

**Parliament Hill Panelist:  
for the Era 21 Networking Breakfast for Young Canadians**

**I am the Black Hockey Player**

**Anthony Bansfield**

**Parliamentary Restaurant, Parliament Hill  
Ottawa**

**May 7, 2009**

I am the Black Hockey Player

A brother who stand out on white ice like a fly in a pail of milk,

Compose my surface smooth as silk,

Cool like the ice I glide, keeping my feelings on the inside

When the stands spit slurs

That echo like gunshots, or slapshots off the boards with the hate in their words

I'm like "Gimme the puck!" I don't give a ...!

I know off the ice they pull you over for driving while Black

Sit your ass in the penalty box for that, doing overtime

Contemplating sudden death, yelling "Don't shoot!" while they take aim

As if to take away my last breath, all tangled up in their net

Easily identified, even behind the white wire of a goalie mask

So I play the game mentally and physically braced for impact, see

I am the Black Hockey Player

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I played through the cheap shots and chipped teeth, stick slash and broke knee

I'm a throwback to guys like Carnegie and Willie O'Ree

Marson, McKegney, or like Fuhr with the Fury

Even on blades blind you with the speed of an Anson Carter or Mike Greer

With the resilience built over 400 years, you could club me like Brashear

But still I perservere, cuz

I am the Black Hockey Player

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Don't player hate, I'm a pioneer

I'm like Henson at the Pole, out in the rink in the blistering cold

Forty below, freezing off my ears

The sole brown face, in places where they never seen, only heard rumours of  
my race

Afro puffing out the sides of my helmet, body check

Why do I get extra attention from the ref?

Never picked for the top teams no matter how good I get?  
I am as rare as brothers in the Winter Olympics, or a Black president!  
I am absent from the Hall of Fame, or the All Star game  
Even these Black history experts don't know my name  
All the same, got dreams of drinking Baby Duck, from the Stanley Cup  
With an all-Black starting line-up, style like the Globetrotters with a puck,  
while the P.A. system play some funk  
Like Kool and the Gang to celebrate my rising star  
I'll have some turning their channel to NASCAR  
As their last sports bastion  
Now that the Williams sisters and Tiger and Hamilton and them  
made their name in their games as champions  
And so will I,  
And do you know why?  
Cuz I am the Black Hockey Player

I am the Black Hockey Player  
I ' playing in a league where the idea of equality is bush league  
Where it's like the era of Jackie Robinson, for me, the Black Hockey Player  
They're saying I don't have a prayer  
Like the way the way the they declared a Negro can't survive  
In the cold up there  
Only serve as porters in their trains up there  
As domestics in their big homes up there  
But now we deep in the city  
Like the Capital, where winter hits with no pity  
Or in Montreal where I twice saw the whole place mash up in a riot  
Just cuz their team won it all, people all drunk and wild  
And from when I was a child, I had heroes like Dr. J, but also Cournoyer  
I loved my trading card of MJ, but also my Jean-Claude Tremblay  
I got chills down my spine when I heard the call and response  
Of the crowd and organ play:  
Dooh-de-dooh DOOT-DE-DOOH  
CHARGE !!!  
Wanted to hear the crowd cheer for me, too  
But when I played as a youth all they did was call me names and boo  
And urge their sons to beat me black and blue  
When all I wanted was to wear my team's colours, the bleu, blanc et rouge  
I am the Black Hockey Player

I am the Black Hockey Player  
But my pops love a game of cricket, talking fastbowler and wickets  
Taught me how to play the real football, and

Took me back home to feel at home in Iere under palms  
Still I could thrive in ice storms, and snow squalls  
As comfortable cradling black rubber as a ball  
Pirhouette lovely like Pele on a breakaway

Amazed the sceptics who said I couldn't make the grade  
Bounced from team to team in the minors to try and ply my trade  
Tried out for the Rangers, but they treated me like a stranger  
Not promoted, stagnated, my career was in danger  
So I was traded, went from the frying pan to the fire  
Found myself riding the bench for the Flyers  
Released and picked up on waivers by the Canucks  
But then the coach started acting like a closet Ku Klux  
We got on like Spree and Carlissimo  
Blackballed, blacklisted, my future looked abyssimal  
I think it's criminal, but I have defined a new mission  
To tell the world my story, communicate my vision  
To the next generation, tell them to keep going, like Jesse Owens  
Scorned, but reborn in a million youth marching to carry on  
So that one day, they can say with less anger in their eyes than I  
When I state that I  
Am the Black Hockey Player