Allan Iverson as America’s Most Wanted: Black Masculinity as a Cultural Site of Struggle

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This essay examines the Philadelphia media’s coverage of Allen Iverson’s domestic dispute during the summer of 2002 and reveals that (a) the media accounts reduced Iverson to the familiar images that have been historically constructed about Black men; that is, that they are aggressive, angry, prone to violence, and sexually aggressive, and (b) the hostility toward Iverson reflects a grander cultural clash between the dominant culture’s middle class values and Black masculinity from a hip-hop perspective. The media coverage suggests that the dominant culture resents Iverson because he does not exemplify an acceptable Black masculinity for someone who has achieved success far beyond middle class.

Black Masculinities and the Dominant Culture

In 1962, Charles “Sonny” Liston completed his domination of the heavyweight division by knocking out Floyd Patterson in the first round to become the undisputed heavyweight champion of the world. Liston’s reign, however, was as controversial as the newly crowned champ’s past. Upon returning to his adoptive city of Philadelphia, he expected to receive a hero’s welcome. Instead, he was greeted by only a handful of airline workers and media people. Friend and Philadelphia Daily News sportswriter, Jack McKinney, who sat next to Liston on the plane flight from Chicago to Philadelphia, recalled Liston’s devastation as the new champ realized that, “He was still the bad guy. He was the personification of evil. And that’s the way it was going to remain. I knew from that point on that the world would never get to know the Sonny that I knew” (Nack, 1991, p. 72).

Not only did Liston spark fear among whites, but his presence was equally fearsome among blacks. The civil rights movement was in its infancy and African Americans were even more conscious of the images and individuals who were used to represent the race. For many, Liston represented all aspects of black masculinity that the culture implicitly believed hindered their struggle for equality, most notably being an ex-convict (Tosches, 2000). Historically, from this country’s settlement, societal pressures to control and dominate black people have been accomplished by elevating the “race man,” who did not pose a threat to the dominant culture’s interests or values (Boyd, 1997). The dominant culture has always pitted the African American culture against itself by pressuring blacks to embrace one type of black masculinity, while rejecting another. This has occurred...
repeatedly throughout history whether it was Washington vs. DuBois, King vs. Malcolm X, or Jackson vs. Farrakhan. For African Americans who were already oppressed politically, socially, and economically, it became problematic to accept black masculinities that the dominant culture did not accept.

Liston’s misfortune was that he did not represent the dominant culture’s idea of a heavyweight champion (Young, 1963). As Nack (1991) explained, “In public Liston was often surly, hostile, and uncommunicative, and so he fed one of the most disconcerting of white stereotypes, that of the ignorant, angry, morally reckless black roaming loose, with bad intentions, in white society” (p. 69). Since Liston was not seen as being worthy of the title, he lived a life of persecution from the police and the white public up until his mysterious death.

Now four decades after Liston won the heavyweight title, black masculinity, while more diverse, still must overcome projected stereotypes and fight for acceptance from the dominant culture. The dominant culture’s contentious relationship with black masculinity is evident in a hero of the hip-hop generation, Allen Iverson. Iverson, a guard for the Philadelphia 76ers is not only known for his quickness, crossover dribble, and rainbow jumpshot, but also for embracing the cultural signifiers of the hip-hop generation such as cornrows, tattoos, and hip-hop music. During his National Basketball Association (NBA) career, Iverson was named Rookie of the Year; three times he has led the league in scoring; and he was named the league’s Most Valuable Player (MVP) in 2001.

As one the NBA’s premier stars, Iverson has made many fans and enjoys a loyal following as his game jersey is consistently one of the top five NBA jersey’s sold (Bunch & DeWolf, 2002). The NBA ever conscious of marketing and merchandising relies on its most famous stars to promote the game. However, the stars of today, unlike past stars such as Michael Jordan or Magic Johnson, come from a different generation, which has the league concerned about its crossover appeal. Iverson, as one of the NBA’s hip-hop icons, best illustrates the volatile relationship between white society, which glorifies the race man and hip-hop culture, which offers African Americans an alternative identity. Although as gifted as past NBA stars, Iverson and his peers represent a new black aesthetics who have redefined how the game of basketball is played. Iverson, like Liston, represents a black masculinity that is usually not accepted within middle class space. Although Iverson is a successful multimillionaire who has economically surpassed the capitalistic desires of middle class society, his persona and cultural identity are denounced and criticized by the same middle class society.

Therefore, Iverson best represents how many young African American men live within a cultural site of struggle. This struggle was evident during the summer of 2002 when Iverson and his uncle, Greg Iverson, were accused of breaking into Iverson’s cousin’s apartment and threatening two occupants as Iverson searched for his wife, who had left their home after a dispute. The media frenzy over the incident and the intense police investigation that took place were unprecedented for an incident that involved no physical abuse or injury. As this essay will reveal, the negative criticism, innuendoes, and assumptions about Iverson indicate deeply held stereotypical perceptions and antagonistic sentiments the dominant culture has towards a hip-hop black masculinity.

The purpose of this essay is to analyze media reports about the Allen Iverson incident that occurred in July of 2002. Specifically, this analysis will examine coverage by the
Philadelphia media during the two week span in July that began when charges were filed for Iverson's arrest and ended with his preliminary hearing, where the judge dismissed all but two misdemeanor charges. The primary texts for analysis include: *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *Philadelphia Daily News* and the *Philadelphia Tribune.* These primary sources will be further supported by additional local and national print and television news broadcasts to demonstrate the pervasiveness of the stereotypical constructions of black masculinity. An analysis of these media reports will reveal that: 1) the media accounts were constructed in a way that catered to the dominant culture's fears about black masculinity. The reports reduced Iverson to the familiar images that have been historically constructed about black men: that they are aggressive, angry, prone to violence, and sexually aggressive; 2) the hostility the dominate culture has toward Iverson can be understood through the larger cultural clash between white society's middle class values and black masculinity from a hip-hop perspective. The media coverage suggests that the dominant culture disapproves of Iverson and others who embrace a hip-hop black masculinity because a hip-hop black masculinity does not conform to the narrowly defined identities that the dominant culture imposes on black men.

**Black Men and Popular Culture: Contemporary Constructions of Black Masculinity**

Sibley (1995) explained how the meanings associated with the colors black and white gained greater currency during European colonialism where it was important to regulate and dominate the colonized. In a colonial context, whiteness became associated with positive meanings such as life, superiority, safety, and cleanliness, and Blackness became associated with negative meanings such as death, inferiority, danger, and dirtiness. In time, popular culture took these associations and disseminated them through newspapers, film, radio, and television. Gates (1992) explained that historically African Americans have been concerned with how popular culture constructs images of African Americans for the dominant culture because: 1) African Americans have never had control of the images that represent them; and 2) the overwhelming majority of the images have been negative.

One of the earliest examples of how popular culture constructed stereotypes of African Americans was the film, *The Birth of a Nation.* This film re-wrote the history of the Reconstruction period by showing inaccuracies and distortions that appealed to southern symphatizers (Franklin, 1989). As Diawara (1993) explained:

*The Birth of a Nation* constitutes the grammar book for Hollywood's representations of Black manhood and womanhood, its obsession with miscegenation, and its fixing of Black people within certain spaces, such as kitchens, and into certain supporting roles, such as criminals, on the screen. White people must occupy the center, leaving Black people with only one choice—to exist in relation to Whiteness (p. 3).

These stereotypes not only depicted a distorted view of African Americans' role during
the Reconstruction but they also influenced an entire industry, which reified these images in radio and later television. As Omi (1989), explained popular culture is a vital cultural form that creates, reproduces, and sustains racial ideologies. These ideologies contain symbols, concepts, and images that act as a code through which individuals understand, interpret, and represent elements of our racial existence and African-American culture (Dyson, 1996, 1996; Neal, 2002).

These issues of representation and mass consumption have been a recurring scholarly investigation. Oliver (2001) labeled hegemony as cultural racism, which he defined as the systematic manner in which the white majority has established its primary cultural institutions (education, mass media, religion) to elevate and celebrate European physical characteristics, character and achievement, while also denigrating the physical characteristics, character, and achievement of people of color. For example, Bogle (1973) analyzed American film during the first 50 years and argued that African Americans were primarily portrayed as Toms, coons, tragic mulattos, nannies, and bucks. Likewise, Schafer (1993) argued that black actors on television (and film) are largely playing comedic roles that continue to perpetuate stereotypes. Meanwhile, Orbe (1998) analyzed the totalizing representations of African American cast members across six seasons of MTV's The Real World to reveal how the show constructs black men as inherently angry, potentially violent, and sexually aggressive. Orbe explained that not only does the show perpetuate negative media stereotypes of African Americans, but viewers can draw from the real world examples on the show to justify and legitimize their discomfort towards black men.

Hoberman (2000) argued that popular culture's overidentification of associating African Americans with athletics and physical performance limits the development of African American children by discouraging academic achievement (in favor of physical self-expression). Likewise, Hutchinson (1997) analyzed America's attitudes toward black men by focusing upon a spectrum of individuals from the political, to the religious, to the entertainment realm. A contradiction Hutchinson discussed was how white sportscasters perpetuate the physical trait stereotype of African Americans by referring to white players' mind (heady, good work habits, cagey) and black players' athleticism (a burner, a speedster, talented). Boyd (1997) elaborated on the intellectual versus athletic stereotype by contrasting the different games of Larry Bird and Michael Jordan. He illustrated how white athletes are associated with the fundamental values of middle class, American citizenship such as intelligence, hard work, and perseverance, whereas black players are defined by their athletic ability and style of play.

The prominence of popular culture in American society has grown significantly since the early days of radio, film, and television. However, the images that are created for mass consumption are controlled by a dominant culture that has taken the historical stereotypes associated with black men and reintroduced them to today's generations through various media.

These stereotypes have impacted the social and individual constructs of black masculinity. As Hooks (2004) discussed, the highly perpetuated media and societal images of black men influence how young black men form their identity. According to Hooks (2004), these stereotypes demonstrate how black men are living in a society that does not want them to succeed and offers narrow identities for them to enact. Mercer (1994) further argued that black masculinity is a contradictory (and subordinated) form of
identity, because historically African American males have been prevented from demonstrating aspects of patriarchy masculinity such as access to positions of power.

The historical and social constructions of race in the United States have influenced the meanings and identities associated with black masculinity (Bush, 1999; Jackson & Dangerfield, 2003). Jackson and Dangerfield (2003) argued that black masculine identities are created and negotiated in relation to societal struggle which includes the concepts of recognition, independence, achievement, and community. While Jackson and Dangerfield theorize about black masculinity, Boyd (1997) described three types of black masculinity that are representative of contemporary culture: the race man, the new black aesthetics, and the nigga.

According to Boyd (1997), each identity represents different expressions, meanings, and ideologies of black masculinity. The race man, who is signified by Bill Cosby, represents the ideology of cultural advancement by presenting acceptable images of the race (i.e., a role model). Cultural advancement is seen in the politics of integration of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the establishment/normality of a black upper class. The new black aesthetics, signified by Spike Lee, is based upon the nationalist politics of Malcolm X. The new black aesthetics, represents post-civil rights era individuals who seek individual power and access to the dominant culture. This identity infiltrated the dominant culture while still providing some sense of an African American aesthetic. The new black aesthetics can lead to individual success, but not group success. The nigga, according to Boyd, does not have an identifiable leader, nor does it have a political agenda. Its primary concern is articulating the voice and lifestyle of the truly disadvantaged. The prominence of the nigga in contemporary society has moved the discussion of black masculinity from race to class as the nigga is defined by class instead of race. In addition, the nigga rejects the social acceptability of the race man and political nature of the new black aesthetics. Boyd argued that the transition from the race man to the new black aesthetics to the nigga demonstrates the contemporary articulations of black masculinity with class politics distinguishing one identity from another.

Allen Iverson is representative of the nigga identity, which can be referred to as a hip-hop black masculinity. Hip-hop black masculinity places Iverson in conflict with the dominant culture. Unlike the race man and the new black aesthetics which ultimately are integrated into the dominant culture, a hip-hop black masculinity is counter-cultural and resists conforming to the dominant culture. As Boyd (1997) explained:

The modern-day “nigga,” having come to prominence through several cultural arenas including rap music, African American cinema, and professional sports, equally defies aspects of mainstream white culture, as well as the at times restrictive dimensions of status quo Black culture (p. 31).

As a result, a hip-hop black masculinity has acquired enough capital to gain some freedom from the dominant culture which enables these individuals to live in middle class comfort, while still presenting an image that retains lower-class signifiers and the mentality of the hood. Hip-hop black masculinity serves as the theoretical framework for understanding the media reports about the Iverson incident and help explain how black masculinity is a cultural site of struggle.
Black Masculinities and the Court of Public Opinion

The Philadelphia media’s coverage of the Iverson incident reveals that: 1) the media accounts were constructed in a way that revealed the dominant culture’s fears about black masculinity and; 2) the hostility the dominate culture has toward Iverson can be understood through the larger cultural clash between white society’s middle class values and black masculinity from a hip-hop perspective. Before articulating these two main points, it is necessary to first provide a general explanation of the incident involving Iverson.

The Incident and Media Coverage

Allen Iverson and his wife, Tawanna, met in high school and were married in June 2001. Tawanna is the mother of their two children Tiaura and Allen II. In July of 2002, it was alleged that the couple had an argument which resulted in Tawanna leaving their mansion in Gladwyne, PA (an exclusive suburb that borders the city of Philadelphia). On July 1, Tawanna Iverson checked into the Marriott Residence Inn in Conshohocken, PA and rented two rooms (one for herself and one for Iverson’s cousin, Shaun Bowman, who is her confidant). On July 3, at 3:00 a.m. Iverson and his uncle Greg, age 39, went to Shaun’s apartment in West Philadelphia looking for Tawanna. They entered the apartment and Iverson confronted Shaun’s roommate, Charles Jones, age 21 and next door neighbor Hakim Carey, age 17. According to Jones, Iverson, with a gun visible, forced his way into the apartment and threatened Jones with harm if he did not tell him where Tawanna and Bowman were. On July 3 at 1:30 p.m. Jones called 9-1-1 and told a dispatcher about the alleged incident. After the police talked to Jones, they began their investigation. On July 3, the story began to be reported by the Philadelphia Media.2

In the days following July 3, the Philadelphia media (e.g., talk radio, the major newspapers, local and cable television news) began extensive coverage of the alleged incident which was described as All Allen All the Time. On July 10, Allen Iverson became the focus of intense media coverage as the media surveillance of his residence intensified. The media speculated that the police would issue a warrant for his arrest. National and local media made around-the-clock stakeouts of Iverson’s residence; a news helicopter circled his home; television vans and trucks with satellite dishes blocked Iverson’s driveway and street; photographers took pictures of anyone entering or leaving Iverson’s residence; reporters interviewed people of all types as they congregated on the quiet street to get a first-hand glimpse of the media spectacle (Armstrong, 2002b).

On July 11, District Attorney, Lynne M. Abraham announced that Iverson would be charged with 14 offenses, four felonies (criminal trespass, two counts; criminal conspiracy, one count; violation of the uniform firearms act; one count) and 10 misdemeanors (violation of the uniform firearms act, one count; simple assault, two counts; terrorist threats, two counts; unlawful restraint, two counts; false imprisonment, two counts; possession of an instrument of crime, one count). A defense attorney, who has represented high-profile clients for 30 years, responded to the charges by saying, “They’ve thrown the book at him. From the information I have, this incident is steep in domestic turmoil and domestic-related. This is an awful lot of charges for a guy who had
an argument with his wife" (Nance & Leinwand, 2002, p. 1C.). On July 14, a number of media reports such as the Associated Press, The Philadelphia Daily News, and The Philadelphia Inquirer reported that police found blood inside Tawanna Iverson’s car. Two days later, the police clarified that they did not find blood in the car.

On July 16, at 5:30 a.m., Iverson surrendered to police, where he was fingerprinted, photographed, and arraigned before being released 11 hours later after he and his uncle both signed for their $10,000 bail. The Philadelphia media obtained Iverson’s mug shot, where he looked extremely tired and his hair was disheveled. The image was broadcast (and printed) for public consumption. By daybreak, an eclectic throng of media, supporters, opponents, street entertainers, and upstart entrepreneurs who sold items such as Free Iverson t-shirts gathered at police headquarters. ESPN’s Sal Paolantonio called the media frenzy surrounding the case, “O.J. East.” (Bunch et al., 2002, p. 4).

In contrast to the media and public frenzy at police headquarters, the district attorney released more information from the affidavit against Iverson. It was alleged that Iverson pushed the door into Carey’s chest knocking him back as Iverson entered the apartment. Moreover, Iverson allegedly stated, “I’m either going to die or I’m going to jail, and I guarantee you I’m not going to die” (“Affidavit Against A.I.,” 2002). Also, it was alleged that Iverson lifted his shirt to reveal a semiautomatic handgun stuck in his waistband.

Leading up to Iverson’s preliminary hearing there were some complaints that the media had blown the incident out of proportion and that the police were overzealous in their pursuit of Iverson (Williams & Brooker, 2002). For example, there was no allegation or evidence that Iverson physically assaulted or harmed Tawanna or that she was naked. (Armstrong, 2002b; Moran, 2002). Residents of the Cobb Creek apartments also questioned the accuracy of the alleged fact that Iverson broke into the apartment because the front entrance is locked and visitors must either punch a key code or be allowed in by a resident (Goss, 2002). Others questioned the motive of Charles Jones, who was not on the apartment’s lease, had no job to pay for the apartment, and who waited 10 hours to call 911 (Brooks, 2002; Caparella & Hinkelman, 2002).

On July 29, after a six-hour preliminary hearing, Judge James M. DeLeon dismissed all but two misdemeanor charges (making terrorist threats) against Iverson. During the hearing, one prosecution witness, Hakim Carey, contradicted his earlier statement to police by saying he did not see Iverson with a gun. Carey said that he saw something like a black handle, but he could not speculate that it was a gun. He explained that he simply went along with what Jones said. Carey also contradicted the fact that Iverson forced his way into the apartment. He explained that when he heard that Iverson was coming up to the apartment, he went to get a pencil and pen, hoping to get an autograph. Also, the trespassing charge was denied by Shaun Bowman, who explained that Iverson actually paid the rent at the apartment. Bowman explained that Iverson was welcome to come anytime to the apartment. In addition, the defense showed evidence from Jones’ cell-phone records that he talked to several people before he contacted police. In fact, Jones admitted that he spoke to a personal injury lawyer before he called police (which occurred 10 hours after the alleged incident) (Nolan, 2002b). In explaining his decision to drop most of the charges, Judge DeLeon said, “It sounds like you had a relative looking for a relative at the house of a relative occupied by the guest of a guest” (Nolan, 2002b, p. 3). Greg Iverson’s lawyer, Guy Sciolli, summed up the entire incident by saying, “People will say if Allen Iverson wins this case, it will be because of celebrity.
And it's the irony in this case that the only reason he got arrested is because of celebrity” (Nolan, 2002b, p. 6).

Revealing the Dominant Culture's Fears Towards Black Masculinity

Although the remainder of this essay will focus upon those who view Iverson negatively and thus felt he had to be guilty, it is worth noting that Iverson had a groundswell of support within the black community and from his fans of all colors and ages (Armstrong, 2002; “Even More,” 2002; Smith, 2002). A CN8 (which is a Philadelphia Comcast cable news channel) nonscientific web poll taken the night of Iverson's preliminary hearing reported that 95% of respondents agreed with the Judge DeLeon's ruling. Novella Williams, the spokesperson for Iverson's Celebrity Softball Classic (which took place in Camden, NJ on July 20, and which Iverson participated in) stated:

I stand committed with my other young women to free him from the powers of evil. We will not allow anyone to throw another of our African-American heroes to the wolves. We cannot allow another young African-American millionaire to be taken down by a system (Smallwood, 2002, p. 9).

Likewise, various attorneys were all in agreement that the case against Iverson was weak and without Iverson's notoriety, it would not have gone to court. The lawyers explained that if the same incident had happened to the average person, the incident would have been quietly handled as a private criminal complaint and not an intense criminal investigation (Nolan, 2002a). The Iverson case represented a minor case, considering the 1,550 cases handled by the Philadelphia courts each week. Brian McMonagle, a former homicide prosecutor stated, “In 17 years, I’ve never seen a charge of the uniform firearms act in the absence of the gun or evidence of a shot fired” (Nolan, 2002b, p. 7). Added attorney Leon Williams, “I think the district attorney’s case is weak and I don’t think you have to be a good lawyer to win that case” (Williams, 2002, p. 5A).

Given the attorneys' perspective and the judge's dismissal of all but two of the charges, something larger was at work in the Iverson incident. This case illustrates how the dominant culture perceives black masculinity, especially a hip-hop black masculinity. The larger narrative is the dominant culture's fear of black masculinity. This fear is revealed in the Philadelphia media's coverage of Iverson's domestic incident. Analyzing the media accounts that covered the Iverson incident reveal that individuals not identified as fans, and who tended to be non-black, were more likely to believe all the allegations against Iverson. Columnist Johnette Howard (2002) picked up on this point:

Judging from TV interviews, plenty of people - whites in particular - seem focused on what punishment Iverson might receive, as if they suddenly find the wildly popular comrowed and tattooed 76ers guard menacing, not just edgy or hip anymore. Plenty of people—African Americans in particular, at least those who were interviewed on TV outside Iverson's home and at the police station yesterday—seem focused on Iverson's treatment. They expressed a deep-rooted sense that Iverson is just another black guy who’s getting a raw deal from the police (p. A70).
The media coverage of the Iverson incident was not only biased, but it implicitly constructed an image of Iverson as a menacing person whom people should fear. This image is more clearly understood after the preliminary hearing when Iverson’s defense was able to show the contradictions in the accusers’ testimony. This suggests that those who believed Iverson was guilty were basing their perceptions and understanding of Iverson through the widely constructed media stereotypes of black men. As Orbe (1998) has shown, when black masculinity is under scrutiny, people unconsciously tap into long-established stereotypes of African American males. In this case, these stereotypes were used to convict Iverson as a criminal. Therefore, those who disliked Iverson used the biased coverage from the Philadelphia media to justify and legitimize their own discomfort about young black men via Allen Iverson. As John Baer of the Philadelphia Daily News (2002) wrote, “If you’re wealthy you get a different justice than if you’re not, and if you are guilty you get Dick Sprague.” (p. 5). Baer’s simplistic analysis, underlines a common practice of the dominant culture to perceive African Americans as criminals and to automatically assume they are guilty. That Baer would believe Iverson was guilty without even considering the alleged facts or by dismissing the principle of assuming innocence until proven guilty is alarming. Overall, the media coverage reduced Iverson to the familiar stereotypical images that have been historically constructed about black men: that they are aggressive, angry, prone to violence, and sexually aggressive.

The aggressive nature of black masculinity was clearly evoked in the media coverage of the Iverson incident in several ways. The most common way was by articulating the alleged facts of the incident over and over such that the alleged facts become normalized and reified as truth. This was a point that Philadelphia Daily News sports reporter, John Smallwood, made on the cable television show Daily News Live (2002). That Iverson forced his way into his cousin’s apartment was accepted as fact.. Over 150 documents generated from primarily the Philadelphia press, television news broadcasts, and three television news talk shows from July 12 to July 30, all emphasized that Iverson used force to gain entry into the apartment. When the reports also mention that Iverson had a heated argument with his wife, the media constructed one of the most troubling stereotypes of black masculinity: the aggressive and angry black man. As Ronnie Polaneczky wrote in her column in the Philadelphia Daily News “They’d set aside, as they always do, Iverson’s arrogance, hot temper and record of brushes with the law, cutting yet another break to a guy who’s getting too old to blame youthful indiscretion for his bad judgment” (2002, p. 7).

The only source that provided more insight into the alleged aggressive nature of this aspect of the incident was The Philadelphia Tribune, which is the city’s black owned newspaper. These reports quoted residents of the building saying that no one could enter the building unannounced because the front door was locked (Brooks, 2002; Gross, 2002). According to the residents, an individual either had to know the key code or be buzzed up by a tenant. This information which was either ignored, or downplayed could have provided the public with a better understanding of the situation and challenged the reliability of the information that was being reported by the media.

Besides portraying black men as aggressive, the image of black masculinity as prone to violence was also constructed for the public. When the incident was being discussed, most articles reviewed Iverson’s past record which included being arrested (as a high
school student) and convicted in 1993 for engaging in a bowling-alley brawl in Virginia. Iverson spent four months in jail before he was given clemency by then governor Douglas Wilder. His conviction was eventually overturned by an appellate court. In 1997, he was arrested in Virginia after police found a gun and a small quantity of marijuana in a car in which he was the passenger. This information was often at the end of an article or report, which gave the impression that the current incident was simply a continuation of past misdeeds. This is illustrated by Karl Minor who commented in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* on July 16, “The man [Iverson] has had more opportunities and breaks than anyone. He needs to pay for his actions now” (qtd. in Fleming, 2002, p. B1). Philadelphia Daily News Columnist John Baer (2002) wrote, “But, look, didn’t he ask for this? And didn’t we? Hasn’t his pattern of behavior since high school reflected an outlaw, I’m a rebel style?” (p. 5). The media constructions of Iverson’s past actions were repeated to influence how the public interpreted the current incident. What was lost in these constructions was the roughly ten years in-between incidents, during which Iverson contributed positively to society as a father, husband, and as a community fund raiser. Instead, the media used negative constructions to define black masculinity and in this case the negative images that present black men as prone to violence.

Another construction of black masculinity as prone to violence was the repeated alleged fact that Iverson used a gun to force his way into the apartment. Every article and news story repeated the allegation that he had a gun. Alan Taylor of the *Chattanooga Times/Free Press* presented the alleged fact as truth when he wrote, “As for her jumper-jacking hubby Allen Iverson, he certainly could use a shoulder holster. A superstar shouldn’t have to tuck a handcannon in his waistband” (qtd. in “What They’re Saying,” 2002, p. 7). A *Philadelphia Daily News* editorial called for Iverson’s immediate arrest and wrote:

> NOTE TO ALL the gun-toting criminals in the greater Philadelphia metropolitan area: The next time Philadelphia police come knocking on your door with an arrest warrant in hand, tell them you’ll turn yourself in just as soon as your attorney gets back into town. Maybe you’ll get the same reaction Allen Iverson is getting. (“Iverson plays defense,” 2002, p. 15)

Furthermore the editorial stated:

> The fact that Iverson is a free man, despite an arrest warrant that would make an al Qaeda operative blush, despite the fact that police know exactly where he is, shows the world that Iverson will be treated differently than everybody else. (“Iverson plays defense,” 2002, p. 15)

These assumptions made by the media reinforce historical stereotypes about black men as violent. As Sniderman and Piazza (1999) contend, the dominant culture tends to believe the stereotype of black men as violent because the stereotype reinforces what has been disseminated throughout the mass media on a daily basis.

Another construction of black men as being prone to violence was highlighted by the articles on domestic abuse that were written in connection to the case. Domestic abuse is a serious problem that should not be taken lightly, and clearly it is not an acceptable
practice. In the Iverson incident, however, the shocking and horrifying violence associated with real domestic abuse were used to further vilify Iverson. A few articles discussed domestic violence as if it certainly took place in the Iverson incident (Eisner, 2002; Laker, 2002). This speculation was made despite there being no alleged physical abuse and no filing for a protective order. In fact, Tawanna did file the complaint against Iverson.

The true brutal nature of domestic violence was highlighted in an incident that occurred the same night as the Iverson incident, but was not aggressively investigated. In this case, a woman’s former boyfriend entered her apartment, verbally threatened her, and then assaulted her. The unidentified woman (who was black) filed a complaint with the police, but the police never pursued it (even after an inquiry from the reporter who wrote the story). While this case of domestic violence was ignored, in the Iverson case, where no abuse occurred, nine detectives worked on the case, supervisors oversaw the investigation, and the police commissioner was kept appraised of the developments (Hepp and Phillips, 2002). In response to the lack of attention to her case, the unidentified woman said, “They locked up this man up, Allen Iverson, and he didn’t even put his hands on the people. I get beat up and my face is all swollen and they won’t call me back” (qtd. in Hepp and Phillips, 2002, p. A18). Considering how these two cases were handled clearly exemplifies how the police department and the media were fixated on the alleged crime due to Iverson’s celebrity as a young black basketball star and not due to the nature of the alleged crime.

Besides being characterized as aggressive, angry and prone to violence, one of the most prominent stereotypes about black masculinity involves the hyper-sexuality of black men. Historically, black men are seen as having large sexual appetites and being ultra endowed to perform sexually, but psychologically too immature to have meaningful relationships (Dyson, 2002). Not surprisingly, sexuality was prevalent in the Iverson case. One of the most reported alleged facts was that he kicked his unclothed wife out of the house. Similar to the other alleged facts, almost every article made reference to the alleged fact that Tawanna was naked. This alleged fact supports Jones’ (1993) argument that black sexuality is often represented by the dominant culture as animalistic and carnal with a lack of intimacy and true humanity. These constructions help illustrate African American men as psychologically immature and subhuman (Jones, 1993).

Focusing on whether she was nude or not, underlines the covert practice of constructing stereotypes of African Americans as being sexually driven people who do not have loving and mature relationships. As Fleming and Harris (2002) wrote in their report, “Who could imagine that the king would be accused of tossing the queen from the mansion naked?” Although no one was there to view the incident (this alleged fact was made by Jones), the mere repetition of this alleged fact became accepted as truth. The alleged fact was disputed by both parents, and later versions of the facts tended to report that Tawanna was half-naked (Armstrong, 2002b; Hepp, 2002).

In addition to covering the alleged sexual nature of the case as scandalous, the media also made light of the alleged fact. In a sarcastic and condescending column about the entire incident, Kinney (2002) wrote hypothetical questions she would have liked to have asked during the police conference, “What are your personal feelings about fighting with your spouses while nude” (p. B1)? Kinney also wrote, “Would it be wise to advise the public to hide clean clothes, car keys, and a fully charged cell phone somewhere as a
preventive measure for just this sort of situation" (p. B1)? In another remark, Taylor wrote, “Before we begin, can someone toss Tawanna Iverson a robe? And how about a Hide-a-Key?” (“What They’re Saying,” 2002, p. 7)

When considering the themes of domestic violence and sexuality that were constructed by the media, the two themes portray contradictory perspectives that underline two negative stereotypes of African Americans. On the one hand, reporting the case as domestic abuse signifies to the public a serious crime. Furthermore, as a black man who is constructed to be aggressive and prone to violence, Iverson as the alleged abuser, feeds into the dominant culture’s fear of black masculinity. On the other hand, the sarcasm that is used to make light of and demean Iverson and his wife tap into the dominant culture’s perception of African Americans as sex-crazed buffoons who are on public display. Considering these two themes, the media can appeal to both those who are alarmed at domestic abuse and perceive black males in a suspicious and hostile way and those who view African Americans as comedians shucking and jiving their way in society.5

The media’s intense coverage of the Iverson incident reflected a cultural divide between whites’ belief about American society and blacks’ experience within the American system. This cultural clash will be discussed further.

**Black Masculinity as a Cultural Site of Struggle**

The stereotypical construction of black masculinity as illustrated by the Iverson incident is magnified through the larger culture clash between the dominant culture’s middle class values and black masculinity from a hip-hop perspective. Hooks (2003) argued that this tension is the result of black men living in a patriarchal culture that restricts and confines the black self. She further explained that:

> Black men have had no dramatic say when it comes to the way they are represented. ... As a consequence they are victimized by stereotypes that were first articulated in the nineteenth century but hold sway over the minds and imaginations of citizens of this nation in the present day. Black males who refuse categorization are rare, for the price of visibility in the contemporary world of white supremacy is that black male identity be defined in relation to the stereotype whether by embodying it or seeking to be other than it (p. xii).

How black men attempt to negotiate and enact black masculinity in the face of negative stereotypes reflects the larger cultural issue that black men in general live in a cultural site of struggle between the dominant culture and African American culture. The culture clash can be understood through the concepts of identity, work, and self.

The Iverson incident illustrates how identity continues to be a salient issue in contemporary society. Historically, African Americans have survived in an oppressive culture by inventing identities that either transcended or reinforced the stereotypes (hooks, 2004). The hip-hop black masculinity is unique for it is an oppositional identity that resists categories created for blacks by the dominant culture or stereotypes associated with middle class blacks such as the race man or the new black aesthetic.

The hip-hop black masculinity moves the discussion of black masculinity from solely race to class as this identity is based on a hard core urban environment and mentality
where *being real* is being wise to and respected in the *hood* (Boyd, 1997). The hip-hop black masculinity is the product of what Kitwana (2003) argued is the new black youth culture, which is defined by its defiant attitudes and dispositions, through hood films, hip-hop magazines, and youth-oriented television programming such as MTV, and activism that is in opposition to both mainstream politics and older-generation African American activists. Those who enact a hip-hop black masculinity are viewed with suspicion from both the dominant culture and older African Americans.

As a hip-hop black masculinity icon, Iverson represents the tension between the dominant culture and hip-hop culture. Columnist Ralph Wiley, articulated this point on Cable News Network’s *Reliable Sources* (2002) when he said:

> The only reason why we are looking into this case is because Allen Iverson can be made into a political referendum; either you’re young or not young, either you agree with the symbolism of hip-hop, of tattoos, and braids or you don’t. It’s either one or the other and that’s what this case was about. It’s not about the legal charges . . . none of this has been proven, none of this has been admitted, that he had a gun. These charges are N.B.A., nothing but air.

Iverson, as a product of the hip-hop generation, has been influenced by its music, fashion, and perspective. Rap music and hip-hop culture grew out of inner city youth’s discontent with a society that failed to hear their concerns or address their problems. As an inner city youth, Iverson identified with many of the themes articulated in rap music because his life experiences paralleled those of many rappers such as coming from an impoverished background of a single parent home and living in a poor neighborhood in Hampton, VA. Not surprisingly, many of his generation listen to and have embraced rap music and hip-hop culture as part of expressing their cultural identity (Dyson, 2001). Iverson is associated with hip-hop culture through its various signifiers such as cornrows, tattoos, baggy clothes, stocking caps, baseball caps, jewelry, music, and use of the vernacular. In fact, Iverson’s cornrows, while a trendsetter, represent a sign of racial difference. Historically, African Americans’ hair has been devalued as the most visible stigma associated with blackness next to skin color because it represented qualities that the dominant culture labeled as having less worth (Mercer, 1994). Iverson, by embracing the cultural signifier of cornrows is ignoring the dominant culture’s value system and elevating the worth of black hair and thus, blackness.

While these hip-hop signifiers are embraced by many black youth, the dominant culture associates negative meanings with these signifiers. Since hip-hop culture emerged from the margins, it has always been viewed with skepticism, criticism, and hostility from whites. As Stefan Fatsis of the *Wall Street Journal*, said:

> Allen Iverson grew up in the inner city. He grew up in the projects. Iverson’s role, I think, was to help society see that it’s OK to dress differently and talk differently and still be a great athlete and still be a good person. These latest incidents, though, I think, throw that into question. (“What They’re Saying,” p. 6)

Fatsis’ statement underlies the implicit stereotypes that are associated with the
dominant culture's perception toward not just Iverson but young black men in general. Ironically, while some label and denounce Iverson for embracing hip-hop culture, the dominant culture has co-opted hip-hop for economic profit as a marketing strategy to sell everything from fashion, to products, to sports, to films and have used hip-hop to widen its appeal (Hughes, 2002).

Since a hip-hop black masculinity is oppositional to the dominant culture and to middle class black identities, why would black men embrace it and subject themselves to an even greater struggle when defining their identity? For Iverson and other young black men, they are able reject the dominant culture’s norms because they have achieved financial freedom. As Boyd (1997) explained, “Access to capital has made it possible for many to defy the accepted codes of mainstream decorum in favor of displaying a defiant mode of aggression whenever desired” (p. 32). Although they have reached elite status, they choose to retain their lower-class visual aesthetics and behaviors to defiantly reject the accepted norm of their acquired class position. This point is supported by Neal (2002) who argued, “In a league that commercializes black male urban expression, players are defined via their class interests or failure to accept the ‘special’ responsibilities and upper-middle-class sensibilities that being an elite athlete engenders” (p. 145). For those black men who have not gained financial freedom, the hip-hop black masculinity enables them to demonstrate power in patriarchy culture—by posing and stylizing their bodies. In a patriarchy culture, black men’s own bodies are the only aspect they have control over. Since back men do not have power and status, they use their bodies to attain power and respect. As West (1996) proclaimed, “For most young black men, power is acquired by stylizing their bodies to reflect their uniqueness and provoke fear in others” (p. 228). West (1996) further explained that the way young black men stylize their bodies is a form of self-identification and resistance to the dominant culture. Therefore, the unique stylizing, posing, clothing, and dialect that signify a hip-hop black masculinity is a way for young people to exercise power. The stylin’ and profilin’ associated with a hip-hop black masculinity is perpetuated in videos, films, entertainment, and athletics as a way to demonstrate an oppositional identity that is reified as a sign of a strong black man.

A second prominent cultural clash between the dominant culture and black masculinity is the value of hard work. Hooks (2004) argued that one of the most oppressive places for black men is the work place, which is a site of white male dominance. Hooks (2004) contended that:

Most black males suffer psychologically in the world of work whether they make loads of money or low wages from overt and covert racially based psychological terrorism. Integration has not intervened on the strategies of psychological terrorism that unenlightened white people use to maintain their dominance over black people (p. 24).

One explanation for why black men struggle in the work place is due to the contrasting cultural values in regards to work. As Kochman (1998) explained, in the workplace the dominant culture is governed by the norm of subordinating the self to the organization. All individual efforts and decisions follow a highly structured plan that is implemented from the top down. The goal is to have predictability. In African American culture, however, the norm is for the individual to be showcased by the group where individual
effort demonstrates improvisation and stylistic self-expression. In the work world, these cultural values governing work conflict as African Americans can feel restricted by the dominant culture. Kochman (1998) best explains this African American cultural value as “Tell me what to do but not how to do it” (p. 297) as blacks place more emphasis on individuality in completing the task as opposed to the dominant culture that insists on consistently following a formal procedure to accomplish the job. In essence, the dominant culture’s cultural value towards work stifles black creativity, which suggests why blacks gravitate to professions such as sports, entertainment, and business because they can showcase their individual skill.

Iverson represents this cultural clash between the dominant culture’s organizational values governing work which emphasizes highly structured plans (often explained in sports as playing the right way) and African American norms that emphasize improvisation and spontaneity. Iverson while praised for his skill, is often criticized for disregarding the strict organizational rules that govern meetings, routines, and practices (Donnellon, 2002; Lowe 2002). As one letter to the editor said, “Just think how good he could be if he would practice” (“Community Voices,” 2002, p. C3). Showing a lack of interest in practice is diametrically opposed to a fundamental middle class value that Boyd (1997) argued is central to the dominant culture’s idea of what makes a good citizen, which is hard work. In questioning his practice habits, white society is clearly questioning Iverson’s work ethic and dedication, which implicitly echoes the tired stereotype of black men as lazy and unproductive.

Contradicting the dominant culture’s suspicion of Iverson’s work ethic are his achievements which suggest he had to work hard to be the player he is today. The list includes: being the first pick overall in the 1996 NBA draft, being the NBA rookie of the year for the 1996-97 season, leading the league in scoring three times, being a three time all-star, being the NBA All-Star MVP, being the league MVP, and leading his team to the NBA finals during the 2000-01 season. When Iverson’s size is also considered (barely 6 foot), it illustrates that he had to work extremely hard to excel at a game that is dominated by much larger and taller men. One reason why his hard work is often overlooked can be explained by the dominant culture’s acceptance of racial folklore. Racial folklore consists of stereotypes that associate African Americans with having natural physical ability (Hoberman 2000; Oliver, 2001). Therefore, Iverson despite his size, is not seen as having worked hard to achieve his athletic success; he is simply doing what comes natural to him. The belief in racial folklore not only undermines Iverson’s hard work, but it also implies that intelligence is not needed to perform what comes naturally, which evokes the stereotype of black men as physically talented but not bright.

A final tension between the dominant culture and black masculinity involves the concept of self. Stereotyped constructions of black men often ignore that these individuals are human beings who have have human thoughts and human emotions. As Hooks (2004) explained, black men continue to be constructed as untamed, uncivilized, unthinking and uneffiling. A consequence according to Hooks is that “negative stereotypes about the nature of black masculinity continue to over determine the identities black males are allowed to fashion for themselves” (p. xii). In the case of black masculinity, popular culture represents the worst of African Americans. As Ellis (1995) stated, “Although seventy-five percent of black men never have anything to do with the criminal justice system, we are looked on as anomalies, freaks of nature, or worse, thugs-
Ellis' point is profound, for Iverson was not constructed as a modern day Horatio Alger, but as another black male thug, who is roaming recklessly in society. The media constructions make Iverson to be a sensationalized black masculinity. Hoberman (2000) argued that one consequence of this sensationalized black masculinity is that whites can develop an appreciation of black cultural styles via the media without developing a new understanding or liking of African Americans as their neighbors, friends, and colleagues.

In contrast to the media constructions, Iverson has risen from poverty to provide a better life for his family. His is a familiar story that is often celebrated in African American culture. Iverson has been a committed husband and father to his family by moving them into an exclusive neighborhood in the Philadelphia suburbs and by placing them in private schools. He has also supported many of his extended family members as well as the three children of his best friend who was tragically killed during an altercation (Armstrong, Laker, & Egan, 2002). In addition, Iverson has created several charity events to give back to the community (Gray, Bahadur, Kerkstra, 2002; “Fans Support,” 2002; Smallwood, 2002). The charitable acts that Iverson performs are not magnified by the media; instead the media, as illustrated in this essay, tend to focus on constructing Iverson according to historical stereotypes of black masculinity.

These examples explain how black masculinity is a site of cultural struggle, in this case between the dominant culture's middle class values and the values of a hip-hop black masculinity. In Iverson's case, he has transcended middle class values by not compromising his own values. Iverson's transcendence of middle class values on his own terms highlights what David Sibley calls inversion (1995). According to Sibley, inversion occurs when individuals on the margin occupy the center and those on the center get displaced as spectators. With inversion, implicit boundaries and power relationships become more visible and explicit. Inversions represent a challenge to established power relations. Sibley's concept of inversion helps explain the tension between middle class values and Iverson's values. Iverson, by ascending from poverty to high-class status has certainly inverted the power structure of the dominant culture. For those displaced by Iverson, they perceive him as someone who has achieved more, while circumventing the system and rejecting their values. The media and the police work in concert to help perpetuate the existing power relationships and control individuals (which includes Iverson) who attempted to invert the system. Baer's (2002) comment underscores Iverson's inversion:

We've ripped apart the private lives of Allen, his wife, his family, his friends. Over what? Well, it's part of the deal. We make you an icon, we give you millions and then you are ours. We are, at all levels--media, law and justice, sports, entertainment--celebrity-driven, celebrity-obsessed (p. 5).

By enacting a hip-hop black masculinity, Iverson inverts middle class values by retaining his lower-class visual aesthetic and defiantly rejecting the accepted decorum of his recently acquired class (Boyd, 2002, p.122). Iverson transforms the gap between a hip-hop masculinity, which has been accepted on the basketball court, and widespread acceptance within the dominant culture. Therefore, he represents a black masculinity that is influenced by hip-hop culture, which has transformed the mainstream without being
fully compromised by it.

Conclusion

The Iverson incident demonstrates the compelling and complicated society in which African Americans live. Despite his accomplishments and contributions to the community, when the Iverson incident occurred, the media reported the story by constructing stereotypes about black masculinity that justified and legitimized the dominant culture’s fears toward black men. The incident reflects how black masculinity reflects a cultural site of struggle between those in power, who are only comfortable with narrowly defined identities for African Americans, and African Americans themselves who embrace many identities, one of which is associated with hip-hop culture. The multitude of identities that comprise black masculinity is explained by Neal (2002):

> While we embrace these identities as part of our being, we are also conscious of the fluidity of the communities to which we belong and the relative freedom to explore these identities, often playful at the expense of white onlookers, in ways that our parents could never conceive (p. 177).

Yet, as this essay demonstrates, African Americans are still subject to narrow casting by the dominant culture who still constructs comfortable images of the race man as well as stereotypical images of black men to feed white society’s fear of black masculinity.

The struggle to define black masculinity in the face of opposition is a historical struggle that began before Liston and unfortunately will continue beyond Iverson. This controversy emphasizes that black masculinity will continue to be a cultural site of struggle that merits attention, action, and strategies for transforming the “center” from the “margins” to alleviate these cultural clashes. For African American males such as Iverson who attempt to construct identities outside the acceptable boundaries of the dominant culture, their struggle for self-definition reflects the larger cultural clash between white society’s middle class values and black masculinity from a hip-hop perspective. This also reflects how the dominant culture prevents inversion, while maintaining its power and perpetuating cultural racism.

Likewise, the Philadelphia media’s coverage of the Iverson incident reinforces how the dominant culture sensationalizes black masculinity. The entire Iverson episode is troubling when one considers that the police were under pressure to pursue the case (based upon a questionable complaint) due to the intense media attention, which relied on stereotypes of black masculinity. Sports commentator, Keith Obermann, discussed how the media coverage of the Iverson incident was excessive on Cable News Network’s Reliable Sources:

> I never thought at any point it was a lead story or one of the top three or four for the simple reason ... he may have broken into his own apartment armed with a pager and said bad things about his wife who was not present. There are two extremes on this story. It always seems to me that when you are in doubt to what the facts are, the best case and the best rule to follow is wait until the authorities
press charges and wait until the charges are filed and wait until there’s a hearing and I think we’ve seen the outcome of that.

Nevertheless there were still many individuals who believed Iverson received preferential treatment due to his celebrity (Sanfilippo, 2002; Porter, 2002). The misinterpretation surrounding a hip-hop black masculinity, however, is not limited to the Philadelphia media or to the dominant culture. This is an issue that affects many. African Americans do not like others to construct their identities, yet the culture is not totally comfortable with embracing all the identities that comprise black masculinity. After all, the culture believed the fears that were constructed about Sonny Liston as well as other black men such as Iverson who have not fit into the narrowly defined identity constructed by the dominant society. African Americans must begin the process of deconstructing black masculinity in order to understand and accept the complexities of it. As Dyson (2002) stated:

To demythologize black masculinity then is to understand its strengths and weaknesses, to understand not only its romantic elements but its powerfully progressive elements in the face of what we know about black masculinity.

The process that Dyson speaks about starts with the ability to self-critique ourselves not in a hateful way but in way that liberates black masculinity from racial folklore, cultural racism, and historical stereotypes.

Notes

1 The Philadelphia newspapers, The Inquirer, Daily News, and The Tribune were chosen as the primary texts for analysis for the following reasons: 1) The Inquirer and Daily News are the largest circulated newspapers in the Philadelphia metropolitan area, which includes five suburban PA counties, eight New Jersey counties and the cities of Atlantic City, Camden, and Trenton, and one county in Delaware and the city of Wilmington. Furthermore, during the time of the incident, the number of readers of the city’s two largest papers increased (Shea, Blanchard, & Lowe, 2002), which makes what was written in the newspaper even more important to analyze; 2) as a Philadelphia 76er, Iverson’s team is covered by these papers, the alleged crime took place in the city of Philadelphia, and it involved the Philadelphia police and Philadelphia district attorney. Since the incident was a “Philadelphia” story involving most of the major players in the city of Philadelphia, it was important to analyze how the Philadelphia media covered the incident; 3) Philadelphia is known as one of the toughest (if not the toughest) sports media markets in the country with some of the most notorious sports fans in the nation. For example, the Philadelphia fans are known for pelting Santa Claus during the halftime of an Eagles football game and for cheering when Dallas Cowboy receiver Michael Irvin injured his neck and lay motionless on the artificial turf at since demolished Veterans Stadium; 4) the Philadelphia newspapers represent different audiences. Although The Inquirer and Daily News are owned by the same company they appeal to two different demographics. The Inquirer is the “hard news” paper, while the Daily News is more of a tabloid newspaper. The Inquirer is known for its international section and the Daily
News is known for its sports section (although individuals like Steven A. Smith who writes for The Inquirer has raised the profile of The Inquirer’s sports section as he has crossed over into television as a basketball studio analysis for ESPN and TBS). However, the Iverson incident propelled the story from the sports pages to the headlines in both newspapers. Therefore, analyzing how the incident was covered in both newspapers was important. The Philadelphia Tribune is the city’s black owned newspaper that provides an alternative perspective in its news coverage of the Iverson incident. Analyzing all three represents how the dominant culture and the African American culture constructed reports about the incident.


Although not a historical stereotype, the media consistently justified its excessive coverage of Iverson by explaining that it was Iverson who brought the public attention on himself. As Ferrick, Jr.(2002) wrote “Thanks to his antics in West Philly last week, Allen Iverson now goes from starring on the basketball court to starring in Municipal Court” (p. B1). Sam Donnellon appearing on the Philadelphia Comcast cable television show Daily News Live (2002) saw nothing wrong with the media coverage and said it was the media’s duty to cover the story. According to Donnellon, the media didn’t create the circus, the defense attorneys being allowed to have their client wait created a time line for the media to gather and create the coverage. This point was repeated by Howard Eskin on Philadelphia Comcast’s television talk show, It’s Your Call (2002):

If he hadn’t stayed in his home and waited to turn himself in (the excessive coverage would not have happened). Once they got it out of the way (Iverson’s arrest), we didn’t do anything until the hearing. If he had gotten that out of the way, we wouldn’t have had all the extra media coverage.

References


