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Activist, Author "JLove" Weighs In On Margaret Jones' Fake Memoir

Author of *That White Girl* Addresses Race, Class, and White Privilege

"The fraud perpetuated by **Margaret Seltzer** is another example of the naiveté of the "do-gooder" mentality that reeks of narcissism and paternalism, which have plagued white folks for centuries," claims **Jennifer "JLove" Calderon**, noted social justice activist and author of the critically acclaimed novel *That White Girl*.

Earlier this week, it was discovered that Seltzer's new book *Love and Consequences* (Riverhead Books, a unit of Penguin Group USA), a memoir that tells of Seltzer's life as a white girl growing up to African American foster care parents in South Central Los Angeles, a community that is known mostly for his gang activity, is a work of non-fiction. Seltzer also claimed to be a member of the Bloods. According to *The New York Times* (March 5, 2008), "Margaret B. Jones is a pseudonym for Margaret Seltzer, who is all white and grew up in the well-to-do Sherman Oaks section of Los Angeles, in the San Fernando Valley, with her biological family...She has never lived with a foster family, nor did she run drugs for any gang members."

In that same article Seltzer said, "I was in a position where at one point people said you should speak for us because nobody else is going to let us in to talk. Maybe it's an ego thing — I don't know. I just felt that there was good that I could do and there was no other way that someone would listen to it."

JLove weighs in on these comments today, "We must respond to the daily injustices perpetuated on people with low income and people of color and we must do so with integrity and partnership. It is not in anyone's best interest to speak for them, attempting to be someone's "savior." We must be focused on supporting people standing up and telling their own story; their own truth."

Calderon's novel *That White Girl*, inspired by her own life, is a coming of age hip-hop oriented story that explores a young woman's struggles and triumphs as a middle class Irish Catholic white girl navigating her way through her new family - the Crips, a notorious street gang. Released in the summer of 2007, the book met with great reviews

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from across the country, but mostly from a community of artists and activists. JLove organized her own corresponding book tours, including dates in New York; Washington DC; Boston; and Los Angeles. She believes, however, that the book fell short of making a break-out success for a number of reasons. "The country is not as ready to deal honestly with some of the deeper, more uncomfortable issues of race, class, and privilege. My life, on the other hand, is dedicated to truth, love, and freedom. I spend all my waking hours working with my fellow activists to dismantle unfair and oppressive systems and institutions which are the root causes of issues such as gang violence, the prison industrial complex, and poverty."

JLove is the coauthor of ***We Got Issues: A Young Women's Guide to Bold, Courageous and Empowered Life***. She has written for and been featured in numerous publications, including *The New York Times*, *The Source*, *Self* magazine, among other publications. She is currently working on her third book, *Till The White Day is Done; White Privilege, Hip-Hop, and Social Change*. She lectures frequently at colleges and conferences on the topics of young women's empowerment, hip hop activism, and white privilege. She lives in New York with her husband Hector Calderon and their two sons.

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