

# TRUE LIES

DISGRACED *NEW YORK TIMES* JOURNALIST JAYSON BLAIR COMES CLEAN ON HIS DIRTY LITTLE SECRET WITH *BURNING DOWN MY MASTERS' HOUSE*

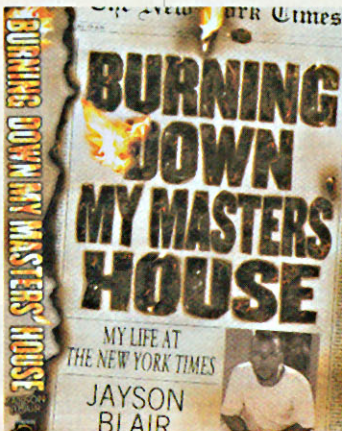
**T**HE SOURCE: You're a Black man with a Polish girlfriend who lied about sleeping in his car and got fired from *The New York Times* for plagiarism. It's like a *Chappelle's*

*Show sketch.*

**Jayson Blair:** I guess I'm a representative of my generation: crazy, interracial [dating] etc. All I need is a rap album. But no, I am not going to remake myself as a Hip-Hop artist. I can't rap or sing.

**A lot of Black writers are mad at you; you're right up there with the D.C. sniper as our most embarrassing Black man of 2003.**

I definitely understand. If it had been you and I was at the Times I'd be just as angry. I think a lot of that anger should be directed toward the people who refuse to look at African Americans as individuals. There are plenty of tal-



ented African Americans in all professions who shouldn't be marred by [what I did]. I can't get upset about others' being mad at me.

**In this profession, everyone misses deadlines. So why the intricate deception?**

Part of me was afraid to admit to my bosses that I couldn't pull it off. I'm a Black recovering drug addict and I know everyone's got their eyes on me. There is also a part of me that didn't want to admit that I was incapable of doing that particular job.

**So you thought your evaluation at work was based on your race?**

I had my perceptions about how the people in the newsroom viewed me. Those perceptions created internal pressures, and those internal pressures became my own prison.

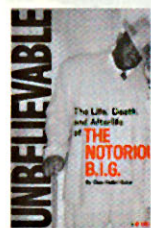
**Did race play a role in your day-to-day work?**

I wrote about a Central Park murder and I wondered if [the editors at the *Times* would have] cared if [the victim] were a Black or Latino woman. It makes you scratch your head about the editors' biases. The newspaper is carefully manufactured every day, and if you can't hide your biases on the pages, you're having a harder time hiding them in the office.

**Do you have any advice for the next Black intern at *The New York Times*?**

That's a harsh question. At the *Times*, I know they are going to have a tough road. Many people at the NYT will see [a Black employee] as an individual, but there are others who will see them as an affirmative action hire. I've watched that newspaper nurture people through heroin addictions, alcoholism and affairs in the office, and protect them the whole way. I don't think it's going to be as forgiving an environment as it once was. The leash is going to be a lot shorter. —JERRY L. BARROW

# Central Booking



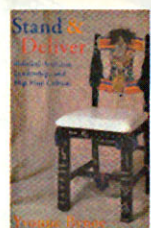
**Unbelievable: The Life, Death, and Afterlife of The Notorious B.I.G.** (Three Rivers Press, \$19.95)

*Unbelievable* is an in-depth look into the life and afterlife of Biggie. With exclusive photographs and candid interviews conducted by author Cheo Hodari Coker, the book provides insightful details on one of Hip-Hop's icons.



**The 50 Most Asked Questions About Gangs You Were Afraid To Ask** (Sidewalk University, \$20)

There are an estimated 250,000–500,000 gang members nationwide, and author and T. Rodgers, founder of the Black P Stone Bloods, answers 50 questions as to why many of America's kids join gangs.



**Stand & Deliver: Political Activism, Leadership and Hip Hop Culture** (Soft Skull Press, \$13.95)

In her debut, Yvonne Bynoe analyzes the relationship between Hip-Hop and politics while discussing the importance of Black leadership.



**Bling** (Miramax Books, \$24.95)

*Bling* tells the story of Mimi, a small-town girl trying to sing her way to stardom who quickly realizes the future of her record label rests solely on her shoulders.

—LATISHA ELMES