

Kwanzaa



26th December 2020 - 1st January 2021

Umoja - Kujichagulia - Ujima - Ujamaa - Nia - Kuumba - Imani

African American Voice Special Supplement Issue
December 2020

What is Kwanzaa?

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Kwanzaa is an annual celebration of African-American culture that is held from December 26 to January 1, culminating in a communal feast called Karamu, usually held on the 6th day. It was created by Dr. Maulana Karenga, based on African harvest festival traditions from various parts of Africa, including West and Southeast Africa. Kwanzaa was first celebrated in 1966.

Kwanzaa celebrates what its founder called the seven principles of Kwanzaa, or Nguzo Saba (originally Nguzu Saba – the seven principles of African Heritage). They were developed in 1965, a year before Kwanzaa itself. These seven principles comprise Kawaida, a Swahili word meaning "common". Each of the seven days of Kwanzaa is dedicated to one of the following principles, as follows:

- **Umoja** (Unity): To strive for and to maintain unity in the family, community, nation, and race.
- **Kujichagulia** (Self-Determination): To define and name ourselves, as well as to create and speak for ourselves.
- **Ujima** (Collective Work and Responsibility): To build and maintain our community

together and make our brothers' and sisters' problems our problems and to solve them together.

- **Ujamaa** (Cooperative economics): To build and maintain our own stores, shops, and other businesses and to profit from them together.
- **Nia** (Purpose): To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.
- **Kuumba** (Creativity): To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.
- **Imani** (Faith): To believe with all our hearts in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders, and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

Kwanzaa celebratory symbols include a mat (Mkeka) on which other symbols are placed: a Kinara (candle holder for seven candlesticks), Mishumaa Saba (seven candles), mazao (crops), Mahindi (corn), a Kikombe cha Umoja (unity cup) for commemorating and giving shukrani (thanks) to African Ancestors, and Zawadi (gifts). Supplemental representations include a Nguzo Saba poster, the black, red, and green bendera (flag), and African books and artworks – all to represent values and concepts reflective of African culture and contribution to community building and reinforcement. Ears of corn represent the children celebrating and corn may be part of the holiday meal.

How to Observance Kwanzaa?

2



Families celebrating Kwanzaa decorate their households with objects of art, colorful African cloth such as kente, especially the wearing of kaftans by women, and fresh fruits that represent African idealism. It is customary to include children in Kwanzaa ceremonies and to give respect and gratitude to their ancestors. Libations are shared, generally, with a common chalice, Kikombe cha Umoja, passed around to all celebrants. Non-African Americans also celebrate Kwanzaa. The holiday greeting is "Joyous Kwanzaa".

A Kwanzaa ceremony may include drumming and musical selections, libations, a reading of the African Pledge and the Principles of Blackness, reflection on the Pan-African colors, a discussion of the African principle of the day or a chapter in African history, a candle-lighting ritual, artistic performance, and, finally, a feast of faith (Karamu Ya Imani). The greeting for each day of Kwanzaa is Habari Gani?, which is Swahili for "How are you?"

At first, observers of Kwanzaa avoided the mixing of the holiday or its symbols, values, and practice with other holidays, as doing so would violate the principle of kujichagulia (self-determination) and thus violate the integrity of the holiday, which is partially intended as a reclamation of important African values. Today, some African American families celebrate Kwanzaa along with Christmas and New Year's.

Cultural exhibitions include the Spirit of Kwanzaa, an annual celebration held at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts featuring interpretive dance, African dance, song and poetry.

The popularity of celebration of Kwanzaa has declined with the waning of the popularity of the black separatist movement. Kwanzaa observation has declined in both community and commercial contexts. According to the University of Minnesota Professor Keith Mayes, the popularity within the U.S. has "leveled off" as the black power movement there has declined, and as of 2009 between 500 thousand and two million Americans celebrated Kwanzaa or between one and five percent of African Americans. Mayes added that white institutions now celebrate it.

The National Retail Federation has sponsored a marketing survey on winter holidays since 2004, and in 2015 found that 1.9% of those polled planned to celebrate Kwanzaa – about six million people in the United States.

Starting in the 1990s, the holiday became increasingly commercialized, with the first Hallmark Card being sold in 1992, and there has been concern about this damaging the holiday's values.



The Black Candle



The Black Candle is a landmark, vibrant documentary film that uses Kwanzaa as a vehicle to explore and celebrate the African-American experience.

Narrated by world-renowned poet Maya Angelou and directed by award-winning author and filmmaker MK Asante, The Black Candle is an extraordinary, inspirational story about the struggle and triumph of family, community, and culture.

Filmed across the United States, Africa, Europe and the Caribbean, The Black Candle is a timely illumination on why the seven principles of Kwanzaa (unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith) are relevant today.

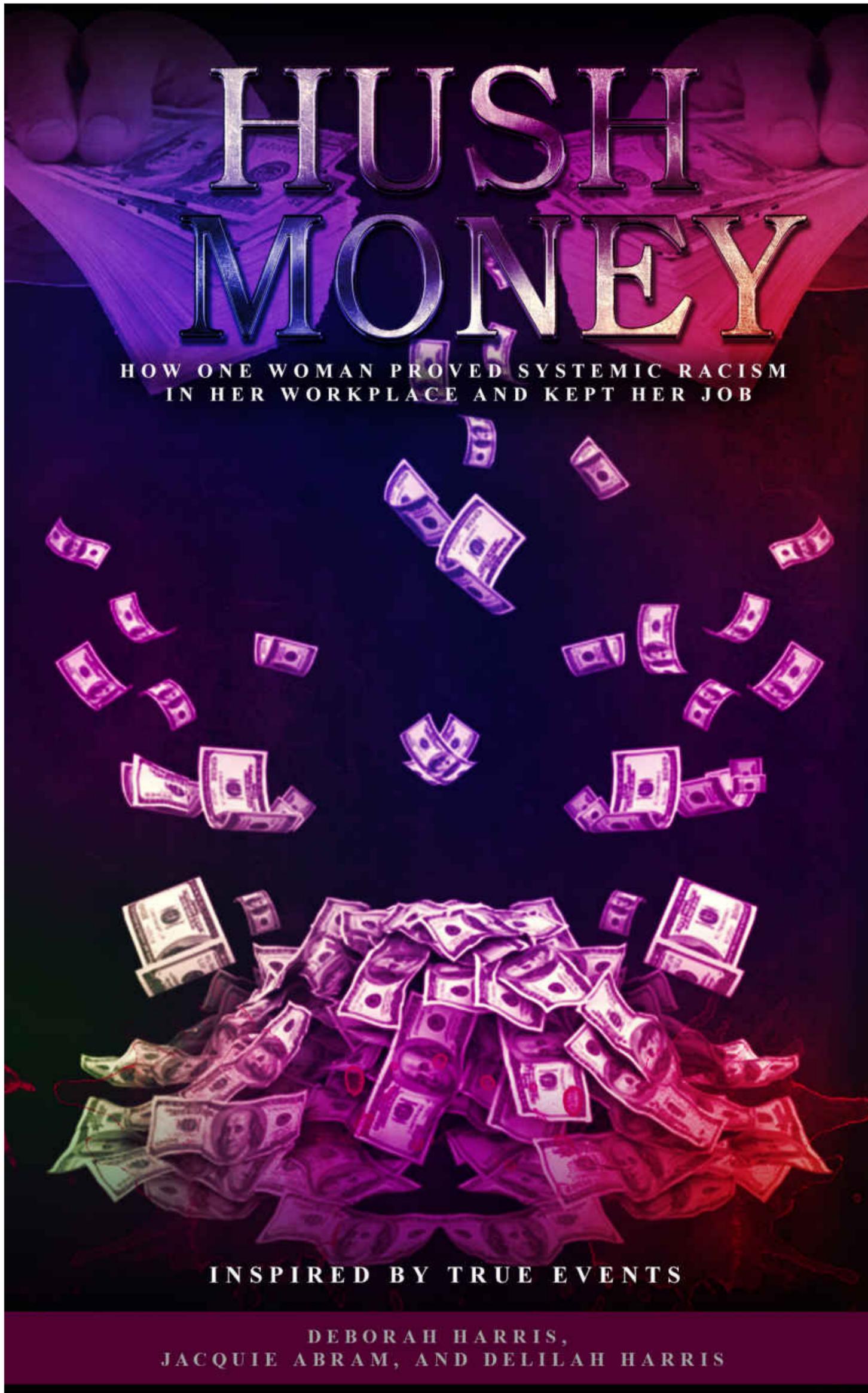
The first feature film on Kwanzaa, The Black Candle traces the holiday's growth from the first celebration in 1966 to its present-day reality as a global holiday embraced by over 20 million celebrants.

With vivid cinematography and an all star cast that features NFL Legend Jim Brown, Hip Hop icon Chuck D, Kwanzaa's founder Dr. Maulana Karenga, artist Synthia Saint James and many others, The Black Candle is more than a film about a holiday: it's a celebration of a people!



Celebrating New Black Authors

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Hush Money tells a story that is all too familiar to Black people across the globe with the case study of Ebony, a young Black woman who was living in poverty, struggling financially, and finding it hard to make ends meet.

It describes how she obtained a job with an organization, after years of working dead-end jobs, that put her one step closer to living the American dream. But it also describes how that dream turned into a nightmare when she became a victim of systemic racism in her workplace, was stripped of all dignity, confidence and strength, and was left with three choices: suffering in silence to keep her job, resigning to keep her sanity, or waiting to be unjustly fired.

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