

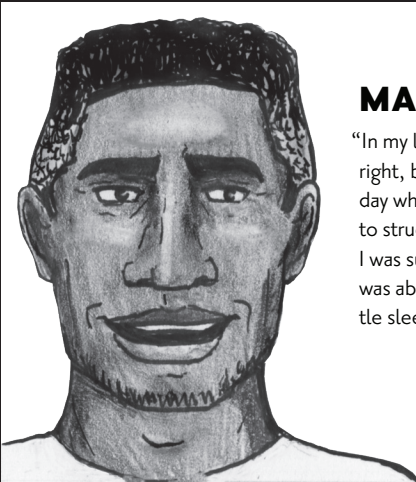
BLACK FATHERHOOD

THIS IS WHO WE ARE

A Research-based Comic by Dr. Lindsey L. Wilson
Illustrated by Marisa Iliakis

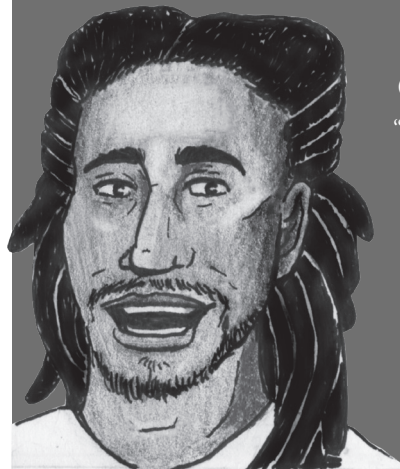
MEET THE FATHERS

Research has confirmed the dynamic role Black fathers play in their families and communities. Several studies suggest that these fathers are more active in their children's lives when compared to other racially diverse fathers. Yet, historically Black fathers have not been acknowledged for the active role that they play in their children's lives. This comic is a graphic representation of a research report written by Dr. Wilson that provides an insider's perspective of Black fatherhood by capturing the messages, voices, and experiences of 13 African American fathers.



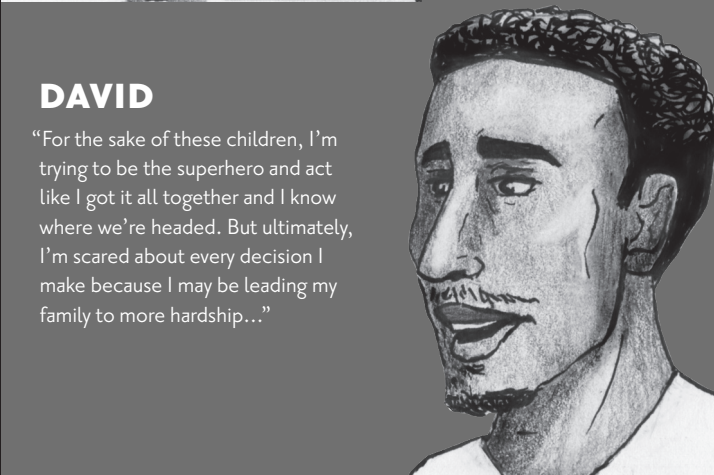
MALIK

"In my life I like to structure things, right, but then at the end of the day when you have a kid, you have to structure things around him and I was surprised at uh, how much I was able to do or function with little sleep when that time came..."



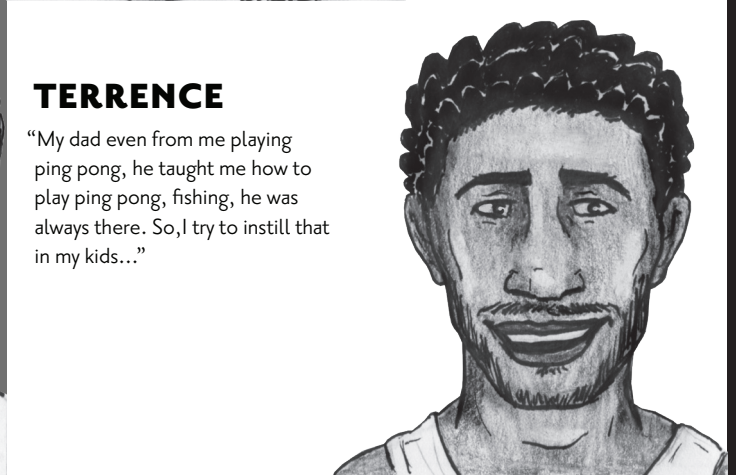
CAMERON

"I don't want to be gone from my kids for too long...I do need my me time, but I know that time I have with them I cherish it... I'm at every event, I possibly can be."



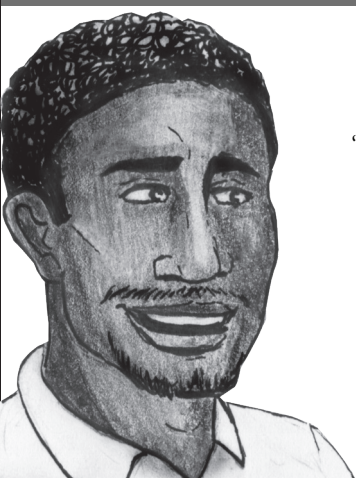
DAVID

"For the sake of these children, I'm trying to be the superhero and act like I got it all together and I know where we're headed. But ultimately, I'm scared about every decision I make because I may be leading my family to more hardship..."



TERRENCE

"My dad even from me playing ping pong, he taught me how to play ping pong, fishing, he was always there. So, I try to instill that in my kids..."



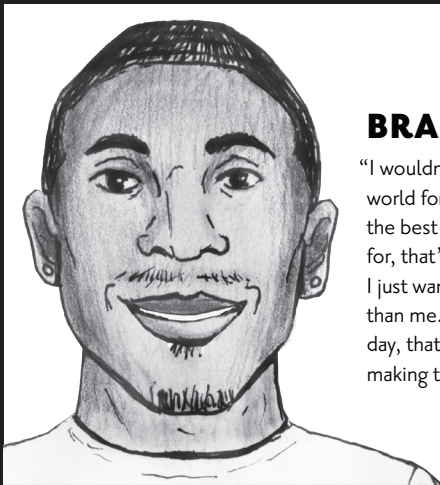
JEREMIAH

"I love my personal time with my son, like just me and him... I get to parent him the way I really want to parent. Messaging to him, or, you know, just bonding whatever."



KEVIN

"A lot of my kids' teachers they'll say we can tell you're involved... I have expectations... I'm intentional about the outcome I want and I'm working towards that in their lives so they always look at me and say, 'No your kids are fine.'"



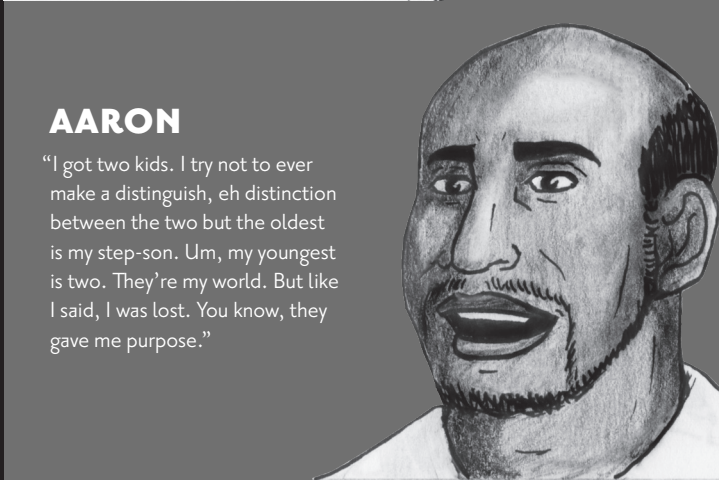
BRANDON

"I wouldn't trade nothing in the world for my kids. Like they're the best thing. That's what I live for, that's what I breathe for. Like I just want to make them better than me... At the end of the day, that's all I care about is just making them better than me."



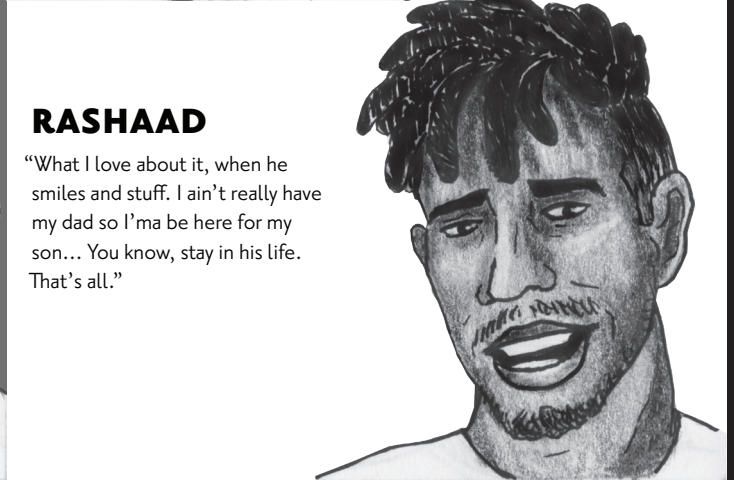
LUTHER

"A dad and a father is two different things... The father is the one that stays through all circumstances and situations and takes care of his kids. The dad is the one who can make one and break."



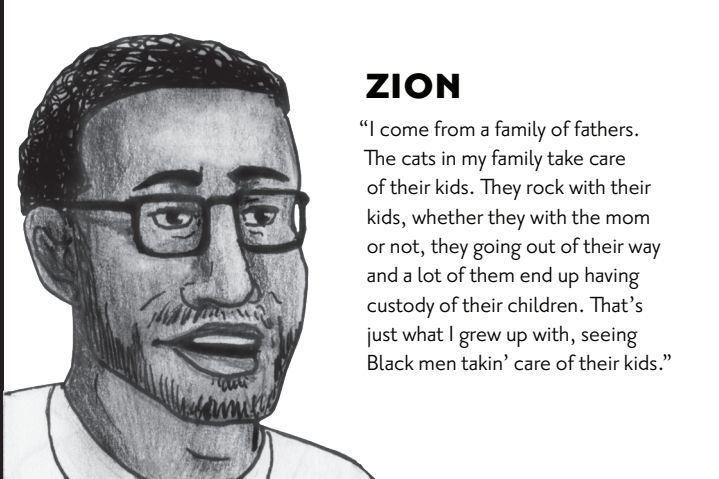
AARON

"I got two kids. I try not to ever make a distinguish, eh distinction between the two but the oldest is my step-son. Um, my youngest is two. They're my world. But like I said, I was lost. You know, they gave me purpose."



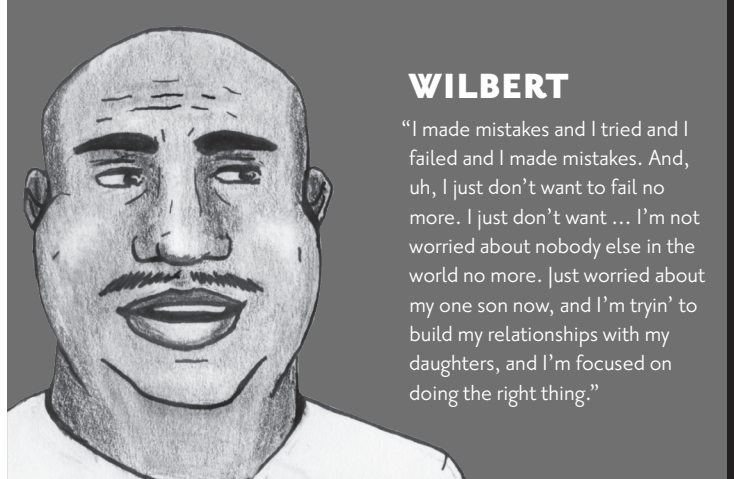
RASHAAD

"What I love about it, when he smiles and stuff. I ain't really have my dad so I'ma be here for my son... You know, stay in his life. That's all."



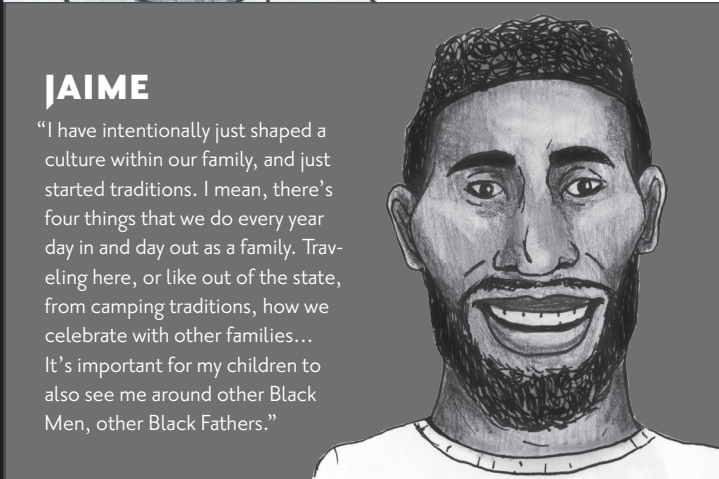
ZION

"I come from a family of fathers. The cats in my family take care of their kids. They rock with their kids, whether they with the mom or not, they going out of their way and a lot of them end up having custody of their children. That's just what I grew up with, seeing Black men takin' care of their kids."



WILBERT

"I made mistakes and I tried and I failed and I made mistakes. And, uh, I just don't want to fail no more. I just don't want ... I'm not worried about nobody else in the world no more. Just worried about my one son now, and I'm tryin' to build my relationships with my daughters, and I'm focused on doing the right thing."



JAIME

"I have intentionally just shaped a culture within our family, and just started traditions. I mean, there's four things that we do every year day in and day out as a family. Traveling here, or like out of the state, from camping traditions, how we celebrate with other families... It's important for my children to also see me around other Black Men, other Black Fathers."

Nearly all 13 fathers were adamant about being there for their children, family, and communities. Many reported that the narrative created and pushed about Black fathers did not align with their personal lived experiences. Instead this is who fathers reported they were!



GROUP 1

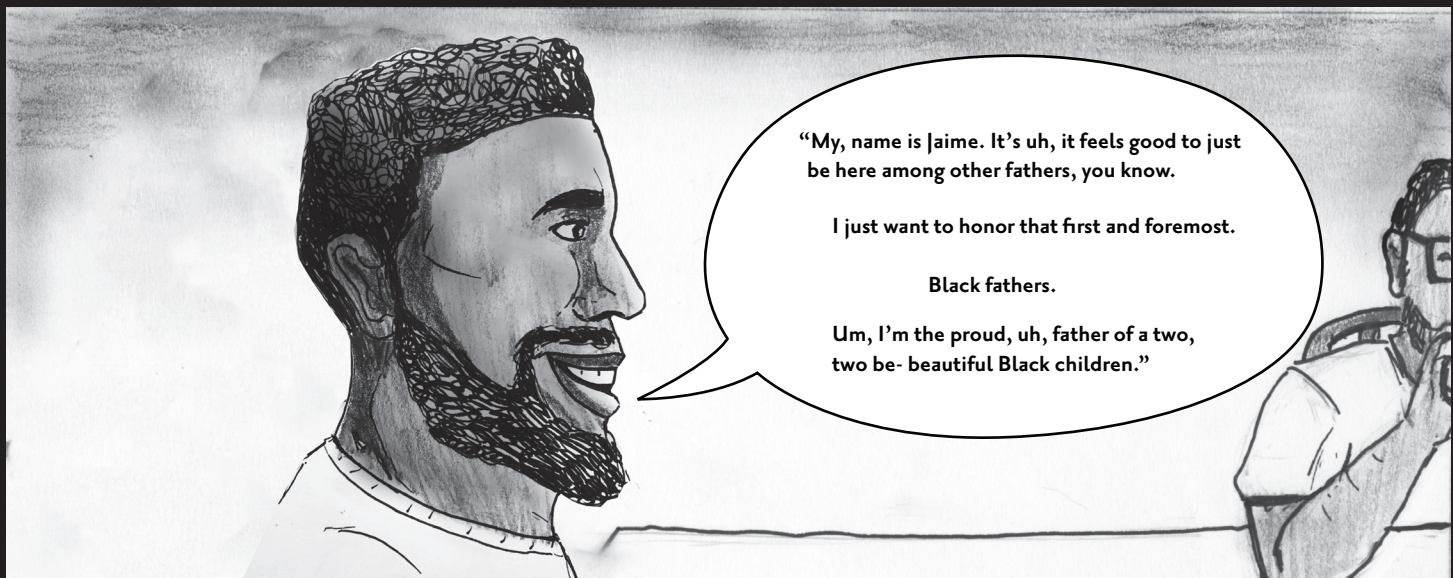


“So all these people are having an incomplete picture of Black fatherhood including us.

But we’re making sure our kids are getting a complete picture.

We’re doing everything we can at home to make sure they’re getting a complete picture.”

GROUP 2



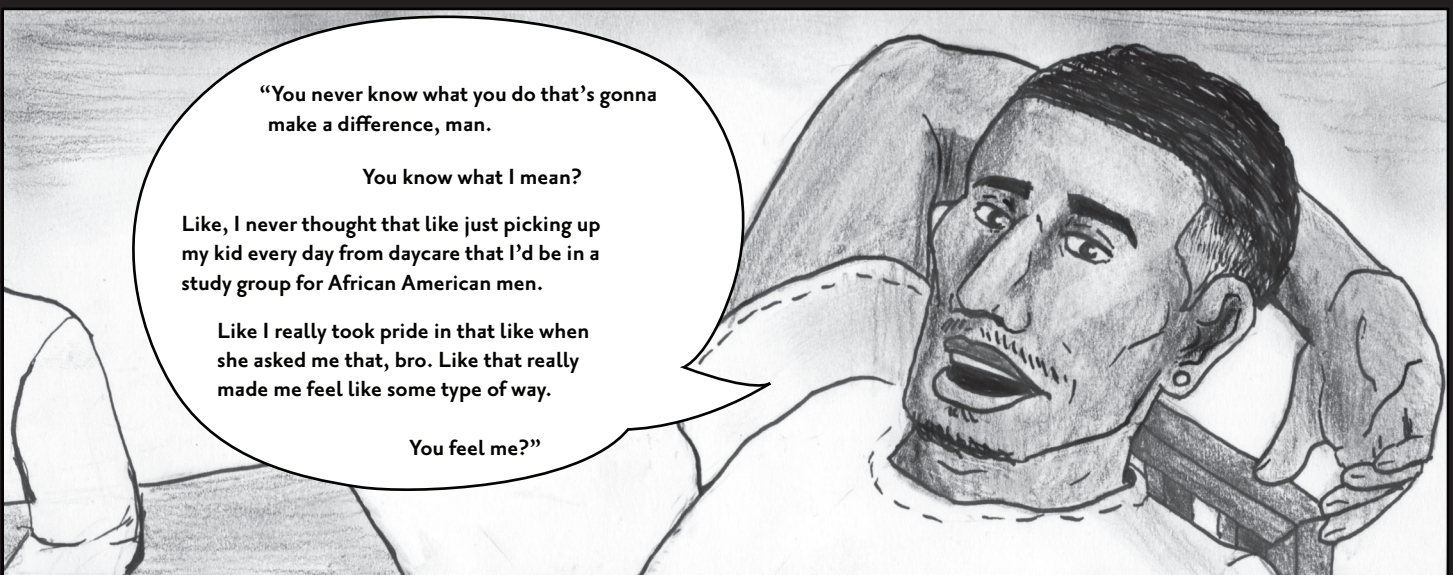
“My, name is Jaime. It’s uh, it feels good to just be here among other fathers, you know.

I just want to honor that first and foremost.

Black fathers.

Um, I’m the proud, uh, father of a two, two be- beautiful Black children.”

GROUP 3



“You never know what you do that’s gonna make a difference, man.

You know what I mean?

Like, I never thought that like just picking up my kid every day from daycare that I’d be in a study group for African American men.

Like I really took pride in that like when she asked me that, bro. Like that really made me feel like some type of way.

You feel me?”

Stability was a theme that emerged amongst several Black fathers across all three groups. These men shared how stable they were in their roles as fathers and how they desired that media would depict them as more stable both within their fatherly roles and homes. Reporting from an insider's perspective that the current Black narrative and media's depiction did not accurately capture who these men were, many shared that they felt media neglected to show how humble they were. In addition, they felt that the media omitted the love and respect that Black fathers have for their mothers, wives, and children. In spite of fathers' residential status, it was clear that they were very active in their children's daily lives.

ON STABILITY

As we're rambling about movies, I do think it's still a lot of showing absent Black fathers and the impact. Like the Black dad not being there, which is not realistic.

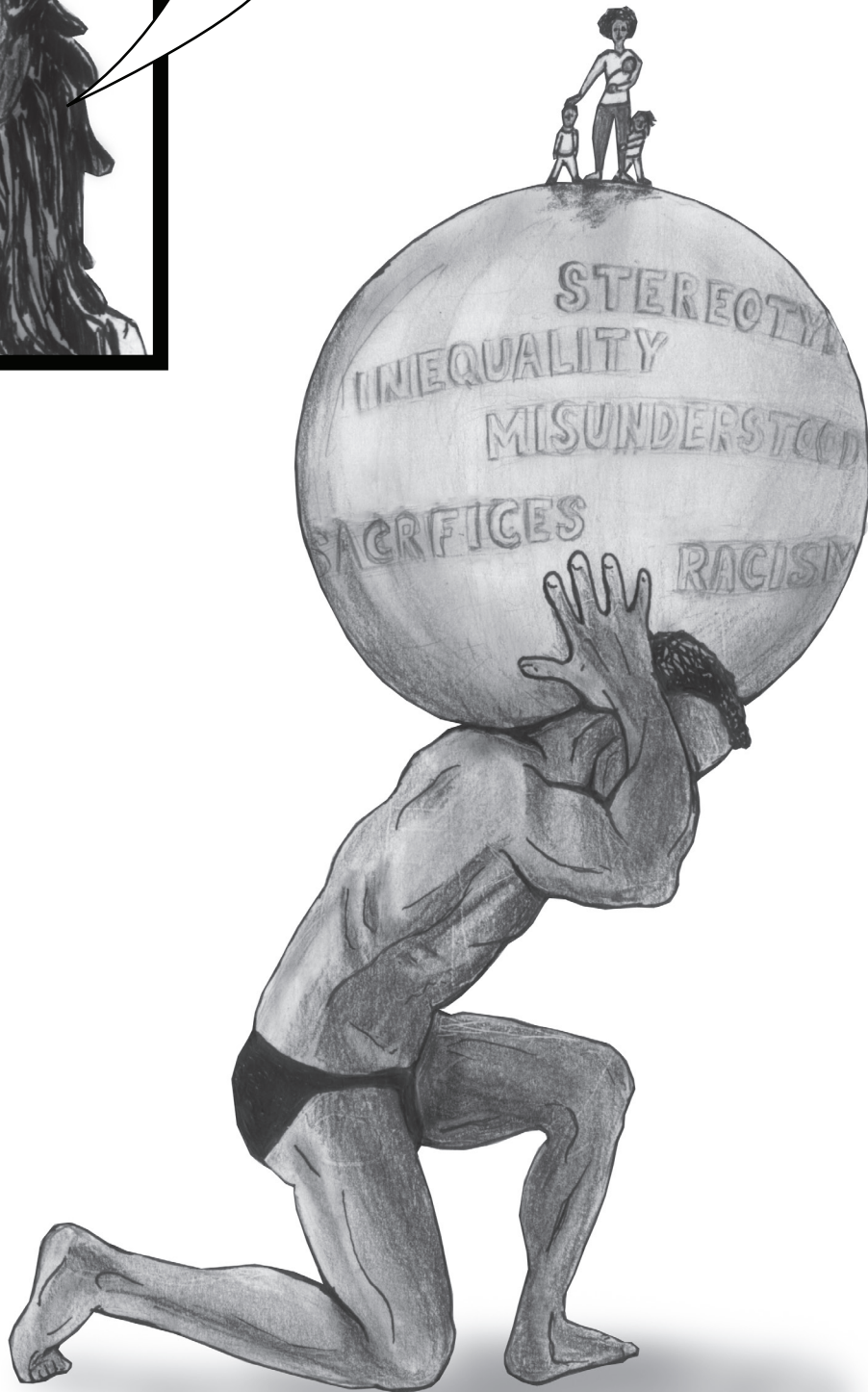
DAVID:

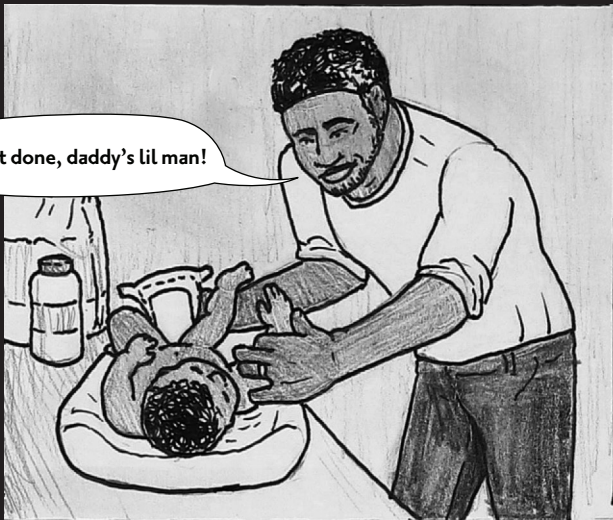
Most dads that I know personally, no matter if they're rich or poor, um. They see their children. Like, that's, that's something important to them.





I just think we need more stability shown on television. There are more Black fathers in their kids' lives these days probably because of how they were treated growing up, like myself, um. I can never be away from my child. So I would always want them to see that stability represented...





Some fathers reported how they desired for the media to capture how involved they were in their communities whether it be the community marches, supporting local businesses, or engaging in social fathering activities these men were front and center. Yet, some of them reported feeling that the media only felt obligated to come to the community when something negative happened. Fathers shared that media rarely captured the many positive things that were taking place in the community with these fathers.

ON COMMUNITY

Like I know the stuff that we do in the community, and whatever, we don't do it to get patted on the back, or to get media coverage or anything like that. But I wish they would show more that Black men and Black fathers do in the community positively. You know, they, they just don't show it, man (laughs).

EXACTLY!





Keeping Our Community Healthy



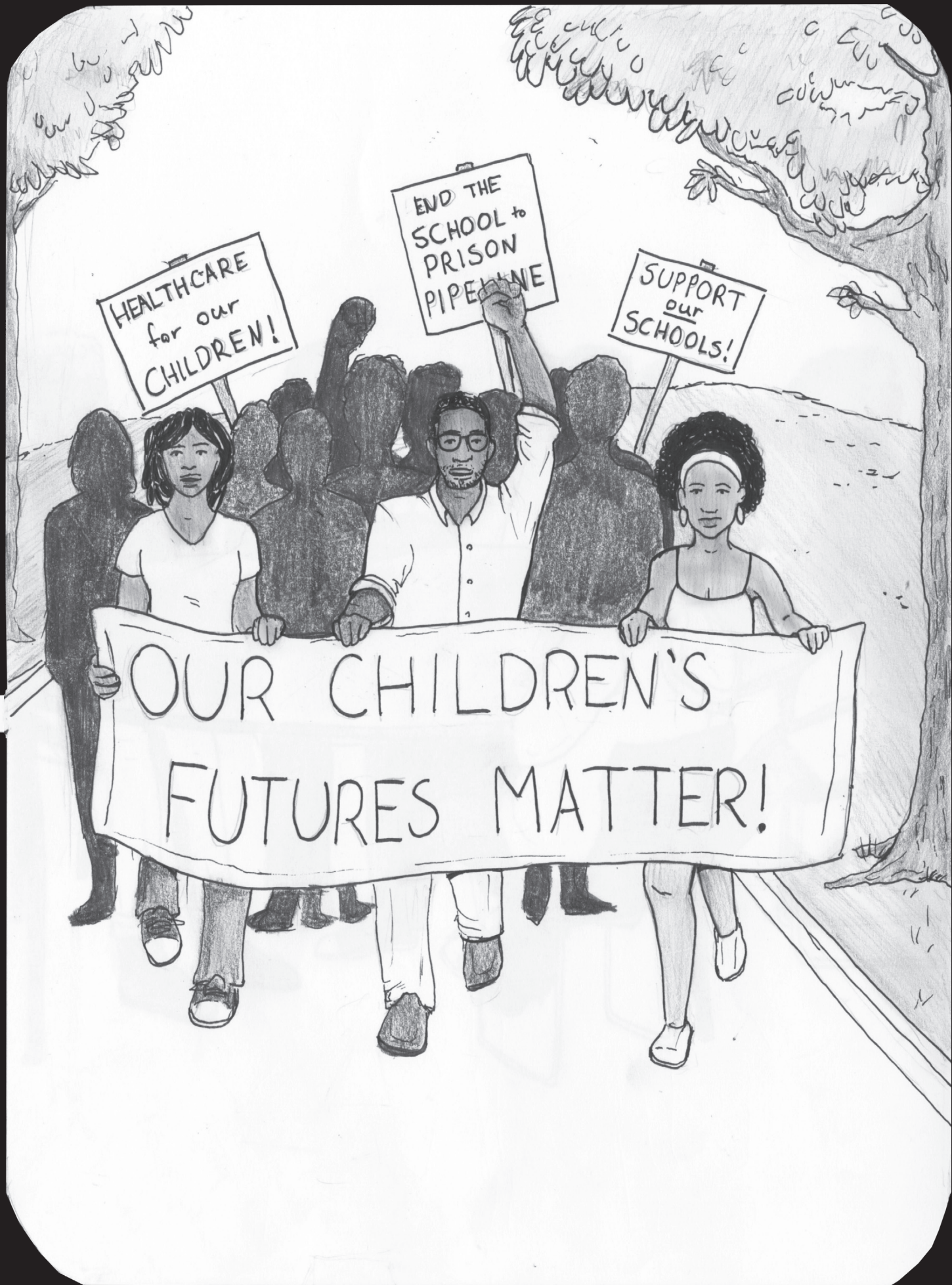
Supporting Our Schools



Supporting Local Business

Being There For Our Brothers





HEALTHCARE
for our
CHILDREN!

END THE
SCHOOL to
PRISON
PIPELINE

SUPPORT
our
SCHOOLS!

OUR CHILDREN'S
FUTURES MATTER!

Finally, fathers reported that the educated Black man is rarely depicted on television, and they wished that he was portrayed more often engaging in educational activities with his child. Furthermore, some of these fathers recognized that they experienced unique challenges that required them to make specific sacrifices. These men shared unique obstacles that they have had to overcome in order to be a part of every aspect of their child's lives including school functions and doctors' appointments. In spite of the negative narrative often told about them, these fathers are very active in their children's lives and take pride in being a Black father.

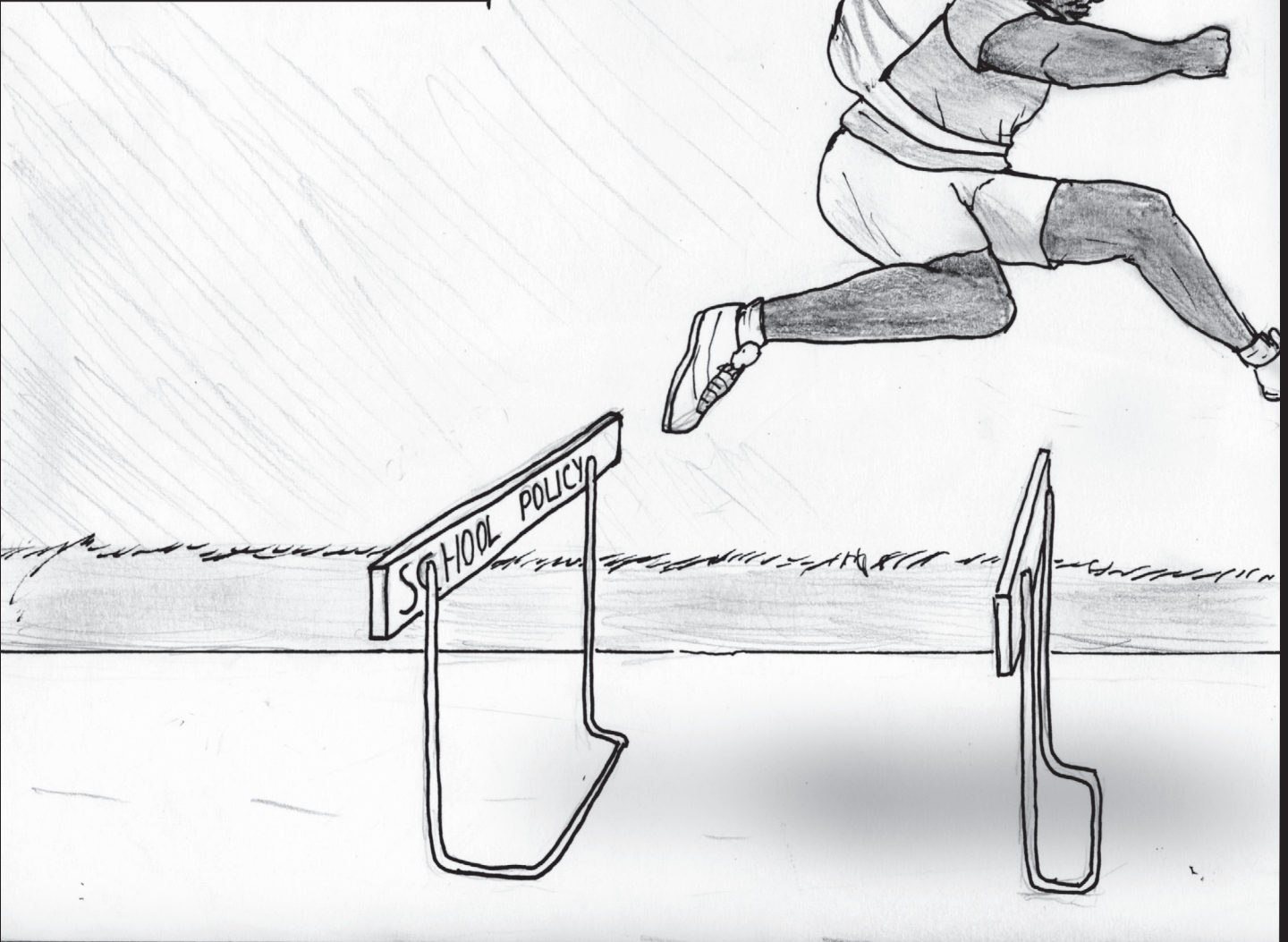
ON SACRIFICE

They never show a Black father teaching his kids anything he can use in life. They might show how to throw a football, baseball, or something related to sports, but as far as, uh, the building blocks that you're gonna need in life, they don't show us portraying that type of thing. Teaching our kids nothing like that.





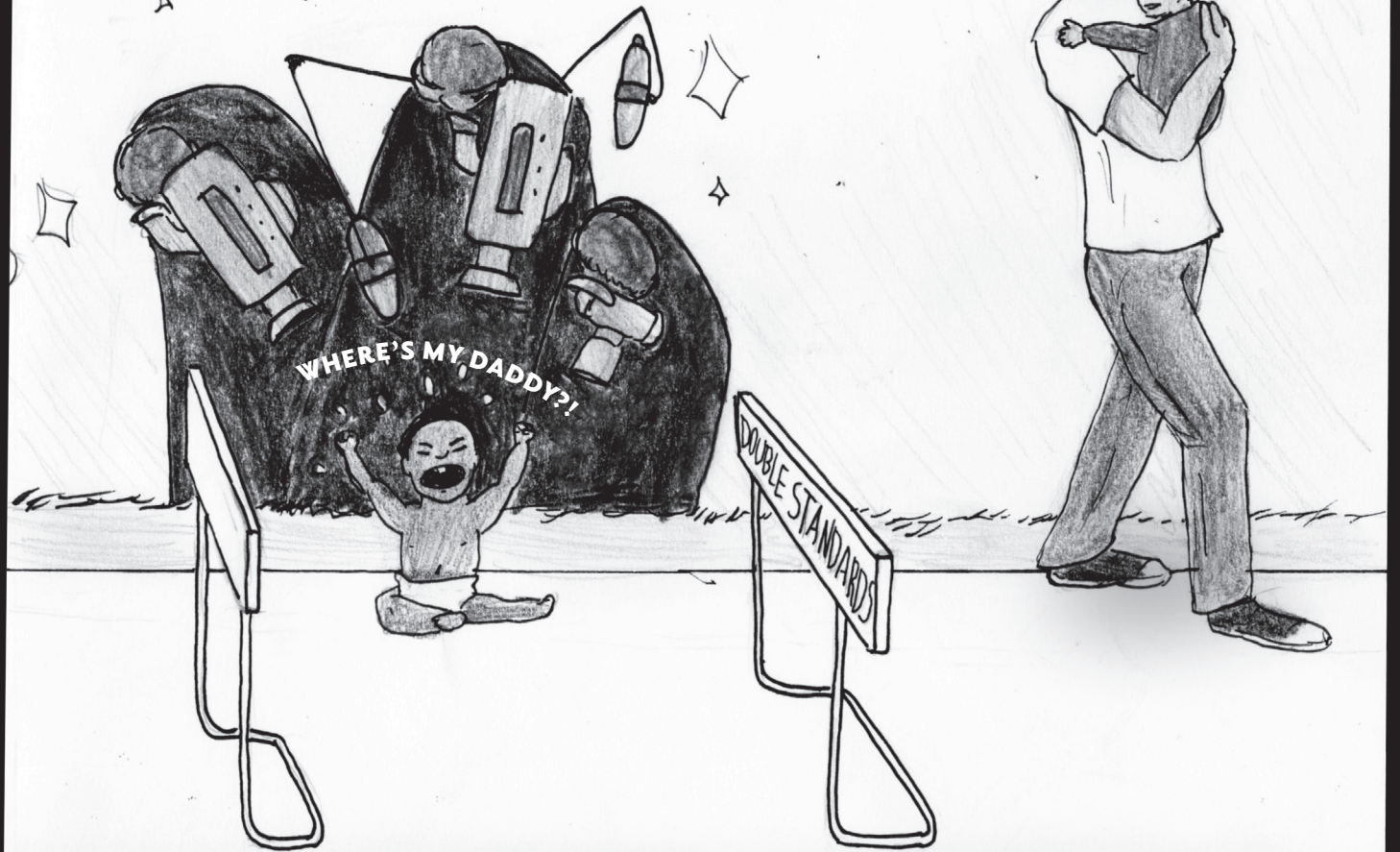
I think media makes it a point to say how bad a kid was or how negatively affected they were when their father wasn't there but they never make it a point to do some type of survey or something to say, "Oh these kids were wonderful because they had fathers in their lives."



RACE of BLAC

I can never be away from my child.

MEDIA COVERAGE



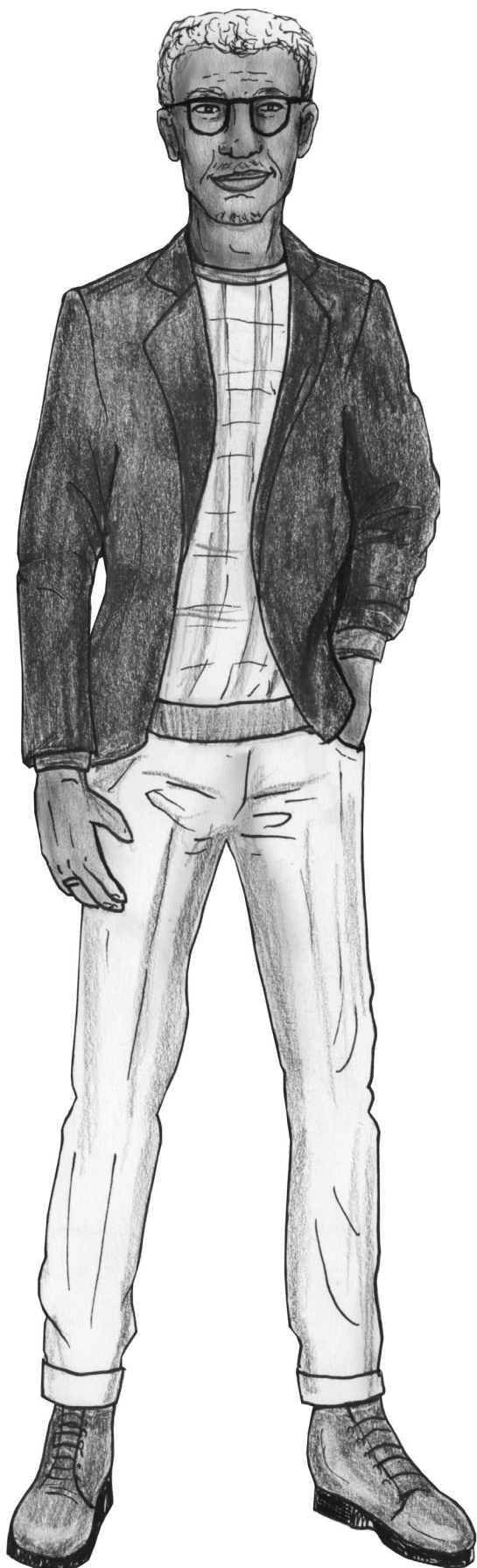
K E A T H E R H O O D

Reflective Questions for School Professionals

- 1. What strategies do you use to strengthen connections between African American fathers and schools?**
- 2. What messages do you receive about African American fathers from broadcasted television?**

Reflective Questions for Communities

- 3. Do you feel that media portrays a complete picture of Black fathers?**
- 4. What are some aspects of African American fathers you believe are missing that you would like to be shown on TV?**



African American family literature has confirmed the active role Black fathers play in their families and communities. Yet, African American fathers have historically been portrayed in unfavorable manners through a deficit-based narrative. Media has been said to contribute to this crisis through its stereotypical images; yet, little is known about the effects that media has on these Black fathers' roles. Through three qualitative, semi-structured focus groups, Dr. Wilson completed a study that explored the messages that Black fathers received about themselves from televised media. Results suggest that Black fathers believe that media presents an incomplete picture of Black fatherhood. In addition, fathers desired for media to portray them for who they truly were. These men reported being active Black fathers who were stable in their families, engaged in their communities, and willing to make sacrifices for their children. This comic captures these 13 fathers' stories.

Lindsey Wilson, Ph.D

Dr. Wilson's research aims to use reflective strength-based practices to combat understudied barriers as a means to better understand and increase father involvement. More specifically it captures the essence of minority fathers, recognizing their value, dedication, and passion not only to their roles as fathers but to the growth of their young children. Through this work, she challenges the current narratives of racially diverse fathers in particularly African American fathers, while pushing teachers and other early childhood providers to reflect on their current practices of engaging low-income and fathers of color. As a scholar who perceives such work as equitable, she uses fathers' voices to advance educational policy, practice, and structural change.

Wilson, L. Lindsey (2018). A Collaborative Effort towards Social Change: Understanding Media's Influence on African American Fathers of Young Children. University of Washington

This research was funded by the Center for Communication, Difference, and Equity.

The findings in the report "A Collaborative Effort towards Social Change: Understanding Media's Influence on African American Fathers of Young Children", have been visually interpreted by Marisa Iliakis at the University of Washington (iliakism.com).