

ONE MAN ONE NIGHT ONE NATIONWIDE TOUR



*From Kings* TO THUGS TO PRESIDENTS

FEATURING MUHIBB DYER

## S.O.S. - SAVE OUR SONS

In cities all across the United States of America, neighborhoods in the black community have become reminiscent of those in Iraq. The body count of young black males has reached an all time high, yet few organizations are lobbying to stop the war in the hood. In fact most people have given up; most people have become desensitized to the sound of gunshots, the sight of shrines on corners, and incarcerated males being hauled off to jail reminiscent of assembly lines. And the saddest part of all is that most youth between the ages of 12-18 do not see themselves making it to 21. The communities where they live have claimed the lives of too many of their friends and family. It is in these times of dire need that the play From Kings to Thugs to Presidents was born.

Artists and playwrights in the African American community historically have always helped to spark movements of change. This play is a return to that tradition. A tradition where art creates a dialogue about the causes of black male homicide and incarceration ultimately leading to solutions; a tradition that inspires youth who view themselves as products of their environments to know they are far more than their environment. A tradition that emphatically exclaims that art for art's sake or solely for the sake of money or anything else is no longer acceptable.

The mission of the Save our Sons Tour is to use the production of the play, From Kings to Thugs to Presidents, as a catalyst to garner the interest of young African-American males. In each city of the tour, the play will be followed by breakout sessions and workshops led by local youth development organizations with the goal of:

- Reducing juvenile crime
- Reinforcing a sense of respect for themselves and others
- Reducing interpersonal conflicts at home, at school and in the community.

Working with local community organizations we hope the play and subsequent workshops build momentum of the play and continue with concrete action plans to save our youth.



## THE PLAY

From Kings to Thugs to Presidents is the story of the African-American experience as told through the works of poet and community activist Muhibb Dyer. From Royal beginnings in Africa to periods of extreme loss and tragedy in the Ghettos of America to the return of greatness that could not be denied in the Presidency of Barack Obama, this story of trials, tribulations, triumph, and victory attests to the powerful human spirit of a people that have overcome insurmountable odds. More than your typical theatrical performance, those in attendance are guaranteed to leave this event thoroughly entertained and inspired to make an impact on the world.

### MARNA'S STORY

The play begins with a video clip of a mother talking about her experience of losing her son to violence.

### PRECIOUS LORD

The revered gospel song, Precious Lord plays in the background accompanied by slides of victims of violence. A dance of praise to the song is performed simultaneously.

### I BET YOU'VE NEVER SEEN IT LIKE THIS

As the curtain rises the main character rises out of a casket, forcing the audience to visualize the reality of violence in the black community. The question is asked "How did we get here"? The answer is given in the form of a poem called the sounds of the ghetto, which details a drive by shooting of a four year old girl.

### A CONVERSATION WITH PRESTON

"Everybody knows someone under the age of 21 that lost their life to violence, and this is mine" says the main character as he pulls out an obituary T-shirt. He pretends that the deceased is talking to him urging him not to forget his existence; to not let him die in vain. The main character promises to tell the deceased story to other troubled young men possibly preventing their early demise.



## THE PLAY (CONTD.)

### HISTORY IS HIS-STORY

The main character speaks to the idea that throughout Western history African Americans have mostly been depicted negatively and the current media images are a continuation of that. “But the truth is we come from Royalty, although they won’t tell you that, and why should they”. “History is his-story while my story is a mystery”.

### ENTER THE KING

An African dancer comes on stage and presents the main character with an outfit of royalty as he puts the garb on, she dances to show honor for her king. After she finishes, the main character performs a poem that speaks of the resilient king that still lives inside black people that could never be destroyed, despite the systematic attempts made by the American society since their arrival.

### WHAT HAPPENED TO US?

After a display of pride and dignity, the natural question to ask is what happened to us? The lights go black on the main character and the spotlight shifts to a comedian that makes a mockery of the foolish behavior of certain segments of the African American community.

### STRANGE FRUIT / ENTER THE THUG

Before the dysfunctional Jerry Springer like black community was paraded all over the media, lynching of black men made headlines in Southern News Papers. The main character watches a dance performance to the Nina Simone version of strange fruit with a picture of a mutilated body in the background. “Hate is what happened to us and now we are the hate that hate produced” exclaims the main character. He puts on a jail suit and role plays an angry black male who refuses to care about life because life never cared about him.



## THE PLAY (CONTD.)

### I'M THE CHAMPION WITH OR WITHOUT YOU!!!

The main character playing the role of the angry black male indicts those successful black people that failed to give back to the Ghetto. He suggests that money, power, and prestige must be more important than his life. But despite their lack of help, he vows to defeat the negativity of the “hood” that wants to see him dead or incarcerated. He yells emphatically “I’m the champion with or without you!!!”

### ENTER THE PRESIDENT

The main character takes off the jail suit and underneath it is a suit and tie. “He says “Instead of being in front of an audience of a Judge and jury of my peers waiting for my plea, my audience is the world and their waiting for me to set them free.” I closed my eyes and took a deep breath and let the president speak through me!!! The main character stands at a podium and gives his version of a presidential address.

### HOW WILL THEY REMEMBER YOU?

The main character walks back to the casket where he began, “How will time remember you”. The only thing that survives the grave is your works.” Will you be the KING, THUG, OR PRESIDENT? THE CHOICE IS UP TO YOU!!!! The main character gets back into the casket... fade to black.



## MUHIBB DYER - BIOGRAPHY

Muhibb Dyer is undeniably one of the most dynamic elements in our community who is intent on cultivating a scene of positive and influential change with a local and national following of sold out events. His penetrating poetry reaches the core of their audiences painting real life scenarios geared towards societal issues with a mirror effect.

Much like the late activist Malcolm X, he has encountered similar trials in his lifetime. Trials that could have easily made him fall victim to the streets, adding to the statistics in the African American community for black males. But instead he is using his life's experiences as a spring board to motivate others through poetry and inspiration that will create change regardless of your current environment.

In 2003 Dyer had a vision and put together a "calendar of consciousness" that covers the spectrum of black existence. The theme of the calendars, The Children Are Crying Calendars feature poetry and photography covering everything from black love, to the high murder and incarceration rates among black men, to what it is like to be black child in the inner city. Since its release in 2003, over 15,000 calendars have been sold and several young people have received The Children Are Crying Scholarships.

Subsequently he created the Campaign Against Violence and Flood the Hood with Dreams which features grassroots event and seminars that serve as a catalyst to diminish violence within our communities. The organizations' are dedicated to empowering youth to dream big and achieve their goals by overcoming their environments and taking responsibility of their futures.



# MUHIBB DYER - PERFORMANCE HISTORY

## HIGH SCHOOLS

Washington - Milwaukee, WI  
Bradley Tech - Milwaukee, WI  
South - Milwaukee, WI  
North Division - Milwaukee, WI  
High School of Arts - Milwaukee, WI  
Hamilton - Milwaukee, WI  
Marshall - Milwaukee, WI  
Pulaski - Milwaukee, WI  
Custer - Milwaukee, WI  
Riverside - Milwaukee, WI  
Juneau - Milwaukee, WI  
Vincent - Milwaukee, WI  
Wauwatosa East - Wauwatosa, WI  
Wauwatosa West - Wauwatosa, WI  
Nicolet - Glendale, WI  
Shorewood - Shorewood, WI  
Asata Altrntve. - Milwaukee, WI  
Cornerstone Altrntve. - Milwaukee, WI  
Transition Altrntve. - Milwaukee, WI  
James Madison - Milwaukee, WI  
Spotted Eagle Altrntve. - Milwaukee, WI  
St Charles Altrntve. - Milwaukee, WI  
Holy Redeemer Altrntve. - Milwaukee, WI  
Genesis - Milwaukee, WI  
African Amer Emersion - Milwaukee, WI  
Westinghouse - Pittsburgh PA  
Selma High School - Selma, AL  
Madison West - Madison, WI  
Madison East - Madison, WI  
Menona Grove - Madison, WI  
Aiken High School - Cincinnati, OH  
Waukesha South - Waukesha, WI

## K THROUGH 8

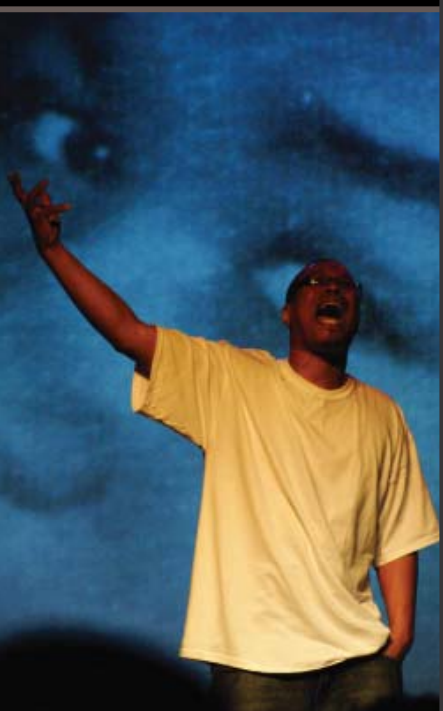
Westside Academy - Milwaukee, WI  
Audubon - Milwaukee, WI  
Edison - Milwaukee, WI  
Hopkins Ave - Milwaukee, WI  
Auer Ave - Milwaukee, WI  
Lafollette Elementary - Milwaukee, WI  
Benjamin Franklin - Milwaukee, WI  
Burroughs - Milwaukee, WI  
John Muir - Milwaukee, WI  
Northwest Alterative - Milwaukee, WI  
George W. Carver - Milwaukee, WI  
Milwaukee College Prep - Milwaukee, WI  
Dr. Martin Luther King - Milwaukee, WI  
Malcom X Academy - Milwaukee, WI  
Silbah Lutheran - Milwaukee, WI  
Christ the King School - Milwaukee, WI  
South Eastern Alternative - Milwaukee, WI  
Lincoln Elementary - Milwaukee, WI

## CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Focus Program - Milwaukee, WI  
Milwaukee Juvenile Detention Center  
Juvenile Dept of Probation & Corrections  
Lincoln Hills Juvenile Corectional Facility  
Carmelite Home for Boys - Milwaukee, WI  
House of Corrections - Franklin, WI  
Milwaukee County Jail  
Public Defenders Conference  
- Milwaukee, WI  
State Judges Conference - Madison WI  
Felmers Chaney Center - Milwaukee, WI  
Adult Probation Center - Milwaukee, WI

## COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Futures First Initiative - Milwaukee, WI  
Safe Schools Healthy students - Milwaukee, WI  
Milwaukee Urban league - Milwaukee, WI  
Sherman Park Boys/Girl Club - Milwaukee, WI  
Hillside Boys/Girl Club - Milwaukee, WI  
North Division Boys/Girl Club - Milwaukee, WI  
Families United to Prevent Teen Pregnancy - Milwaukee, WI  
Metropolitain Milwaukee Association of Black Student Educators (MMABSE) - Milwaukee, WI  
The Milwaukee Fatherhood Initative  
Social Developement Comission - Milwaukee, WI  
Arts at Large - Milwaukee  
WIWEASSP Conference - Milwaukee, WI  
Parklawn YMCA - Milwaukee, WI  
The League of Young Voters - Milwaukee, WI  
American Civil Liberties Union - Milwaukee, WI  
Department of Labor Youth Oppurtunty Program - Milwaukee, WI  
Service Employees International Union (S.E.I.U)  
National Conference - Washington, D.C.,  
Bloody Sunday Conference - Selma AL,  
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)  
National Conference, Washington, D.C,  
Dream Reborn Conference -TN



# MUHIBB DYER - PERFORMANCE HISTORY (CONTD.)

## COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

UW Platteville - Platteville, WI  
UW Milwaukee - Milwaukee, WI  
UW Madison - Madison, WI  
UW Parkside - Parkside, WI  
UW Whitewater - Whitewater, WI  
UW Lacrosse - Lacrosse, WI  
UW Oshkosh - Oshkosh, WI  
Alverno College - Milwaukee, WI  
Milwaukee Area Technical College - Milwaukee, WI  
Bryant and Stratton - Milwaukee, WI  
Edgewood College - Madison, WI  
University of Rhode Island - Kingston, RI  
Florida A&M - Tallahassee, FL  
Prarieview A&M - Prarieview, TX  
Texas Southern - Houston, TX  
University of Pittsburgh - Pittsburgh, PA  
Malcom X College - Chicago, IL  
Beloit College - Beloit, WI  
Cardinal Stritch University - Fox Point, WI  
Waukesha Tech - Waukesha, WI

## POLITICS

Shared the stage with:  
Cornell West  
Judge Maybelline Ephriam  
Judge Matthis  
Minister Louis Farrakhan  
Jesse Jackson  
Al Sharpton  
Russell Simmons  
Congresswoman Maxine Waters  
Congressman John Louis  
Civil rights activist Andrew young  
Entertainer/Civil Rights Ativist Harry Belefonte

## AWARDS

Poetry Unplugged Innovation Award  
Ahmadiyya Movement Community Service Award  
Urban Underground Impact Award  
Scottish Rites Masons Certificate of Excellence Award  
Milwaukee Inner City Churches Allied for Hope (MICAH) Justice Award  
Milwaukee Times Black Excellence Award

## ENTERTAINMENT

Opening Act for:  
Muhammad Ali                      Dave Chappelle,  
P-Diddy                                Marry J. Blige  
Master P                                Common  
Talib Kweli                            India Arie  
Malik Yusef                            Dead Prez  
Afeni Shakur

## FEATURED PERFORMANCES

Kothi Dance Company  
Andre Lee Ellis & Company,  
Verbal Hustlin Vol 1  
The Soul Unseen Tour

## NATIONAL POETRY SLAM PERFORMER

Milwaukee Slam Team Member 2002-2004  
Competed in Minnesota, St. Louis and Chicago  
Made top 10 out of 500 in Minnesota.

## OTHER POETRY PERFORMANCES

Performed in poetry venues in Milwaukee, WI, Madison, WI, Chicago, IL, Waukegan, IL, Kenosha, WI, New York, NY, Norfolk, VA, Washington, D.C, Dallas, TX, De Moines, IA, Omaha, NE, Los Angeles, CA, Pittsburgh, PA, Cincinnati, OH, New Orleans, LA, Detroit, MI, Boston, MA, Atlanta, GA, & Memphis, TN.





“The play brought several grown men to tears. Then it led them to growth...”

Carey Jenkins  
League of Young Voters  
Training Director, Atlanta,  
GA



“Our urban climate is in dire need of liberating prophetic voices. Muhibb Dyer provides us with that with his powerful works of integrity and truth.”

Derrick Rogers  
Principal,  
Transition High School





“Phenomenal! Muhibb speaks for the many mother’s sons who are no longer here to speak for themselves because we’ve lost them to the streets.”

Marna Winbush  
Mother’s Against Gun Violence  
Milwaukee, WI



“Muhibb Dyer breathes life into his “Stop the Violence” message by putting a generally middle-aged crowd inside the mindset and the language of young people living and dying on the inner city streets.”

Dominique Paul  
Noth  
Milwaukee Labor Press



“Dyer’s one-man-show took me on a journey to where I come from, what I’ve done, and what I needed to do to change my fate. This production was like watching re-enacted stories from my tumultuous life. All children should see this... especially black and brown boys.

**Carl Wesley**  
UW-Platteville  
Director of Pre-college  
Programs and Retention