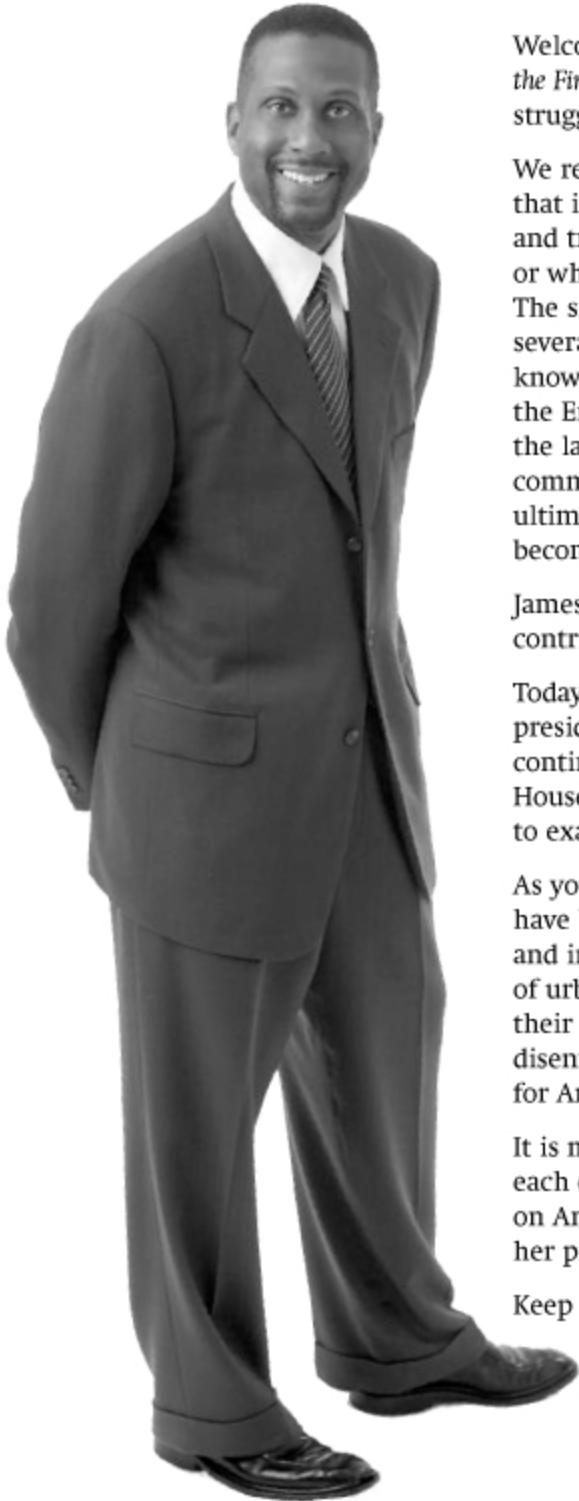




## *Greetings from Tavis Smiley*



Welcome to *Jamestown 2007—400 Years in Retrospect: A Cross-Cultural Look at the First Settlement*, a conversation about America—her birth, her slavery struggle, her growth and her future.

We recognize that the story of America cannot be told with one voice—that it takes an amalgam of *who “America” is* to provide context, meaning and truth. The significance of Jamestown lies not in the argument of who or whom landed first, or which locale and city has more historical import. The significance of Jamestown is that it is the first settlement where several cultures came together, worked together and built this place we know as America *together*. Native American tribes traded with and taught the English settlers how to survive in the New World. The Africans worked the land, built structures and fashioned tools to increase productivity and commerce. The English established a new governmental system that ultimately broke from the monarchy and over the past four centuries has become the democracy we know today.

Jamestown is the nexus where each of us recognizes our own cultural contribution to America.

Today, we sit poised on the edge of history. The beginning of the presidential campaign season awaits. War still rages on. The Gulf states continue to rebuild and America boasts its first female Speaker of the House. But before we look towards the future, we use these next few hours to examine the past.

As you listen to the conversation, consider how different America would have been if the cultures had not worked together. Would our commerce and industry have thrived in the 19th century and stimulated the growth of urban cities? Would other countries have looked to America to model their own child labor laws, women’s suffrage, and civil rights for the disenfranchised? Would today’s technology be as “cool” and “hip” if not for American pop culture?

It is my hope that this discussion enlightens, encourages, and empowers each of us to recognize the impact every culture made *and continues to make* on America and how we can work together to build an America as good as her promise.

Keep the Faith,

