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2017 Lecture Series Program

Bryonn Bain

University of California, Los Angeles

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Vernon Pack Scholar-in-Residence 2017

Convocation: Wednesday, April 12, 7:00pm
Cowan Hall

Bryonn Bain

Assistant Professor in Residence
Department of African American Studies
University of California, Los Angeles



Bryonn Bain is Brooklyn's own prison activist, actor, author, hip hop theater innovator and spoken word poetry champion.

Wrongfully incarcerated during his second year at Harvard Law School, Bain was featured on *60 Minutes* after writing *Walking While Black: The Bill of Rights for Black Men* (2000) -- which received the largest reader response in the history of *The Village Voice*. Described by Cornel West as an artist who "...speaks his truth with a power we desperately need to hear," Bain's work as a BET host won awards for the critically acclaimed talk show, *My Two Cents*.

Bain's internationally acclaimed, multimedia production *Lyrics From Lockdown* (directed by Gina Belafonte) is a one-man show weaving together hip hop theater, spoken word poetry, blues, comedy, calypso and classical music to tell his unbelievable story of racial profiling and unjustified imprisonment. Bain plays 40 characters in this tour de force production which had its world premiere at Harlem's *National Black Theatre* (executive produced by *Harry Belafonte*), has been featured at *The Apollo Theater*, *Carnegie Hall*, *Lincoln Center*, *the New Jersey Performing Arts Center*, *The Actor's Gang Theater*, *The Grammy Museum*, and sold-out on three continents worldwide.

Bain's first book, *The Prophet Returns: A Hip Hop Generation Remix of a Classic* was celebrated by *The New York Times*. Bain's second book, *The Ugly Side of Beautiful: Rethinking Race and Prisons in America*, is published by Third World Press with a foreword by Mumia Abu-Jamal and introduction by Lani Guinier. Bain's newest book, *Fish & Bread/Pescado y Pan*, is a bilingual hip hop-inspired children's book illustrated by his 13-year-old son and 9-year-old godson, and published by Brown Girls Books.

Bryonn's music, poetry and videos are available on *Life After Lockdown: The Digital Mixtape*, executive produced by legendary hip hop founder, DJ Kool Herc. After developing courses linking Rikers Island Correctional Facility with Columbia University, and teaching the first hip hop and spoken word course at Harvard University, Bain launched the *Prison Education Program* at New York University to offer course work in New York prisons. Bryonn is currently developing a prison education program with University of California Los Angeles at a California women's prison.

Bringing arts, activism and education to prisons for over 25 years, Bain's courses on hip hop, theater, spoken word poetry, police abuse and the prison crisis continue to impact youth at Rikers Island, Boys Town Detention Center and those incarcerated at Sing Sing prison.