



## What's Going On

*Nathan McCall*

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## What's Going On Nathan McCall

With the same personal authority and exhilarating directness he brought to his account of his passage from a prison cell to the newsroom of *The Washington Post*, Nathan McCall delivers a series of front-line reports on the state of the races in today's America. The resulting volume is guaranteed to shake the assumptions of readers of every pigmentation and political allegiance.

In *What's Going On*, McCall adds up the hidden costs of the stereotype of black athletic prowess, which tells African American teenagers that they can only succeed on the white man's terms. He introduces a fresh perspective to the debates on gangsta rap and sexual violence. He indicts the bigotry of white churches and the complacency of the black suburban middle class, celebrates the heroism of Muhammad Ali, and defends the truth-telling of Alice Walker. Engaging, provocative, and utterly fearless, here is a commentator to reckon with, addressing our most persistent divisions in a voice of stinging immediacy.

## What's Going On Details

Date : Published December 29th 1998 by Vintage (first published 1997)

ISBN : 9780375701504

Author : Nathan McCall

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## From Reader Review What's Going On for online ebook

### R.K. Byers says

entertaining and a little silly.

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### Alex says

I read McCall's memoir, "Makes Me Wanna Holler" when I was about 15 years old. It was an instant favorite to me. Fast-forward 10 years later, and I spot "What's Going On" in a bookstore. I immediately pick it up, looking to, in a way, "reconnect" with one of my first favorite authors. His memoir that I read as a teen is now a vague memory in my mind, sans for a few quotes from it that have stuck with me over the years. Yet, as I was reading "What's Going On" I begin to remember why I loved his style of writing so much. McCall is deep and critical and explains the complex aspects of being black in American in layman's terms. One can also appreciate the very personal aspect in which he reveals his own thoughts and emotions and personal growth.

McCall opens with an essay titled, "The Revolution Is About Basketball." I appreciated this critique of basketball and how it influences young black men in America, affecting their hopes and dreams of what they want to be in life. It is all the more appreciated because it's coming from the point-of-view of a black man. Even though it is about basketball, it is really critiquing all major sports whose athletes are predominately black men. As a young woman, I've always viewed American sports as a distraction tool. Black athletes are rewarded because of the entertainment they provide for the mainstream audience, all the while, spending the majority of their most pivotal years as a young adult...playing a game. One has to ask why are black men suddenly praised in this one genre of life and demonized in all others. Not to mention, athletes serve as marketing tools for corporations, by way of endorsements. A lot of this is my own critique and not necessarily a critique of McCall's essay, but this essay serves as a lead into these types of conversations—conversations that you don't hear black men really talk about.

I was impressed with the second essay, "Airing Dirty Laundry." He talks about seminal works (i.e. books) by black people that have exposed the flaws within our own community. I was firstly impressed that he both read and respected works regarding black feminist thought, such as Ntozake Shange and Alice Walker among others. We hardly hear black men speak in such a positive and respectful light about these women and this topic.

In "Men: We Just Don't Get It" McCall admits to "strong-arming" women into having sex with him as a teen. My initial thought was, "why would this guy admit to, basically, raping women in a book." Then I remembered when I read his memoir as a teen where he graphically described his participation in "running trains" on girls as well as other details that are just as graphic. I do recall that he spent some time in jail as well. Either way, it reminded me of why I liked his writing in the first place. Not because of the explicit nature and topics such as rape, but because he had the nerve, for lack of a better term, to admit what he did. Most men probably wouldn't be so candid. His writing is raw honesty. I also like his male-perspective. I notice that McCall touches on subjects in ways that I haven't heard other male writers do. This stands out most to me when he talks about women. In Airing Dirty Laundry for example he basically comes to the defense of feminist writer Alice Walker, and Terry McMillan, two writers that have been vilified by black men in particular.

He tackles the myth of the "Great White Man" through an exploration of the true heritage of George Washington, The Father of Our Country. Housing and gentrification in "Old Town: The Negro Problem Revisited." In "Faking the Funk," He discusses the confusion that often makes up the Black Middle Class.

This is a collection of Essays that tackles a broad range of important issues among blacks who live in the U.S. McCall critiques and explains these issues through his own personal experiences and references to other relevant examples from others. What he's talking about is, in fact, what's going on.

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### **Pam Barone says**

People my age can barely remember that once upon a time, there were black neighborhoods in cities and towns that functioned just like white neighborhoods. Only sometimes better. Whole groups of people knew each other, supported each other, watched over one another's children. They owned homes or rented, had jobs, stayed in school. That didn't evaporate by chance. It evaporated with public policy, relentless propaganda, a political agenda perverted.

McCall details that past and writes about how that past shaped generations but has not been able to hold its own. I am thinking that his work is worth visiting again

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### **Kell says**

#### **Very well thought out**

I Gave What's On 3 star rating. This book is very well written from the heart( as you can feel it as your read). Again took me back to my joys and pain of the 70's.

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### **Mr. Paul says**

i would love to read more by NM

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### **Sandy says**

Although I enjoyed the other two books I've read by Nathan McCall more, there were some select essays in this book that were provocative and thought-provoking. I so appreciate his perspective and life experience.

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### **Mona B-j says**

Inspirational to men who hope! I need to reread...it's been a while!

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**Lisa (Liken Books) says**

Not as good as the first one. It actually aggravated me.

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**Chris Ellis says****Done it again!**

This book was excellent! Very real and thought-provoking! Mr. McCall is one of the best storytellers of our time in my opinion! I would recommend this to any and everyone because we can all learn something from this!

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**Angel says**

See my blog post on it:

<http://gypsylibrarian.blogspot.com/2010/02/tell-it-like-it-is.html>...

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**Roslyn says**

Nathan McCall, gives us his take on current issues that plague society today. He is blunt in his opinion, but yet insightful and provokes individuals to think about matters of concern in a logical and simplistic manner.

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**Joseph Peeples-hampton says**

A must-read for African-Americans.

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**Corey Matthews says****Tell it like it is!**

Real and to the point, McCall talks candidly about race class humanity our society and the world we live in from someone who has an opinion. Like a conversation at the barbershop, he was honest and spoke with conviction! A solid read.

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**Kofi says**

very thought provoking book. A must read for every black person, not African-Americans only.

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