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URBAN RADIO CROSSES MORAL AND ETHICAL LINES TO GAIN LISTENERS

According to concerned media professionals who lament the loss of the credibility of urban radio on broadcast hosted by James Brown.

(Washington, D.C.) This week **AMERICA'S BLACK FORUM** questions whether Black radio goes too far in its effort to attract listeners. Examples like an Internet radio promotion called "Smackfest," where female contestants smack each other to win \$500 evoked strong reactions from the panelists. "I'm heartbroken," said **Michaela Angela Davis**, **executive fashion and beauty editor** for *ESSENCE MAGAZINE*. "These are my people...what they take away from it is so small compared to what they're giving away."

Hip-hop journalist Davey D says the blame is being placed on the wrong group. "When we see things like this, the immediate target is the people who participate and the DJs, but we don't look at the corporate people behind it." **DJ Alizay** of **WKYS Radio** in Washington, DC, sees it as pure entertainment. "From the perspective of a 24 year old, I find it funny." Davey D thinks that's intentional. "It's based on a formula of success using the Ricki Lake and Jerry Springer type shows where they show mostly people of color in a despicable light and make that entertainment." **NAACP Chairman Julian Bond** questioned, "Don't you think it's a part of the coarsening of American culture, generally?"

The panelists also discussed the increasingly vulgar lyrics being heard on urban radio. "Radio only researches one type of record," opines **Paul Porter**, **Co-founder** of the media watchdog group, **Industry Ears**. "So a so-called conscious record can't get played, if it hasn't been researched."

ABF is seen on over 100 television stations across the country and on the TV One cable network. **Juan Williams** of *Fox News Sunday* and **James Brown** of *Fox NFL Sunday* host the program. Commentators, including former White House correspondent **Deborah Mathis** and NAACP Chairman **Julian Bond** join the hosts. Supervising producer is Byron Lewis, Jr.; the program is produced by Jaci Clark.

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