



Beyond the Down Low: Sex, Lies, and Denial in Black America

Keith Boykin, E. Lynn Harris

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Keith Boykin, a former Clinton White House aide, syndicated columnist, and AIDS activist, breaks new ground by going beyond the hype with the first responsible, eye-opening look at the down low sensation. Unlike all previous accounts on the topic, *Beyond the Down Low* refreshingly presents the DL not merely as a problem of gay and bisexual men living in the shadows and endangering women, but more broadly as a telling example of the African-American community's overall failure to engage in critical but uncomfortable conversations about sexuality. Boykin details how the virtual silence from black leaders on sex matters has helped to create an environment where gay and bisexual men feel compelled to lead double lives. Meanwhile, the dialogue that has occurred both inside and out of African-American circles encourages an unhealthy battle of the sexes, ignores the complexities of the closet, demonizes homosexuality and bisexuality, disempowers women from personal responsibility to protect themselves from STDs, and misdirects public resources and attention at vilifying down low men.

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