



## “Taking On Hollywood” - African American Filmmakers Flip the Script

by Tanisha Coleman

*BlackPRWire* - There are many African American filmmakers today that are taking on Hollywood and flipping the script to get the job done. What is the job, exactly? To produce something that not only caters to African Americans, but that also changes Hollywood's traditional perception and portrayal of Blacks in film.

According to [www.africanamericans.com](http://www.africanamericans.com), a younger generation of black filmmakers are emerging from key academic institutions including the film schools of University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), the University of Southern California, New York University (NYU), and from historically black schools such as Howard University. These schools have variously embraced Van Peebles, Micheaux, and African filmmakers such as Ousmane Sembene of Senegal as their cultural models.

Spike Lee, an NYU alumnus, is probably the best

known of the black filmmakers during the 1980s and 1990s. He was successful in attracting large audiences for almost everything he produced – from film school exercises, to credit-card-financed early efforts such as *She's Gotta Have It* (1986), to television commercials and promotional pieces. He also directed a string of Hollywood successes, including one of the most politically challenging and commercially successful films of the new black cinema, *Do the Right Thing* (1989). Oh, but let's not forget Malcolm X, a favorite among African American moviegoers.

Today, Spike Lee has been joined by John Singleton, Keenan Ivory Wayans, Anthony Fuqua, and many other Black filmmakers. The good news is that as black filmmakers have become more prolific, black actors in Hollywood have been getting steady, rather than sporadic work. By the late 1990s, the steadily expanding black presence in American film

seemed to assure a solid future for the new black cinema.

We would be remiss if we didn't give thanks to the formation of organizations such as the Black Hollywood Education and Resource Center (BHERC), which was formed in 1996. This organization, along with its predecessors and followers, has helped Black cinema to prosper. As a non-profit organization designed to advocate, educate, research, develop and preserve the history, as well as the future of Blacks in film and television, the BHERC helps produce and fund diverse film and theater projects.

If one thing is certain, Black filmmakers will remain committed to taking on Hollywood and flipping the script to create a Hollywood experience that embraces African American culture and our rich history and traditions.

*The thing about hip-hop today is it's smart, it's insightful. The way they can communicate a complex message in a very short space is remarkable.* – Barack Obama



## CELEBRITY ROUNDUP!

By Semaja Haney

Hey there ladies and gents! It's time to see what's going on with our friends in the celebrity world. Here's your Celebrity Roundup!



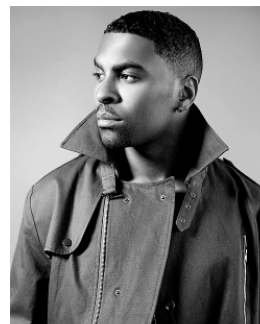
**We Still Love Her Smile!**  
- According to [www.concreteloop.com](http://www.concreteloop.com), Singer/Mother, Shanice, stepped out with her husband Flex Alexander to support the 8th Annual Michael Jordan Celebrity Invitational Golf Tournament. Such a cute couple!



**Odd Couple-** According to [www.concreteloop.com](http://www.concreteloop.com), rapper T.I. and his rather colorful wife, Tiny, attended the RIAA and Feeding America's Inauguration Charity Ball. Will somebody please get Tiny a stylist?



**Queen B is not Pleased!**- According to [www.concreteloop.com](http://www.concreteloop.com), rapper, Lil' Kim, is not pleased with the way she was portrayed in the film "Notorious." Many believe that it made her look like a loose female. Perhaps that has to do with the fact that Biggie's mother, Ms. Wallace, and wife, Faith, had major input in the final



**Comeback Watch-** According to [www.concreteloop.com](http://www.concreteloop.com), Singer, Ginuwine, is set to release his long awaited album, "A Mans Thoughts".



**First Time For Everything**  
- According to [www.concreteloop.com](http://www.concreteloop.com), Beyoncé had the pleasure of singing her rendition of "At Last" for the President and First Lady's first dance at the Neighborhood Inaugural Ball. What an honor!



### You Remember...Whatchamacallit?

Do you remember that R&B girl duo Changing Faces? Cassandra Lucas and Charisse Rose formed the girl group, linked up with R.Kelly, and scored a hit song. I don't know if there "comeback" worthy but I enjoyed their music. What do you think?

*Semaja Haney is a journalism student at Western Michigan University, served as an Intern with Community Voices in 2008 (now authoring Celebrity Roundup in each edition), is a native of Chicago, Illinois ... which, before moving to Washington, D.C. and becoming President of the United States of America, was 'home' of the President and First Lady, Barack and Michelle Obama and their children. We are honored that Semaja has included them in this edition of Community Voices!*

**Barack and Michelle Obama ... Celebrities in Celebrity Roundup!**

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