

Fed up with TV talk show exploitation

In her just released book, "The Color of Crime: Racial Hoaxes, White Fear, Black Protectionism, Police Harassment, and Other Macroaggressions," Kathryn K. Russell discusses the idea that talk shows aim to distort and undermine much of the progress Black people have made....Those of us who are fed up with TV talk shows' exploitation of African American women agree with Russell.

The television talk show industry is a profit-driven phenomena at the expense of the images of African American women. The success of the highest rated talk shows, (in order of rating): Jerry Springer, Ricki Lake and Jenny

RUNGANO NYAJEKA
Managing Editor

Jones are primarily due to their negative depiction of African-American women. Talk show host Ricki Lake was one of the first to find professional and financial success for her controversial topics. Her rhyming titles, such as "Just 'Cause You Lost Your Fat, You Ain't All That" are degrading statements of her panel guests. Lake's guests are often afflicted by social issues, ridiculed and victimized. In the early 90's Springer's ratings were mediocre until the explosive episode "Why Do You Hate Me" of former guests confronting leaders of hate groups. A Klansman punched a panelist, an African-American woman, in the face. The crowd went wild and so did Springer's ratings. Television talk show hosts' overall duty and legal obligation is to make money for the corporations' stockholders; therefore, the free markets versus upholding social and community values debate will continue to rage over what should be put on the air. African-American women will continue to be featured in unflattering ways until we decide to do something about it -- like using the TV remotes to turn off shows that damage racial images.

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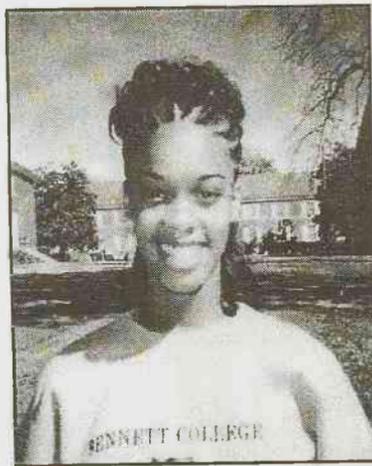
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STUDENT OPINION POLL:

Bellespeak

What is your opinion of the depiction of African-American women on television talk shows?

Photos by Marie Smith, Chief Photographer



AMBER BATISTE
CLASS: FRESHWOMAN
MAJOR: MASS COMM
HOME STATE: WASHINGTON

They [talk shows] make black women look uneducated. They make us look like we have low self-esteem and that we don't know how to carry ourselves.



MICHELLE SIMPSON
CLASS: SOPHOMORE
MAJOR: PSYCHOLOGY
HOME STATE: TEXAS

A lot of black women on talk shows have nothing really going for themselves. A lack of self-respect drives them to behave ignorantly and I don't think they should be the ones to represent my race or gender.



KATHERINE WHITWORTH
CLASS: FRESHWOMAN
MAJOR: PSYCHOLOGY
HOME STATE: NEW YORK

Women lashing out on the Jerry Springer show that we [black women] can be obnoxious and ignorant. But well-respected, intelligent Blacks like Oprah and Maya show how Black women are, where we were, and how we will be.



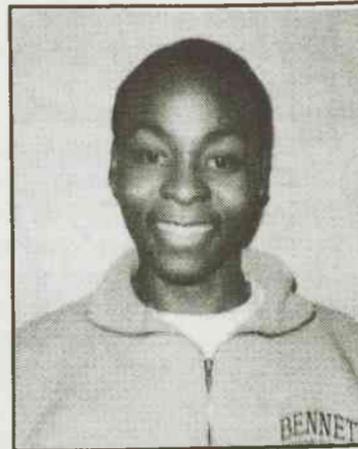
TOKIKO GEORGE
CLASS: FRESHWOMAN
MAJOR: ARTS MANAGE.
HOME STATE: MARYLAND

Black women on the Jerry Springer Show keep the stereotype going that Black women have attitudes. Even though white women are [also] featured on the show acting tantamount to Blacks. Black women will be looked down on because of the stereotypes.



TAMARA PHELPS
CLASS: FRESHWOMAN
MAJOR: MASS COMM.
HOME STATE: WASH DC

Black women get on TV and think it's showtime at the Apollo and they put on an act and that's not good.



KUBRAT GBAJABIAMILA
CLASS: SENIOR
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Black people on Jerry Springer's show are very ignorant as opposed to the [those on] Oprah Show who portray the educated Black.