

Tony Brown Comments



Tony

Blacks Who Beat Slavery

If only about 20 percent of the African slaves reached the United States, the natural question is where did the other 80 percent go? According to Allen Counter and David Evans, two Black scientists from Harvard University who have traveled deep into the South American jungle for almost a decade, the enslaved Africans were taken primarily to South America, Central America and the Caribbean.

The flood of notoriety that followed Alex Haley and his history-making book and television mini-series, "Roots," has made all of America more interested in their ancestry. Just as inquisitive as Alex Haley is Dr. Allen Counter, professor of Biology at Harvard University.

While on a trip to Brazil in 1971, Dr. Counter discovered that a tribe of pure Africans was living in the jungles of Surinam, South America. They were the proud descendants of rebel slaves who were brought to Dutch Guiana by Europeans, but mutinied and fled into the bush for freedom.

As I talked with Counter and Evans on an upcoming television special called "The Vanishing Tribe," I realized that these two committed scholars had made one of the most unique anthropological discoveries ever: The only Africans in the world who had defeated the whites, and as a consequence, had preserved the only European-free African-pure culture.

After years of curiosity and numerous voyages into the remote regions of this South American country, Allen Counter and David Evans have co-authored a book, "I Sought My Brother" (Mit Press, \$19.95).

"The reason we named the book 'I Sought My Brother' is that it is so appropriate; it comes from the old poem that says: 'I sought my friend and my friend forsook me. I sought my god and my god eluded me. I sought my brother and found all three,'" Dr. Counter explained.

In exploring the Djuka tribe, the North American African-American team found a people who for 10 generations have lived free in the deep forest of Surinam in Northern South America. These Bush people, as they are also called, have lived in peace with very little contact with the outside world. Ten generations have kept Africa alive in the New World.

But the establishment has kept their history and existence a secret also. "They fought a 100-year guerilla war. People often talk about the Vietnamese fighting for 20 to 30 years. Can you imagine a group of Blacks fighting on the run for 100 years—and winning, defeating whole armies, and our growing up and not hearing anything about it?," Counter asked on the program.

However, the Bush people have preserved their history. In every village, story tellers keep their legacy alive. They never tire of telling how their rebel ancestors broke out of bondage, conquered the forest and fought the slaveholders to a standoff—nearly driving them into the sea.

The climax to this history of rebellion is how their forebearers' war skills forced a Dutch colonial government to sign a series of unique peace treaties that guaranteed their independence and freedom and even provided this tribe of Afro-South Americans with an annual financial stipend. In other words, they militarily humiliated the slaveowners' armies.

Other than the lesson of not surrendering to oppression of any kind, there are other contemporary implications for the 30-million Afro-North Americans living in the United States. Does the fact that the Djukas have never been enslaved and have never internalized their enemies' emotions account for the fact that they do not genocide (black-on-black crime) one another?

David Evans told the village leaders of this concern. "In the United States, the African people there have no records of how we were when we came over, and it's only been a little more than a hundred years since we were slaves. We have strayed from the African ways in that we do great harm to each other. I don't see that here, I have not heard of that here, and this is what we want to take back and to show them, that these people have fought for almost a century, and defeated the white man and chose to live here as they see fit."

The Bush people are a lesson and a model for all races. For example, in the film, "Da Buwan," the medicine man teaches a boy that to become a man, he must build houses, hunt, make boats and lead a good life.

"A good life." Think about the wisdom in those three words. Have our machines, drugs, stress and racial polarity provided us with "a good life"?

A good life lies in the knowledge of who you are and where you're from. The Bush people know that their slave routes led to South America, but their roots lie in Africa.

"Tony Brown's Journal," the television series, can be seen on public television Sundays, on Channel 58 at 6:30. It can also be seen on Channel 42, Thursdays, at 10:30 p.m. Please consult listings.

"Matt Houston" Airs Sunday Night

When a world-famous couturier is murdered during one of his own fashion shows, Matt Houston is called in to investigate on behalf of the designer's top model, who happens to be a chief suspect and an old girlfriend, in "Matt Houston," airing Sunday, October 17 at 8 p.m. on WSOC-TV, Channel 9.

In "Deadly Fashion," Valentine St. Clair, a famous designer who is hated by just about everyone who works with him, is killed at a fashion show introducing his newest line. Christina Berenson, St. Clair's top model, is the chief suspect. But before Lt. Novelli can charge her with the crime, Christina hires Matt Houston to investigate.

What Matt uncovers is a long list of additional suspects, including: Vera Martin, St. Clair's assistant, believed by many to be better at her job than her unpopular boss; Marvin Garth, St. Clair's business partner, set to inherit a million-dollar corporate insurance policy; and Vales-

"Dallas"

J.R. tries to push his mother and Bobby into a decision that would open Jock's will, on "Dallas," Friday, October 15 at 9 p.m. on WBTB, Channel 3.

Bobby and J.R. agree that it is time for their mother to get out and meet old friends. When she decides to attend the Oil Baron's Ball, J.R. tries to push her into finally winding up Jock's affairs. He then tries to coerce Bobby toward the same goal. Donna and Ray's long-delayed honeymoon is postponed when they have to go to Kansas for Amos Krebb's funeral.

Pam's concern for Lucy's depression prompts her to tell Bobby about his niece's condition. J.R. uses John Ross as a pawn to win Sue Ellen back. Cliff cautiously accepts Marilee Stone's offer.

WE'VE GOT IT ALL!!!!

ka DeBraken, the designer's ex-wife whose company is about to go under because her ex-husband refused to bail her out of debt. Lee Horsley stars as Matt Houston. Also starring are Pamela Hensley, John Aprea, Dennis Fimple, Paul Brinegar and

Penny Santon. Guest stars include Christina Ferrare, Brit Ekland, Mr. Blackwell, Vic Tayback, Carol Lawrence and George Wyner.

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