



# THE PHILADELPHIA TRIBUNE

## An open letter to Mrs. Jada Pinkett Smith

Written by Robert Woodard

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In memory of the sacrifice of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., April 4, 1968, I acknowledge the importance of the civil rights movement. However, today in 2016, I want to share this letter concerning a "One Race Movement" with Mrs. Jada Pinkett Smith, that can help change our world for the better and heal an ailing society about how we presently view "Race."

Dear Mrs. Jada Pinkett Smith:

My name is Robert Woodard and I am a barber in the Wynnefield section of the City of Brotherly Love and Sisterly Affection. In the city of Philadelphia there are many Black males dying as I write this letter to you. How America views race has affected every ethnic group that lives here in the USA. I am so proud of the movie "Concussion" and I am even more proud of your husband for excelling to become one of the greatest actors of all times. Will lived in Wynnefield, not far my barbershop and I know that he knows the streets.

The fear of Black males in our American society has become contagious to say the least, from the street corners to the corner of Wall Street, from the jail cells to the tissue cells under a microscope. The experience from the lack of opportunity in growth and respect for the "Children of Slaves" living in America goes on even into Hollywood. So it doesn't surprise me what is happening about the lack of diversity in awardees at the Oscars.

The movie "Concussion," in which Will Smith portrayed the life story of Dr. Bennet Omalu so eloquently, was one of the best films I have ever seen. In the movie, Dr. Omalu stressed the point to the NFL to tell the truth about what was happening to their players after his discovery about Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) and the damages it had done and would do to the players if they didn't tell the truth. By telling the truth about its effects on the players, it brought out the problems we have in sports and how we view race in America today. Mrs. Smith, I know by you telling the truth it will help you in your journey of exposing the prejudice and the discriminatory actions that goes on in high places and I believe there could be no better place to start than the Oscars and no better person than you to do it. Remember, discrimination is a crime that should be appropriately addressed. In order to tell the truth, we must first face the facts that in America slaves were never immigrants. Therefore, it would make it very hard for any other cultural group to understand the trouble that the "Children of Slaves" have seen or understand our sorrow. There was another scene in the movie "Concussion" that showed Dr. Omalu talking to a corpse as he was doing a autopsy, as if the corpse were still alive. His method of procedure confused and frustrated his fellow colleague, who happened to be a white American doctor, which started an argument in the examination room, because he didn't understand his style of work. As human beings living in a multicultural society like America, we should never judge people until we honestly communicate with them. In all of our getting, we as Americans should get understanding.

It is difficult for immigrants in America to truly understand what happened to those human beings that were forced on slave ships, only to arrive dead as whole persons. For America to say that if you as a slave were not a whole human being, but more like an animal, then that means that slaves as human beings were dead on arrival. This is the truth and without the truth, we as a nation will never get understanding. Americans must know the truth about themselves in how they view race in this country. Even Dr. Omalu, as an immigrant, had to learn as a Black man living in America, just what the "Children of Slaves" have to go through, even when they become very successful.

Mrs. Smith, I am sending you a conversation that I had with a Professor of Race Relations from La Salle University. It is a 10-minute video on how America views race. The question becomes, "How do you view the word race? Is it singular or plural to you?" This conversation was not scripted and it became so interesting, that I decided to share it with the world. It is called the "RACE Test." It is defined as a Human Relations Extracurricular Activity. Mrs. Smith, because of the work you are doing, I believe the test should be a part of all police training and in all municipal services around the USA, about how race is viewed in the country. I also believe the importance of how we view it becomes a public health issue that needs to be addressed. I am also sending you the link to my article entitled "Threat of Black Males in American Society," because of how we view race in this nation: [http://www.phillytrib.com/commentary/threat-of-black-males-in-american-society/article\\_38cae109-7d77-5429-8e66-e45732725e39.html](http://www.phillytrib.com/commentary/threat-of-black-males-in-american-society/article_38cae109-7d77-5429-8e66-e45732725e39.html).

The movie "Concussion" will live on as an example of the facts in the film speaking loud and clear about how America put money first and human life second. Mrs. Smith here is the link for the "RACE Test," [www.BarbershopTalkHFD.org](http://www.BarbershopTalkHFD.org), as I would like to see all of those who are involved in the Oscars to take it.

P.S. In the spirit of Black History, America needs a makeover that will help the children of tomorrow introduce a better future for all human beings, even those who were never immigrants. Also, if you or your husband happen to be in Philadelphia on April 4, 2016, please join us in acknowledging the sacrifice of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at our Human Family Day Press Conference at City Hall, Mayor's Reception Room, Room 202, Philadelphia, PA 19107-3295, 12:30-2 p.m.

Robert L. Woodard, "The Wynnefield Barber"