

“No Thanks for Tokenism:  
Telling Stories from a Black Nation,  
Black Journal, 1968–1970”

excerpt from a chapter of the book

*Black Power TV*

by

Devorah Heitner

## Speaking to a Black National Community: Strategies of Black Publics

*Black Journal's* claim to advocacy and community was openly stated from the first episode, in June 1968: in his introduction, the host, Lou House, said, "It is our aim in the next hour and in the coming months to report and review the events, the dreams, the dilemmas of Black America and Black Americans." The program editor Lou Potter told a journalist later that year, "Our challenge was to do something truly new and meaningful: Not just black faces bearing a white message, but black ideals, black achievements—a black world."<sup>6</sup> *Black Journal* was designed to foster a shared vision of a national Black community by transcending regional, generational, and class differences in its coverage. *Black Journal* had the potential to present its audience with a vision of common ground.

As the program evolved, the staff had to work out what it meant to be a national Black television show. *Black Journal* was continually self-reflexive about what it meant to be a national Black television show, asking questions about geography and local and regional issues, reconciling dichotomies of urban versus rural, north versus south. "We had to get out of New York, we took that very seriously that we had to represent the nation and Blacks throughout the whole country," recalls the former *Black Journal* producer Kent Garrett of the program's mission.<sup>7</sup> *Black Journal's* crew shot documentary segments in Los Angeles, Boston, New York, Chicago, the Mississippi Delta, Georgia, Detroit, and other locations as part of an effort to envision a Black nation and a Black cultural and political vanguard that moved beyond regionalism. This approach resulted in coverage of multiple locations, coverage that had the pedagogical function of demonstrating innovations in one place to individuals who shared the same problems in other locales. The program also reinforced the ideology of diasporic Blackness by relating issues in Black America to the diaspora, by comparing living conditions in famine-filled Biafra to the conditions of near starvation that Blacks still faced in some parts of the South. Furthermore, *Black Journal* investigated the concerns of African Americans in a transnational context, even starting a bureau in Africa. By situating the topics it explored as common to Black people in many regions and nations, the program proposed that Black viewers should consider themselves part of an emerging Black world wherein Africa and the Black diaspora were vitally relevant.

What did it mean to be a Black program, inserted into the very white

flow of public television, and television in general? After starting out under the white executive producer Al Perlmutter, most of the original Black staff went on strike so that the program could truly be a Black television show in its editorial decision-making. The African American filmmaker William Greaves became the show's executive producer as a result of the Black staffers' conviction that *Black Journal* could only be authentic under Black leadership. Greaves urged the show's young producers to "capture Black reality." "Always try to make films about black people with the interior voice," Greaves told them. "Don't be like white people and just say, 'This is what so and so say.' Try to get *the Black people* to say it." St. Claire Bourne commented, "That's what made *Black Journal* different than *60 Minutes*."<sup>8</sup>

*Black Journal* alternately cited, critiqued, and celebrated other media representations, showing that the staff was keenly knowledgeable about the contributions of other media, especially the Black press, and aware of the implications of *Black Journal*'s location within a television flow that was often racist. *Black Journal*'s on-air media criticism and satire offered a constant reminder that the staff were aware that they were producing a national Black television show with media commentary ranging from a sketch about the idealized images of African Americans on television, in episode 1, to a series of interviews with Black media makers in later episodes. Public television's status as a beggar at the table for production funding forced *Black Journal* to internally confront the question of how a Black show could be simultaneously authentic yet created and distributed through a white-dominated technology, funded by the Ford Foundation, and later by corporate funds.

The staff's self-reflexivity about this paradox is evident in their attention to Black exclusions and misrepresentations elsewhere on the dial, highlighting discrimination in the media industry on the air. This self-reflexivity was most evident in the first several years of *Black Journal*, when its funding was at its height and audience was largest. The inclusion of self-examination as part of the program's content was heightened during the transition from white editorial control under Al Perlmutter through the William Greaves era (episodes 3 to 25), to the first few episodes with Tony Brown at the helm.

Tracing the program's formation, from the strike to achieve Black control through the evolution of the program's style and content under Greaves, offers a sense of the program's ambition. Three early *Black Journal* documentaries highlight the program's engagement with the questions of

what constituted a national Black identity, and what role African Americans might play in the powerful structures that shape American life. These three documentaries examined Black relationships to powerful American institutions: the school system, the police force, and the army. *Black Journal* defined their project of representing a Black nation with respect to different regions of the United States, as well as in relation to decolonizing nations in Africa. Finally, this chapter examines the reasons for *Black Journal*'s decline in funding and influence.

### ***Black Journal* under White Control**

In the first episode of *Black Journal*, before the opening credits roll, the comedian Godfrey Cambridge appears dressed in overalls and a painter's cap, with a paint roller in hand, and methodically paints the television frame. To the viewer, it appears that his or her television is being painted black from the inside — a potent visual metaphor that the program did not quite embody in its initial staff; whites held significant editorial control. Initially, NET put together a team that included eleven Black staff members and nine white staff members under the editorial direction of the white executive producer, Al Perlmutter. Surprisingly, despite the dearth of Black employees at NET, Madeline Anderson was not tapped to work on *Black Journal*; she requested to work on the program and was assigned to it (see figure 3.1). As was the case for the local programs, the network recruited the remaining Black staff members from outside public television's lily-white ranks, drawing from radio talent and the arts community. Perlmutter was surprised to encounter resistance to the racial imbalance of the program's staff from the very first episode. When he sent a group headed by a white producer to interview the proprietor of the Black-identified Harlem clothing line New Breed, the proprietor refused to participate unless the segment had a Black producer (see figure 3.2). Perlmutter granted the request, promoting Kent Garrett to associate producer, and the segment was included in the premier episode.

Most NET workers had little experience working with Black producers and talent, and fault lines between the intention to challenge racial boundaries and unexamined prejudices surfaced right away. A party thrown for the *Black Journal* staff after the release of the first episode featured watermelon and fried chicken, foods the white assistant who planned the reception thought were universally loved by African Americans. This provoked significant frustration among the African American staff members. Inci-

dents like this demonstrate that despite Perlmutter's intentions to foster an alternative Black perspective at NET, some of the organization's staff were, as Madeline Anderson put it, thoroughly "clueless about Black people, about how [they] feel about stereotypes like that."<sup>9</sup> After the first episode aired, an interoffice memo to Perlmutter criticized a number of technical problems in the episode, including with Godfrey Cambridge's wardrobe: "You will recall that Godfrey Cambridge wore highly reflective blue and yellow shirts, which restricted the color TV system in its ability to bring out the most important aspect of the scene, i.e. the actors' facial features and characteristics. On a white person, these shirts would have worked fine. For a Negro, more subdued clothing tones work much better."<sup>10</sup> This note, from one white, public-broadcasting official to a white executive producer, speaks to the extent of Black Americans' underrepresentation on television, the newness of having Black faces on public television, and the station leadership's discomfort with the changes to the status quo.

The style and approach of *Black Journal* would evolve, but the categories of content in *Black Journal*'s first episode—which included stories on school control struggles, Black culture, updates on Black activism, coverage of events in Africa, reports on Black politics, both mainstream and radical, reports on Black economic initiatives, and critiques of the Black absence from mainstream media—typified the program in its first several years. Episodes were structured as a mix of in-studio discussions, often featuring Lou House framed by dramatic black-and-white images from the stories he was reporting, alternating with short- and long-form documentaries shot in the field. The cinematography and editing of these documentaries more closely resemble underground and experimental cinema and documentary cinema from this era, and contrasts stylistically with the staid, subdued, and monotonous style of much of PBS's other news and public-affairs programming.

*Black Journal*'s initial budget of at least \$500,000 per season, though small for television, was considerably larger than those of local programs like *Say Brother* and made the production values, though not the content, of *Inside Bedford-Stuyvesant* look "almost embarrassing," according to Charles Hobson, who worked on both programs.<sup>11</sup> The kinds of expressive images that predominated on *Black Journal* were more dynamic than those dominating typical public-affairs programs on noncommercial television, where poor people were discussed by "experts" but rarely spoke for themselves. Madeline Anderson remembers that "people used to always ridicule NET projects as 'talking heads,'" but "no one did anything about it." At

*Black Journal*, by contrast, there were “people who were not of the ‘talking head’ tradition.” Anderson recalls, “These guys wanted to be filmmakers, and that’s what was so good about it. So you could try things. . . . If you look at it, you see some artistic vision, richness of production, which the other writers and producers I worked with, they were not willing [to do].”<sup>12</sup>

### Framing Desegregation, Representing Children

*Black Journal*’s long-form documentaries in the first four episodes demonstrate the limitations imposed by white editorial control while also showcasing the talents of the staff and the potential for the program. The second episode features two separate documentaries focused on African American children: the first was a very traditionally structured documentary on school reform, and the other was a more experimental documentary about children’s folk culture. The “experts” chosen for inclusion in the school reform documentary and the narrative omissions in the “ethnographic” documentary are evidence of the challenges Black staff members faced in airing pointed, critical programming. In the first episode, despite Cambridge’s painting the screen black, the white producers’ sense of “balance” is evident as the views of white police are covered extensively in a story about Huey Newton, of the Black Panther Party.

The second episode highlights the contradictory impulses between white ideas of balance and Black advocacy. While resisting the narrative of “desegregation” and emphasizing Black control, the school segment nonetheless gives significant airtime to a number of white “experts.” The documentary employs innovative cinematography and poetic editing to showcase the poignancy of the children’s situations. It opens with several sequences of long duration featuring the trash-filled alleys and dilapidated conditions of sections of Roxbury, one of Boston’s main Black communities, with a spare mix of “(I Can’t Get No) Satisfaction” playing over the images. This exposé of the troubled condition of the community is followed by an introduction to the issues at hand by Ruth Batson, a local, African American school-reform activist who offers a critique of the powers that be, saying that she “holds them accountable.” Her depiction of Black children as outsiders in their own school system is underscored by the setting of the interview, which features Batson outside a school in her winter coat. “We just can’t accept this,” states Batson, of the deplorable test scores and reading level of Boston’s Black children. Batson’s interview frames the segments that follow, which document different approaches

to solving the problems of Boston's troubled schools. The first of these focuses on a young girl of about seven, Kathy B., who is bussed from Roxbury to the Boston suburbs. This segment epitomizes the contradictions between liberal thinking about race and the lived experience of crossing racial barriers. Images of Kathy playing happily with other African American children on the bus are intercut with a long take of the bus's winding its way through gray Boston streets during winter, to underscore that although she is traveling only eleven miles, Kathy is moving between two starkly different worlds. Next, Kathy is shown surrounded by her white classmates at an affluent public school, and the soundtrack features a long interview with her teacher over the classroom footage that captures the teacher's white, liberal perspective. She points out that Kathy's reading has "advanced" several grade levels since she began attending the school but that the Black children who arrived at the beginning of the school year "were all just barely reading." Kathy's teacher also discusses the changes in Kathy's self-image. "When she first came she would not draw herself as brown," the teacher comments, but "she has begun to draw herself as brown . . . I think Kathy is the most aware of anyone that she is Negro," the teacher says, in a tone that suggests she is encouraged by Kathy's progress in this regard. The teacher feels that Kathy gets her sense of identity from "the home" and that her parents encourage her to be proud "that she is a Negro." The teacher seems to convey ambivalence about this messaging from Kathy's parents, as if Kathy's best hope might be to forget "that she is a Negro," although the teacher is clearly proud of Kathy and her achievements.

Contradictions between the teacher's liberal rhetoric and aspects of Kathy's experience become evident in the documentary. While Kathy's teacher speaks, a series of images of Kathy at school are shown in sequence, including one in which Kathy is painting a classmate's face with black paint. Only after viewing this image repeatedly did I realize that Kathy was not painting her schoolmate in blackface but rather painting a beard on the other child, presumably in the context of a school theater production. The choice to include this moment that so strongly highlights the differences in the children's phenotypes underscores Kathy's presence as a racial outsider and something of a curiosity at the school. Similarly, we see several poignant shots of Kathy in a sea of white students, shots in which she appears connected to them but not necessarily as playful as she was in the earlier scenes riding the bus with her neighbors. The program subtly argues that this particular kind of desegregation has high stakes for

the identity of Black children, by stitching together the voiceover of the teacher's observation that Kathy has moved from invisibility to an identification with Blackness, with images that highlight Kathy's difference.

While Kathy's teacher indicates that the risks of Kathy losing her identity can be mitigated by strong messaging from the home, the remainder of the documentary suggests that *Black Journal* is critical of this kind of integration. The next segment features school reformers' preferred alternative to busing children out of Roxbury: building excellent schools in the Black community, schools so desirable that white parents might choose to send their children to them. Jonathan Kozol, a school reformer who is white, persuasively argues that white parents oppose bussing "because white parents know, in their shame, that the schools in black neighborhoods are bad, but if you build excellent schools they will come." He introduces as an alternative a school within Roxbury that is privately funded. Shots of the school building attest to its relative lack of affluence—compared to the school in Brookline, the Roxbury school has barer features, and the building is more run down. Yet Kozol describes children engaged in close relationships with their teachers, and the viewer sees that these children are comfortable and happy on the playground.

None of the parents, teachers, or administrators at the school Kozol uses as a model appear on camera, nor does the viewer hear from Kathy or either of her parents. Ruth Batson's fully formed and expert analysis of the schooling situation offers a critical and much-needed Black, grassroots perspective in this episode. The fate and significance of Black children at this key moment of transformation is a critical issue, and *Black Journal's* documentary leaves the viewer with a poignant final image to consider: a long take of a wide shot of Kathy playing violin, a little Black girl at school in Brookline, surrounded by a sea of white students playing "Hot Cross Buns." The kind of national analysis this episode offers, comparing events in one city with those in another, distinguished the possibilities of a national program—possibilities that would be enhanced once greater Black control of *Black Journal* was achieved. The preponderance of white experts in the segment offers a sharp contrast to the authorization of Black expertise by local, Black public-affairs programs—it is difficult to imagine either *Inside Bedford-Stuyvesant* or *Say Brother* taking this approach—or, for that matter, *Black Journal* itself, after it later achieved greater Black editorial control.

Later in this same episode, the hopes and promise of African American youth are examined in a more experimental documentary about children's

folklore. More open-ended and less editorialized than the school reform segment, the documentary muses on the roots of certain songs and games and focuses on the ways that games inspired by nature and wildlife translate into children's play in the urban North, putting the North in dialogue with the South, and the city in dialogue with the country. Madeline Anderson later described the segment as "kind of a mish mash," because of the struggles for editorial control.

Leon Bibb, a folklorist and musician who narrates the episode, sings with the children, and appears in the documentary, evinces a strong affection for the South and for rural children's folk traditions, repeatedly referring to the rural South as "down home." Images of children playing circle games, clapping games, and jumping rope in a rural and isolated field by a roadside in an unidentified southern location are contrasted to those of urban children playing the same and similar games. The children themselves are what is beautiful in the urban setting, and in documenting the movement of their play—from South to North, from rural to urban—*Black Journal* highlights the shared heritage of children's culture. While the documentary idealizes the rural over the urban, it indicates the continuities in Black vernacular culture, even across the temporal and spatial dislocations of migration. In this way, the piece celebrates the importance of attending to and preserving Black folk traditions as part of the project of building a national Black identity.

### **Black Americans at Home**

In the fourth episode, two contrasting domestic scenes highlight how *Black Journal* expanded on the styles of other media. The first, a story on gender relations, centered on the actress Val Ward and her family, in Chicago, echoes similar spreads in *Ebony* magazine. This segment emphasizes both the egalitarian romance of the Wards' union and the ways Ward and her husband furnished their home to underscore their full commitment to Black identity. Images of Ward and her husband at home, surrounded by African art and walking on the beach together, are intercut with images of women and women and men discussing their roles in relationships, in consciousness-raising groups. In contrast to the Wards' well-appointed home, another segment in the episode called "Urban Renewal or Black Removal" focuses on wealthy universities that have displaced poor Black people from their inner-city homes. Showcasing the program's national reach, the episode profiles individuals displaced in New York, Philadel-

phia, and Chicago by Columbia University, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Chicago. A domestic scene on the South Side of Chicago features a shaken and enraged woman scared to sleep in her new apartment because of inadequate locks, limited space, and poor air circulation. Afraid of retribution from the University of Chicago for speaking out, she appears on *Black Journal* anonymously. Long takes of this woman, shown silhouetted in her dark apartment (she had no electricity) underscore the dire consequences of these displacements. While urban renewal was often equated with “Negro removal” by community activists, *Black Journal* showcased, in shocking detail, how far venerated institutions were willing to go to expand their campuses. Together, these vignettes of Val Ward in her home and the anonymous displaced woman in hers paint a complex picture of the role of economic class in Black life that resists simplistic characterizations.

### Reviewing *Black Journal*

The critical responses to *Black Journal*'s early episodes reveal the critics' ambivalence toward Black-focused television as a genre, even in the case of programs they determined to be “quality” Black television. One of the earliest reviews of *Black Journal* offered the telling headline “Regular Television Fare Put to Shame by Negro Production.” Its enthusiastic white reviewer positioned *Black Journal* as an antidote to the excesses of commercial television, claiming that “regular TV” suffered by comparison to *Black Journal*'s insightful commentary and excellent production. Operating under the mistaken assumption that the program was entirely under Black control, the reviewer argued that *Black Journal* was “different” for this reason: “It is not only about Negroes. It not only features Negroes. It is not only aimed at Negroes. It is actually created by Negroes, from the first ideas all the way throughout production.”<sup>13</sup> Seeming somewhat incredulous, the reviewer points out that the program is intelligent and adult and asks sarcastically, “What kind of television is that?”—implying that most television programming lacks these qualities. This review suggests that *Black Journal* gained credibility in part because it fit into the emerging critical category of “quality” television, which PBS aimed to epitomize.<sup>14</sup> Situating *Black Journal* as an enlightened show in the vapid television “wasteland,” the review contrasts *Black Journal*'s thoughtful documentaries with what the critic considers empty fare, citing programs such as *Laugh In*.

Other critics expressed thinly veiled astonishment at *Black Journal*'s

achievements, apparently because they had been unable to imagine that Black people could write and create such intelligent, engaging television. In this vein, one called the show “a thoroughly professional piece of work,” suggesting that he may have expected otherwise.<sup>15</sup> George Gent, writing in the *New York Times*, asked if the novelty of hearing Black voices in an overwhelmingly white medium was the main attraction of the program, whether the “unfamiliarity of much of the material” was part of the program’s “charm.” He deemed some of its content a bit “superficial” but judged it mostly “well chosen and professionally written and edited.”<sup>16</sup> Gent and other critics applauded the program’s seriousness and dignity—implying that these qualities define only exceptional Black people.<sup>17</sup> Some reviewers were more reserved in their responses. Ann Hodges wrote in the tellingly titled piece “Journal Illuminates Dark Racial Cavern,” “In all, it was an interesting hour, an innovation that should have more to contribute once the newness wears off. In the eagerness of this opening night, there was a tendency towards defensiveness rather than professional polish. If the producers can withstand the temptation to become a sounding board for the more vocal militants and focus attention rather on the Negro community that is so seldom illuminated in these columns, *Black Journal* will provide a valuable channel for racial communication in the months to come.”<sup>18</sup> Hodges makes it clear that she believed, as did many of the managers of the stations that created Black public-affairs programs, that programming on and inspired by the racial crisis would only be on the air for a few months. Her commentary further reveals her hope that the program would not be too radical and offend white sensibilities. Yet the show’s premiere and the first four episodes were complex and layered enough that white critics, though patronizing, were not openly intimidated by the political message of the program or the simple fact of seeing so many Black faces on national television.

In January 1969, *Black Journal* brought together an impressive cast of Black public figures, including LeRoi Jones, Kathleen Cleaver, Ron Karenga, and Elijah Muhammad, to offer their retrospective views of 1968 and to look forward to what 1969 might bring. Larry Williams, a critic from Memphis, predicted of this episode, “I’m sure the remarks will be occasionally bitter and even threatening,” but he noted reassuringly that the executive editor, Lou Potter, “said the prevailing mood will be a desire for, and confidence in, self-help.” Looking back at the show’s first six months, Williams remarked, “*Black Journal*, predictably, has been uneven. At times it fulfills its avowed goals admirably and at other times it seems to floun-

der in petulance and very loud sound and fury. It is never, I must add, insignificant, and for that one can say it has succeeded.”<sup>19</sup> This ambivalence was typical of white reviewers’ responses to *Black Journal*’s first season. An acknowledgment of the importance of the show coexists alongside the sense that *Black Journal*’s message is a bitter pill that white people must “swallow.”

The Black press took notice of *Black Journal*, as well — not surprising, given the relationship between their missions and the reality that they competed for a share of the same audience. After a “golden age” during and immediately following the Second World War, Black newspapers saw their influence decline in the “post-civil rights” years. Meanwhile, the Johnson empire, publishers of *Negro Digest*, *Jet*, and *Ebony*, also grew after the Second World War and through the civil rights era but faced transitions in the post-civil rights era, as well. The numerous factors leading to this change are beyond the purview of this work, but the possibility for at least a few Black journalists to work in the “white press” was one factor. An *Ebony* article that appeared later in the program’s run was titled “Black Excellence in the Wasteland,” capturing the enthusiastic, even celebratory, responses of many Black critics to the program in 1969.<sup>20</sup> The article mentions several times that unless *Black Journal* receives additional funding, it will shut down: “That the Journal is stopping is regrettable but even more so that many audiences won’t have seen it yet,” the writer laments.<sup>21</sup> Even when critical, reviewers in the Black press tended to be more aware of the challenges *Black Journal* faced in staying on the air.

### **Demanding Editorial Control:**

#### **“Ending an Era of Thanks for Tokenism”**

While most reviewers of the first episodes perceived the program to be by and for African Americans, from the outset Black staff members felt hemmed in by NET’s control, frustrated that they had few Black crew members on the production side, and galled that NET was allowing the world to think that the production was utterly controlled by African Americans. These frustrations were among the catalysts of the strike that prompted the Black staff to walk out in August 1968, to demand Black editorial control. The strikers complained, “NET has deceived the Black Community by advertising the program series as being ‘by, for and of’ the black community.” Despite appearances, they had “no editorial control over the program’s content or production.”<sup>22</sup> They demanded a Black

executive producer, proposing the staff member Lou Potter as a candidate. St. Clair Bourne, who was also part of the initial staff of the program, said to the *New York Times*, “We, not only as black professionals but mainly because we are black people, feel that NET has been hypocritical,” that the network’s staffing decisions represented not “tokenism” but “frontism,” in that the visibility of the Black on-air staff was used, in the *Times* writer’s words, to perpetuate “the idea that Negroes controlled the program,” though in fact white NET employees produced the majority of the segments.<sup>23</sup> The station’s initial response was to say it would revise the public relations spin that suggested that the program was under Black control but not change the editorial control. The network soon offered terms, however, apparently hoping to settle the dispute relatively promptly.<sup>24</sup> The network claimed that it had intended “all along” for the show to have a Black executive producer but was “unable to find anyone qualified.”<sup>25</sup> Station executives argued that Potter did not yet have sufficient experience for that role and placed him in the role of executive editor instead, proposing to eliminate the executive producer role altogether. The striking staff members initially agreed with this compromise, then regrouped among themselves and demanded a Black executive producer, either Bill Branch or William Greaves. At first, NET said neither were available, but eventually Greaves, who had already appeared as a cohost on the program, was hired for the position, replacing Perlmutter. Greaves, an accomplished and well-regarded experimental filmmaker and theater artist, was, at forty-two, somewhat older than most “young Turks” on the staff at the time.<sup>26</sup>

Acknowledging how unusual it was for Black media workers to take action against a powerful media entity, *Variety* reported of the strike: “Even if the series is cancelled and the group dispersed, ‘Black Journal’ has clearly signaled the end of a time when integrationist Negroes accepted the token generousities of white liberals with murmurs of gratitude. Because if NET public service initiative put the show on the air, it took the independent action of black staff members to make ‘Black Journal’ black.”<sup>27</sup>

In 2010, Kent Garrett recalled that one of the most revolutionary things about the strike was that the staff went to the press with their story. “We knew we had them [network management] in the corner,” he recalls, as they had been claiming the show was “by, for, and about” Black people. The tenor of the times made the striking staffers feel “almost invincible.” Garrett said, “You didn’t care about losing your job . . . there is a bigger principle involved. You’re young, you’re talented, you feel that if they are not going to meet your demands, you’re not going to do the show.”<sup>28</sup>

Other activists of color in the broadcast industry around the country successfully used similar tactics in the years that followed.<sup>29</sup>

The transfer of power on *Black Journal* was immediately signaled visually and verbally on the broadcast. At the beginning of *Black Journal*'s fifth episode, which aired in October 1968, Lou House tells the story, in an understated way, of the walkout and the subsequent change in control, and Greaves appears in the studio with him, demonstrating that the program is now under Black direction. The new opening theme featured a red globe with images from the program inside a black space in the shape of the African continent, signifying *Black Journal*'s connection to a Black world. "*Black Journal* surprised itself by making headlines," said the host Wali Siddiq of the strike, seated next to the executive producer William Greaves. Siddiq smiled as he announced that the show was now truly "by for and of Black people, and that's where it's at." Then Siddiq made a Black Power fist (see figures 3.3 and 3.4). Speaking with *Variety* after the strike, staff members reported that the show immediately gained "credibility in the black community" due to the strike. Greaves seemed to forecast a radical departure from the "rationalist" style of PBS: "Journalistic objectivity is one of the biggest lies in Western culture," he said.<sup>30</sup>

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