

# The GRIOT

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Colorado State University

## *Break Away Play*

Maya Lovelace



"Breaking-Away" is a play focused primarily on the Negro National Anti-Taft League in 1908, which began here in Colorado. The play consisted of twelve individuals and lasted about 30 minutes. In that time frame, the actors took the audience through a journey back in time.

It first started off with the Negro national anthem sung by the director herself, Lonnie McCabe. Then the play transformed into a meeting where members of the Anti-Taft League gave their different opinions of the political parties and how African Americans were treated with their 14th amendments being violated and Caucasians supporting it.

Not only did the play focus on the Anti-Taft League but also it highlighted how women were treated. A young woman who played Harriet S. Blanche (Woman's Right Activist) elaborated on how being a woman back then in America was harder than many would believe.

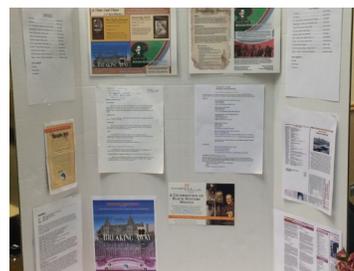
She spoke about not having the right to vote, freedom of speech and truly living in a "Man's world" thus shinning the spotlight on how many were silently ignored in that era. What made this play far more different than your average play was the interaction between the actors and the audience.

Given that the actors sat in the crowd with audience, that small detail made the audience feel a part of the chaos of the play. The play also spoke on history and killings that happened in Limón, Colorado as well as other injustices that happened across the country.

Shortly after the play, there was a Q&A panel discussion, which was actually the highlight of the entire play. The panel discussion gave the actors and audience an opportunity to voice their background in politics and political party affiliation.

In the crowd were two African American males who believed firmly in the philosophy of the Republican Party. Others represented the "independent" party and why they cannot fully stand with philosophy and actions of the democrats or republicans.

The overall, night was memorable and very informative for those who lacked knowledge of the Anti-Taft league. Majority of the audience felt that with the help of the play, they wanted to dig deeper and were left with questions such as: "Can I fully identify with the party for which am affiliated?" "How come there is not a third party?" And finally, "What can I do now to educate myself on whom to vote for in upcoming elections?" I encourage you to answer these questions yourself and challenge yourself by being informative to others instead of informed.



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## *Hoodwinked: Misconceptions of The Black Man*

*Stephaun Gaddis*

"I must emphasize at the start that the Honorable Elijah Muhammad is not a politician. So I'm not here this afternoon as one or even an American, because if I was an American, the problem that confronts our people today wouldn't even exist. So I have to stand here today as what I was when I was born: A black man. The government reflects on everything you do. Oh, I say and I say it again, ya been had! Ya been took! Ya been HOODWINKED! Bamboozled! Led astray! Run amok! This is what He does..." - Malcolm X



Just in time for Black History Month, well known film maker Janks Morton Jr. presented one of his latest documen-

taries: *Hoodwinked: The Misconceptions of the Black Man*. A documentary made solely on illuminating the hardships men of color face due to the consistent stereotypes and misrepresentations they are linked to by media.

In the documentary, Morton goes across the nation visiting different colleges asking students of color if they can name positive and negative stereotypes about African-Americans, as well as leading classes concerning statistics about people of color. The majority of the students were able to give multiple negative stereotypes yet unable to respond accordingly with a positive stereotype which left many to question if there really is an answer. Another major question that was asked through out this documentary was if there were more African American males in college or in prison. Most of the responses to this question supported the idea that more African American men were in jail rather than in college, the real answer to this question is that there are indeed more African American males in college than in prison.

The film continues this journey of understanding with knowledge spoken by many familiar faces. Dr. Steve Perry, Dr. Boyce Watkins, Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu, and Dr. Marc Lamont Hill all had their fair share in their opinion on how this perception is affecting African-American men.

Morton then ended the movie, with an open discussion with CSU students and CSU faculty as a way to continue the message. "Name one positive stereotype about African-Americans," Morton repeatedly asked as he also supported the idea with facts about how media tweaks statistics and over-exaggerates negative depictions of men of color. Exploring the most recent data from the US Census and other primary resources, he persuaded us to question it all. We should question the validity of our facts and statistics.

Many of our audience members could not answer this question as we dug deeper to the root of the problem. Morton claims that the support, encouragement, and overall wellbeing of the black man declines due to media misrepresenting statistics and facts about them.

Morton provided the fact that many statistics from the media in fact are not primary sources. Primary meaning, the information is original from the source that has personal knowledge in that field. They change statistics in favor of financial gain and a good article in the news. Making people of color (men especially) look like negative individuals in society just to get a top story or funding has been a regular occurrence for decades.

Following the viewing and post discussion, members of the United Men of Color led another discussion for just men, going in depth and exploring the topic further. The discussion with Morton was in fact heated, many people having different perceptions on stereotypes and other topics concerning people of color.

It was powerful to continue the topic, educating our students is the ultimate goal and this was definitely accomplished at the end of the night. Many agreed, there are other successful African-American men in the world other than rappers or athletes. Doctors, lawyers, and engineers of color don't get acknowledgment because they aren't on camera everyday nor are they in media; but they are still



men we can look up to regardless of their fame.

Also we as a community need to recognize that getting a solid education and being successful in life is the key to success, and not fame. They know that even being successful is only short lived if one does not give that support and education back to their community, creating that circle of success for years to come. Each one must teach one as awareness of our surroundings happens one mind at a time.

## Shade Ashani

Torshan Thomas



Photo Courtesy of: Google

"When someone shows you who they are, believe them the first time- Maya Angelou". Shade Ashani is a name that holds so much power, beauty, and compassion. Shade Ashani, a woman amongst the greatest of women. Shade Ashani, who started as a broken little girl grew into a teenager of great tribulation and now is a woman of glorious purpose.

There wasn't a dry eye in the room; there wasn't an empty laugh released. Both men and women could relate to

her story at some capacity and no matter the amount, you felt it to the tips of the hairs that stood on end from her raw emotion. That same broken little girl spoke to us tonight and throughout her tale, we got to mentally and physically see her transform into a strong, confident woman.

A tale of trial after trial of getting it wrong and after getting it right, only to get it wrong again. She stood before us and told her dark, gut wrenching story of her being fatherless, a high school dropout, looking for attention in all the wrong places, being raped, becoming atheist and ultimately suicidal.

That broken little girl laid on those train tracks waiting for her life to be over, but that same little girl got up from those very tracks she laid and was forever transformed into a brave girl. She was motivated by that experience to go back to school and finish. She was humbled seeing her friends graduate before her but also she was even more determined to go to Columbia University in New York, an Ivy League college.

Despite discouragement from her teachers, she accomplished that goal. This is when she found that broken little girl still lived and thrived inside of her like a deadly parasite. She found herself getting it wrong all over again, only looking for love in all the wrong places.

This led her down a spiraling path of verbal and physical abuse. Until she realized she couldn't love anyone without having to love herself first. The true epiphany that gave her purpose was one that she chose, one that she owned as Shade Ashani.



She is a speaker, writer, daughter, fiancé, sister, and business owner. The perfectly flawed tale of a woman who fell, a woman who survived, a woman who conquered,

Shade Ashani. "Few people are brave enough to love you when your secrets are on display" -Shade Ashani

*“choose courage over shame”*

*~Shade Ashani*

## Sex for Chocolate

Aleya Jones



On February 12th, Black Student Alliance hosted their popular event Sex for Chocolate. This program gave students the opportunity to voice their opinions on many controversial topics surrounding sex in an open and welcoming environment.

As the event began, a student from the group Colorado Youth Create created an activity for all of the students to complete focusing on safe sex and its importance. One of the questions asked that sparked up plenty of different answers was, Why is safe sex important? Students sparked up plenty of feedback right away such as, "prevention of unplanned pregnancy, no STD's, and part of your overall health." I thought this was a great way to start the Sex for Chocolate program because while it is always interesting to talk about sex, it is very important we are all aware of the safety and precautions of being sexually active

The real fun of the night began as the hosts started asking us questions. The first question asked was, "Why a woman is considered a hoe if she has sex with a lot of people, but a man is not?" Interestingly enough the males and females in the room had the same opinions about this topic responding with answers such as, "media idolizes men to look like "pimps" and it is a double

standard to judge woman for having a lot of sex partners but not men." The answer that truly grabbed my attention was the idea that if a man calls a woman a hoe, she is someone who he does not want or does not like.

Out of all the questions asked, the topic that caused the biggest debate between the students at the event was friends with benefits. Many students felt this sort of a relationship was impossible to work because one of the people would end up developing feelings. Others felt it truly depends on the maturity of the people in the relationship. I personally loved hearing everyone's response to this question because it is a growing type of relationship in our society.

Overall, I thought Sex for Chocolate was a great event. It gave students the opportunity to discuss topics in an open environment that are quite common in our society. I think it is very important that we get the chance to talk about sex amongst each other so we can realize many of our own thoughts may be similar to others on campus as well. Great job Black Student Alliance!



Photo Courtesy of: Google

## Soul Food for Junkies

Alexandria Norris



“People argue that vegetarian and vegan soul food is a departure from our roots, when in reality it is a homecoming” (Personal Communication, Adrian Miller).

Soul Food for Junkies was an innovative and educational

Black History Month event that was sponsored by ASAP, Aspen Grill, The Diversity Grant, Black Definition, and the Black African American Cultural Center.

This new addition to the calendar consisted of a documentary, a three-person panel, and a food tasting all into one insight and eye opening event. With over one hundred and sixty people in attendance the event was a success and left a lot of people with a new outlook on soul food.



To start the conversation on soul food Adrian Miller shared an “insightful, educational, historic, and creative” documentary that “gave a lot of great ideas on how ‘we’, as a community, can make healthier preparations and choices” in regards to soul food (Personal Communication, Adrian Jones, BSA Member). The documentary captured the rich history behind soul food, while challenging its need to be greasy and unhealthy.

The film introduced the audience to the origins of soul food; demonstrating that Africans and slavery were the main components. The film talked about how the very existence of slavery and the very conditions in which they were fed made healthy preparations seem like a reasonable response for how these individuals- whom were worked day in and day out, beaten, abused, and forced to reproduce frequently- survived for several generations. Soul food was sometime the only food given to these individuals and more time then none the sharing of these meals was the only happiness and sense of togetherness they were allowed to experience with each other.

The documentary challenged the audience to “take a closer look at what we put in our bodies; because it is more important than time, which has been chosen over nutrition in U.S. society” (Personal Communication, Duan Ruff).

So if you missed this intriguing event, you can search for the documentary “Soul Food Junkies” by Byron Hurt in local bookstores. This documentary takes its audience on an engaging and interesting culinary and historical adventure.



Its content is rich with history, food, traditions, stories, and values. You could also pick up Adrian Miller’s Cook book “Soul Food: The Surprising Story of an American Cuisine, One Plate at a Time.” His book delves into the influences, ingredients, and innovations that make up the soul food tradition. Focusing each chapter on the culinary and social history of one dish—such as fried chicken, chitlins, yams, greens, and ‘red drinks’.

Adrian Miller uncovers how these various items made it on the soul food plate and what it means for African American culture and identity.



## Dare to Move With LZ Granderson

Chynna Fayne



During Black History Month I had the pleasure of attending Dare to Move with LZ Granderson, an African American commentator for both CNN and ESPN. LZ set the stage for the discussion with these words, “I’m going to give ya’ll some, and ya’ll going to give some back to me.”

In his giving he talked about topics ranging from the struggle of coming from

humble beginnings in Detroit working his way to success, being gay and African American, being gay and having a spiritual life, being gay playing sports, and just living in this world being African American in general.

Mr. Granderson discussed the preconceived notions of African Americans specifically males are always thought to have done something wrong to have been killed when a white individual is accused of the crime. Mr. Granderson told us about the African American parental fears for their sons being killed by doing simple acts such as running through their neighborhood or playing loud music in their cars.

We also discussed the topic of having a spiritual life, being gay, and the myth that you can’t be both gay and Christian. Mr. Granderson told of his personal encounters on this subject as being untrue because he himself is both a Christian and gay. He did have to battle with the things that people in the church were saying and the way that the gay, lesbian, transgender, and queer community also made him feel about having a spiritual life.. Later

in life he finally found peace and was able to continue his walk with Christ and even brought his partner to join him.

Lastly we talked about the topic of being gay and playing sports and the “distraction” this could be for the team, players, and the league in general. Mr. Granderson expressed his dislike for the word, “distraction” being used in this topic because it’s not a matter of distraction but rather the lack of comfort with the other players.

He also went on to say that he, “would much rather a person come out and say that they don’t want anyone staring at them when they are naked in the shower than them saying having a gay teammate is a distraction.” He felt that everyone should have a chance to play and that the locker room problem ideas would subside if the players would just “take a shower (put on some cocoa butter so they won’t be ashy), put some clothes on, and keep it moving”.

At the end of this wonderful evening we also had the opportunity to “give some” back to Mr. Granderson with a Q&A. One of the major topics discussed was everyone’s personal Mount Rushmore of basketball players. I must say that this was an event that no one should have missed. It was full of laughs, life lessons, and reality. I am so happy and honored to have gotten the opportunity to attend this event with LZ Granderson.



## ***Black History Month Real Talks***

*Stephann Gaddis*

Black History Month has come to a conclusion! With that being said, many people began to appreciate the meaning behind the month even more with our Black History Month Real Talk Topics.

Starting it off with Jim Crow era and the Civil Rights Movement, our viewers learned just what it was like for the Black Community during this time in American history. We dug deep into the topic, depicting each and every aspect of black separatism and assimilation, how they differed and correlated. Overall sharing with our participants that we have truly come a long way from what blacks went through back in that era, and how to take advantage of such a blessing.

In our next topic, Affirmative Action, we took a look at how these policies benefit or hinder African Americans. Discussing trends of positive inclinations of success for blacks in the workforce through affirmative action, as well as issues caused for blacks because of the very same policies. Both aspects are still current today, as many of our guests could bring up examples of times they were put into the "disadvantaged" group for opportunities. People talked about receiving things like scholarships, outreach programs and other facets to lure people of color felt like forms of affirmative action policies. Nonetheless, we encouraged people, regardless of the benefits they received; what separates people from the crowd is how you use the benefits given.

Our 3rd topic, which was a fan favorite was Slave Mentality were we talked about people of color still having a slave mind set. As a group, we dove into the topic, learning about how some people were under absolute control in every facet of life including our jobs, technology, gossip, and debt as we always find ourselves showing up mentally to these objects, seeming to depend on them daily.

Many began to truly relate to ideas of slave mentalities and began to debate if there was a difference between a slave mentality and a typical addiction. This created the door of opportunity to learn as we all then observed how 6 main objects were affecting the black community.

A game introducing things like names, food, debt, language, self-hate, family, and prison all connected to our audience in one way or another showing them the main slave mentalities the black community faced. Educating others about these mentalities and their criticality would be the ultimate key. Each one teach one.

Our final topic in this extravagantly soulful Black History Month was Black Leaders. In this topic, we began a debate on just who were our most important black leaders were during the Civil Rights Movement? Many could automatically name 5+ people and organizations like the great Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Rosa Parks, The Black Panther Party, Muhammad Ali etc. But when the question came to name many black leaders in the current time, many people fumbled with words and questioned their own idea of a black leader. Why is this? Did they only come from the 50's and 60's? Or was there something else apparent? We came to conclude that our understanding of a black leader today did not have to be a Nobel Peace Prize winner, nor a abolitionist or even a political leader, our real leaders of today are the people of color inspiring our youth in each and every positive way possible.

Writing poetry, speaking as motivators, people putting an emphasis on what it means to have a village, a family, and strengthen the black community. We learned that even though people like CEO's of companies and other "behind the camera" leaders aren't mainstream to us; we still need to know them. Educate yourself in any way possible on leaders today; they might be closer than you think.

As we end our Black History Month of 2014, we continue to encourage everyone, no matter your color or ethnicity, to truly continue to inspire each other. Education is nothing without a messenger; it is up to us to speak, for we have the voice to change lives. We all may not have what it takes to change the world, but we can inspire someone who can.

## ***Upcoming Events.... Mark your Calendars!!!***

L.E.A.D. Conference – April 5 & 6 Downtown Denver (Selected Sophomores)

Soul Food Gospel Fest – April 13th, doors open at 4:45! Get your ticket today, call 1-5781

30th Annual Awards Banquet– April 26th @ 3p.m.. Nominations for Awards deadline is March 14th

# March 2014

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> <i>Real Talk @ 4 p.m.</i>	<b>5</b> <i>Men's basketball vs. San José State - Senior Night and Green Out! @ 7pm</i>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> <i>Women's basket- ball vs. Wyoming @ 7pm</i>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> <i>Real Talk @ 4 p.m.</i>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> <i>Spring Break!</i>	<b>18</b> <i>Spring Break!</i>	<b>19</b> <i>Spring Break!</i>	<b>20</b> <i>Spring Break!</i>	<b>21</b> <i>Spring Break!</i>	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> <i>Real Talk @ 4 p.m.</i>	<b>26</b> <i>Movie: Pariah @ 6 in LSC Theater</i>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>					



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BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN  
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