



**Tony Brown's  
COMMENTS**

**Blacks Should Not Defend  
Young Vanessa Williams!**

Part I reviewed the new fall line-up for the disgraced former Miss America, Vanessa Williams. In the November Penthouse, she will appear for the second time with the same white woman and in January in color nudity with sado-masochistic gear—handcuffs, leather scanties, studded belts, etc.

What she called a "mistake" of her youth now looks more like a pattern in 1982 when, according to People magazine, she "wandered into the porn (pornography) field." And she admits that she signed a release for the second white photographer's S&M pictures taken in his apartment.

This admission strips (pun intended) her of her youthful innocence excuse because it means that she wanted the world to see what the camera saw. Which gives a new meaning to the embattled Penthouse publisher Bob Guccione's words: "When did they say they didn't want the pictures in Penthouse? Where did they want them to be published? In Good Housekeeping?" She is suing the first photographer to pay her, but not to restrain Penthouse.

While Williams got disgraced, every white man associated with her downfall got something. Bob Guccione got \$24 million on the September issue alone; her obese white photographer male friend—all 300 pounds of him—got at least \$250,000, almost a \$1,000 a pound. And her white boyfriend of four years got his hat.

So much for her notion of integration. She exploited her body to benefit her ambitions and all of the white people connected with her ambitions got a free ride—or deserted her.

Even when she was busted, the only news organizations to whom she gave exclusive interviews were white. I saw no such concern on her part for the Black Press—not a single newspaper or magazine including Essence magazine that defended her ethics.

And on top of all of this, after turning her back on black people, she now returns by insulting our intelligence. "And above all, I'm Black." Believe it or not, those words were spoken by the most conspicuous un-black, black woman in public life. Now she turns for support to the people she scorned.

Know why? Because legitimate white people don't want her anymore. But Essence magazine's editor is, along with Williams, pushing the line that this is a racial issue rather than a moral issue. Susan Taylor of Essence in her open letter editorial to Williams blames society's ethics and suggests that the problem is not what Williams did, but that the public doesn't accept what she did.

Essence affects the opinions of many of the 2.9 million readers it claims. Young black women look to it for a sense of self and are guided by its directions and role models. Taylor's editorial fails them. It certainly misrepresents the mood of the Afro-American community.

I prefer the opinions of the black mothers who are warning their daughters not to be like Williams—in racial identity or morals—and a black model, Donna Jorge, from Philadelphia who said: "I was proud when she won, but these pictures...if you saw them you would think she was a lesbian...it's not what the Miss America Pageant wants...it's not what God wants. Most black women would not do what Williams did."

We don't owe Vanessa Williams anything. She has disgraced black people, denied us, worked with racism when it suited her ambitions and now seeks to exploit our moral high ground.

The Essence defense of Williams' sexually explicit (and then some) pornography is astride a moral hobby horse. Perhaps, Taylor inadvertently has confused nudity with lesbian pornography and opportunism with blackness.

Comments in black papers across the country are also at odds with the Essence position. An editorial in The Charlotte Post, the leading black paper there, described Williams as "a young woman abandoning her sense of personal decency in quest to advance herself."

A black mother of two girls, concerned about positive role models, said in New York's Amsterdam News that Williams' behavior "was morally indecent and wrong" and she is now "sorry...only because she was exposed."

The Michigan Chronicle in Detroit blamed her for "ignorant indiscretion" and reminded its readers that our society's code "rejects the printing of pictures of nude women in lesbian sexual behavior." Her parents "reared their daughter," the black paper continued, "in a small white community. In their search for the 'best' they got the worst."

Tommy Nash, in a brilliant letter to The Oklahoma Eagle, the black paper in Tulsa, said he was "irritated" by the position taken by some prominent leaders and feels that blacks, after seeing the dirty pictures, "have a moral responsibility to the youth of our race to speak out." Penthouse and Williams were "motivated by the same things—lust for money and success. Nobody placed a gun to her head."

Instead of eulogizing Williams as a victim of the racism she enjoyed so much, Nash says that we should be, instead, concerned about the impact of her disgrace on black people and "the morality of our youth."

Our battle for final passage to freedom in America will be fought in the minds of black people. Black role models, therefore, are important as symbols because people in life are guided by what they imagine themselves to be.

Let anyone try to prove that a life which is not lived with honor and integrity can succeed.

Tony Brown's Journal TV series can be seen on public television Sunday, on Channel 42 at 5 p.m. It can also be seen on Channel 58, Sunday at 6:30 p.m.; and on Channel 30, Thursday, at 10:30 p.m. Please consult listings.

**"Let's Dance" Will Focus  
On Teens And High Schools**

WPCQ-TV will premiere a locally produced 90-minute dance program, "Let's Dance," at 5 p.m., Saturday, September 22.

The show will feature students from area high schools and one of their favorite deejays, Jack Daniel of WJZR, Z100 Radio as host.

Producer Joanne Hock said, "We believe with Jack Daniel as host and the participation of energetic enthusiastic students, "Let's Dance" will be a big hit. Once every 12 weeks

**Summerstage**

The noontime performances continue during the September edition of SummerStage '84. This week's programs feature music and dance.

Friday, September 21, First Union Plaza - The Swingin' Pines. This square dance group, with a professional caller, will entertain the Uptown audience.

All performances begin around noon and end by 1:30 p.m. In case of rain, the day's event is cancelled.

The SummerStage '84 series began June 1. These free, noontime programs are sponsored by the Central Charlotte Association (CCA), with Trammell Crow, First Union National Bank, NCNB, WBTV, Independence Venture and Independence Center.

the show will go on location for a "Dance Off" among the schools with prizes and gift certificates for the winners."

Each Saturday the show will spotlight a different high school in the Channel 36 viewing area, beginning with Charlotte's Independence High on the premiere. The teens will dance on a contemporary set dominated by a huge mockup of a jukebox.

The program will incorporate music videos produced locally by the students as well as videos by the major record

companies. Ms. Hock said there will be a local internship program to involve the students in developing story lines, scripts and featurettes on their schools. Bill Miller, who pioneered this kind of programming in Washington, D.C., is executive producer of the program.

Ms. Hock said 12 high schools already have signed up to participate in the program and that students interested in having their school participate should telephone her at (704) 536-3636.

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