

Black in America

By: Steve Johnson

Network Giant “CNN” delivered what was to be a historical event on July 23rd and 24th called "Black in America." Given the historical lack of positive African American coverage in mainstream media, where as of 2008 the national numbers revealed that 2/3 of all references to young black males are criminal. This year long project set out to give the world a view of how it is to be black in an American society. The two shows, one about black women and the other about black men, showed several different aspects of being black. The reality of disparity, slavery, and black on black crime, and poverty which is a mental state was discussed. After watching these shows I understood that some of the things that were highlighted were how other races view blacks. There were several parts that did touch me and I began to realize that blacks have made progress in this country but realistically we still have a long way to go until we can reach our full potential as a people. The pain that was shown through the eyes of the young black male who lived homeless and the lady, who had to survive without the help of her children’s father, was a clear picture of reality. During both shows there was a lack of historical content which is needed in order to better explain how we got into this situation. Being careful not to feed into separation, I think that you must explain more about our history than just civil rights and slavery. We must understand history better so that we can take stuff that was meant to harm us and use it to help us. Religion was all throughout both shows. Many of the shows participants tried to explain that religion gives us a sense of understanding our existence. Obtaining a so called “middle class” was a touchy subject to a lot of people throughout the country. Statements from the numerous blog sites that reported on the show constantly battled with the definition of middle class.. On one hand the middle class is growing and on the other the masses are still poor. The tremendous amount of pressure placed on black professionals was also discussed. It touched on just how much pressure there is on black professionals to succeed in a white male dominated business world. This section I felt they should have dug deeper into because this feeds into the core of our problems as blacks in America, a lack of resources. The show gave attention to the fact that in a lot of cases, the way you look plays a dominant factor on if you get hired for a job or not. Dark skin brothers got treated different than the light skin brothers. The show used the example of Michael Eric Dyson and his brother who was treated a lot differently because of his darker skin. In all, the show was great if you wanted to understand our problems but weak if your goal was to come away from the show with some solution based rhetoric. No one with a clear conscious who watched the shows can disagree that there are two different Americas one being black in America.