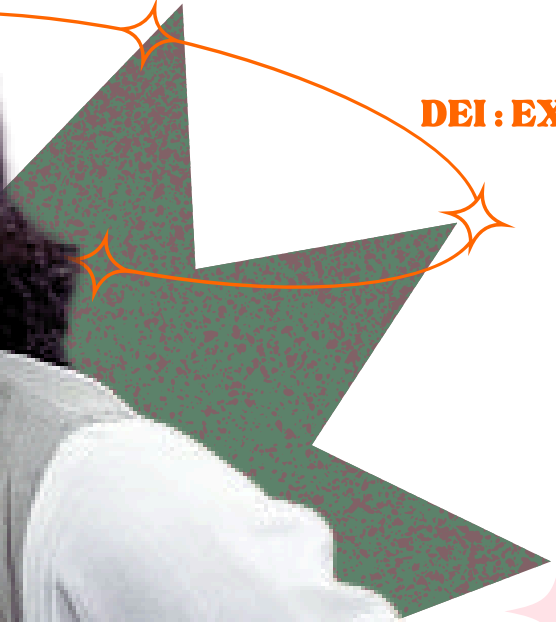
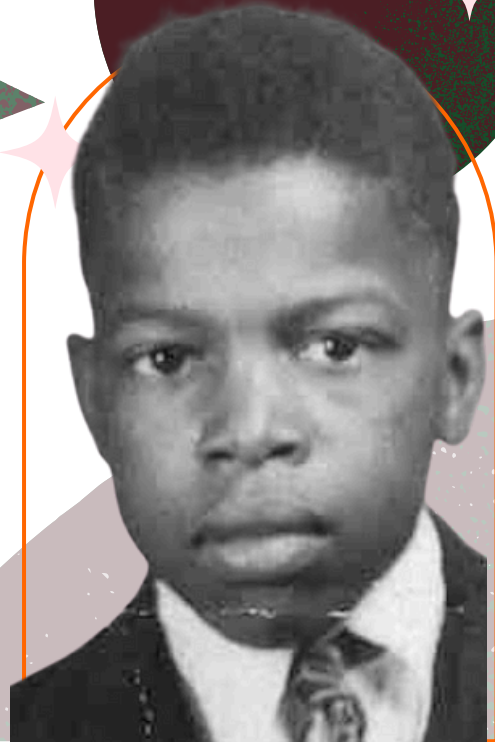
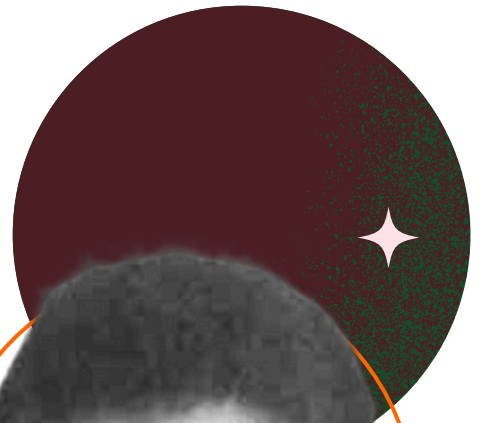




THE BLOODLINE TRIBUNE



**DEI: EXCLUSIVE OR INCLUSIVE
FOR BLACK PEOPLE?**



MARCH 2025 NEWSPAPER

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DEI: Exclusive or Inclusive for Black People?

Since its inception, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives have aimed to create more equitable environments across all sectors of society. But has DEI truly benefited Black people, or has it been more exclusive than inclusive?

At its core, DEI was designed to address historical inequalities faced by marginalized communities, including Black people. By focusing on representation, fair access, and removing barriers, DEI has opened doors for Black professionals, students, and individuals in ways that were previously unavailable. From affirmative action in hiring to diversity initiatives in higher education, these efforts have provided crucial opportunities to a community that has historically faced discrimination.

However, DEI programs have also faced criticism for sometimes lacking clear, long-term impact or for favoring other groups. Some argue that while DEI policies are intended to promote inclusion for Black people, other minority groups, particularly in racial or ethnic categories, have seen more immediate benefits as companies and institutions widen their scope.

By: Darryl Ben Yudah

Despite these challenges, DEI efforts have undeniably opened pathways for Black people in many areas, including corporate leadership, education, and healthcare. But, as we move forward, it's crucial to evaluate DEI's long-term effectiveness and ensure it continues to prioritize Black people's needs while fostering broader inclusivity.

The term "DEI" as a comprehensive framework, encompassing not only diversity but also equity and inclusion, began to take shape in the 2000s. It was increasingly recognized that diversity alone wasn't enough — there needed to be systemic changes to ensure fairness (equity) and a supportive environment (inclusion) for all groups.

So, while the exact creation of DEI as we know it today can't be pinpointed to a single date, it evolved over several decades, building on earlier movements for equality and civil rights

Meanwhile, Texas Rep. Jasmine Crockett has stated white women and Asian people were the top beneficiary of DEI programs. Yet black people remain the face of it but receive the least benefits.



The Bloodline

Ancestral Culture



Reverse racism” is sometimes used to describe situations where white people mainly narrow minded beast mentality conservatives believe they are negatively stereotyped or discriminated against because of their whiteness – or treated less favourably than people of colour. Which is delusional and sign that goes beyond the elements of mental illness. Especially when according to United States census website white folks make up 75 percent of the population and negros make up 13.7 and amazing the Latinos make up 19.5 but even when combined together equal 33.2 still does not amount to the population of white American power influence over politics, religion, economics and educational institutions.

The Trump administration's efforts to ban or limit Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives were largely driven by concerns over what they viewed as "anti-American" or "divisive" practices in government agencies, federal contractors, and educational institutions.

The administration argued that DEI programs often promoted a "left-wing" ideological agenda, encouraging racial or gender-based division, creating discrimination against certain

Marcelline Anderson - 2023



DEI: Exclusive or Inclusive for Black People?

groups, and promoting concepts like critical race theory, which they opposed.

Elon Musk, who wrote in an X post last year “DEI is just another word for racism.” Yeah the racism that white folks like him continue to practice even after the Civil Rights Act, signed in 1964 by President Lyndon B. Johnson was created to level things out.

According to Time Magazine

Almost over 6,000 Black workers from Tesla Inc.’s California factory can sue the car maker collectively over claims that it failed to protect them from racism, under a tentative ruling by a California judge.

"EEOC Sues Tesla for Racial Harassment and Retaliation"

"Federal Lawsuit Alleges Black Employees Endured Open Hostility and Racism"



Green Valley Pharmacy 1952

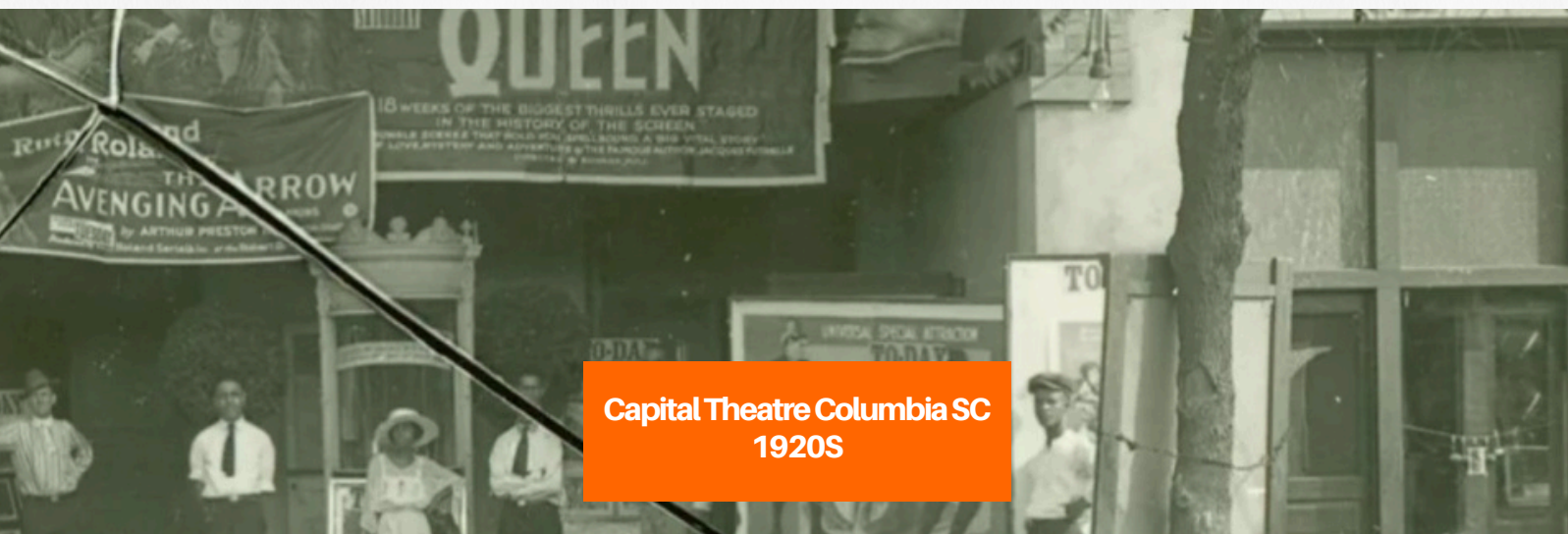
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DEI: Exclusive or Inclusive for Black People?

FREMONT, Calif. – Electric car maker Tesla, Inc., violated federal law by tolerating widespread and ongoing racial harassment of its Black employees and by subjecting some of these workers to retaliation for opposing the harassment, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) charged in a lawsuit filed today.

*According to the EEOC's suit, since at least 2015 to the present, Black employees at Tesla's Fremont, California manufacturing facilities have routinely endured racial abuse, pervasive stereotyping, and hostility as well as epithets such as variations of the N-word, "monkey," "boy," and "black b*tch." Slurs were used casually and openly in high-traffic areas and at worker hubs. Black employees regularly encountered graffiti, including variations of the N- word, swastikas, threats, and nooses, on desks and other equipment, in bathroom stalls, within elevators, and even on new vehicles rolling off the production line, the EEOC said.*

The EEOC's investigation also found that those who raised objections to racial hostility suffered various forms of retaliation, including terminations, changes in job duties, transfers, and other adverse employment actions.



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DEI: Exclusive or Inclusive for Black People?

The EEOC investigated Tesla after EEOC Chair Charlotte A. Burrows filed a commissioner's charge alleging that Tesla violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by subjecting Black employees to an unlawful hostile work environment and retaliating against employees for opposing harassment. Title VII prohibits racial harassment and requires employers who receive harassment complaints to take prompt and appropriate action to investigate and stop it".

This is why DEI was the natural of the threat.

They used base jendi mind tricks on everybody to gain control like they are so white saviors but remember the devil act like a angel of light but is full of evil and wickedness. In urban terms " Trump administration are fake and phony and voters are crash dummies.



Harlem Black Owned Grocery store 1937

DEI: Exclusive or Inclusive for Black People?



Trump administration issued an executive order that prohibited federal agencies and contractors from conducting training that promoted "divisive" concepts such as the notion that America is fundamentally racist. The administration contended that DEI programs could lead to reverse discrimination and that these efforts were seen as fostering political correctness, rather than promoting genuine inclusion.

After all (DEI) is an inclusive concept that was created to welcome and respect people from all backgrounds. Even though the Trump administration too stupid and more narrow minded than the righteous path believe it's exclusive, but rather a way to create white domination



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The Bloodline unites us
all throughout the
Diaspora.



MARCH 2025



The Need for Black Nationhood Today, Project 2026

The beginning of this year has certainly been quite intriguing, to say the least. Newly elected President Trump has settled into office, the country itself has seem to become more "American" than ever before. There is significant concern regarding the cancellation of DEI programs and other initiatives designed to promote "inclusivity" Likewise groups such as



Neo Nazis, white supremacist and others have publicly held demonstrations to make America "white" again. The response I've seen from much Blacks across the country has been the need to protest, boycott and plead for the God Given rights that honorable Marcus Garvey already Implemented that we were given at our very own Birthright. Ironically, I feel that this process is not only exhausting but also misguided.

In my truthful honesty it is my perspective that things were much better for blacks during segregation. I will never condone the racism endured by our ancestors or the neglect they faced, but we must always remember the significant achievements they made that some may wish to overlook today. That they refuse to teach about. I frequently imagine the experience of entering a Black-owned hospital and being cared for by professionals who share my background, eliminating the unconscious feeling of being viewed as secondary. Similarly, I envision visiting a Black-owned grocery store to purchase fresh produce, where I am treated not just as a customer, but as a valued member of the community.

Detilah Blake - Artist



The Need for Black Nationhood Today, Project 2026

The concept of segregation appears to be primarily associated with schools and restaurants where our ancestors faced refusal or were forced to use a back entrance to receive service. Discussions about the number of Black-owned businesses that thrived during that period, in comparison to today, are seldom held. In a time where the Black spending dollar yearly reaches the trillions it is unheard of and even unavailable to say least to spend this amongst each other. The drive for integration in response has resulted in a diminished sense of community and national identity. Closing Black Businesses, breaking black families all in efforts to obtain Dr. King prospective "dream" which was just that a dream.

Despite the numerous challenges and obstacles intentionally placed in our path, many of us have successfully navigated the barriers of corporate America.. I never believed that America would truly embrace diversity and inclusivity.. When focusing solely on its historical performance.Black people are still looked at as an asset or monetary value rather than human. It was only after the great Marcus Garvey declared to the world that we chose to unite and embrace our national identity collectively.

The Need for Black Nationhood Today, Project 2026

The attempts to seek acceptance could be far more productive if channeled into a collective effort for mutual self-sufficiency. Join together to establish businesses, shop at those establishments, and actively support and promote them. "If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair." advised political powerhouse Queen Shirley Chisholm. We have discovered alternative uses for the folding chair instead.



Notable actor Larenz Tate expressed it perfectly: "Never beg for a seat when you can build your own table." We are now



in a time where we have no choice but to create our own tables, schools, programs, infrastructure, and whatever else our community requires. We must embrace the practice of constructing for ourselves instead of depending on unworthy promises and feeble compromises.



The Need for Black Nationhood Today, Project 2026

Times have never been separate nor truly equal. However, the sense of safety provided by our communities offered us some peace of mind in contrast to the constrained environment we find ourselves in today. A drive for self-creation fueled many remarkable Black inventors. Their contributions, both recognized, later recognized and patented, have often been exploited by individuals who do not share their background. With the credited history that Black have gave to America in all aspects it is by no means undoubtedly possible to create and build our own.

Most children will receive little more than a fleeting glimpse of genuine Black history if we rely solely on society or schools for its education. I believe that establishing a solid foundation of genuine, unbiased Black education fosters a profound sense of pride within our race. Instead of adopting a passive mindset that suggests we are always secondary or subordinate to others, which is far from the truth. We learn the Pledge of Allegiance before being introduced to figures like Marcus Garvey or the Pan African flag. Ultimately, we have to take responsibility for this, as no one else governs the education that occurs within our homes except for us. Our ancestors didn't just forge paths; they first had to create them.

The Need for Black Nationhood Today, Project 2026



Deacons of Defense

This calls for a collaborative effort that is increasingly rare in today's world. However, during these times, there is no better chance to explore possibilities. What alternatives have proven effective? What other approaches appear to be resourceful? What solutions have demonstrated any potential? While many individuals in our diaspora identify our heritage as African, some refer to themselves as indigenous, while others embrace different nationalities or identities. Nevertheless, the world continues to recognize us under the unified and dignified term of Black. Where we take pride in what they regard with shame. In today's world, the need for collective unity is not merely a request or suggestion; it is an imperative. "Everyone Can Do Something" embodies the motivational spirit we should embrace. It encourages us to reflect on how we can assist others without anticipating any rewards. It's simply about the honor of being able to serve our people. "No race can achieve prosperity until it recognizes that there is equal dignity in cultivating a field as there is in composing a poem," proclaimed the esteemed Booker T. Washington. While I may not have agreed with many of his viewpoints, his dedication to fostering collective cooperation among our community was evident. He made a significant impact by establishing schools across the nation for individuals who look like us.

THE BLOODLINE

THE NEED FOR BLACK NATIONHOOD TODAY, PROJECT 2026

It is not unexpected to witness the resurgence of discriminatory elements from the past in contemporary society. The canceling of so called Black national holidays, recognitions, programs and more. All of these which were offered to us as a mild compromise when contrasted with the genuine recognition and reparations that are rightfully due for the contributions of our ancestors. In response more performative works such as "target boycotts" and protest spur across the country in a senseless hope. I believe we have progressed beyond those initial attempts that appeared to be less aggressive and more passive. We must now recognize that our greatest asset is each other. Collaborative dedication among all of us is vital for creating authentic solutions. This concept is referred to as collective unity.



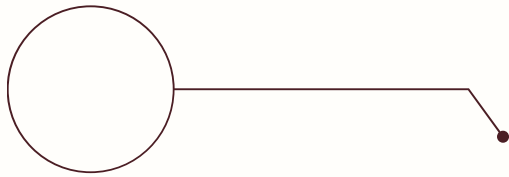
The Need for Black Nationhood Today, Project 2026

It begins by providing our youth, our future, with a genuine sense of identity that is distinct from the Americanized perception of who we are. If we persist in adopting these practices, we will perpetually always feel as though we are in a secondary position. The dedication of every Black person's religion, belief, gang, organization or all other forms of loyalty should be subordinated and directed towards a collective national mindset.

In hindsight, this is precisely what the Bloodline embodies. It represents the unifying force that connects us all—a fresh wave of solidarity challenging the current norms. It establishes a direct link from our ancestors to the present and onward to future generations. Today, I urge you to adopt this mindset in your daily endeavors. When one person embraces this outlook,



they can inspire another, and then another, until we gather enough strength to effect real change. We have witnessed powerful examples through the honorable Marcus Garvey and the UNIA, as well as through the esteemed Malcolm X and the Organization of Afro-American Unity. This collective unity consists of platforms and structures that resonate with everyone. It is something to take pride in, celebrate, and fight for. This is the essence of the Bloodline.



NELLIE BROWN

Black Cowgirl 1880s

The Bloodline unites us all
throughout the Diaspora.



MARCH 2025

THE BLOODLINE

WHO GETS TO BE *Country?*

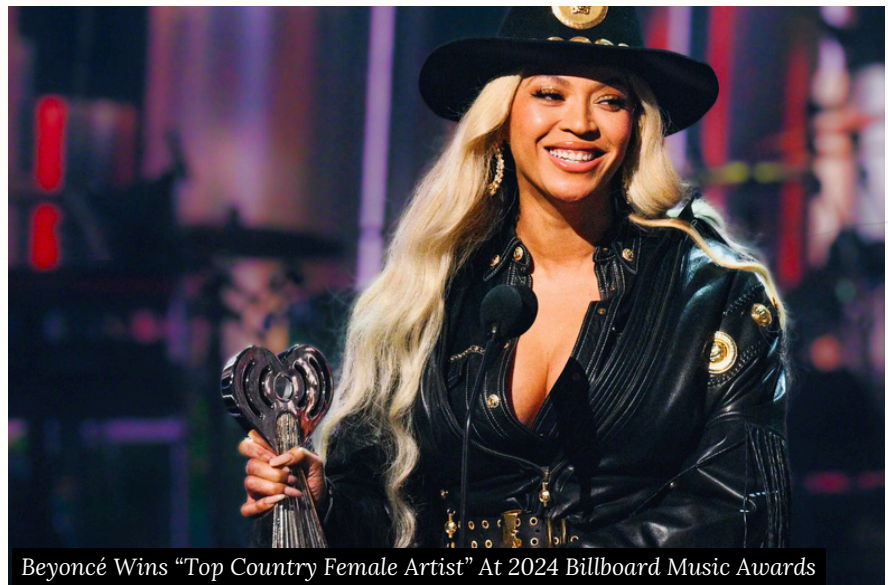
COUNTRY MUSIC'S IDENTITY CRISIS: THE GATEKEEPERS,
THE CULTURE CLASH, AND THE **BEYONCÉ EFFECT**

Country music has long been branded as a white genre, but its roots tell a different story—one deeply embedded in Black musical traditions.

Country music is having another moment—but whose moment is it? With the release of Beyoncé's "*Cowboy Carter*", conversations about **race, ownership, and authenticity in country music** have reignited. The outrage from country purists and the celebration from Black communities highlight a fundamental identity crisis: **Who gets to be "country"?** This article examines the deep-rooted Black influence in the birth of country music, and how Beyoncé may be bringing country back home.

THE ORIGINS OF COUNTRY: A BLACK MUSICAL TRADITION

Country music has deep roots in Black culture, yet mainstream narratives often downplay or outright ignore these contributions. In the early 20th century, African American musicians played a significant role in shaping the genre, incorporating elements from field hollers, spirituals, the blues,



Beyoncé Wins "Top Country Female Artist" At 2024 Billboard Music Awards

and banjo rhythms—an instrument that originated in Africa. These traditions laid the foundation for what would later be labeled as "hillbilly" music, which eventually evolved into country.

Black musicians in the rural South played the banjo, fiddle, and early forms of the steel guitar, shaping the sound that country music later embraced as its focal point. Black cowboys and folk musicians passed down ballads and oral storytelling traditions that became hallmarks of country songwriting.

Although Black artists were instrumental in shaping country music, Black artists and originators

were largely excluded from performing or participating in the industry as country music became a commercial genre.



Beyoncé performs at the 2016 CMA Awards.



DeFord Bailey (1899–1982)



Lead Belly (1888–1949)



Charley Pride (1934–2020)

BLACK PIONEERS AND ORIGINATORS OF COUNTRY MUSIC

DeFord Bailey:

A harmonica master and the first Black performer at the **Grand Ole Opry**. Despite his immense talent, he was dismissed from the **Opry** and faded into obscurity until his late-life recognition.

Lead Belly:

Known for songs like “**Goodnight Irene**” and “**Midnight Special**”, which were later recorded by white artists with little credit to him. His storytelling and folk music deeply influenced early country.

Charley Pride:

A country music trailblazer and the first Black superstar in the genre. Despite facing racism, he earned **29 No. 1 hits**, won **multiple CMA awards**, and became the first Black inductee into the **Country Music Hall of Fame**.

THESE ARTISTS LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR COUNTRY’S DEVELOPMENT, YET THEIR IMPACT HAS OFTEN BEEN DOWNPLAYED OR OUTRIGHT ERASED FROM ANY MAINSTREAM NARRATIVES.



Sister Rosetta Tharpe (1915–1973)

A gospel-blues innovator whose guitar style shaped rock and country music. Despite influencing legends like Elvis Presley and Johnny Cash, she was largely erased from country’s history.



Ruby Falls (1946 – 1986)

Falls charted **nine singles between 1975 and 1979**, including her hit “**Sweet Country Music**”. After leaving **Plantation Records** due to its offensive name and bias toward white artists, Ruby was blackballed, silencing her career and forcing her into early retirement.



Big Mama Thornton (1926–1984)

The original voice behind “**Hound Dog**”, a song Elvis Presley made famous. While his version brought him millions, she was denied recognition and fair compensation.

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THE ERASURE:

A Hillbilly Hijack that Gave Country Music a *Color Change*



The emergence of the Grand Ole Opry as a central institution in country music further solidified this racial divide, favoring white artists and excluding Black musicians. The rise of rock and roll—ironically influenced by Black country and blues music—also contributed to this shift, with white audiences associating country with whiteness and moving Black artists into the blues or R&B categories.

As country music gained popularity in the early-to-mid 20th century, the industry deliberately distanced itself from Black artists. Radio stations and record labels segregated music into "hillbilly" (for white audiences) and "race records" (for Black audiences), effectively excluding Black musicians from country airwaves. Over time, country music was branded as a "white genre," and Black contributions were systematically erased or appropriated with no credit.



Linda Martell (b. June 4, 1941)

The first Black woman to perform at the *Grand Ole Opry*,

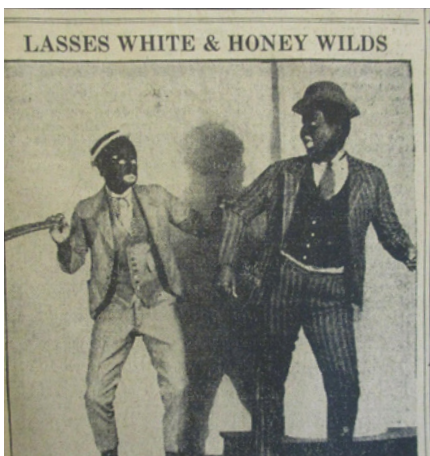
Martell made history with her 1969 hit "*Color Him Father*" which made her the first Black woman to chart on Billboard's country chart. Despite her talent and growing success, ***she faced relentless racism***, both from audiences and the industry. She was heckled at performances, dismissed by country gatekeepers, and ***sabotaged by her own label, Plantation Records***, which refused to support her career and ultimately pushed her out of the genre. ***Blackballed from country music***, Martell was forced into early retirement, while white artists continued to thrive off a sound she helped shape.



MINSTRELS & MOCKERY: THE OPRY'S DIRTY LITTLE SECRET

The Grand Ole Opry has long been hailed as the heart of country music, but its early years tell a much darker story—one where Black culture was mocked rather than honored. In the early 20th century, blackface performances were a regular part of the show, with white performers smearing on burnt cork to impersonate caricatured versions of Black people.

Acts like Lee "Lasses" White and Lee "Honey" Wilds leaned into minstrel traditions, playing up racist stereotypes for laughs while Black artists were barred from the stage entirely.



Jamup and Honey do the blackface comedy just as they have on the Opry every Saturday night for the last 18 years. They have been featured on some of the most famous shows on the road as well as on TV, radio and screen.

This wasn't just harmless entertainment—it was a deliberate effort to control the image of Black people in country music, reducing their presence to racist parodies while simultaneously blocking them from the industry. Blackface at the Opry helped reinforce the false narrative that country music was a white-only genre, sidelining the very Black musicians who shaped its sound. Instead of inviting real Black talent into the fold, the industry opted for imitation, ensuring that

Black artists remained invisible while white performers profited from their erasure.

This exclusion didn't stop at the Opry—it became the foundation of country music's industry-wide discrimination. Record labels categorized Black artists as "race records," radio stations refused to play their songs, and country's gatekeepers built a system that benefitted from Black creativity while denying Black artists access to the stage.



Lee "Lasses" White joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1934.

NO MORE STOLEN SONGS

BLACK ARTISTS DEMAND THEIR DUE

For decades, Black artists have fought back, calling out an industry that profits from Black creativity while denying Black artists their due credit, compensation, or visibility.



**THE SELF CARE
SNOB**
CONTRIBUTOR

Through music, public outcry, and organized movements, Black country artists have exposed an industry built on theft and erasure—and every time the industry tried to deny them, they refused to be silenced.

Lil Nas X and the Racist Gatekeeping of Country Music

When Lil Nas X released *Old Town Road*, it skyrocketed to popularity, blending hip-hop and country in a way that resonated across audiences and genres. But Billboard removed it from the country charts, claiming it didn't have "enough country elements"—despite the genre's long history of embracing white artists who incorporated pop, rock, and R&B influences.

The backlash was swift. Fans and fellow Black artists called out the hypocrisy, forcing a national conversation on country music's exclusion of Black artists.



Lil Nas X: *Old Town Road*

Only after Billy Ray Cyrus joined the remix did the song get reaccepted into the country conversation—this time, with the white industry's stamp of approval.



Beyoncé: *Cowboy Carter 2024*

The Cowboy Carter Snub Sparks a Social Media Revolt

Beyoncé's *Cowboy Carter* made history as the first country album by a Black woman to top the country charts. It was a flawless blend of traditional country elements infused with blues, gospel, and soul—genres deeply rooted in Black musical history. Yet, the Country Music Association (CMA) failed to nominate the album for any major awards, reigniting the long-standing grievances about the industry's racial bias.

For decades, Black country artists have struggled against an industry that reaped all the benefits of their influence while keeping them on the sidelines.

Beyoncé's omission from the CMA Awards only reinforced what many already knew: **country music institutions continue to gatekeep Black artistry**, aiming only to recognize it when it remains secondary to its white counterparts.



Tierra Kennedy: 2023 CMT Awards

NO PERMISSION NEEDED DENIED, BUT NOT DEFEATED

THE OUTRAGE WAS IMMEDIATE.

Black country artists, fans, and activists launched social media campaigns calling for accountability within the music industry, using hashtags like #CMABlackout and #CountryMusicSoWhite to highlight the systemic exclusion of Black musical genius.

Even Black female country artists who have won awards in the past have rarely received the same level of industry support as their white peers.

Mickey Guyton
the first Black female artist to be nominated for a Grammy in a country category (*Black Like Me*, 2020).

has spoken openly about the discrimination she has faced. Despite her unmistakable talent, she remains one of the only Black women acknowledged at major country music award shows since their inception.

Similarly, Tracy Chapman made history in 2023 when Luke Combs' cover of her song Fast Car won CMA Song of the Year, making her the first Black woman to receive a songwriting award at the CMAs. But the fact that it took a white male artist's version of her song for her to receive that recognition only underscored the industry's ongoing bias. These milestones aren't signs of progress—they are exceptions to a rule that still exists.



Tracy Chapman performs "Fast Car" at 2024 Grammy Awards

RECLAMATION, AND RECKONING

The CMA tried to shut Beyoncé out, but—as if that was ever going to work—she responded in the most Beyoncé way possible. Instead of waiting for validation from an institution that had already made its bias loud and clear, she doubled down with **Cowboy Carter**—an album that wasn't just country, but a history-making reclamation.



Mickey Guyton 2021 Grammy Awards

This was more than just an album—it was a statement. *Cowboy Carter* forced a reckoning, shifting the public conversation from “Do Black artists belong in country?” to “Why is the industry still trying to keep them out?”. And Beyoncé made it clear: she didn't need their permission to take up space.



Beyoncé: Cowboy Carter 2024



Beyoncé: Cowboy Carter

FROM YN'S TO YOUNG KINGS



"IT'S ELEMENTARY/THEY WANT US ALL GONE EVENTUALLY"

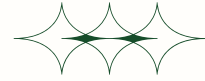


IF I RULED THE WORD- NAS

MINISTER PAUL SCOTT



FROM YN'S TO *Young Kings*



Lil J was known for wildin' out in his hood. Every morning he would go on Tik Tok flashing his gun and bragging about how many of his opps he had shot the night before. All was fun and games until he woke up one morning to find a tank parked outside his door with a National Guardsman yelling for Jameson J Smith to come out with his hands up...



There is a new variant of the dreaded N word that is spreading across the country, "YNs." While the N word has plagued the Black community for centuries, this new strain is even more deadly, YNs (Young Niggas) is the latest slang word in the hood lexicon that refers to young African American men without morals, a code of ethics or guidance.



FROM YN'S TO *Young Kings*



While in previous years, this might be overlooked as just another phase of youth cultural rebellion that will be replaced next year with something else, with the current mandates coming out of the White House, this situation is different.

Since his election campaign, President Donald Trump has pledged to restore “Law And Order” to America. Historically, every time this phrase is used it creates disastrous consequences for the Black community.

If you can remember during the late 60’s, President Richard “Tricky Dick” Nixon called for “law and order” as a reaction to the nationwide rebellions that took place after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This siren call resulted in the neutralization of the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army.



FANNIE *LOU* HAMMER

Momma Hamer served as a fearless, selfless hard working individual for Black Nationalism.

OCT . 17TH
1917



FROM YN'S TO *Young Kings*



During the 80's President Ronald Reagan's version of law and order was his so called "war on drugs." Reagan had the whole world believing that the greatest threat to civilization was a future army of crack babies that would, eventually, destroy the nation. This paranoia set in motion a series of actions that would lead to the mass incarceration of young Black males , tougher sentencing for nonviolent offenses and the construction of the prison industrial complex.

In later years, showing that the stereotyping of urban males was bipartisan, President Bill "Slick Willie" Clinton's wife, Hillary, coined the term "super predators" a not-so-subtle reference to gang culture.

THE BLOODLINE



In 2025, in cities all around the country, people are asking what can be done to curb youth gun violence. In cities like Durham, North Carolina, there has been a rash of shootings recently, where Black youth have either been the perpetrators or the victims. Every night the evening news is flooded with stories about how children as young as 14 years old are carrying high powered assault rifles and creating havoc, so much so that citizens are begging for any solution to stop the bloodshed.

This is what makes Trump's call for law and order so concerning. The anti-black youth propaganda has been so pervasive that draconian measures to restore order will be met with little outcry from the community.

Let us be clear. There is little truth to the myth that the majority of African Americans embrace criminal behavior and are soft on crime. We just know the history of the heavy handed crime prevention approach and how it can result in innocent Black youth being swept up in a drag net and seen as just "casualties of the war on crime, with the response from politicians and law enforcement being "well, y'all wanted safer streets. Here you go."



THE BLOODLINE

Although many like to parrot the idea that we have tried everything as an alternative to mass incarceration and tougher sentencing laws, as the Tik Tok generation would say, “that’s cap” aka a lie. In very few cities has an African-centered approach to stopping youth violence been utilized. Just mention the works of Amos Wilson (Black on Black Violence), Michelle Alexander (The New Jim Crow) or Joyce Degruy (Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome) and you will receive a clueless blank stare from policy makers.

In cities across the country we must inact a strong YNs to YKs Movement, (Young Niggas to Young Kings) where black cultural and political education is used to steer our youth in the right direction on a boots on the ground level.

So, the question facing us in 2025 is, if given a sincere choice, will this new generation of YNs join us in the socio-economic and political fight to make our communities better or will we have to face the grim reality, like Kendrick Lamar said, “They not like us?”





Deacons for Defense, a militant self-defense organization founded by Black Americans in 1964.

Deacons

Of Defense



PHYSICAL EXERCISES AND PRACTICES FOR SELF DEFENSE

31

CHUCK KING

Regardless of the prevailing narrative, the necessity for both armed and unarmed self-defense practices is considered essential rather mandatory within the Black community. History teaches us that we should always be ready, both at home and within our community. Great teachers like Robert F Williams encouraged that all Blacks should be armed and equipped with the proper tools of self defense. However, this begins with physical exercises, especially in situations where a self-defense weapon may not be accessible. This approach also fosters a sense of discipline while serving as a method to maintain good

good health. Self-defense has been a part of our culture since ancient times. However, narratives often overlook our stories of resilience and empowerment, instead promoting the misleading idea that we passively endure harm and oppression.

Before diving into the actions, we must first focus on our mindset. Self-defense is primarily about safeguarding oneself rather than showing aggression. It starts with emotional management. Characteristics such as pride and ego can mislead us into thinking we must display force to "validate" our strength, often in an attempt to avoid appearing weak or gullible. This is actually the slave mindset. In situations where we let others determine our worth or inadvertently allow them to influence our fate, especially if we do not manage circumstances properly.



PHYSICAL EXERCISES AND PRACTICES FOR SELF DEFENSE

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Here are some techniques and exercises for you to try out.

Avoidance - Live to fight another day, live to return to our families. Employing avoidance is closely linked with de-escalation; both serve as essential survival tactics in today's world. If a conflict can be sidestepped, it should be. This applies not only to interactions among ourselves but also with those who may not look like us. Numerous justified self-defense cases have unjustly criminalized our communities within a biased justice system. We must recognize that we don't have the luxury of privilege here and there are those who seek to exploit this as an opportunity for predation.

Many of you may have encountered this false sense of "boldness" at various points in your lives. Be mindful that situations worth avoiding may serve as intentional distractions for your mind



Self-defense should never stem from emotional impulses. As the elders used to say, a good run is better than a bad stand. In our community, this practice can not only enhance self-defense but also save lives. It is crucial to shift the narrative of viewing ourselves as our own adversaries.

Combat Sports- Engaging in combat sports is an excellent way to develop skills and prepare

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for real-life situations. While our culture has dominated boxing for years, you don't need to be Muhammad Ali or Mike Tyson to appreciate and learn the sport. Interestingly, martial arts are often associated with Asian cultures, even though they have been part of our culture since ancient times. Personally, I studied Shaolin Kenpo, and the mental discipline I gained from it influences my daily life.

Exploring different variations of self-defense is encouraged, as martial arts encompass thousands of styles to learn and become comfortable with. The renowned Michael J. White has trained in over nine different styles, including Shōtōkan, Goju-Ryu (where he honed his technique under Master Eddie Morales), Taekwondo, Kobudō, Tang Soo Do, Wushu, Jujutsu, Kyokushin, and Boxing, with a particular focus on Kyokushin Karate.

Additionally, wrestling is another combat sport worth noting—not the WWE version, but genuine wrestling. Young athletes who start early have opportunities for scholarships in this sport. Recently, Morgan State University and Delaware State University have introduced wrestling programs, while Allen University in South Carolina features both men's and women's wrestling teams.

Fencing, a unique swordsman sport may seem Black culture, yet many have achieved great success in it. Its origins trace back to stick fighting in modern-day Egypt. Everything in evidence came from us. Historically, Black individuals were often excluded from fencing programs in early America, making it even more important for us to participate and excel today. Peter Westbrook became the first Black American to win an Olympic medal in fencing at the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles, and in 2024,

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Laura Scruggs made history as the first Black woman to earn an Olympic medal in the sport. As we continue to break down barriers, picking up this hobby is an opportunity more of us should embrace. Combat sports serve as excellent methods to keep our community fit while also equipping us with the skills to defend ourselves if necessary.

Being Alert/Aware- Inadequate preparation leads to unsatisfactory outcomes. For the Black community, situational awareness is essential in today's world. Observing our surroundings helps us safeguard ourselves and those we cherish. Unfortunately, innocent bystanders often fall victim to unforeseen incidents. It is unrealistic to assume we can read everyone's authentic intentions. Consider the tragic event that occurred in Charleston, SC, in 2015 at Mother Emanuel AME, where nine cherished members of our community lost their lives. The murderer, whose name I will not mention until justice is served, had conducted reconnaissance on several Black churches before committing this act, including visiting this very church beforehand.

While the church is a cornerstone of the Black community, it also contains vulnerabilities that challenge the warrior mindset of our ancestors. Historically, this has been a target for attacks, including church bombings and fires, and ruthless acts. Thus, it should be a standing point for self-defense. We must always be aware of potential threats. For Black individuals, situational awareness must evolve into a lifestyle—a fundamental way of living. The truth is, it always has been. We may feel safe in our homes or natural environments among our own. However, stepping outside means understanding that we are often targets.



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I won't enumerate the numerous instances where we have failed to protect our own without achieving justice. Black men must take the lead in safeguarding our community, with the collective responsibility resting on every single one of us, man, woman and child. Situational awareness involves being conscious of your surroundings, comprehending what is happening, and responding appropriately. We must carry a defensive strategy with us at all times, discreetly—never flaunting or boasting about it. Being aware of our environment is one of the most effective self-defense and prevention tactics we can adopt.



Prior to acquiring the necessary training and discipline to achieve proficiency in firearms, we should first establish the right mental and physical state. Even for those who believe they are sufficiently trained, it is essential not to overlook the fundamental self-defense skills that could be crucial in an emergency or everyday situations. The practice of self-defense within our culture is not meant to promote violence; rather, it helps to reduce it while fostering discipline and unity within our tribe.



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