

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

W. E. B. DU BOIS INSTITUTE FOR AFRICAN AND AFRICAN AMERICAN RESEARCH
DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN AND AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

Barker Center • 12 Quincy Street • Cambridge, MA 02138-3879

For Immediate Release
October 27, 2004

Contact: Dell M. Hamilton, 617.495-3611,
dhamilt@fas.harvard.edu,

Celebrities and Scholars Debate New Political Satire, *Birth of a Nation*, Black Nationhood and the Presidential Election at Harvard's JFK School

Cambridge – On October 27 2004, celebrities and scholars will discuss the new political satire, *Birth of a Nation: A Comic Novel*, black nationhood, and the 2004 presidential election in a panel discussion at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

Dubbed "Birth of a Nation: Elections, Successions, and Post-Literate America", the discussion centers on the political satire, *Birth of a Nation: A Comic Novel*, which brilliantly analyzes the botched 2000 presidential election through the lens of the poor residents of East St. Louis, Illinois. Penned by Reginald Hudlin, director of *House Party*, *Boomerang*, *Bebe's Kids*, and most recently *Serving Sara*, and Aaron McGruder, creator of the popular *Boondocks* comic strip, this scathingly hilarious book asks the burning question: would anyone care if East St. Louis, Illinois seceded from the Union?

Illustrated by acclaimed cartoonist, Kyle Baker, *Birth of a Nation* lays into a host of hot social and cultural issues - skewering white supremacists, black nationalists, and everyone in between - drawing real blood and real laughs in equal measure in this riotous send-up of American politics.

Moderated by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., director of the W. E. B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research and author of *America Behind the Color Line: Dialogues with African Americans*, the panel includes Reginald Hudlin; Lani Guinier, author of *The Miner's Canary: Enlisting Race, Resisting Power, Transforming Democracy* and Bennett Boskey Professor of Law at Harvard Law School; Michael C. Dawson, author of *Black Visions: The Roots of Contemporary African American Political Ideologies* and professor of government, Harvard University; Rev. Eugene F. Rivers, co-founder, Boston Ten Point Coalition and president, Ella J. Baker House; and Micheal Flaherty, president of Walden Media, the production company that developed the hit films *Around the World in 80 Days* and *Holes*.

This event is co-sponsored by Harvard University's W. E. B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research and the Harvard University Institute of Politics, the Harvard Black Men's Forum, the Harvard Black Student Association, and the Kennedy School Black Student Caucus. For more information about the Du Bois Institute, go to www.fas.harvard.edu/~du_bois; for more information about the Institute of Politics, go to www.iop.harvard.edu.

Who: Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Reginald Hudlin, Lani Guinier, Michael C. Dawson, Eugene F. Rivers, Micheal Flaherty.
What: "Birth of a Nation: Elections, Successions and Post-Literate America," a panel discussion.
When: Wednesday, October 27, 2004, 6 P.M. – 7:30 P.M.
Where: John F. Kennedy Forum, JFK School of Government, Harvard University, 79 JFK Street, Harvard Square, Cambridge.
Cost: Free, open to the public and wheel-chair accessible. For more information, please call the W. E. B. Du Bois Institute at 617.495.3611.