

# Coates: Blacks as criminals idea is old and must be changed

BY TEVIN STINSON  
THE CHRONICLE

Through his writing ability and powerful words, Ta-Nehisi Coates has a certain way of connecting with people.

That's exactly what he did when he spoke to a large crowd of students at Wait Chapel on the campus of Wake Forest University.

"Don't let anyone tell you that what we are going through in this country today is new," the national correspondent for The Atlantic said. "The presumption that because you are black, you are more likely to commit some sort of criminal activity is just as old as the country itself."

Coates, who is known for writing about culture, politics and social issues in America, was at Wake Forest as part of the university's Voice of Our Time guest speaker series. It is designed to expose students and the community to some of the world's leading thinkers for discussions about timely national and international issues.

Coates began his speech last week by telling the story of a college friend who was shot and killed by an undercover police officer who had mistaken him for someone else. He then used that personal moment to explain how the premise of criminality of black people is part of the American heritage.

According to Coates, the death of his friend is also what led him to write his most recent book, "Between the World and Me." The book, which is written as a letter to his son, addresses what it means to be black in America.

Coates mentioned that even the most admired and well-known figures throughout African-American history were considered criminals by the government. He named a number of well-known activists, such as Marcus Garvey, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and others.

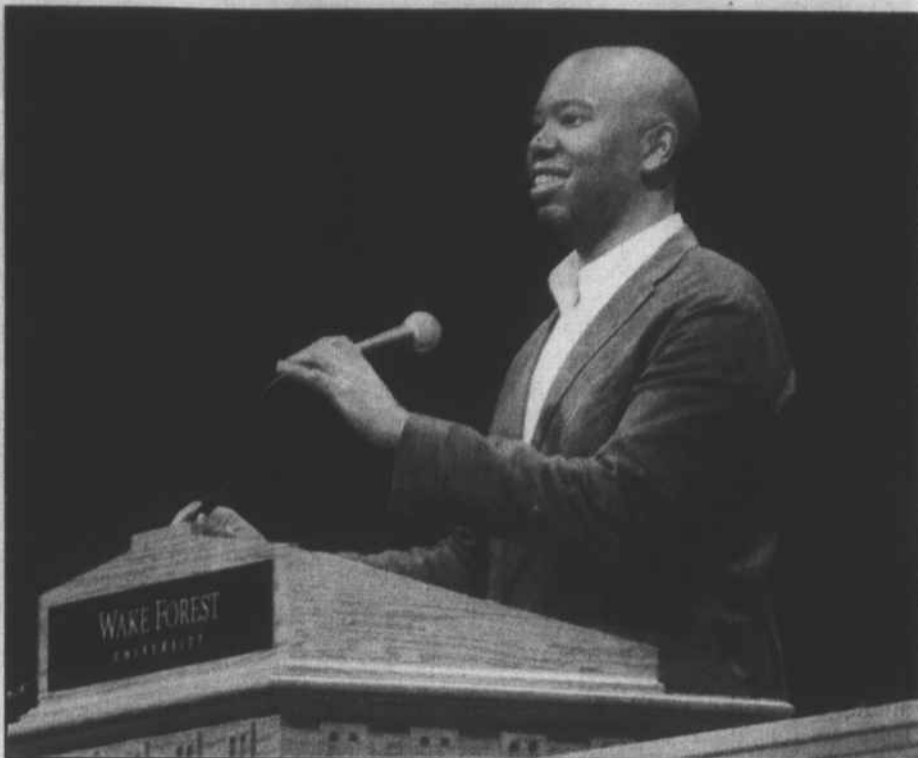
Although these figures are respected and acknowledged for their contributions to society today, during their own lifetimes they were seen as nothing more than criminals.

"It's nice Harriet Tubman is on a stamp now, but what about during her lifetime?" questioned Coates. "During her time, she was regarded as a criminal."

"Dr. Martin Luther King, our patriot saint of non-violence, freedom, and liberty, during his lifetime he was regarded a criminal by the top officials in the government."

It is well documented that the Kennedy Administration ordered FBI agents to wiretap King's phones during the height of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s.

Coates went on to say the same conviction used to enslave Africans years ago is



Author and journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates delivered a powerful speech to a large crowd of Wake Forest students on Tuesday, Nov. 17. The speech was part of the university's Voice of Our Time guest speaker series.

Photo by Tevin Stinson

being used today, just in a different manner. Black males in America have a 30 percent chance of being incarcerated at some point in their lifetimes.

He told students the system of oppression that is currently in place was not built in a day, and cannot be taken apart in a day.

"Although we may not be around to see the change, it is important that we lay the foundation for generations to come," he said.

"This is work of generations," Coates continued. "It took almost 400 years to get to this point; we will be lucky if it takes less than that to get us out."

## People

from page A1

**Vedlazella McGhee, Cleveland, Ohio**

"I'm thankful for the fact that I'm able to be here, and spend Thanksgiving with my daughter, who lives here in Winston-Salem. God has blessed me to still be alive, and I'm thankful for that."



**Lorenzo Williams, Winston-Salem**  
"I'm thankful for spending Thanksgiving with my mom."



**Kenneth Lloyd, left** "I'm most grateful for having my mother, knowing that my mother is safe in heaven."  
**Ricky L., right** "I'm thankful to be alive to see this year, to see my 50th birthday. It's grateful to just be here and my whole family to enjoy the holiday, and to see the people happy. To make sure that everybody is safe."



## HORN\$ MEMBERS Get Your Tickets!\*

Join the Winston-Salem State University Rams for all of the fun and excitement of the

# 2016 CIAA Basketball Tournament

\* HORN\$ presale tickets available now through December 13. General Public tickets sales begin Monday, December 14.

Disclaimer: There are a limited number of tickets available in each section. Therefore, tickets will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. If your request cannot be met, you will be contacted by the WSSU Ticket Office.

**February 22 - 27, 2016**

Charlotte, NC Time Warner Cable Arena

Support the Rams' Campus of Champions by purchasing your prepaid tickets directly from the WSSU Ticket Office.

### HOW TO PURCHASE TICKETS

- by calling the Ticket Office at 336.750.3220 with a credit card; or
- at the Ticket Office Monday - Friday from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. with credit card, cash or cashier's check.

WSSU will receive the tickets prior to the tournament. Your tickets will be sent to you via Express Mail.

### WSSU TICKET INFORMATION

Ticket Category	Price
Center	\$275.00
Quads	\$225.00
Endzone	\$175.00
Upper	\$50.00

