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## Black Players: The Secret World Of Black Pimps

*Richard Milner, Christina Milner*

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**Richard Milner, Christina Milner : Black Players: The Secret World Of Black Pimps** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Black Players: The Secret World Of Black Pimps:

20 of 21 people found the following review helpful. Anthropology Meets True Crime: A glimpse into a world where

women are the breadwinners and men are truly dominant

By VEL The Contemporary Heretic

To validate flawed political doctrines such as cultural determinism and feminism, generations of anthropologists have ventured to deserts, jungles and other remote, dangerous and inhospitable corners of the world in an effort to discover (or, if necessary, fabricate) the existence of a society in which traditional western sex-roles are reversed. The enterprise has been singularly unsuccessful (see *Why Men Rule: A Theory of Male Dominance*; and *The Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory: Why an Invented Past Won't Give Women a Future*). However, back in the 70s, Milner and Milner, two American anthropologists, discovered precisely what their colleagues have been searching for in vain right in America's own backyard - or rather back-streets - namely the world of pimps and 'hos'. Here, women are the "economic providers" and "a man may spend hours a day on his hair, clothes and toilette while his women are out working to support the household" (Milner and Milner 1973: p5). Of course, since pimp culture has now been popularised by generations of rappers, the "secret world" promised by the title may be more familiar to modern readers than on the book's first publication (though even then blaxploitation films had introduced the pimp archetype). However, the picture created in rap lyrics is necessarily so comically caricatured out of all recognition that the Milners' exploration of the reality remains as revelatory as ever. (For example, it is likely that relatively few of the listeners to 50 Cent rap on the radio or MTV about his 'pimp stick' are aware that, according to Donald Goines, 'pimp sticks' are "two wire coat hangers twisted together" used by pimps as a weapon to discipline whores (Whoreson p212)).

### Male Dominance and Pimp Philosophy

Of course, although women are the economic providers and pimps are concerned with their clothes and appearance, in one crucial respect, conventional sex roles appear not to be reversed but rather accentuated. Male dominance, the Milners' make clear, was complete and unquestioned. However, 'pimp philosophy', the worldview passed down among pimps from mentor to student and described by the Milners in detail, raises serious questions about whether this too, in some respects, represents a reversal of the sex roles apparent in mainstream society and whether, in square society, it is in fact men who are dominant (see also *The Myth of Male Power*). According to the 'pimp philosophy', "White men (and square blacks) are thought to be 'pussy-whipped' by their wives after being brain washed by their mothers to accept female dominance as the natural order of things. Most families today are controlled by women, who direct the goals and manage the money... by withholding sexual favours" (p161). It is indeed the case that, while men work longer hours and earn more money than women, women are known to control the vast majority of spending decisions. For example, according to *Pocketbook Power: How to Reach the Hearts and Minds of Today's Most Coveted Consumer - Women* women make approximately 88% of retail purchases in the US. According to the 'black players', square husbands are 'pimped' by their wives every bit as ruthlessly as street-prostitutes, by being obliged to earn money and financially support their wives in return for sexual access. This view of male-female relations, interestingly parallels that of anti-feminists such as Esther Vilar (*The Manipulated Man*) and Matthew Fitzgerald (*Sex-ploitation: how women use their bodies to extort money from men*). For example, one pimp's describes how wives bear children because "she knows once she has one or two babies she's gonna have him locked down tight and even if he leaves she can still get four or five hundred dollars a month if he's making any kind of money" (p227). This parallels Vilar's description of children as "hostages". Like Vilar, pimps believe "woman's liberation movement is not revolutionary" but that "what would be truly revolutionary would be the liberation of men" (p227). According to the pimps, male dominance is the natural and harmonious order of mankind, disrupted only (according to pimp mythology) when Adam gave into sexual desire, and was tempted by Eve to bite into the forbidden fruit, thereby becoming, not the first man, but rather the first trick (166-70). On this view, pimps represent "the only real men in America today" (p162).

### Pimp Philosophy Evaluated

Pimp philosophy is certainly more interesting and insightful than the feminist social theory, which represents the dominant paradigm for viewing the relations between the sexes in the academic and political establishment and the mainstream media. The Milners are themselves clearly taken by this perspective. "Once the world, and particularly the relations between the sexes, is viewed from a black player's vantage point", they acknowledge, "things never again seem quite the same" (p243). According to the Milners, this is hardly surprising. "Like the sociologist and anthropologist, pimps and hustlers depend for their livelihood on an awareness of social forces and the human psyche" but the "social scientist... has far more leeway than the hustler or the pimp in being wrong before he is out of a job" (p242). In other words, whereas feminist sociologists protected in their universities by ivory towers can hold to their ideological dogmas with blind faith notwithstanding all evidence to the contrary, the pimp's analysis is subjected to ruthless falsification by the market forces beloved of neo-liberal economists. However, in claiming that male dominance is the natural state of humanity, pimp philosophy seems to take a wrong turn. If male dominance is so natural and harmonious, why is it found today only among a small subculture of pimps? What is more, why even among pimps is it maintained only by levels of violence and of self-control on the part of pimps far greater than that typically apparent in square relationships? The most fatal flaw in the pimp perception of male dominance as the natural and harmonious state of nature lies in the nature of the pimps' own dominance over their women. As the Milners note: "[Although] the Book [i.e. the unwritten code of how to pimp passed from mentor to student] provides a blueprint for a male-dominated society and a rationale for wresting all control over men from women... ironically, this condition is achieved by making women's full-time occupation the control of men who are outside the subculture" (p48). In other words, the pimp's exploitation of his women relies and depends on those

women's exploitation of other men. The Book provides, therefore, not a blueprint for male domination throughout society, but rather a blueprint for domination by a necessarily small subset of men both of women and, indirectly, of other men. The pimp survives, not only through the exploitation of women, but also, more fundamentally, by the vicarious exploitation of other men (namely the prostitutes' clients, or, aptly named, 'tricks'). Sweet Jones, a character from Iceberg Slim's *Pimp: The Story of My Life*, summarised the point: "A pimp is really a whore who has reversed the game on whores. So Slim, be sweet as the scratch, no sweeter, and always stick a whore for a bundle before you sex her. A whore ain't nothing but a trick to a pimp. Don't let 'em georgia you. Always get your money in front just like a whore." (Slim 2002: xxi) [Curiously, the Milners claim to have interviewed Iceberg Slim (ne Robert Beck). However, Beck, without mentioning them by name, denies this in *The Naked Soul of Iceberg Slim* (p200), where he accuses the Milners of stealing black culture. *Iceberg Slim: The Lost Interviews with the Pimp* apparently includes the alleged interview.] On this view, with their characteristically feminine concern for clothing, hair and hygiene and their ability, like housewives, to live off the income of their sexual partners, pimps represent, not "the only real men in America today" (p162), but rather second-rate female-impersonators. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Great Book About Real Official Pimps and Hookers By Anonymous This book had been out of print for years and has been reprinted in paperback. Great book on the subculture of official Pimps and Hookers from the late 1960's in the Bay Area (San Francisco/Oakland CA) researched and written by two anthropologists who actually befriended and interviewed the subjects. If you have an interest in this lifestyle aka "The Life" then I strongly recommend this book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Egg Great book

Originally published in 1973, *Black Players* was the first book to do a thorough examination of the urban pimp culture. Social anthropologists Richard and Christina Milner were allowed access to the secretive and controversial world of pimps and prostitutes. *Black Player* guides the reader through every aspect of this unfamiliar world, allowing the Players to describe themselves, and the rules of the game in their own words. The Milners interviewed many of the top pimps in the Bay area and other parts of the country during the late 60's/early 70's. There is even a rare interview with legendary pimp-turned-author Iceberg Slim in this book. Out of this experience, has come one of the most fascinating journeys into a secret culture ever written.