

THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN SET
on
WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

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The event that will be discussed in this paper is a set. A set is the term used by African-American students to describe a get together--a party. Generally, a set happens when you get bored. On Western's campus, there is little for African-Americans to do, except for every now and then a sorority or fraternity gives a party at the Garrett Ballroom or the Lampkin Park Pavilion. So many times our only option is getting together with our friends. Usually one person tells someone early in the day on Thursday that there is going to be a set on Friday or Saturday in this person's room (that is where the set is held) and then word gets around very quickly. It usually starts with just your friends invited to your room, but it always turns out that people, both friend and strangers, show up and before you know it your entire room is filled, wall to wall.

When all the people get together in the room, everyone is either drinking or smoking blunts (marijuana). Someone is always cracking (making fun of someone) on each other, especially after they get drunk, high, or both. Everyone is fair game. People are sharing drinks and blunts with each other. That is one thing about Black people at parties, we do share what we have with each other, whether it be food, drink, or just good conversation. On some occasions, there will be food in the room. If there is, just consider it gone. Once you have smoked weed, you tend to get the munchies and will eat anything you can find. This generally leads to the raiding of the vending machines downstairs or food from other people's rooms that live in the same dorm that has attended the same gathering. Eventually, when people sober some,

just a little buzz lingering, everyone ends up at Krystal's or White Castle since they stay open twenty-four hours. Some people drink so much, they just eventually pass out and they are literally left in your room until they awake the next day.

Often at sets, some people usually hook up with each other and go out on a creep (have sex). You do not see them for a while, but when they come back you know what they have done. You can just tell by their actions. Not everyone engages in this sort of activity at a set. Most people are just there to drink, smoke, and talk to their friends. The conversations range from what you did during the week to who you were with the night before. Unlike a larger party by the Black greeks, there is hardly ever any confrontations or fights because you feel more comfortable with these people due to the fact that most of them are your friends. This is not to say that there is never an occasional disagreement or a slight run-in between people who in most cases do not get along and just happen to be at the same set.

The spring time calls for the best sets. When the weather gets warmer, Black people want to get together outside and it usually turns into a cook-out. Almost everyone you know shows up. You have the music loud and the grill out. The drinking still takes place and there is definitely food involved at this set. We always take pictures and record the event on video tape. The picture taking occurs at both indoor and outdoor sets. This allows you to look back and remember what fun you had when you and all of your friends got together last week or last year doing

this and that.

These sets are so much fun because you never really know what is going to happen. In the beginning you think nobody is probably going to show up but only a few friends. You all will just sit around and chill and talk about the people who you do not like and the people who are not there. You are always surprised at who all shows up.

All of the things that has been described happens at a set. It never fails, no matter if you plan it differently than the last time. It still ends up the same way around three and four o'clock in the morning with people passed out in your room and all kinds of empty bottles on your floor from Seagram's gin to Boone's Farm wine. This more than likely happens every weekend because there is nothing for African-American students to do.