

Hip Hop Stand Up- Recognize Speak Out

Written by DeBorah B. Pryor ID3138
Thursday, 30 November 2006 03:07 -

Hip Hop Stand Up - Recognize & Speak Out

While Black Leaders Focus On Richards' Controversy, Najee Ali Aims To Bring Brutalized Black Journalists Ann Brown and Tonye Allen Back Home By DeBorah B. Pryor

Who would have thought that a strange looking White Man spewing the "N" word would overshadow the immediacy of returning two Black journalists to safety. Go figure... While Jesse Jackson is busy helping Mike Richards' work through his issues, community civil rights activist Najee Ali has detoured to assist in the efforts to bring African American journalists and hip hop photographer Tonye Allen and his fiancée, Ann Brown back home. Mr. Tonye Allen is an African American hip hop photographer whose work has appeared in many hip hop related publications as L.A. Weekly, The Village Voice, Rolling Stone, Vibe Magazine, and The Source among others.

Harassed, choked and beaten severely, the journalists remain in Toronto, Canada involuntarily; and have been there, for well over a month, with no assistance from the U. S. political community. The reason why is still unclear.

"Of course I can help and will help. That's what civil rights activists do," stated Najee Ali via email to this writer, who have been in contact with the beleaguered journalists and made the request of Ali. A controversial community activist recognized for his passionate activism on behalf of oppressed people everywhere, Ali, a former gang member who turned his life around following a stint in prison founded the non-profit national civil rights organization Project Islamic H.O.P.E. and serves as Executive Director. He continues to be a front line initiator on many highly publicized injustices and those the television cameras show no interest in.

Though calls were made to the offices of Black leaders across the country, as of this writing Ali is the only one who has responded. With regard to these two journalists, known to many in the media via their bylines and contributions to publications including Essence magazine, hip hop's

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Vibe magazine, Black Enterprise and in Mr. Allen's case, The Village Voice, Rolling Stone and many hip hop publications, Mr. Ali will use his influence to connect with congressional representatives, the senate and the U. S. Embassy in Canada.

Allen and Brown's nightmare began when they stopped over in Canada on their way to South Africa in October. As journalists they had been in and out of the city on several occasions during the past year working on stories; which referenced the city in glowing detail. Obviously, it would only be a matter of time before the city whose country is symbolized by a Maple Leaf revealed its other side. On October 16 the journalists checked out of the Econolodge Hotel on Jarvis Street in Toronto and proceeded to hail a taxi. Without warning, they were besieged by Canadian police who beat and pepper sprayed Mr. Allen, a photojournalist before arresting him. Allen, who was handcuffed during the beating sustained multiple injuries to the head; with abrasions and bruises, loss of hearing, dislocated jaw, and damage to his eyes amongst an extensive list of inconclusive injuries. Ms. Brown, his fiancée, was choked, shoved and threatened with arrest during the altercation. The altercation was at the hands of two Black police officers.

Mr. Allen, who has never had any prior arrests, has since been released on bail in the recognizance of Brown, who was required to post \$1,000 bail in cash and ordered to supervise Allen; whose passport remains in the hands of the Canadian government.

As reported in an article in EUR [October 23, 2006] via information from a former Toronto police officer, police brutality in Canada is nothing new, but it is definitely on the rise; and from all angles, they appear to have little interest in trying to cover it up. In Brown's attempts to learn why her fiancée was being charged, the audacious retort "We'll think of something," coming from the mouth of "Detective Moyer of the 51st precinct" screams "we get away with this kind of [sic, expletive] all the time." While his thought process eventually landed on "assault of two policeman and resisting arrest, times two," he fell short of explaining why it was that these two

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people were being arrested in the first place.

According to Brown, Jason E. Bogle, a lawyer whom she and Allen are working with, had his own share of problems with Canadian law enforcement a year ago when they decided to give him a birthday gift. While sitting with his girlfriend in a parked car, Bogle, a Black man, was surrounded by officers in five unmarked cars and a marked van screaming “drug dealer.” Pulled violently from the car, he was thrown to the ground while his girlfriend watched in horror. When he was finally able to show them his Bar identification, they remarked, “So you’re a drug dealer AND a lawyer?” From the looks of things, Canadian law enforcement appears to have a penchant for brutalizing Black men in front of a targeted audience: Black women. To hear Bogles videotaped account of his harrowing experience, visit www.bogleslawoffice.com

Meanwhile the November 28th pre-trial net little progress for the pair. While they have yet to raise the funds to retain counsel, lawyer Bogle appeared with Allen anyway in an attempt to have his passport returned; but the court put the issue off until Friday, December 1, when Allen is ordered to appear again. Via the blog site <http://tonyeallenandannbrown.blogspot.com/> readers can lend their support of Allen and Brown on a variety of levels. They would appreciate the in-person support of anyone who can come to the courthouse for the December 1st court date at 444 Yonge Street, Downtown Toronto, Room 505 at 10 A. M.

“I was beaten three times--on the street, in the hospital [and] in the police station while being strip-searched,” says Allen, who has not left his hotel room since the October altercation. I was pepper sprayed twice...when I asked for a lawyer...and threatened by the police and prison guards. I want my passport back and the charges dropped. They called us terrorists in court but I abhor terrorists of any kind, and that includes abusive authorities. I have traveled to South Africa, Zimbabwe, Ghana, and the Caribbean and have never been attacked.” “We were merely on a trip visiting the city of Toronto and this happened to us,” says his fiancée, Ann Brown “But from what I am learning, it is a growing problem here... and before Black Americans decide to vacation here or do business here, they should think twice.”

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For updated information go to <http://tonyeallenandannbrown.blogspot.com/>

Read the first article when this happened here - <http://www.thuglifearmy.com/news/?id=3083>