

Beacon On The Scene

Director Lee Daniels teams with Terrie M. Williams and Antoine Craigwell to screen Black gay men and depression documentary

Mental health activist and author of the critically acclaimed book entitled, *Black Pain: It Just Looks Like We're Not Hurting*, Terrie M. Williams, will be presenting a film screening of the document "You Are Not Alone" on Tuesday, June 18, 2013, from 6-8 p.m. at The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture located at 515 Malcolm X Boulevard on 135th and Lenox Ave in Manhattan, NY.

Following the film screening, there will be a panel discussion featuring Academy Award nominated film director Lee Daniels; television personality and practicing psychologist Dr. Jeff Gardere; film and television producer Nathan Hale Williams; journalist Patrick Riley; and assistant principal & mental health therapist Tanya Odums, LCSW-R.

"You Are Not Alone," was created and produced by Guyanese-born journalist and founder of Depressed Black Gay Men (DBGM), Inc., Antoine Craigwell, with re-enactments directed by triple NAACP Image Award winner, Stanley Bennett Clay. It is a powerful film which explores many of the underlying social factors which contribute to high rates of depression among Black gay men and exposes the raw truths behind their devastatingly silent pain.

The film features critical issues affecting many Black men and Black gay men who go through life hiding their depression, which can contribute to unsafe sexual activity, elevated drug use, and death by suicide. "We are nothing without our emotional and mental health," Williams says. "Declaring who we are is healthy—not doing so is a very painful experience."

DBGM is a combination of three projects in one: the documentary, a book on the same subject, and community discussion forums to raise awareness of the effect of this debilitating illness. The documentary merges interviews with those who have suffered from depression, mental professionals who placed the stories in context and relevance, and re-enactments of the stories with, as Bennett Clay says, "a bit of Hollywood thrown in." The documentary premiered in New York City at a gala on November 17, 2012.

Through the interviews and re-enactments, the documentary reveals society's dark underbelly, exposing some of the most pernicious and destructive issues in many families and communities, such as negations of a person's sexual identity and orientation, sexual abuse and trauma, religious influenced homophobia, discrimination, stigma and ostracism, an HIV diagnosis, and the isolation and loneliness experienced by older Black gay men.

The two other components of DBGM, are community discus-



Lee Daniels

sion forums and the book. The book, which was superseded by the documentary, delves deeper into and explores in greater depth the underlying psycho-social and socio-cultural factors contributing to depression in Black men who are

perceived as different because of their sexual orientation and identity.

The community discussion forums serve to educate, inform and encourage many dealing with depression to seize every opportu-



Terrie M. Williams

"We are nothing without our emotional and mental health, declaring who we are is health — not doing so is a very painful experience." Terrie M. Williams

nity to express themselves, realize they are not alone in their suffering, and that they can get non-stigmatizing/non-discriminatory help. For more information regarding DBGM please visit www.dbgm.org and to see a trailer of the documentary film, "You Are Not Alone," visit www.yanahthefilm.com.

About Lee Daniels

Lee Daniels was born December 24, 1959 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He is known for producing films that tackle such thorny issues as race, image, family violence, and sex. Along the way he's shown that these stories can succeed at the box office. His critically acclaimed 2002 hit, *Monster's Ball*, was not only an Oscar winner, but turned a \$2.5 million production into a \$31 million success. In 2009, Daniels was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Director for his film *Precious: Based on the Novel "Push" by Sapphire*. Daniels' directed *The Paperboy* (2012), based on the 1995 novel by American author Pete Dexter, and starring Matthew McConaughey, Zac Efron, John Cusack, and Nicole Kidman. The film competed for the Palme d'Or at the 2012 Cannes Film Festival. Currently, Daniels is in post-production for the upcoming historical drama film *The Butler*, starring Forrest Whitaker, John Cusack, Jane Fonda, Mariah Carey, Terrence Howard, Alan Rickman and Oprah Winfrey.

About Terrie M. Williams

Terrie M. Williams, one of Ebony magazine's "Power 150" for Activism, Woman's Day magazine's "50 Women On A Mission To Change The World," and a Black history makers honoree on the 2013 theGrio 100 list, is an advocate for change and empower-

ment. For more than 30 years, she has used her influence and communications expertise to educate and engage audiences in causes. Williams has written four successful books. *The Personal Touch: What You Really Need to Succeed in Today's Fast-paced Business World* (1994, Warner Books), *Stay Strong: Simple Life Lessons for Teens* (Scholastic, Inc., 2001), *A Plentiful Harvest: Creating Balance and Harmony Through The Seven Living Virtues* (Warner Books, 2002) and her critically acclaimed book, entitled *Black Pain: It Just Looks Like We're Not Hurting*, which is credited with starting an unprecedented national dialogue that recounts her personal struggles with depression and the impact the stigma of mental illnesses have particularly on the African American community. Her dialogue has led to a national mental health advocacy campaign called "Sharing Ourselves... Healing Starts With Us" with the collaboration with the Ad Council's and SAMHSA's Campaign of Mental Health Recovery. To date, the campaign has garnered \$2.5 million in donated national advertising space and 11 million media impressions to significantly heighten the awareness and importance of mental and emotional health.

About Antoine Craigwell

As a contributing writer for *Out in Jersey* magazine and *The Bilerico Project*, Craigwell reported for several publications such as *FORTUNE Small Business* magazine, *The Bronx Times Reporter*, and *The New York Amsterdam News*. He graduated from Baruch College of the City University of New York and in 2008 earned two awards from the New York Association of Black Journalists for his reporting on plans to build a 2,000-bed jail facility in the city's South Bronx neighborhood.



Antoine Craigwell