

# Black Odyssey

By Cynthia Greenlee

STAFF WRITER

Britain has yielded Soul II Soul, Desree, Omar, UK Black, and a generation of reggae artists who identify with their African or Afro-Caribbean roots. During a recent trip to England, I realized that beyond the realm of entertainment, Black Brits and Black Americans may share little else.

"Are you Hawaiian?" one store clerk in London asks me. Startled by the question, I replied that I was Black. He, a white owl-eyed man, persists in asking me about my ethnic background and I learned my first lessons in English race relations—that "Black" can generically mean "person of color" and that a particularly strong relaxer could easily confuse any curious white British male.

Stephen Small, a lecturer at England's Leicester University wrote racialised barriers, a comparison of the Black experience in England and the United States in the 1980s. Noting that the British population of African descent is the result of immigration from former colonies and is barely two percent of the nation. Small emphasized the historical absence of slavery as an institution in Britain and the present lack of any widespread cultural movement representing the ethos of the Black Caribbean and African communities. However, Black Brits, like their American counterparts, have higher rates of unemployment and lower educational attainments than their white compatriots.

Watching British television, one always

finds something unusual. I am listening to the news for any mention of possible terrorist activities and hear a report about racism in the armed forces. The broadcaster states in a typically British dry tone that reports show there is very little discrimination in the military, despite the fact that has been one Black serving in the Buckingham Palace guard in history and he quit rather than work in a hostile environment.

Another important issue deals with dating. Seeing black American men with white women has become so commonplace that my friends and I have started a code system—BM/WF, Black male with white female—and this code system can be modified to encompass any imaginable racial configuration.

In England, the popular match seems to be BF/WM—Black female and white male, a combination rarely seen in these parts. When I walk past the Y.A.R.D. (abbreviation for You Are Really Dumb) with a white male friend, the stares of both Blacks and whites are colder than this past winter.

Reading guide books does not prepare the Black traveler for the whirlwind European tour. Brixton, a location outside London's center, is the home of a vibrant Afro-Caribbean community where the markets sell mangoes, fresh fish, and calypso, where the people speak alternately with crisp British accents or the slower, syncopated speech of the islands, just short of a trip to the Antilles.

Americans flock to see the sights—Buckingham Palace, the Crown Jewels...And the tourist is confronted with the colonial past. One

of the world's largest diamonds, the Star of Africa, is on view at the Tower of London. Plundered wealth from Africa and Asia lines the coffers of the Queen and her museums.

What do Black people in Britain do without their own institutions of higher education? While those of us at UNC do not daily experience a historically Black university or college, the communities in which we live are often dense networks of people educated at our fine institutions or who otherwise support the efforts to uplift one's self and the greater entity.

"We don't have segregation in England like you do in the United States," many a English student at UNC has been quick to declare.

Perhaps this is true and perhaps not. Maybe not in housing, as most Black (in the American sense) Brits, small as their numbers are, live in racially integrated urban settings where they may comprise a majority on this block or that one.

But I noticed that Black people didn't smile or acknowledge each other, however briefly, as we in the States do. Smoothing out my face after a smile that went unreturned, I wondered what our distant cousins—the Afro-British—think about us—the African-Americans, so alike, yet so different.

Reading Small's book, I was struck by the statement that many persons of African descent in the United Kingdom ask how African-Americans have organized and become so successful. Such a question implies belief in African-American's organization and success and if that is indeed a question that some British people (of whatever color) ask, it is a sad testament to race relations in their own European home.

## Locklear's Hope of Native American Growth

By Shana Fitts  
STAFF WRITER

In 1994 Anthony Locklear made history when he became the first Native American hired to an administrative position at UNC.

Two years have passed and Locklear, who serves as assistant dean in the Office for Student Counseling, is still the only Native American holding such a position here at UNC.

"I was pleased and honored to be the first Native American to come on board," Locklear said. "My being employed here is a start in the right direction."

Locklear said that there are many qualified Native Americans who he would like to see working for the University in both administrative and teaching positions. He pointed out that although North Carolina has one of the largest Native American populations in the nation, Native Americans are underrepresented in the state's universities.

About 82,000 Native Americans live in this state, according to the 1990 U.S. Census.

Locklear is disturbed by the belief that this University is recognized as being culturally diverse, when more Native American courses need to be included in the curriculum.

Recognizing the importance of students learning about their culture, Locklear has helped implement programs through his involvement with the

Carolina Indian Circle.

Locklear said these programs that promote cultural awareness often are not funded by the University but by outside resources. He said no additional funding has been allotted to the Office for Student Counseling for the implementation of Native American programs since he came to the University.

Since his arrival, Locklear has worked closely with the 130 Native American students here at UNC.

"I feel like I've made a difference for many Native American students here," Locklear said

Senior Chenoa Richardson, former president of the CIC, said Locklear's presence has made an impact on her.

"Before Dean Locklear came to UNC, I felt like I didn't have anybody to talk to or understand where I was coming from," Richardson said. "Now I feel like I have someone who understands me."

Carolina Indian Circle Vice President, junior Linwood Watson, said Locklear is open and friendly and has the students' interests in heart.

Though the University still needs to increase its Native American presence in and out of the classroom, Locklear said he has enjoyed being at UNC.

"The Carolina community has made me feel very welcomed and for that, I am appreciative."