substance.

There is a jobs bill in play and it will cost us nearly \$450 billion. It will put teachers, construction workers, and others back to work. It's a viable plan that doesn't offer everything, but it is a step in the right direction. Can we focus on the substance, not the rhetoric?

President Obama must be frustrated, because I surely am. With Black unemployment inching toward a third, how can we continue to afford the political stalemate that strangles progress? Why is anybody involved in a picayune debt that parses every word, and every inflection, without dealing with the substance of those words?

President Obama has been stuck someplace between a rock and a hard place since his elec-

tion. He inherited a broken economy and had few tools with which to fix it. He also has a conciliatory demeanor, which makes him a poor negotiator when his effort is to find consensus with those who have openly promised to oppose him. Had he been firmer in his first two years, he might have had a different legislative demographic to deal with in these last two years of his first term. Now, he faces a hostile House of Representatives, some who say their goal is to deny him a second term, even to the peril of our nation.

Our President's difficulties do not earn him carte blanche from those who answer to their constituencies - jobless, foreclosed on, insecure. There must always be room for principled criticism. On the other hand, our President's challenges should not earn him this micro-inspection of his every word, his every nuance. I think that when President Barack Obama was at the CBC he was "home" and he expressed himself

as if he were home - candid, fiery, frustrated, and focused. I applaud the President for his words, and for his presence at the CBC. At the same time, I stand with those like Maxine Waters (D-CA) who want more, faster, and targeted. Seasoned politicians understand the space in which our President operates, and seasoned politicians understand that while the Tea Party is pushing hard to the right, there are those who must push to the left. And still, there is a bottom line. Support this President for all of what he stands for. Offer principled criticism for ways he can do better. The criticism shouldn't be about dropping his "g's" or scolding Black folk. The criticism ought to be about ideas, proposals, effort and outcomes. The flap about President Obama's speech is much ado about nuttin' (g's deliberately dropped). What will we do to help the jobs bill pass? Right now that's the bottom line!

Julianne Malveaux is president of Bennett College for Women in Greensboro, North Carolina.

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