
Homeboys v. Homegirls

By Torise Battle

In recent times, movies that portray Black people often exploit our culture and society. Most movies focus on violence, sex, drugs and alcohol, which tend to characterize Blacks in America as hateful, promiscuous and lazy. However, more and more films are beginning to show a more positive side of Black life. These movies are concentrating on the successful, talented, favorable side of black life that is often overlooked in derogatory films. Such movies include "Waiting to Exhale," starring Whitney Houston and Angela Bassett and "The Wood," starring Omar Epps and Taye Diggs, which focus on male and female friendships and relationships in a positive outlook.

On Sept. 8, Davené Smith, a sophomore communication studies major, facilitated an Around the Circle discussion comparing the male and female relationships in these two movies. Participants in the discussion concluded that the friendships in "Waiting to Exhale" and "The Wood" were realistic of Black men and women to an extent; however, the sexual relationships that took place were

more unrealistic. The group pointed out that male friends and female friends do help each other in desperate times and render personal advice to sustain their friendships with each other. However, many of the participants' opinions clashed on the sexual relationships in both movies.

In "Waiting to Exhale", Savannah (Whitney Houston) and Robin (Lela Rochon) are two women who continuously attract bad men. Although these men have their obvious faults, Savannah and Robin continue their sexual relationships with them. Many of the participants agreed that while many women would not tolerate such worthlessness from men, there are women who repeatedly remain in unhealthy relationships. Nevertheless, the group concluded that even though the male/female relationships in "Waiting to Exhale" were not always typical of real life, the friendship amongst Savannah, Robin, Bernadine (Angela Bassett) and Gloria (Loretta Devine) was accurately portrayed. The women supported one another and provided solace during difficult times in each oth-

ers' lives, which is a typical part of Black female relationships.

"The Wood," a 1999 film produced by MTV, is a coming-of-age story about three young black men. Taye Diggs' character, Roland, has a case of cold feet on the morning of his wedding day. As his friends Mike (Omar Epps) and Slim (Richard T. Jones) try to help him overcome his fear, they reminisce on their childhood in Englewood, California. The participants in the Around the Circle discussion totally agreed with the images portrayed in this movie. The friendships of Mike, Roland, and Slim were very realistic in the minds of the participants, especially Roland's fear of commitment. The sexual relationships were also viewed as being realistic of men. A young person's first love, first sexual experiences, and marriage commitments were all symbolic of real life situations that the participants shared.