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## To find and forgive their fathers

### In a new book, three doctors, lifelong friends, recount their painful search

Monday, October 15, 2007

**BY MEG NUGENT**  
Star-Ledger Staff

One father was a drug addict and felon, another an alcoholic and a third was violent in the home. All three were estranged from their families.

Now fast-forward 25 years. The sons of these men, three young African-Americans who grew up together, fatherless in tough Newark neighborhoods, decide to find their fathers and rebuild their broken relationships.

You might remember the young men as "The Three Doctors," a trio who made good on a pledge to shepherd each other through medical school and become physicians. Their book about the experience, "The Pact," was a 2002 bestseller.

Now, the childhood friends, Sampson Davis, Rameck Hunt and George Jenkins, have reconnected with their mostly absentee fathers.

The message, they say, in a new book, "The Bond: Three Young Men Learn to Forgive and Reconnect with Their Fathers" (\$24.95, Riverhead Books), is don't wait for Dad to make the first move.

"Be a bigger person and do it, yourself," said Davis.

As teenagers, it was Jenkins who proposed making the pact to go to medical school, eventually attending University High School in Newark.

Years later, it was Hunt who first considered writing about his relationship with his father, Alim Bilal, a drug addict who spent a lot of time in jail during Hunt's childhood. It wasn't until Hunt was 12 that his father became what he describes in the book as "a more consistent presence in my life."

"I never got the sense he didn't want to be around me," Hunt explained. "He was just battling his demons."

About 10 years ago, Bilal was able to beat his addiction and return to college to become a drug and alcohol counselor.

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