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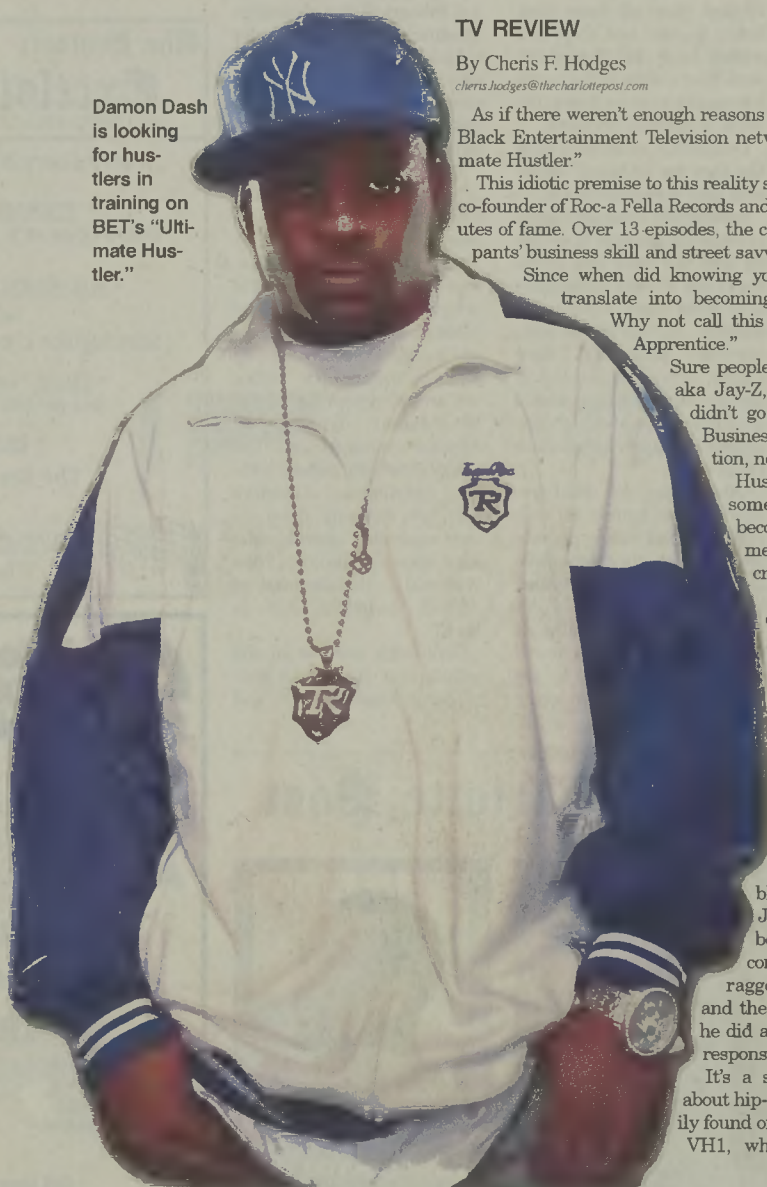
Section

No flow with BET hustle

'Ultimate Hustler' represents a new low in reality TV

A & E

Damon Dash is looking for hustlers in training on BET's "Ultimate Hustler."



PHOTO/BET

TV REVIEW

By Cheri F. Hodges
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As if there weren't enough reasons for an all-out boycott of the Black Entertainment Television network, here comes the "Ultimate Hustler."

This idiotic premise to this reality show features Damon Dash, co-founder of Roc-a-Fella Records and 16 people going for 15 minutes of fame. Over 13 episodes, the competition puts the participants' business skill and street savvy to the test. Huh?

Since when did knowing your way around the street translate into becoming a great businessperson? Why not call this show what it is - "Ghetto Apprentice."

Sure people like Dash, Shawn Carter, aka Jay-Z, and Sean "Diddy" Combs didn't go to the Wharton School of Business, but they are the exception, not the rule.

Hustling usually means doing something illegal. So, does becoming the ultimate hustler mean that you're the ultimate criminal?

Why does BET continue to dumb down its programming and do such a disservice to the community it allegedly serves?

Honestly, BET should be taken off the air. Aside from video shows, programs about making videos and old sitcoms, what does this network offer?

And you really can't blame Bobcats owner Bob Johnson for it anymore because he's not a part of the company. Although he left the raggedy blueprint for Viacom and the new guard to follow when he did away with all of the socially responsible shows at the network.

It's a shame that documentaries about hip-hop and R&B are more easily found on VH1 or MTV.

VH1, which was traditionally an

Please see BET/2D



Get 'Lost' in tight writing, suspense

Lost
Seven-disc boxed set
Starring Matthew Fox, Evangeline Lilly, Terry O'Quinn, Dominic Monaghan and Harold Perrineau
J.J. Abrams and Daniel Attias, directors
Buena Vista Home Entertainment



Wow. That's my initial reaction to this wildly popular television show and nearly as popular DVD set.

Who would have thought such a gamble for ABC would reap this big of a reward? "Lost" could have easily faded with most of dramatic episodic TV, but it had too much going.

The concept seemed like "Gilligan's Island" meets Reality TV (wait, that was done) at first but it turned out to be one of the most intelligently written, intensely acted programs of any season. "Lost" kept viewers dangling from their couches each week, then dashing toward a computer to jump in a chat room. "Did you see that?" "Was that a polar bear on a tropical island?" "What the heck does that mean?" America was hooked.

And I mean lots of Americans. "Lost" stayed in the Top 10 the entire season. It earned a best drama Emmy and made a huge ensemble cast into stars. Dominic Monaghan was probably the best known as one of the hobbits in Peter Jackson's "Lord of The Rings" trilogy, but the rest was a bunch of faces that looked familiar.

The plot line is simple. A plane bound for L.A. from Australia crashes on a remote island. Forty-eight people survive and have to figure out how to deal with each other and this crisis. But this island (if that's what it is) has strange goings on that threaten, please and bewilder the castaways.

If you want to know more, buy this set. This treatment is spectacular, offering all 24 episodes and a plane load of special features. If you missed any of the first season, this is a must-have. Heck, it's that even if you didn't.

Ratings

Classic	★★★★★
Excellent	★★★★
Good	★★★
Fair	★★
Why?	★
No stars - A mess	

London fans gather to see Jackson

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON - Hundreds of Michael Jackson fans turned up outside a London theater Saturday to catch a glimpse of the pop star as he arrived to see the stage version of hit movie "Billy Elliot."

Security staff forced a path for Jackson, 47, through a crowd of admirers and photographers standing outside the Victoria Palace theater so he could reach the front door. But the singer fell to the ground in the commotion.

Jackson's children accompanied him to the show but had their faces covered by clothing as they entered

the theater.

Jackson was staying at the Dorchester Hotel in Park Lane. His fans had gathered outside the luxury hotel in hope of seeing him before heading to the theater.

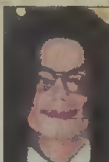
"We were outside his hotel and there was a rumor that he was coming here, so we came down," said admirer Phillip Goldstone, 22, from east London.

During the performance interval, Jackson mingled with other specta-

tors, chatting and signing autographs.

"He talked to us saying hello and there were a lot of people around him," said Roxanne Wisenberg, 47, from San Diego, California. "He was very nice and his children were with him."

Jackson was in London to work on recording a song to benefit Hurricane Katrina victims. The visit to Britain was believed to be his first since his acquittal in June of child molestation charges. He has spent much of his time in Bahrain since.



Jackson

ART REVIEW

Exhibit connects art, human emotions

By Sandy Seawright
THE CHARLOTTE POST

"Color of the Blues"
James Denmark
Afro-American Cultural Center
East 7th Street at North McDowell St.
Through Dec. 31

James Denmark of Yemassee, S. C. creates artwork that is about human connection, all the

colors of the rainbow, blues music, and the human body in motion. Denmark's art is about being in love with being alive.

He has studied with some great artists such as Dr. Samella Lewis when he studied at Florida A & M University and he has been mentored by Romare Bearden, Jacob Lawrence and Norman Lewis. How-

ever, he has developed a unique style that he usually expresses in pastel colors.

In his art, Denmark relies on improvisation just like a blues musician. He says, "There are no rules. I leave everything open...striving for a marriage between what is pasted and what is painted."

He uses high-keyed col-

ors, harmonic patterns, and creates a celebratory mood using brightly colored papers with fabrics and found objects. One of Denmark's most unique qualities is that every figure in his compositions is interesting to look at. No one is there just to fill space. He will fill a picture like "House Party" with nine men and women and Please see DENMARK/2D

Celebration of African American literature

By Cheri F. Hodges
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North Carolina's first literary festival for African American authors is seeking self-published authors to attend.

Imagem Publishing of Winston-Salem is hosting a black book festival, featuring authors like L.A. Banks, Jacquelin Thomas, Electa Rome Parks and Van Whitfield.

"North Carolina has such a vast population of readers," said Joseph Dixon, the event coordinator. "This gives readers a chance to meet some of their favorite authors."

With so many genres of fiction, the event has something for all readers, said Dixon.

"This festival was formed to promote literacy in the North Carolina's black community," he said.

Opening the doors to self-published authors is one way to help artists promote their work and talk to established authors and other industry professionals.

"I'm looking for 15 to 20 self-published authors to join the festival," he said.

Self-published authors should log on at www.Ncbookfest.com for instructions on how to be a part of the festival.

The event, which runs from March 31-April 1, will include a book extravaganza where attendees can choose from an array of

panel/author discussions, book signings and workshops. Admission is free, but seat reservations may be required for some scheduled events.

The opening night gala will celebrate the achievements of Thomas, who lives in Raleigh, and will be presented with the festival's writer's achievement award.

With the festival held in Winston-Salem, Dixon said its proximity to Charlotte and Greensboro should make for stellar turnout.

And Winston-Salem, home of Maya Angelou, seemed like the best place to celebrate black writers, Dixon said.

More sonic trash from Trina CD

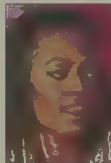
Trina
Glamorest Life
Various producers
Atlantic/Slip-N-Slide



One has to wonder how many times the same person can talk about the same stuff CD after CD.

With Trina, that answer seems to be each and every time. The ghetto princess raps of sex, jewelry, 'da club' and shaking her ample booty, and it seems to work. Her CDs sell in the millions. I tend to think it's because of the covers, but that's probably good for a couple of thousand copies.

Since there's not much talent



Trina

here, the real reason must be sex. The most successful female rappers sell it by the pound. Trina's one of the best at doing this, which isn't saying a great

deal. This CD gets old by the third song. Talk of chrome wheels, rump shakin' and designer gear purchases do not a great CD make.

There are a few interesting moments. Kelly Rowland supplies vocals for "He We Go," based on the Force MD's lilting "Tender Love." Trina is anything but, spitting out her verse as if she's a drill instructor. Finesse isn't her strong suit. "Lil' Mama" suffers the same fate. Nice idea to use Tony! Toni! Tone's "Pillow," but Trina's nasal, grating voice ruins the mood.

The rest of the stuff goes from OK ("Sexy Gurl" and "Da Club") to wretched. Trina will probably pocket another small fortune for garbage, but this gravy train can't run forever.

