

Don't Be Fooled

Kimberly Daniels says that racial injustice in our nation's past has caused some blacks to believe that "the white man" is the devil, and she warns against this deception.



For months I had been dreaming that I was an inmate in prison. In every dream an unseen enemy had set me up by planting drugs of some kind on me. Because of these dreams, a burden I had never experienced came on me. As a result, I began to research the criminal justice system in America. I have a bachelor's degree in criminology, yet I was never taught what my research revealed. I learned that, according to statistics compiled by Common Sense for Drug Policy:

Of the 246,100 state prison inmates serving time for drug offenses in 2001, 56.7 percent were black, 23.2 percent were white and 19 percent were Hispanic, according to 2002 Justice Department statistics.

In 1998, a federal Household Survey found that 72 percent of all drug users were white, 15 percent black and 10 percent Hispanic. Despite these numbers, blacks constituted 36.8 percent of those arrested for drug violations, more than 42 percent of those in federal prison for drug violations and 58 percent of those in state prisons for drug felonies.

In 1986, and before mandatory minimums for crack offenses became effective, the average federal drug-offense sentence for blacks was 11 percent higher than for whites, according to a 1992 report published by the Federal Judicial Center. In 1990, when harsher drug-sentencing laws were implemented, the rate skyrocketed to 49 percent higher for blacks.

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