



Being #BlackintheIvory: Contending with Racism in the American University

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The Backstory

On the evening of Saturday, June 6, 2020, **Dr. Shardé M. Davis created a Twitter hashtag #BlackintheIvory** to document the overt and covert racism that Black academics (“Blackacademics”) across disciplines experience throughout their academic tenure. Dr. Davis, as well as her colleague from graduate school, Joy Woods, began tweeting the hashtag and by Sunday morning thousands used the hashtag on various social media platforms to share their stories. BLACK IN THE IVORY™ has opened the door for thousands of Blackacademics around the globe to share their stories of anti-Black racism in the academy, so much so that the hashtag was in the top 20 trending hashtags on Twitter in the US that weekend. The origin and impact of the “hashtag turned movement” has been featured in over 50 news outlets including *The New York Times*, *Nature*, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Book Structure

The BLACK IN THE IVORY™ book will discuss anti-Black racism and anti-Blackness within the academy in a holistic manner, recognizing the threads of resistance, agency, resilience, recompense, and retribution as well as deep-seated trauma, stress, agony, (professional) precarity, hypervisibility, hypervigilance, and pain. The stories will be organized according to this **tentative structure of the book**: Undergraduate Life, Surviving Graduate School, Matriculating Up the Academic Ranks, and Alternatives to Academia.

Blackacademics are invited to submit a **150-word (maximum) vignette** about a specific, personal experience of anti-Black racism and/or anti-Blackness in the academy, keeping to the spirit of how #BlackintheIvory was started via Twitter.

From the submissions, Dr. Davis will use an inductive, qualitative approach to identify the stories that will be included in the book, which ones will remain short vignettes, and which ones will be invited to expand into longer narratives. During this process, she will consider stories that demonstrate the diversity and range of anti-Black racism, as well as diversity in topics and people.

While much of the book will feature stories from scholars who respond to the open call, I am **inviting renowned Black scholars to compose lead analytical essays** that intellectualize their stories by placing them within a larger scholarly conversation about anti-Black racism and its intersections with other identity frames. The book will also include information that educates the reader about racism (and anti-Black racism specifically) and how it gets institutionalized, as well as the definition of concepts (i.e., racism, intersectionality) and terms that are specific to academia (i.e., PhD, tenure-track, promotion to tenure) that will repeat in the book.

All Stories are Welcome!

Blackademics are not a monolith. This book will expose how anti-Black racism and anti-Blackness eat their way across academia and affects Blackademics from all vantage points. This includes (but is not limited to):

- *Any field or discipline*
- *Intersectional experiences* (e.g., anti-Black racism at the intersection of ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, gender, socio-economic status, physical mobilities, learning abilities, etc.)
- *Academic position* (e.g., undergraduate student, graduate student, teaching or research faculty, upper administrator, someone who decided to leverage their PhD to create a business or work in a non-academic job)
- *Type of institution* (e.g., PWI, HSI, HBCU; liberal arts college, research intensive institution, etc.)
- *Topic of the story* (e.g., success however defined, resistance, agency, resilience, seeking or receiving recompense, and retribution, as well as experiences of trauma, stress, agony, precarity, hyper visibility, hyper vigilance, and pain, and the like)
- *People who are currently in academia or left academia*

Anonymity

Many Blackademics have **stories of anti-Black racism and anti-Blackness that can only get shared anonymously.** The BLACK IN THE IVORY™ book is holding space for those stories to be told. In the form, you will be asked to share your identifying information along with your vignette. If your story gets included in the book, then you will have the opportunity to discuss how (if at all) your identifying information will be listed (e.g., at the end of the section, at the end of the book, not at all).

Deadline

All 150-word (maximum) submissions are **due by 11:59pm Eastern on March 15th, 2021.** Vignettes must be submitted via the google form (found at www.blackintheivory.net) to be considered for the book. Only one submission per person.

Next Steps

Once Dr. Davis carefully reads through the submissions and identifies the stories that will get included, she will contact the submitters using the email listed in the submission form with further steps and information.

If your story isn't chosen, that decision doesn't minimize the incident or the importance of your experience. There are various factors to consider in this scenario, including a balance in topics. Please also know that the hashtag #BlackintheIvory still exists. You have the agency to stand in your right as a Blackademic TRUTHteller and share your story via social media if you would like to do so.

Feel free to follow @BlackintheIvory and @DrShardeDavis on Twitter to receive updates on the book!