



David Sylvester Phone 267.252.1974 Fax 215.724.1931 sylvester_david@hotmail.com www.contribute2.org

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David's Call to Action:

I have received emails from everywhere on this topic and picture.

Is it true?

All over the world: Austria, Luxemburg, Germany, France, England, Malawi, Australia, Haiti, Paraguay, Qatar, Israel, Kenya, Nigeria, Holland, Ireland, Japan, Thailand, 30+ US states and other places.

Is it false?

All ages from 18 to 71.

How could this happen?

All colors: white, black, brown, yellow and everything in between. All sexual orientations. Some people are even asking me what to do.

Is this for real?

All these races, regions, religions and demographics agree on one thing: there is a problem. And it is not just niggers, bitches and ho's. It is all the terms that we use. It's everything.

There is a problem with how we look at ourselves. There is a problem with how we treat each other. There is a problem with a "get rich or die trying" mentality that leaves us in debt culturally, financially and intellectually. There is a problem with the respect that we don't give each other. There is a problem with the love we are unable to give ourselves. There is a problem that we don't cultivate dreamers anymore. There is a problem with the blurred definition of what we truly need in life and what we want in life. There is a problem with our inability to separate style from substance. We all agree that there is a problem, but what do we do and who is powerful enough to do it?

The answer is inside each and every one of you!

When I was in Tanzania I met a drunk man in a bar named George. As with many that I had met, George perked up when he saw that I was an American. For many I was the 1st African American male that they ever met. He wanted my opinions and views on America, politics, foreign affairs, women and all of that stuff. He wanted to know where I was from, where I was going, why I was traveling, why I was traveling by bicycle, who was my friend, why did he mean so much to me, what did I feel about the war, what did I feel about war in general. He wanted to know me, who I was.





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He wanted to know everything.

The conversation progressed and so did the drinks. He seemed to become more and more sober, coherent and vocal as I started to succumb to the libations – boy, am I a lightweight. At this point he asked me what was America's biggest export. "Cars," I said dumbly. "No," he snapped "It's entertainment." Wow, I thought and started to kind of drift off in thought wondering if it was true or not. I was jolted from my A.D.D. and alcohol-induced haze when he yelled "what are you giving us!" at the top of his lungs.

"What do you mean," I said, somewhat scared and startled by the yelling. "What are you giving us" he asked/demanded in a calmer manner. "Look," he said "I am not going to say that African music is better than American music or any other type of music, but I am going to say this: in my day the songs were about love. I love you. You love me. All you need is love. Oooh child things are going to get easier." He swayed back and forth as he sang pieces of a few songs. He stopped singing and swaying and said "Tomorrow, tomorrow was something better than today. Tomorrow was the only thing worth fighting for. But today" he said dryly, "today, the music is; I am going to get mine, take yours. Screw her. Screw her friends. Screw everybody. Get a big car. Get a big house. Get some big tits! and after all of this getting, you know what...today is still a fucked up day."

Talk about 'keepin' it real! I sat there with my mouth agape. I never heard it put in such a poignant manner. I never looked at it from that perspective or heard it put so bluntly. The next thing he did was point his finger in my face and say "I hold you responsible and you need to do something."

Huh, I thought. "What can I do? I am just a regular guy on a bike." I said meekly, not ready for such a task and/or challenge. He said "If you have it here" pointing to his head "and have it here" placing his hand over his heart "to get here," pointing to the Tanzanian earth, "then you have some power and you must figure out how to use it. Now let's go." And with that he drove me through the night to my campsite. No more serious tenor or tone to the conversation just two silly, buzzed guys laughing the night away. But the challenge had been issued, George's feelings and thoughts had been stated and the power had been exposed. That exchange dominated my thoughts the next few days on the bike and has rattled in my head ever since. Never has anyone made me that accountable and reminded me of the power that I actually do have, usually you are bombarded with the notion of the power that you don't have.

So with that I say to all of you: If you have in your heads to have read this far into the email, have seen too much, heard too much and you have it in your heart to feel the passion and energy of what I am saying, then you too have power my friend, and now is your time to go. Time to use your power and demand better.

Demand better images of you on the TV screen. **Demand better** pictures of you in the movies. **Demand better** words to describe the millions of black men, women, and children that are out there in the world. No more nigger, nigga or any variation in between! **Demand better** representation of your elected officials



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and make them work for you. Let them know that even if you did not vote them into office, that unless they step up and are better, that you and others will surely vote their behinds out. **Demand** more passion from the teachers because the kids they teach need to feel it, so they will want to learn their whole lives. **Demand better** stories of you in books and not overblown pamphlets with big type, small words and weak plots. **Demand better** and safer streets because basic public safety should not be a premium of life, it should be the norm! **Demand more** from yourself. Step up and acknowledge your strengths and weaknesses, and then work on them so you can be even better! **Demand better** from the men in your circle and let them know that the definition of a man has little to nothing to do with their penis, but more with their character. **Demand better** speakers at your child's school so that others with a passion can paint a real picture of the world they are about to venture into. **Demand** more from your friends and let them know that you will help them through any problem but they first have to help themselves out. **Demand** a more peaceful past by coming to a point of resolve- what happened in the past is past so learn a lesson from it, gain perspective and move on-holding a grudge is useless. **Demand better** from your icons, should they be role models –no- are they role models-yes! (sorry Charles Barkley but that is the steep price of fame and fortune) **Demand better** from life because in the end I don't think anyone's last thoughts are consumed with spinning rims, stacks of dough, big cars, bling bling, three-somes or platinum chains. **Demand better** from women and remind them that their sex appeal, sensuality, and seductiveness come from what spills out of a brain and not always from what spills out of her bra. **Demand** a better future by writing, not just, your goals down but a relevant plan to achieve them as well and go do it. **Demand** the truth from your lover, and let them know that if the relationship is over, then let it be over. You are strong and will deal with it over time, but don't lie to you, cheat on you and put your health in jeopardy! **Demand more** from your children because a kid without standards, rules, roles and guidance is a lost soul in the woods and will surly be devoured. **Demand** vision from everyone because we can all see the problems that face us. **Demand better** guidance from the adults in the community and in the home because we need their perspective. **Demand** respect, but only after you sincerely give it. **Demand more** from your significant other because you need support, tenderness, love, honesty, respect and affection- not just one or two of those things. **Demand better** food that is going to make you healthier, not heavier. **Demand** a better environment and pick up a piece of trash or sweep your block.

Demand it, because you deserve it!

Call, write, mail, email and engage all that you think can contribute to the mess and noise that is currently out there. Let them all know how you feel! Make them all accountable! ESPN, Clear Channel, P Diddy, 50 cent, Reebok, Nike, George Bush, David Stern, Bad Boy entertainment, Sean john, Phat Farm, Viacom, Universal, Sony, Phillip Morris, McDonalds, Glaxo Smith Kline, BET, ABC, NBC, HBO, CBS, the guy that owns the corner store and anyone else. Make them aware. Tell them who you are. Tell them what you are. Tell them what you do. Tell them that you demand better. Engage them in a dialogue. Tell them you deserve better.

- Do I think that P Diddy should weigh in on this topic? Yes, because it was his name the Malawian's uttered not anyone else's.
- Do I blame him totally for the current volume of the usage of the "N" word? No, no, no! The word



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was around way before Sean Combs or his parents were ever even thought of. Please no 'you hatin' on P Diddy emails.

- Do I blame myself for the current state of un/consciousness? Yes, I have purchased CD's, DVD's, said the words, and, in a sense, fanned the current flame of ignorance. But I was not alone. There are millions around the world that were right along with me.
- Do I think that it is important to take a stand on this and other issues? Yes. If not here, where? If not now, when? If not me, who?
- Do I think that even P Diddy needs to be reminded of the power that he possesses and should try and put a stop to this crap? Yes. We need you Diddy!
- Do I think that we as individuals need to be reminded of our own individual power and try and abate the current tide as well? Yes, we all have a capacity for immense power. The seeds of every revolution were planted initially by just one.
- Do I think that I can make a difference in the world? As long as there is a breath in my body and a smile in my heart, then there's a chance, and I am going to take it and try and make it.

I am David Hale Sylvester. I am an un-sponsored, poor, unfettered, driven, passion-filled, world-traveling, people-loving, life-living, bear-hugging bicyclist. I am a son. I am a proud uncle. I am a leader. I am a role model to someone. I am very much alive, and in the time that you have read this email 500 people around the world have taken their last breaths. I am tired of contributing to the perpetual cycle of nonsense. I have gifts of physical size, a big heart, a voice, might and mental strength. I am starting a new scholarship with each continent I traverse, www.contribute2.org. I am an ambassador. I am a public speaker. **I have seen too much to stop now.** I am demanding more from life. I am demanding more from others around me. I am demanding more from myself. I am going to use my individual power, and will, to make others give me what I deserve: **BETTER.**



This did not start out as an act of activism and humanitarian awareness, but it kind of became one. You all now know who I am, and I urge you to let the world know just who you are and start to contribute2 it. **Who is with me?** For anyone interested in having me as a speaker, panelist or interested is in contributing to the fund, please contact me at the number below or at the Philadelphia Foundation, www.philafound.org

—DAVID

This will help you be whatever you want. Just one four-letter word: W-O-R-K. We love you. Mommy and Daddy. —Samuel and Theresa Sylvester, Christmas '77

Sylvester_david@hotmail.com
267-252-1974 voicemail