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PhiladelphiaObserver.com

Vol. 27 • No. 23

June 11 – June 17, 2020

# "GONE WITH THE WIND" GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN



Getty Images

HBO Max has removed from its catalog "Gone with the Wind," the 1939 movie long considered a triumph of American cinema but one that romanticizes the Civil War-era South while glossing over its racial sins. HBO pledged to eventually bring the film back "with a discussion of its historical context" -

## Activists demand D.C. 'Defund' police amid peaceful protests

PhiladelphiaObserver.com

Washington — Thousands marched and protested against police brutality in Washington, D.C. on Saturday, keeping the May 25 death of George Floyd on the White House's collective mind by demanding the city defund its police force.

Just one person was arrested, according to the Washington Metropolitan Police Department.

D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser designed a city block near the executive mansion as "Black Lives Matter Plaza"; protesters added the words "Defund the police" in bright yellow paint.

Derek Chauvin, a white police officer, is charged with killing Floyd, a 46-year-old black man,



during an arrest in Minneapolis. Rioting there began less than a day later and quickly spread

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## 90% of America's sheriffs are white men: New report

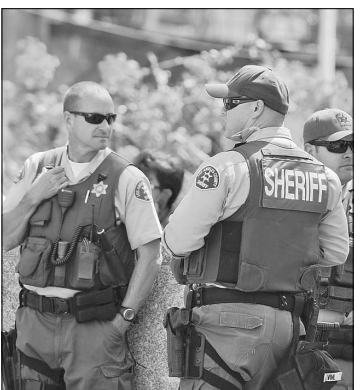
PhiladelphiaObserver.com

Racial tensions between police and communities of color have reached a tipping point following the killing of George Floyd, an unarmed black man, at the hands of Minneapolis police officers last week. The incident, which was captured on video, has incited a string of ongoing protests around the country and revived national discourse about police brutality and racial disparities in law enforcement. Amid growing calls for justice for Floyd and an overhaul of our criminal justice system, a new report published by the Reflective Democracy Campaign reveals that 90% of sheriffs across America are white men.

Titled *Confronting the Demographics of Power: America's Sheriffs*, the report explores the racial and gender demographics of sheriffs as well as their impact on public health and safety. The report also highlights current and historical abuses of power by sheriffs along with the position's unique lack of oversight and accountability. The most glaring finding, perhaps, is that 92% of elected sheriffs are white while 90% are white men even though 50% of people in jails are people of color. Meanwhile, just 5% of sheriffs are African American and 2% are women.

Sheriffs, who manage county jails and a wide range of law enforcement activities, operate with less oversight than local police chiefs or commissioners, according to the report. The nation's 3,000 county sheriffs are elected into office in 46 states and often run unopposed.

"Sheriffs in America are singularly troubling. They have unparal-



led autonomy and tremendous power, and that power is concentrated overwhelmingly in the hands of white men, who are 90 percent of sheriffs nationwide," said Reflective Democracy Campaign Director Brenda Choresi Carter in a statement.

The report's findings also include:

With white men comprising just 30% of the U.S. population, the overrepresentation of white male in sheriff's offices surpasses even that of legislators (62%) and elected prosecutors (73%)

African Americans are confined to jail at over three times the rate of white Americans

Deep disparities in representation persist even in states with high percentages of people of color. For example, while California is 63% people of color, only 9% of the state's sheriffs are of color

"As the primary law-enforcement officers for large parts of the country, they routinely make life-or-death decisions for their communities—especially communities of color, who are disproportionately affected, and too often abused, by law enforcement," said Carter. "As policing in America faces a long-overdue reckoning, it's time that we grapple with the role of sheriffs and make them far more accountable to voters and reflective of their communities."

## Philadelphia removes controversial statue of ex-Mayor Frank Rizzo after protests

PhiladelphiaObserver.com

After years of vandalism and calls for its removal, the hulking statue of Philadelphia's late mayor and police commissioner Frank Rizzo was removed Tuesday by the city. Rizzo's political career and heavy-handed police tactics in the late 1960s and '70s were seen as racially polarizing and unfairly targeted minorities and people of color.

Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney, who ordered the statue's removal late Tuesday night, called it a "deplorable monument to racism, bigotry, and police brutality for members of the Black community, the LGBTQ community, and many others."

"The treatment of these communities under Mr. Rizzo's leadership was among the worst



periods in Philadelphia's history," Kenney said in a statement. "The battle for equal rights and justice is still being fought decades later, and our city is still working to erase that legacy."

The massive 9-foot bronze statue, which depicted the former two-term mayor waving from the steps of the city's Municipal Services Building across from City Hall, had been defaced during recent protests over the death of Black Minnesota man George

Floyd, who died while in police custody.

Photos of the statue prior to its removal showed it covered in red and white paint, with "FTP" (short for "fuck the police") written on its chest.

The statue was a gift to the city from Rizzo's family, friends and supporters in 1998, according to the Association for Public Art. His supporters credited him with being tough on crime and bolstering working-class citizens.

## Around 100 white men armed with bats, shovels seen awaiting arrival of 'Looters' in Philadelphia

PhiladelphiaObserver.com

Police and SWAT teams were deployed to the neighborhood, which brought on a multitude of questions after Black Lives Matter movement protesters were tear-gassed and asked to disperse.

"Why were others tear-gassed for peacefully protesting but they could walk around with bats and be protected?" one woman asked.

"I saw hundreds of people teargassed two hours ago for walking around and these people are standing around with bats," another person said.

The two groups argued over "new Fishtown" and "old Fish-

town," indicating drastic changes to the demographics of the neighborhood over the years.

A separate group of young residents in Fishtown gathered outside pleading with the men seen with bats, shovels and hammers to leave.

"Leave us alone!" one woman yelled. "We live here and they're making us feel unsafe!"

As tension continued to rise in the neighborhood, the two groups continued to argue with the police standing in the middle as a barricade, KYW reported.

A person standing in support of the police grabbed a "Black lives matter" sign from a protester and ripped it up.

"I'm ready to f\*\*k s\*\*t up. You know, I've been looking for a fight for the past six months," a person was overheard saying.

Over in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, elected officials acknowledged white nationalists agitating peaceful protests in the town and urged people to be safe, Penn Live reported.

"We have seen with our own eyes the agitators that were in the crowd," Mayor Danene Sorace said.

The police chief in Lancaster said they had "definite evidence" of white supremacists carrying handguns and other weapons while wearing body armor at the protests.



# Confederate statue debate is reignited by George Floyd protests

By Aimee Ortiz and Johnny Diaz

As protests against racism and police violence spread across the nation, demonstrators in at least six cities focused their anger on symbols of the Confederacy, seizing the opportunity to mar statues and monuments that have ignited debate for years.

Many of the monuments were vandalized with spray paint; protesters tried to topple others from their bases. In response, at least two cities this week have seen them removed from public spaces.

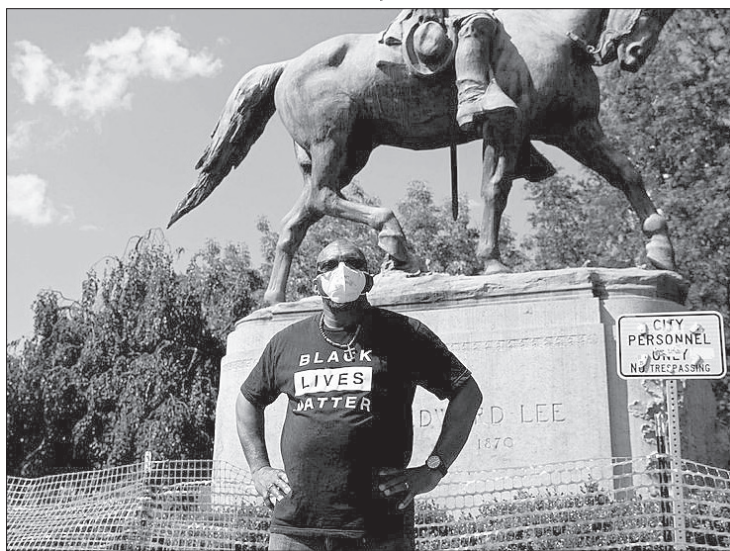
In Richmond, Va., this weekend, graffiti was scrawled on the headquarters of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, and the building also burned for a time. Statues of the Confederate generals J.E.B. Stuart, Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee, all of which stand on the city's Monument Avenue, were marked.

[Virginia governor plans to order Confederate Robert E. Lee statue to be removed.]

In Norfolk, Va., on Saturday, protesters climbed a 15-foot figure of a Confederate soldier and spray-painted its base. In Charleston, S.C., "BLM," for Black Lives Matter, and "Traitors" were spray-painted in red on the base of the Confederate Defenders of Charleston statue, erected in 1932. In North Carolina, a Confederate monument at the State Capitol in Raleigh was marked with a black X.

And in Birmingham, Ala., on Sunday, protesters spray-painted the Confederate Soldiers and Sailors Monument, a 52-foot-tall sandstone obelisk, and chipped at its base. Then, according to news reports, they tried to topple it.

Even as workers arrived to tidy up the destruction, the protests have freshened the conversation



around the fate of these controversial memorials, many of which have been the subject of legal challenges, especially in the years since a deadly white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, Va., in 2017 over the city's plan to remove a statue of Lee.

In the weeks after Charlottesville, dozens of plaques, statues and other monuments to the Confederacy were challenged or removed from public places across the country. Since then, there has been no unified plan for what to do with these landmarks. Some have been auctioned, moved, stored, covered or dismantled in recent years; others have remained while legal challenges have played out or failed.

"The conversation has never really died," said Lecia Brooks, outreach director at the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Ala.

The group has estimated that at least 138 Confederate symbols have been removed from public spaces since 2015, when it started tracking them after a white supremacist killed nine black congregants at a church in Charleston, S.C.

"There has been a consistent drive, primarily in the South, to remove these monuments," Ms. Brooks said. "They are a constant reminder of the dehumanization of African-Americans and the pushback against our civil and human rights."

Confederate monuments that survived the protests are facing renewed scrutiny as protesters, angered by the death of George Floyd in police custody in Minneapolis on May 25, have taken to the streets in at least 140 cities across the country.

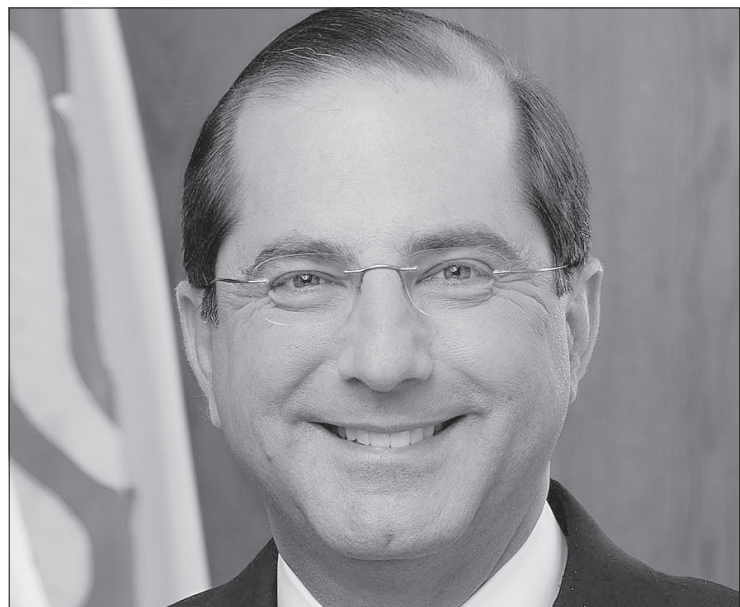
A football coach in Murray, Ky., wrote a public letter to the town's mayor on Tuesday asking for the removal of a statue of Lee — and offered to help take it down himself.

"I am a black male," the coach, Sherman Neal II, wrote. "I am no longer willing to accept state-sponsored symbols of institutional racism in my community."

In an interview, Mr. Neal said he wrote the letter because "you don't get opportunities like this in history more than once in a lifetime to take action that can result in a change."

# Trump administration officials to Black America: 'Coronavirus pandemic is your fault'

In a CNN interview, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar attributed the high coronavirus death rate to unhealthy African Americans. Azar claimed that Black and minority communities have higher comorbidities like underlying health issues. "Unfortunately, the American population is very diverse," Azar stated.



By Stacy M. Brown, NNPA Newswire Senior Correspondent @StacyBrownMedia

primary reason for the nation's devastatingly high coronavirus deaths.

As the president tepidly tries to win Black voter support by touting his record with Historically Black Colleges and Univer-

According to a top official in President Donald Trump's administration, the poor health of African Americans is the

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# Gone with the Wind removed from HBO Max

PhiladelphiaObserver.com

HBO Max has removed from its catalog "Gone With the Wind," the 1939 movie long considered a triumph of American cinema but one that romanticizes the Civil War-era South while glossing over its racial sins.

The streaming service pledged to eventually bring the film back "with a discussion of its historical context" while denouncing its racial missteps, a spokesperson said in a statement on Tuesday.

Set on a plantation and in Atlanta, the film won multiple Academy Awards, including best picture and best supporting actress for Hattie McDaniel, the first African-American to win an Oscar, and it remains among the most celebrated movies in cinematic history. But its rose-tinted depiction of the antebellum South and its blindness to the horrors of slavery have long been criticized, and that scrutiny was renewed this week as protests over police brutality and the death



Vivien Leigh and Hattie McDaniel both won Oscars for their work in the film

of George Floyd continued to pull the United States into a wide-ranging conversation about race.

"'Gone With the Wind' is a product of its time and depicts some of the ethnic and racial prejudices that have, unfortunately, been commonplace in American society," an HBO Max spokesperson said in a statement. "These racist depictions were wrong then and are wrong today, and we felt that to keep this title up without an explanation and a denouncement of those depictions would

be irresponsible."

HBO Max, owned by AT&T, pulled the film on Tuesday, one day after John Ridley, the screenwriter of "12 Years a Slave," wrote an op-ed in The Los Angeles Times calling for its removal. Mr. Ridley said he understood that films were snapshots of their moment in history, but that "Gone With the Wind" was still used to "give cover to those who falsely claim that clinging to the iconography of the plantation era is a matter of 'heritage, not hate.'"

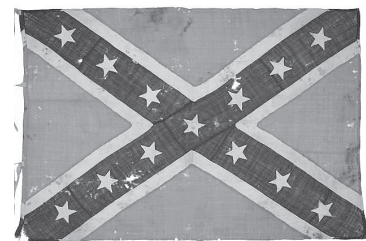
# A new Civil War: Inside the Confederate Flag's banning

Courtesy of the U.S. Marines

A prominent branch of the U.S. Armed Forces has taken an aggressive action that calls for an early American symbol's abolition, which many equate with white supremacy and the enslavement of Blacks.

The U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) is considered by military experts to be the most elite division of America's military. As the nation continues to suffer from rapidly-spreading rashes of race riots and violent protests, the USMC has enforced a controversial ban on the Confederate flag. This menacing but truthful banner of American history used to be the official flag for the Southern states of America's pre-Civil War Confederacy. All of these states were fiercely against the abolition of black slavery.

Leaders inside the Northern Union States of America's pre-Civil War history were the initiators of the abolitionist movement, which eventually outlawed slavery, unified the U.S. government, and ultimately destroyed the Confederacy's slavery-dependent infrastructure forever. However, unifying America's national gov-



ernment by virtue of the Civil War came at a cost that was paid for in many lakes of blood. Seasoned historians have said casualty counts of one million are inaccurate underestimations.

Also, the Union victory over the Confederacy's forces was not a route. The South's pro-slavery soldiers nearly beat their anti-slavery enemies in America's bloodiest war. Despite not having the North's sophisticated war machinery, the South's brutal last punch before its narrow loss at the famous Battle of Gettysburg looked more like a Civil War stalemate than a decisive Northern victory. Over the ages, memories of old Confederacy might linger with proud rebel songs like "The South Will Rise Again."

Today's USMC knows this and that is why they have enforced

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# 6 Atlanta officers charged after students pulled from car

PhiladelphiaObserver.com

ATLANTA (AP) — Six Atlanta police officers have been charged after a dramatic video showed authorities pulling two young people from a car during protests over the death of George Floyd, a prosecutor said Tuesday.

Fulton County District Attorney Paul Howard announced the charges during a news conference. “I feel a little safer now that these monsters are off the street and no longer able to terrorize anyone else,” said Messiah Young, who was dragged from the vehicle along with his girlfriend, Taniyah Pilgrim, while they were caught in traffic.

The Saturday night incident first gained attention from video online and on local news. Throughout, the couple can be heard

screaming and asking officers what is happening.

Two of the officers, Investigator Ivory Streeter and Investigator Mark Gardner, were fired Sunday.

Streeter and Gardner are both charged with aggravated assault. Two others are also charged with aggravated assault, while one is charged with aggravated battery. Some of the officers are also charged with criminal damage to property as well as pointing or aiming a gun.

Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms said Pilgrim was released without charges. She said Young, was released, too, and she’s ordering the charges against him dropped. She didn’t specify what charges he faced. A police report says Young was charged with attempting to elude police and driving with a suspended license.



# Activists demand D.C. ‘Defund’ police amid peaceful protests

From page 2

to other American cities. Clashes between police and protesters escalated quickly in Washington.

Bowser’s order included a paint job on the pavement large enough to be seen from orbiting satellites, according to Planet Labs, a private imaging company.

“We’ve walked this path before, and will continue marching on, hand in hand, elevating our voices, until justice and peace prevail,” Bowser said.

For members of Black Lives Matter DMV—the letters refer to D.C., Maryland and Virginia, not the motor vehicles bureau—her gestures were not enough.

The group claimed responsibility for adding the anti-police message to the road, which is technically still called 16th Street. Saturday’s almost universally

nonviolent protests included a prayer service led by a man at a piano.

“When I see the civil rights movement, all those people were people of God,” Walcott told Zenger News. “As you can see behind me, people are being touched and transformed by the Holy Spirit.” “God, I see people who walk as activists in love and justice and mercy and humanity,” recent Princeton University graduate Mikal Walcott prayed aloud. “God, would you set free people so that they may set free others?”

Behind him, two women who attended his service embraced and cried.

Others shouted louder and with less optimism.

Members of RefuseFascism, a project of the Revolutionary Communist Party USA, shouted “Fuck Trump! No KKK! No fascist USA!”

# Joe Jackson’s granddaughter stabbed repeatedly by racist white neighbor



PhiladelphiaObserver.com

Yasmine Jackson, Joe Jackson’s granddaughter, is nursing stab wounds after her white neighbor stabbed her seven times, as reported by PageSix. According to Yasmine, the white woman began chasing her, and when she finally got hold of her, she started stabbing her because she’s a nigger.

The 25-year-old posted photos of her neck and face with wounds on Instagram to show the injuries. Yasmine was attacked near her Vegas apartment complex. She says if it weren’t for the good Samaritans who came to her rescue,

it would have been worse. While she still can’t move her neck, she’s grateful to those who rescued her.

“I pray to God that if you have any kind of hatred in your heart towards Black people that you heal it,” Jackson’s caption read. “I didn’t deserve this, nobody does. Oh, and by the way, I’m still fucking proud to be Black.”

According to Yasmine’s post on Instagram, the woman was initially charged with felony battery with a deadly. However, she later updated the post, saying that the charges were adjusted to attempted murder, assault with a deadly weapon and a hate crime. The preliminary hearing is set to

kick off this month.

Joh’Vonnie, Yasmine’s mother, was so saddened by the incident. She believes her daughter didn’t deserve this as she’s dedicated her life to helping people serving as a nurse. Joh’Vonnie also posted Yasmine’s injuries on Instagram.

“My daughter has a good heart and has dedicated her time as a nurse to help others. She did not deserve this!” Yasmine’s mother wrote.

Source:

The news was reported via a post on Yasmine’s IG page:



# 7 dead in Alabama shooting

PhiladelphiaObserver.com  
By Christine Hauser

Seven people were found shot dead in a house in northern Alabama late Thursday, and the authorities said they were searching for the person responsible early the next morning.

The Morgan County Sheriff’s Office said deputies and the police responded to an emergency call, reporting gunshots at about 11:20 p.m. on Thursday in Valhermoso Springs, near Huntsville, Ala. They found seven adults dead and began investigating the case as a homicide, the sheriff’s office said on Twitter.

The department said that there was “no immediate threat to the public in the area,” and that the crime scene unit of the nearby Madison County Sheriff’s Office and the F.B.I.’s violent crimes task force were assisting.

Mike Swafford, the spokesman for the sheriff’s office, said on Friday that the authorities believe that the shooting was carried out

by at least one person who then fled the house.

“We do believe them to have left the area,” he said in a telephone interview. “We believe somebody came to this residence to do ill, did it, and then has left. We believe it is an isolated, and not a spree, killing.”

He said the authorities had not identified a suspect.

Mr. Swafford said that when the police arrived, they found a back bedroom of the house, a single-level, ranch-style residence, on fire, but he said the fire was

not being investigated as a cause of the deaths. The authorities entered through the garage, where they found three of the bodies, Mr. Swafford said. The cause of the fire was not known, he said.

He declined to say where the other bodies were found, and did not identify the victims.

Jeff Chunn, the Morgan County coroner, said the dead included four men and three women, and their relationship to one another was not immediately clear. No one else was in the house when the authorities arrived, he said.



# A new Civil War: Inside the Confederate Flag’s banning

From page 3

a ban on all its military bases during today’s race riots. Though its ban is largely a symbolic act enforced to appease loud civilian voices of victimization, the USMC released a seriously-toned statement. This expressed the military branch’s will to let today’s pro-slavery sympathizers know that a massive unit equipped

with overwhelming force is watching them.

“The Confederate battle flag has all too often been co-opted by violent extremists and racist groups whose divisive beliefs have no place in our Corps. This presents a threat to our core values, unit cohesion, security, and good order and discipline. This must be addressed,” read the USMC’s statement.

The USMC is the first and only branch of America’s Armed Forces to impose its ideological stance in today’s times; an era in which the nation continues to be under an extremely dangerous and growing threat posed by well-armed racist groups.

Black America’s time for being on the sidelines of a looming military fight for its right to exist is running out.

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# Editorial

# Philadelphia Observer

## Obama's popularity continues to rise amid Trump's rhetoric

**"The inept Trump becomes; the more people will forget what they didn't like about Obama. And for those of us who loved Obama, seeing Trump mess up ten times a day really drives our appreciation for 44 home even further," New York resident Alicia Butler stated.**

**By Stacy M. Brown, NNPA Newswire Senior Correspondent**

With unrestrained vitriol and the stunning lack of leadership emanating from the White House on an almost daily basis, the ever-rising popularity of former President Barack Obama is unmistakable.

The media and most of the American public hang on every word and watch every move Obama makes — many openly pining for the 44th president to "do something," "do anything," to provide some sense of normalcy and a renewed dignity to 1600

Pennsylvania Avenue.

"Overall, most liberals I know loved President Obama because he was eloquent and thoughtful. I think he's extremely popular right now because Trump has pretty much failed in every way possible — especially on the points where he said he could and would do things better than Obama did," New York resident Alicia Butler told NNPA Newswire.

"The inept Trump becomes; the more people will forget what they didn't like about Obama. And for those of us who loved Obama, seeing Trump mess up ten times a day really drives our appreciation for 44 home even further," Butler stated.

Many others expressed similar sentiments.

In Obama's first four years, he bailed out the auto industry saving several thousands of jobs, and the auto industry repaid the loan.

He tightened up credit requirements to curtail predatory lending practices, which was the main reason the country went into the Great Recession, stated Kevin Darné, an author whose books have included "My Cat Won't Bark! (A Relationship Epiphany)."

"Obama got the Affordable Care Act passed which brought the

number of 46.5 million un-insureds down to 27 million by 2016, and the stock market rebounded, and job growth increased monthly, and he also won the Nobel Peace Prize," Darné stated, adding that Obama repealed "Don't ask don't tell" in the military, supported federal recognition of same-sex marriage, and protected Dreamers from deportation.

"His quick response to Hurricane Sandy drew praise from Republican governors, Chris Christie of New Jersey and Bob McDonnell of Virginia, who killed Osama Bin Laden, the person responsible for the 9-11 attacks in 2001."

Darné also pointed out that Obama effectively managed the Ebola crisis. At the same time, Trump has only repeated his mantra of building a wall, gutting Obamacare, and handling the COVID-19 crisis less than stellar, he said.

"He routinely lies and blames the Obama administration for every issue that arises. The main goal of Donald Trump appears to be to dismantle every signature achievement Barack Obama had," Darné said of the impeached Trump.

Obama's popularity led his being named history's most popular

American president.

Presumptive Democratic Presidential Nominee and former Obama Vice President Joe Biden have publicly stated that he would love to have former First Lady Michelle Obama as his running mate.

The "Committee to Draft Michelle Obama for VP" is working to build "substantial grassroots support for a potential Michelle Obama candidacy and help garner media attention for a vice-presidential nominee who has the power to beat Donald Trump," according to the group's press release.

"Ms. Obama, the most admired woman in America, will be a vital asset this November when Vice President Biden will face an uphill battle to combat the lies and deceit emanating from the White House," said the statement released Monday.

"Her credibility as a trusted leader and a strong symbol of unity within the Democratic Party would certainly help Democrats defeat Republicans up and down the ballot."

Tina Willis, a personal injury attorney at Tina Willis Law, said she cried when Obama left office. She said she didn't agree with every



decision Obama made while in office, but she never doubted that he held the best of intentions for all Americans.

"He was smart and empathetic, surrounded himself with the best advisors and team members, and always did his absolute best to both bring people together and do the right thing for everyone in the country," Willis stated.

"I would say that Trump is so awful, on every level, increased my appreciation for Obama. But my feelings toward Trump didn't increase my admiration of Obama. I always thought he was the best president that I've seen during my lifetime. I really wish Michelle Obama would become the vice president, although I definitely don't blame her for not wanting to face all of the bad that comes with a high political office in this country."



**By Jesse Jackson Sr.**

Three police officers stood and watched as a fourth, Derek Chauvin, knelt on Floyd's neck. They watched for 8 minutes and 46 seconds, with Floyd unresponsive for 2 minutes and 53 seconds of that, according to the criminal complaint against Chauvin. They did nothing to stop the murder. Their silence was as much an act of violence as Chauvin's knee. And if there were no video recording of the murder, they likely would have upheld the Code Blue loyalty, and lied about what happened.

Floyd's murder sparked peaceful demonstrations in cities across the country, demonstrations that, in Minneapolis and a few other places, turned toward riots. Chauvin and his co-conspirators weren't immediately arrested for the murder. Had Floyd, an African American, done this to a white person, he likely would have been jailed immediately, with a bond too high to reach. For too long, for too often, African Americans have been brutalized without consequence. Floyd's plea for mercy — "I can't breathe" — was

## The murder of George Floyd was a lynching in broad daylight

an echo of Eric Garner's last words. Laquan McDonald, Tamir Rice, Trayvon Martin, too often the killers walk free.

The signs say Black Lives Matter. Yet the very people who are supposed to protect us too often, in too many places, don't seem to agree. Instead of accountability, police have been given impunity. There were 17 complaints filed against Chauvin in his 19 years on the force. Only one resulted in even a reprimand. Too few of the police live in the communities they patrol. Too many see themselves as enforcers, not protectors. There are only a few bad apples, we are told.

But the Code Blue wall of silence protects the abusers, and too often rots the entire barrel. Young officers learn that if they want to advance, if they want better assignments, better pay, more security, they have to fit in. And the rot keeps spreading. The demonstrations are necessary. The rioting understandable but regrettable. Already, the damage done to property, the exchanges with the police becomes the subject, not the agenda that is necessary to focus on the outbreaks of rage that are inevitable. "In the final analysis, the riot is the language of the unheard," Dr. King taught us, "What is it that America has failed to hear?" In the last years of the Obama administration, peaceful Black Lives Matter demonstrations occurred in

cities across the country.

In a stunning display of discipline and self-control, demonstrators protested police brutality and murders peacefully, shutting down major thoroughfares. The Obama administration began an effort to encourage police reform. The sentence disparities between crack and cocaine — the "black" drug and the "white drug" — were reduced. Transfers of military weaponry to police forces were restricted. The Obama Justice Department entered into a series of consent decrees with more than a dozen police departments to encourage them to change their practices — to become more a guardian than an occupier.

The consent decrees couldn't root out racism, or dismiss the sadistic or the disturbed, but they could encourage a change in tactics, and perhaps in attitudes. When Trump was elected, he immediately torpedoed the reforms, and terminated the consent decrees. He reopened the spigot on military weaponry and encouraged the police directly to get tough with offenders. Last October, Bob Kroll, the president of the Minneapolis Police Union, appeared at a Trump rally to celebrate the president for freeing the police from the mild reforms of the Obama years.

"The Obama administration and the handcuffing and oppression of police was despicable," he told the

crowd. "The first thing President Trump did when he took office was turn that around, letting the cops do their job, put the handcuffs on the criminals instead of us." Those trumpeting law and order offer African Americans neither. Those peaceful protests were met with harsh reaction. The voices were not heard. And now, Minneapolis is in flames and the streets of America's cities are filled with protesters. What America has failed to hear — decade after decade — is the demand for equal justice under the law, the demand for equal opportunity, the call for basic rights — not only for African Americans but for all — the rights to a livable wage, decent housing, health care, a safe environment, a protective, not a dangerous police force.

The suffering is real; the gap documented over and over, most recently as poverty, hunger and illness makes African Americans disproportionately the victims of the coronavirus. This isn't complicated. The solutions are known. From the Kerner Commission in 1968 on, the analyses have been done; the needed reforms detailed — and shelved. There is money enough for top-end tax cuts, for bailing out banks and CEOs, for waging endless wars across the world. There is never enough money to fund the gap. And so the anger and frustration build, kindling ready to ignite. And time



after time, an act of outrageous police brutality sets the kindling aflame. The demonstrators are showing courage. We've also seen, in a few cities, police leaders show real leadership and wisdom. I pray that all also show caution.

We demonstrate not only against the threat of Code Blue, but in the time of COVID-19. Masks, social distancing, care for one another are vital so the demonstrations for life don't end up sacrificing lives to the virus. In the midst of a pandemic, some march in the hope that America will listen. Some march without hope but because silence is no longer acceptable. Yes, Minneapolis needs to charge, try and convict the murderer and his accomplices. Yes, the Minneapolis police force needs to cleanse itself, inside and out. America too needs to listen and to change. We will come together, or we will surely come apart.



## Mass extinctions are accelerating, scientists report

By Rachel Nuwer

**W**e are in the midst of a mass extinction, many scientists have warned — this one driven not by a catastrophic natural event, but by humans. The unnatural loss of biodiversity is accelerating, and if it continues, the planet will lose vast ecosystems and the necessities they provide, including fresh water, pollination, and pest and disease control.

On Monday, there was more bad news: We are racing faster and closer toward the point of collapse than scientists previously thought, according to research published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. The extinction rate among terrestrial vertebrate species is significantly higher than prior estimates, and

the critical window for preventing mass losses will close much sooner than formerly assumed — in 10 to 15 years.

“We’re eroding the capabilities of the planet to maintain human life and life in general,” said Gerardo Ceballos, an ecologist at the National Autonomous University of Mexico and lead author of the new study.

The current rate of extinctions vastly exceeds those that would occur naturally, Dr. Ceballos and his colleagues found. Scientists know of 543 species lost over the last 100 years, a tally that would normally take 10,000 years to accrue.

“In other words, every year over the last century we lost the same number of species typically lost in 100 years,” Dr. Ceballos said.

If nothing changes, about 500 more terrestrial vertebrate species are likely to go extinct over the next two decades alone, bringing total losses equivalent to those that would have taken place naturally over 16,000 years.

To determine how many species are on the brink of extinction, Dr. Ceballos and co-authors Paul Ehrlich, a conservation biologist at Stanford University, and Peter Raven, an environmentalist at the Missouri Botanical Garden, turned to population data for 29,400 terrestrial vertebrate species compiled by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Of those species, 515 — or 1.7 percent — are critically endangered, they found, with fewer than 1,000 individuals remaining. About half of these species comprise fewer than 250 individuals.

## Musicians playing through the lockdown, to one listener at a time

By Patrick Kingsley  
PhiladelphiaObserver.com

**P**atrick Kingsley, an international correspondent, and Laetitia Vancon, a photojournalist, are driving more than 3,700 miles to explore the reopening of the European continent after coronavirus lockdowns. Read all their dispatches.

STUTTGART, Germany — Atop a hill beside a vineyard, a woman sat down a few yards from a stranger holding a double bass. She sat in silence for a minute, trying to hold his gaze.

It was hard looking him in the eye. She had spent weeks staring at screens, largely in isolation. Human contact felt intense, strange. After 30 or 40 seconds, she glanced away.

But then the musician raised his bow. The air began to hum with the deep chords of the instrument. She began to relax.

He had picked a version of an English folk song — an adaptation of “Greensleeves.” She realized what it was, and its origins. In her reverie, it felt like an homage to her time in England, where she had spent part of her life.

She suddenly felt overwhelmed.



Photo credit by Laetitia Vancon

During two months of lockdown, her amateur choir practices had been canceled. A concert she’d planned to see had been postponed. But here on a hill above Stuttgart, a virtuoso musician was playing a piece — and only Claudia Brusdeylins, a 55-year-old publicist for a renewable energy research group, could hear it.

“I just felt recognized,” Ms. Brusdeylins said later.

To circumvent the restrictions enforced on society by the pandemic, cultural institutions have mostly turned to the internet. Museums have held online panels, theaters have streamed plays on their websites, and orchestras have uploaded their back catalogs.

## Zuckerberg defends approach to Trump’s Facebook posts

In a call with Facebook employees, who have protested the inaction on Mr. Trump’s messages, Mr. Zuckerberg said his decision was “pretty thorough.”

The New York Times  
By Mike Isaac, Cecilia Kang and Sheera Frenkel



**S**AN FRANCISCO — Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook’s chief executive, on Tuesday stood firmly behind his decision not to do anything about President Trump’s inflammatory posts on the social network, saying that he had made a “tough decision” but that it “was pretty thorough.”

In a question-and-answer session with employees conducted over video chat software, Mr. Zuckerberg sought to justify his position, which has led to fierce internal dissent. The meeting, which had been scheduled for Thursday, was moved up to Tuesday after hundreds of employees protested the inaction by staging a virtual “walkout” on Monday.

Facebook’s principles and policies supporting free speech “show that the right action where we are right now is to leave this up,” Mr. Zuckerberg said on the call referring to Mr. Trump’s posts. The audio of the employee call was heard by The New York Times.

Mr. Zuckerberg said that though he knew many people would be upset with Facebook, a policy review backed up his decision. He added that after he made his determination, he received a phone call from President Trump

on Friday.

“I used that opportunity to make him know I felt this post was inflammatory and harmful, and let him know where we stood on it,” Mr. Zuckerberg told Facebook employees. But though he voiced displeasure to the president, he reiterated that Mr. Trump’s message did not break the social network’s guidelines.

The Facebook chief held firm even as the pressure on him to rein in Mr. Trump’s messages intensified. Civil rights groups said late Monday after meeting with Mr. Zuckerberg and Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook’s chief operating officer, that it was “totally confounding” that the company was not taking a tougher stand on Mr. Trump’s posts, which are often aggressive and have heightened tensions over protests on police violence in recent days.

Several Facebook employees have resigned over the lack of action, with one publicly saying the company would end up “on the wrong side of history.” And protesters showed up late Monday to Mr. Zuckerberg’s residential neighborhood in Palo Alto, Calif., and also headed toward the social network’s headquarters in nearby Menlo Park.

## #WendysIsOverParty trends after Wendy’s donates \$400,000 to Trump

PhiladelphiaObserver.com

**T**he fast-food chain Wendy’s is now being canceled after social media users find out that the CEO donated over \$400,000 to President Donald Trump.

UCOMM blog reports that Trump met with CEOs from big fast-food corporations and restaurant chains that he relies heavily on to help him with his presidency. As stated on the blog, the meeting included the CEOs from Panera,

Burger King, Popeyes, Wendy’s, Taco Bell, and Pizza Hut.

“According to FEC records, Bodenstedt is a major donor to Trump, having donated \$440,000, including \$200,000 to the Trump Victory PAC on March 12, just days before states began shutting down in-person dining.”

Other major restaurants have donated like the CEO of Landry’s which owns other brands like Bubba Gump, Del Frisco’s, and Joe’s Crab Shack.



# On the scene

By Audrey J. Bernard

## Teyana Taylor lauds class of 2020 with music & video because they 'Made It'



Teyana Taylor

**T**eyana Taylor — singer, dancer and entrepreneur — released a new video entitled *Made It* which was inspired by the class of 2020 who were denied their rite of passage because of the widespread COVID-19 pandemic that has stopped schools and universities across the country from holding ceremonies to honor its graduates.

Taylor wanted to celebrate the class of 2020 and released a new video entitled *Made It* along with a music video as a congratulatory visual to “those who have reached their latest goal of graduating.” To that end, the sultry singer joined MSNBC’s Ari Melber to discuss her motivation behind releasing the video.

Taylor recounts not having a high school graduation, telling Melber “I didn’t get a chance to graduate” as she “was home schooled,” adding “I knew how it felt to not feel celebrated.” Taylor’s daughter, Junie interrupts the interview mid way through, making her debut on MSNBC. Taylor’s adorable daughter, Junie interrupts the interview mid-way through, making her debut on MSNBC.

Make It was a labor of love. Taking to Instagram following the track’s release, Taylor said:

“Class of 2020 this is for you!!!! First and foremost, Thank you to ALL the graduates that contributed to the video! I truly appreciate you & happy to celebrate YOU!!! Unfortunately, this pandemic has stopped us from physically gathering and celebrating all the hard work you’ve put in through the years But this pandemic can’t stop your spirit, it can’t dim your light, and it can’t take your degree away from you!! So when you make it out of this dark time, shine bright and light up the world! Congratulations to the class of 2020, YOU MADE IT!!!”

Taylor shared her new track along with a second release, the blistering *Bare Wit Me*. While *Bare Wit Me* is more of a sultry vibe, *Made It* is more uptempo with lyrics that lean toward self-love. These releases lead up to her dropping her forthcoming project *The Album* this month.



“The Album” cover art

From her smoky melodic vocals to her dynamic dance moves, the entertainer dips in and out of her talents that also include producing, songwriting, acting, directing and everything in between. When it comes to describing herself, the Harlem native can only think of one word: Everything. “I literally can do everything. I never look at anything as being impossible,” she explains. “I exhaust all options to make what happen when I need to make happen.” Her mantra made her an early favorite to artists like Pharrell, who she signed her first deal with, and later choreographed videos for artists like Beyoncé and Jay-Z. In 2014, Taylor’s love for the arts and R&B earned her the title of the first woman signed to Kanye West’s G.O.O.D. music imprint. Between R&B’s identity crisis in the 2010s, Taylor dropped her debut album “VII,” with tracks like “Maybe” (featuring Yo Gotti and Pusha T) and the sultry “Just Different” shaping her musical persona. The critically acclaimed album debuted at No. 1 on the *Billboard* Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart in 2014, cementing her position in today’s modern R&B field. “I fought for that raw, hood



“Bare Wit Me”



“Made It”

necessary R&B and now I feel like it’s better than ever,” she says. After spicing up the R&B charts, Taylor was blessed with the arrival of her daughter Junie with husband and NBA star Iman Shumpert in 2015. “I do all of this for my baby. She’s who I do it for,” she says about Iman “Junie” Tayla Shumpert Jr., her main source of inspiration. “I always show her how to be a leader and a businesswoman. I want her to believe that she can be anything she wants to be and it not be a shocker that she’s a female doing it all.”

Soon after, Taylor went on to star in the internet-breaking video for Kanye West’s “Fade,” and scored her first MTV Moonman for “Best Choreography” at the 2017 MTV Video Music Awards.

But it wasn’t until the release of her second album project *K.T.S.E.* (released June 2018) that the world caught up with her unabashed talents. With her all-female production company The Aunties, Taylor self-directed videos for “WTP,” the RIAA gold-selling single “Gonna Love Me,” (whose remix features Wu-Tang Clan’s Ghostface Killah, Method Man and Raekwon), and recently, “Issues/Hold On.” She has also directed videos for her peers like T.I. (“You”), Monica (“Commitment”), and Lil Duval (“Pull Up” featuring Ty Dolla Sign) drawing the attention of fans like Ms. Lauryn Hill and Elton John who praised her boss moves. Part of what makes this performer with model looks stand out from the rest is her ability to move with

precision and poise in everything she does. From the studio to the stage, every idea is a project with a vision all her own. With her musical inspirations like Aaliyah, Teena Marie, Mint Condition and Janet Jackson speaking to her soul, Taylor is aware her mission is larger than life. “I’m working on me every day and I think that’s my purpose,” she says, comparing her life to a never-ending book. “I’m still going, still mastering and being a better me.”

*The Album* is the long-awaited successor to *K.T.S.E.* (June 2018), Teyana’s second album, one of the five G.O.O.D. Music/Def Jam albums produced by Kanye West during his 2018 sojourn in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. *K.T.S.E.* (acronym for *Keep That Same Energy*) set off an 18-month chain reaction for Teyana, starting with its summertime Top 10 R&B smash “*Gonna Love Me*.” She performed “*Gonna Love Me*” (in a medley with “*Rose In Harlem*,” another *K.T.S.E.* track) on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*. Hip-hop audiences embraced the “*Gonna Love Me*” remix featuring Wu-Tang Clan’s **Ghostface Killah**, **Method Man** and **Raekwon**, whose video was directed by Taylor. Fans are totally hyped over *The Album* with the Grace Jones-inspired photo mirroring the cover art for her single “*We Got Love*,” featuring Lauryn Hill.

Taylor is one of the most exotic looking and electrifying performers of all time and is often referred to as “a jack of trades” which has allowed her to become a master of all! (Photos courtesy umusic)



## Russell Wilson & Ciara feed the hungry

**Russell Wilson**, quarterback for the Seattle Seahawks of the National Football League, and his gorgeous wife, model, singer, songwriter, and dancer **Ciara**, are donating one million meals to Food Lifeline to feed victims of the COVID-19 pandemic. In a video shared on Instagram, Wilson said that the pandemic is "changing the world second by second, minute by minute." "People are losing loved ones," he said. "The elderly and the young. The people in between. You think about people losing jobs, even in Seattle." The athlete continued: "What we've decided to do is partner up with our local food bank in Seattle, 'Seattle Food LifeLine,' and we're gonna donate a million meals [and] hopefully make a difference." Ciara also encouraged fans to do their part to help, whether it's through big or small gestures. (AP)



Russell Wilson & Ciara

## Ryan Reynolds & Blake Lively donate \$1 million to food banks

**H**ollywood glam couple **Ryan Reynolds & Blake Lively** has donated \$1 million help feed Covid-19 victims. "Covid-19 has brutally impacted older adults and low income families. Blake & I are donating \$1 million to be split between FEEDING AMERICA and FOOD BANKS CANADA," Reynolds, who's from Canada, said. "If you can give, these orgs need our help," he added. The "Deadpool" star also shared some advice for fans. "Take care of your bodies and hearts," he said. "Leave room for joy. Call someone who's isolated and might need connection." Lively shared a similar message encouraging people to practice social distancing while still staying connected. In addition, Reynolds revealed that Aviation Gin, the alcohol brand that he's the co-owner of, will be donating 30% of the money from every bottle sold to bartenders who are currently out of a job through May 1. The couple also donated \$100,000 to the four hospitals in New York that has faced the biggest struggles amid the pandemic. (AP)



Ryan Reynolds & Blake Lively

## SNL's Michael Che pays rent to honor grandmother

**S**aturday Night Live star **Michael Che** is mourning the loss of his grandmother who died of complications from COVID-19. The Saturday Night Live star, 36, revealed in a lengthy Instagram post that his grandmother died after contracting the viral illness. To honor her memory, Che will pay one month's rent for public housing residents where she lived. "It's crazy to me that residents of public housing are still expected to pay their rent when so many New Yorkers can't even work," Che said on [Instagram](#). The comedian continued: "Obviously I can't offer much help by myself. But in the spirit and memory of my late grandmother, I'm paying one month's rent for all 160 apartments in the NYCHA [New York City Housing Authority] building she lived in." (AP)



Michael Che



## If I could do one thing, I'd have a daycare closer to work.

If you could do one thing for your community, what would it be? More daycare centers? More funding for Head Start? Completing the 2020 Census is a safe and easy way to inform how billions of dollars in funding flow into your community for hundreds of services. **Respond online, by phone, or by mail.**

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**2020CENSUS.GOV**

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**2020**

# Health

## Trump administration officials to Black America: 'Coronavirus pandemic is your fault'

From page 3

sities (HBCUs) and prison reform, Trump and his top lieutenants continue to alienate African Americans.

In a CNN interview, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar attributed the high coronavirus death rate to unhealthy African Americans.

Azar claimed that Black and minority communities have higher comorbidities like underlying health issues.

"Unfortunately, the American population is very diverse," Azar stated.

"[America] is a population with significant unhealthy comorbidities that do make many individuals in our communities," he presumed.

"In particular, African American, minority communities – are at risk here because of significant underlying disease, health disparities and disease comorbidities. And that is an unfortunate legacy in our health care system that we certainly do need to address," Azar pronounced.

The interview occurred immediately after Trump again attacked former President Barack Obama – the nation's only African American president.

Trump accused Obama of unjustly targeting his associates in what he calls "Obamagate," and he called on the Senate Judiciary Committee to haul in Obama to testify in hearings about the origins of the investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential election.

However, Trump has yet to explain what crime he thinks Obama had committed.

The administration's rhetoric left social media users angered. "This whole Trump team is worse than worthless," one Twitter user wrote, while many others noted in their commentaries that "Racism is non-stop in The Trump administration."

"Blaming the 80,000+ human beings who have been killed by Covid-19 for their fate 'is the most disgusting deflection yet from an administration that was asleep at the switch,'" Laurence Tribe, a legal scholar and Harvard Law professor, tweeted.

"This whole Trump team is worse than worthless."

Several reports indicate that minority communities have

been disproportionately affected by the coronavirus.

According to statistics, as of May 1, African Americans made up 32 percent of the coronavirus deaths in Wisconsin, even though they only make up 6.7 percent of the population.

Places like Michigan and Missouri, where African Americans account for roughly 40 percent of coronavirus deaths, comprise just 14 percent and 12 percent of the population, respectively.

There are more than 1.87 million confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus in the United States, and more than 108,000 people have died in the U.S. Reportedly, more than 20 percent of the deaths are African Americans despite the Black population standing at roughly 13 percent.

"I don't believe [Trump] likes or respects Black or brown people from his treatment and comments of Hispanics, caging children and babies, and the way he's treated Puerto Rico and throwing paper towels at people during the Hurricane," Carol Gee, author of "The Venus Chronicles," and "If Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus," told NNPA Newswire in an email.

"All of his remarks and actions toward nonwhites tell the real story," Gee stated. "His movement to attract Black voters is only about winning the re-election. His prison reform and the release of [certain] black women, and his supposed embrace of Kanye West, is all just for show."

Attempts to get a comment from the White House by the Black Press of America were met with a usual no response.

NNPA Newswire has repeatedly reached out to the White House requesting the President, Vice President Mike Pence, and top administration staff to provide direct messages to Black America.

White House officials have responded by only asking that the NNPA report favorably on Trump-backed initiatives they believe is proof enough that Trump has done a lot for African Americans.

"I'll tell you what Trump has done," Dominick Carter, an HBCU student, told NNPA Newswire in an email. "He's dangled carrots and thrown out breadcrumbs and thinks we should be grateful. That we should be happy that master has fed the slaves today."

## Mental health, police brutality and Black people

By Glenn Ellis

**H**ave you ever put any real attention on the mental health issues in African Americans associated with police brutality? The data is compelling, and indisputable.

If anyone has any doubt about the magnitude of what is happening, the case was laid out by Radley Balko of the Washington Post:

"A 2017 NPR/Robert Wood Johnson Foundation poll found that half of blacks said they had been unfairly stopped by a police officer. About 6 in 10 said they or a family member had. That means that if you know two black people, one of them feels they've been treated unfairly by police. Philando Castile, a legal gun owner who was shot and killed during a traffic stop despite by-the-book obedience, had previously been pulled over more than 50 times for petty traffic violations... According to a 2015 YouGov/Huffington Post poll, 74 percent of black parents had cautioned their children to be cautious around police, versus 32 percent of white parents. A 2016 Pew poll found that 7 in 10 white people thought police usually use the right amount of force, versus just 1 in 3 black people. A 2017 Pew poll asked police officers if the high-profile police killings of black people were isolated incidents or part of a more systemic problem..."

Bottom line? White people in this country enjoy a privilege (other than just being white) that we can't fathom: police brutality is an afterthought in their lives, and the lives of their sons and daughters.

So, right now, many of you are wondering, what does this have to do with mental health? Well, you'll probably be as surprised as I was when I met Jacob Bor, a UPENN School of Public Health researcher. Dr. Bor (and colleagues) did some groundbreaking, eye-opening research in 2018.

Let me give my understanding of what the study reveals.

If anyone (of any ethnicity or race) has a son who is killed by the police, it is has a traumatic impact on his survivors; his family, his friends, his neighbors; in fact, everyone who knew him.

Looking at it another way, this says that when any black person sees, or hears about, a black male killed by police, they experience "collective trauma". But wait, it gets better; the same thing does not hold true for white people!

First, we should understand that trauma is simply the impact on a person from an event or injury.

Collective trauma is what happens when this impact is felt by an entire group of people, or a community; or even a nation. The events following the 9/11 terrorist bombings left this country in what



would be considered an example of collective trauma.

So, you see folks, what we are witnessing is an example of "collective trauma". As an African American community in this country, each one of us has carried the burdens of structural racism throughout our respective lifetimes that our shared experiences that has formed a shared emotional bond with every other black person in this country.

The effect on the overall mental health of African Americans is enormous! African Americans suffer more poor mental health days from police killings of unarmed African Americans than from diabetes.

This study shows that witnessing or hearing about violence, alone, does not account for mental health impact. Instead, it is clear that only African Americans experience this "collective trauma" following police killings of other unarmed African Americans, only because of the shared experiences of structural racism.

What I found fascinating was that not only did the study find that the same thing didn't when whites saw unarmed blacks (or whites) killed by police, African Americans don't experience this collective trauma when the police killed and armed black (white) man!

All in all, the point of this column is the provide some contextual framework for understanding the sense of range and pain many African Americans are filling at this time.

You could say that we reached

our "collective tipping point".

Brother George Floyd was the drop of water that caused our collective glass to overflow, resulting in a collective outrage that none of us have seen before. The generations of trauma from the pain and sufferings of our Ancestors, that we each carry with us, just reached its' tipping point.

To the outside observer, don't judge our story by the chapter you walked in on. As my dear friend Terrie Williams said in the title of her book: Black Pain: It Just Looks Like We're Not Hurting.

Like many of you, I have been inundated by some well-intentioned people, wondering what they can do.

I point them to the facts and the evidence. In the conclusions of his study, Dr. Bor states, "efforts to reduce health disparities should explicitly target structural racism."

Remember, I'm not a doctor. I just sound like one. Take good care of yourself and live the best life possible!

The information included in this column is for educational purposes only. I do not dispense medical advice or prescribe the use of any technique as a replacement form of treatment for physical, mental or medical problems by your doctor either directly or indirectly.

Glenn Ellis, is a Harvard Medical School Research Bioethics Fellow and author of *Which Doctor?*, and *Information is the Best Medicine*. Ellis is an active media contributor on *Health Equity and Medical Ethics*. For more good health information visit: [www.glennellis.com](http://www.glennellis.com)

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## Desecration of priceless forests in Sierra Leone halted by coronavirus

(GIN) –

The crashing economies in Asia have been a blessing – if temporary – to the endangered forests of Sierra Leone – particularly the tall stands of redwood trees, prized for their beauty, their rich mahogany color and their high quality for furniture.

The illegal trade in the wood is one of the world's most lucrative businesses, and affects much of Southeast Asia and parts of Africa and South America. When demand started to increase in West Africa around 2010, exports went from basically zero to hundreds of millions of dollars in just a few years.

Over the last decade, about US\$9 billion in rosewood was imported into China, and this accounts only for wood officially listed as rosewood, which excludes many species sold as 'rosewood' but not recorded as such.

But now the contraction in the Chinese economy has paused the illegal logging in the Outamba-Kilimi national park – more than 1,100 square km of park protected by 27 unarmed rangers.

"No Chinese men are coming here anymore, and they're the only people to come here and help us by buying what we cut,"



said Ishmael Sessay, who has been harvesting timber from Sierra Leone's oldest park since last year.

Logging for domestic use is allowed, but the government says logging in the park goes far beyond what is needed to satisfy home demand, and it does not have the resources to stop it.

"I feel pain in my heart when I see this forest cut," said Musa Kamara, who worked as a ranger in the park from 1981 to 2018. "This sickness is the only thing keeping them away."

In a related development,

Nigeria is facing life without oil revenue as oil prices, now around \$20 a barrel, have already skidded to the zero point.

"Global efforts to fight the spread of coronavirus have driven oil prices to low that they no longer cover the cost of pumping barrels... let alone providing the government with crucial cash," wrote Bloomberg news wire.

Nigerian environmentalists should cheer this development. Their slogan has been "Keep the oil in the soil, keep the coal in the hole."

## Pope Francis condemns death of George Floyd

Rome (CNN)

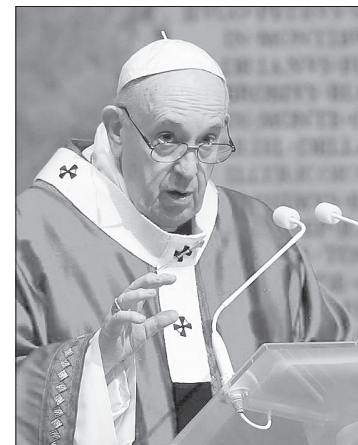
Pope Francis has called the death of George Floyd at the hands of US police officers "tragic" and said he is praying for him and "all those others who have lost their lives as a result of the sin of racism."

After an eighth night of protests across the United States, Francis addressed Floyd's death during his weekly Angelus prayer at the Vatican on Wednesday.

"Dear brothers and sisters in the United States, I have witnessed with great concern the disturbing social unrest in your nation in these past days, following the tragic death of Mr. George Floyd," Francis said.

"My friends, we cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life.

"At the same time, we have to



recognize that the violence of recent nights is self-destructive and self-defeating. Nothing is gained by violence and so much is lost," he urged.

CNN Senior Vatican Analyst John Allen said it is "relatively rare" for the Pope to mention a specific person by name. A Vatican spokesperson told CNN it was a "special appeal."

## Yemen's hidden migrants risk conflict and coronavirus in fight for survival

PhiladelphiaObserver.com

Yellow and purple headscarves and patterned dresses made a jarring contrast with the camouflage uniforms worn by soldiers milling around a bullet-ridden checkpoint in the southern Yemeni city of Aden.

It was 8am, and the sun was already hot. The family of six – four women and two men from Ethiopia, across the Red Sea – had already walked eight miles (13km) so far that morning. They stopped to ask the soldiers for water before continuing on their journey.

"We didn't know about the fighting in Yemen before we came on the boat last night," said one of the group, Abdul Saleh Tayeb. "But we are looking for money. We have to go to Saudi Arabia." They still had around 1,000 miles (1,400km) through disputed territories, mountain passes and scorching desert to go.

The Guardian met Tayeb and his family during a visit to Yemen last September, swapping contact details, although their phone

number has not worked since then. The family are some of the around 138,000 people from the Horn of Africa who made the dangerous journey across the Red Sea to Yemen last year in the hope of reaching the Gulf states and finding employment.

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), as Europe has cracked down on routes over the Mediterranean from Turkey and Libya, the journey to Yemen is now the busiest maritime migration route in the world. Young men in an Aden park told the Guardian they paid 15,000 Ethiopian birr (£354) for the journey.

Almost none of the new arrivals from Ethiopia and Somalia know that war has raged in Yemen for the last five years, impeding their onward journey, or that torture and rape could await them at the hands of smugglers and traffickers. Now, aid agencies are warning that funding shortfalls and cuts and the spread of coronavirus in the country leaves Yemen's hidden migrant population even more vulnerable.



## Mexico's leftist leader rejects big spending to ease virus's sting



By Azam Ahmed  
PhiladelphiaObserver.com

People were losing jobs by the tens of thousands, they warned. Small and medium-size companies, which employ more than 70 percent of the Mexican work force, were running out of cash. The government needed to intervene, they argued. The data was irrefutable.

"I have other data," shrugged the president, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, according to

two businesspeople with direct knowledge of that conversation in April. "You do whatever you think you need to do, and I'll do what I need to do."

Across the globe, governments have rushed to pump cash into flailing economies, hoping to stave off the pandemic's worst financial fallout.

They have mustered trillions of dollars for stimulus measures to keep companies afloat and employees on the payroll. The logic: When the pandemic finally

passes, economies will not have to start from scratch to bounce back.

In Mexico, no such rescue effort has come. The pandemic could lead to an economic reckoning worse than anything Mexico has seen in perhaps a century. More jobs were lost in April than were created in all of 2019. A recent report by a government agency said as many as 10 million people could fall into poverty this year.

Yet most economists estimate that Mexico will increase spending only slightly – by less than 1 percent of its economy – a small amount compared with many large nations.

The reason? Critics and supporters agree: Mr. López Obrador. Hostile toward bailouts, loath to take on public debt and deeply mistrustful of most business leaders, Mexico's president has opted largely to sit tight despite what is expected to be widespread pain up and down the economic ladder.

"The government should help the private sector as much as it can, otherwise our gross domestic product could drop as much as 10 percent, which would be a disaster," said Carlos M. Urzúa, a former minister of finance under Mr. López Obrador.

# Culture

## Floyd Mayweather is paying for all four of George Floyd's funerals

PhiladelphiaObserver.com

The tragic death of George Floyd has sparked massive protests all across the United States and overseas, with many celebrities expressing their feelings about it in one way or another. Some have joined the marches, others have shown their anger online, and a few have donated money to bail out protesters who've been arrested. Floyd Mayweather is showing his support by paying for Floyd's funeral costs.

Floyd, a Black man, died on May 25 after Derek Chauvin, who's white, knelt on Floyd's neck for nearly nine minutes during an arrest by him and three other Minneapolis police officers. All four were fired, and Chauvin was

charged with third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter.

Mayweather spoke with Hollywood Unlocked about his kind gesture and said he was troubled that Chauvin's charges weren't more severe, a feeling that many others have shared.

He decided to pay for the funeral costs after learning the CEO of his TMT music label, Anzel Jennings, grew up with Floyd in Houston, Texas.

After that realization, Jennings contacted Floyd's family, who accepted Mayweather's offer. The professional fighter is paying for four funerals in all — in Houston; Charlotte, North Carolina; and Minneapolis, Minnesota. The fourth location will be announced at a later date.

## Nia Long calls out this beauty brand for racist MUA encounter

PhiladelphiaObserver.com

Nia Long is using her social platform to call out bad actors

According to Long, while Glam Squad, a company that provides beauty and hair services, may claim to be about "diversity in beauty," her experiences were the exact opposite.

"Hey guys make sure you check out @GlamSquad page on IG. They claim to support diversity in beauty, but I had a very different experience. There's nothing black about GlamSquad DO NOT USE THIS COMPANY. I'm still waiting for an apology from the CEO Amy Shecter," she wrote on June 3 on Twitter.

Her tweet was in response to the brand's IG post showing support for #BlackOutTuesday.



According to Long, while in San Francisco, she enlisted services from Glam Squad, which included getting her makeup down.

Long claims that a white MUA told her, "We don't do make-up for Black people very often. I don't have foundation that matches your color."

Naturally, Long said hearing those words, she was in "shock, angry and disgusted."

The MUA artist was asked to leave and Long made sure she had an in-depth conversation with the company's CEO Amy Shecter to talk about the importance of educating their employees on the importance of being able to meet the needs of their Black clientele. Yet, Long feels that her conversation with Shecter was in vain.



## Woman graduates from high school at 98-years old

PhiladelphiaObserver.com

Monrovia, CA — Vivian Fisher from California has finally achieved her dream after she recently earned her high school diploma at the age of 98. She was one of the graduates of Monrovia High School's Class of 2020. She was joined by her great-grandnephew, Elijah Vance, who also graduated in the drive-thru ceremony.

She was not able to graduate decades ago when she was younger because she had to work multiple jobs to provide for her family.

Fisher, whose father was the first Black graduate of Monrovia High School and the first Black police officer in the city, was proud to have been able to keep the legacy of her family.

"Stay in school and be somebody," she told CBS News. "Being a nobody, anybody can do that."



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# Black Enterprise CEO: "I Am Tired ... The Pandemic Of Racism Must End"

Posted by Audrey J. Bernard

**E**arl "Butch" Graves, Jr. is speaking out due to civil unrest in the wake of the George Floyd killing, which is part of a trend of deaths of Black men at the hands of police. Due to ongoing racial inequities, Graves believes that corporate America must take leadership in providing opportunities and stamping out institutional racism and discrimination. Graves can speak from first-hand experience as he was snatched off NY Metro-North by New York police officers more than two decades ago for simply being a Black man. To read more, click: <https://www.nytimes.com/1995/05/09/nyregion/a-black-businessman-s-ordeal-as-a-suspect.html>

Graves explains below that he is simply **TIRED**.

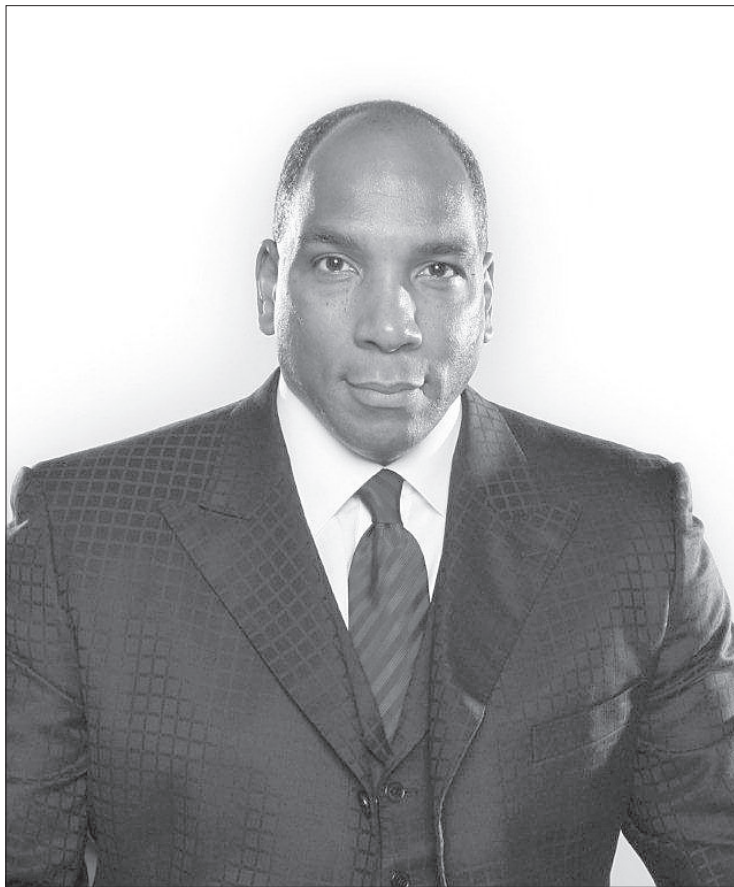
Over the past few days, civil unrest has gripped our entire nation. This was due to the unwarranted and senseless murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis last week by a police officer who placed his knee on the neck of Mr. Floyd for nine minutes as he begged for his life, while three other officers charged to protect and serve, did little — none of them displaying a shred of decency or humanity. It represents the latest, and perhaps the most disturbing, incident of police brutality against an African American man. As such, I feel compelled to share my personal thoughts because I cannot in all good conscience remain silent while the continuation of unchecked violence results in the loss of black lives without regard or consequence.

I am a proud African American man who loves this country. I have close friends and family of all races, and I pride myself on being measured and fair. I have always tried to view the circumstances of life as "the glass 3/4 full instead of 1/4 empty," but my patience has truly run thin... and now I am tired!

I am tired of watching innocent black men being targeted with violence at the hands of law enforcement.

Tired of ignorant bigots taking the law into their own hands and feeling justified to confront black citizens.

Tired of the media-driven, negative stereotypes that shape the dangerous narrative surrounding young black men.



Earl "Butch" James, Jr.

Tired of white people calling the police on black people, and weaponizing the police because they are entitled, scared, or distrusting.

Tired of overlooking the purposeful or passive suppression of talented black professionals in Corporate America.

Tired of watching black-owned businesses struggle without access to capital.

Tired of Corporate America loving the fruits of black culture, but not nurturing the tree that bears it.

Tired of the word "Diversity" which has been nothing more than a diversion away from black.

Tired of systemic and institutionalized corporate racism which is masked by flowery mission statements and codes of conduct that are rarely enforced.

Tired of the rise of the digital and social media economy without commensurate reinvestment in the very market that has often led to its success.

Tired of being disrespected in restaurants as if I were invisible.

Tired of being followed in retail establishments as if I were a threat to rob them.

Tired of not being afforded the same assumption of competence and associated opportunities as my white high school, college, and business school classmates.

Tired of explaining why I like to spend time with black people... while white people are never asked to explain why they like spending time with people that look like them.

Tired of the overall physical and psychological toll that being a black man takes on me every day.

As the father of two talented, charming, educated, young black men with unlimited potential, it pains me deeply that I needed to have "the conversation" with them while they were innocent teenagers regarding their possible interaction with cops that my Dad had with me almost five decades earlier, and that no doubt his Dad had with him. Every evening before I go to bed I must say a prayer that my boys will not be targeted and killed by law enforcement who mistake them as a threat which is something none of my white

friends or classmates ever have to endure much less think about.

Why are we still facing the same problems, and having the same conversations surrounding racism in 2020 that we've had over the past 50, 100, and 200 years? The reason is we have never truly had any desire to actually address and cure the "Pandemic of Racism." I guarantee you we will soon find a vaccine for Covid-19 just like we have found cures for other health crises that have plagued this country throughout centuries. We are a nation with vast resources of money and intelligence, and this Pandemic of Racism can be cured, but black people alone cannot put an end to this virus. We need the commitment and assistance of consciously aware white people to bring an end to this virulent disease.

Let me be clear: I do not condone violence and looting as a methodology to fix racism. On the other hand, I fully understand the frustration and outrage at yet another incident where the lives of black people are

considered worthless. My heart is warmed to see so many of the protestors across this country and around the world to be a full mix of young white, black, yellow, and brown people. I have great hope for the next generation because they are fed up with the nonsense and determined to do something.

Corporate America is uniquely positioned to be true leaders in this discussion and to drive lasting change — especially those companies that sincerely are committed to inclusion and equity. As it has done throughout history, American business can offer viable solutions while helping set the tone for our nation and world. It starts with being intentional, accountable, vocal, and fully engaged. I am truly optimistic about the initial response I have seen from fair-minded CEOs and other corporate leaders. I now challenge all of Corporate America to make an effective strategic plan to unlock the greatness that America can become, and to embrace everyone equally with fairness, love, and compassion.

## JUSTICE? We can't (be) ...

- handcuffed and put in the police car unless we are dead (#GeorgeFloyd)
- sitting in car as a couple (#Messiah Young and Taniyah Pilgrim)
- bird watch in Central Park (#ChristianCooper)
- go jogging (#AmaudArbery).
- relax in the comfort of our own homes (#BothemSean and #AtatianaJefferson).
- ask for help after being in a car crash (#JonathanFerrell and #RenishaMcBride).
- have a cellphone (#StephonClark).
- leave a party to get to safety (#JordanEdwards).
- play loud music (#JordanDavis).
- sell CD's (#AltonSterling).
- sleep (#AiyanaJones)
- walk from the corner store (#MikeBrown).
- play cops and robbers (#TamirRice).
- go to church (#Charleston9).
- walk home with Skittles (#TrayvonMartin).
- hold a hairbrush while leaving our own bachelor party (#SeanBell).
- party on New Year's (#OscarGrant).
- get a normal traffic ticket (#SandraBland).
- lawfully carry a weapon (#PhilandoCastile).
- break down on a public road with car problems (#CoreyJones).
- shop at Walmart (#JohnCrawford) .
- have a disabled vehicle (#TerrenceCrutcher).
- read a book in our own car (#KeithScott).
- be a 10yr old walking with our grandfather (#CliffordGlover).
- decorate for a party (#ClaudeReese).
- ask a cop a question (#RandyEvans).
- cash our check in peace (#YvonneSmallwood).
- take out our wallet (#AmadouDiallo).
- run (#WalterScott).
- breathe (#EricGarner).
- live (#FreddieGray).

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# Bookin' It

By Audrey J. Bernard

## Adam Cruz pens informative book



Adam Cruz

Posted By Don Thomas

**A**dam Cruz has published his first book, "Tips and Tales from an Indie Music Nerd." He takes you on a fast-paced journey through the complicated world of streaming music.

He details the effects that manual interplay has had on royalties and chronicles the diminishing value of music, the rise of streaming services and the changing attitudes of music lovers. Cruz shares tips and tales from his days of running a popular NYC disco label at the turn of the millennium.

He is also graphic designer.

As a producer, Adam has built a solid reputation for his production style and song-writing prowess, who has recorded with Eddie Nicholas, Flora Cruz, Gerideau, Lillias White and several others. As a DJ, he spins an energetic blend of Jazz, Funk, Latin and soulful Dance music.

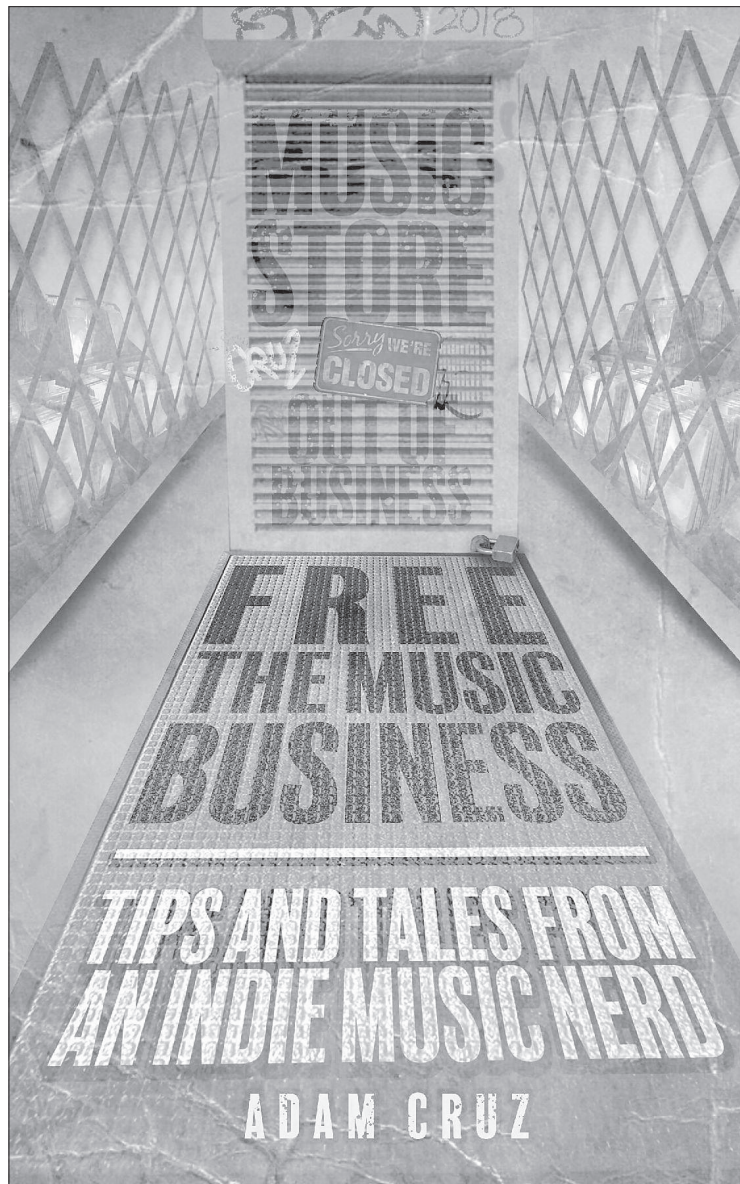
He has worked with disco music legend Mel Cheren, Grammy Award winner Louie Vega, Kenny "Dope" Gonzalez, dance music giants Josh Milan and Kevin Hedge and others.

Adam runs his own record label, Mixtape Sessions and co-owns record label Honeycomb Music, alongside longtime music partner Josh Milan.

For Mixtape Sessions, Cruz released his third "Freedom" LP as well as his first book.

In 2019 Cruz produced the Mixtape Sessions Music Conference, a 1-day music business conference, addressing topics related to artist health and wellness, financial literacy, music business trends and more! The Mixtape Sessions Music Conference returns on August 1, 2020 in Newark, New Jersey.

Currently Adam has been discussing music business news and trends from around the globe on the "Freedom Radio Hour," broadcasting for eleven seasons on Capital Radio 91.6FM The Heartbeat of Sudan in Africa and on the web at [freedomradiohour.com](http://freedomradiohour.com). Tune in from 10am-3pm weekly Fridays. To learn more about Adam Cruz visit the web at [DJAdamCruz.com](http://DJAdamCruz.com)



## Kierra Sheard releases KIERRA!

Posted By Don Thomas

**G**RAMMY and Stellar Award-winning Singer/Actress and entrepreneur, Kierra Sheard, recently released her album KIERRA!, marking her sixth studio album and first project with RCA Inspiration. KIERRA! includes the single "It Keeps Happening" and the anthem

"Don't Judge Me," featuring Missy Elliott, accompanied by a new video for another single, "Something Has To Break (Live)" featuring Tasha Cobbs Leonard.

"KIERRA! provides a fitting sanctuary amid these difficult times. Faith and inspiration have been the driving force of my career. We're going to get past this. We have to. The Lord has so many things for so many of us to do," said Kierra.

The album includes 15-tracks with sounds ranging from Pop, R&B, Hip-Hop and Gospel, featuring some live recorded songs which Sheard performed before a sold out crowd in her hometown of Detroit, MI.

Demonstrating her lyricism, Kierra wrote or co-wrote all of the tracks on the album including "Grateful," "Human," and "Better." Assisted by a dynamic team, the project features production from her collaborators, Harmony "H-Money" Samuels and her brother J. Drew Sheard, as well as Songwriters Mia Fieldes, Varren Wade, Edgar "JV" Etienne, Justin Brooks and rising Chicago artist Sir the Baptist.

In addition to Missy Elliott and Tasha Cobbs Leonard, the album features vocals from other Gospel Artists Todd Dulaney, Tasha Cobbs Leonard, Le'Andria Johnson and Kierra's nephew Jacob Sheard.

Sheard is also celebrating the fifth anniversary of her fashion line, Eleven60, which is available at [Macys.com](http://Macys.com). Showcasing her versatility and range as an artist, Kierra continues to act and co-stars in the Lifetime biopic, *The Clark Sisters: The First Ladies of Gospel*, which premiered on April 11th to 2.7 million viewers. In the film she depicts her mother, legendary Gospel Artist Karen Clark Sheard.



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# Sports

## Brees, Fromm, Trump and Goodell still don't get it



**Brees Feels The Heat**

Photo: Special to the PhiladelphiaObserver.com

By Andrew Rosario

Drew Brees did not get it 4 years ago and he still doesn't get it now. Same with both NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell and President Donald Trump. First round draft pick for the Buffalo Bills quarterback Jake Fromm is now added to the list. While the cities across the nation protested the violent, brutal death of George Floyd at the knee of Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin while 2 other officers helped pin him down and another stood watch, Brees, Fromm, Goodell and Trump made head spinning comments about players kneeling, white privilege and not recognizing players concerns.

Drew Brees will be inducted into the NFL Hall of Fame 5 years after he retires for all of his accomplishments on the field. He will also be remembered for comments he made last week. "I will never agree with anybody disrespecting the flag of the United States of America or our country," Brees said to Yahoo! Finance. "I think what you do by standing there and showing respect to the flag with your hand over your heart, is it shows unity. It shows that we are all in this together, we can all do better and that we are all part of the solution." From the very beginning, Colin Kaepernick made it clear that he was not protesting the flag or the military men and women that have served this country. He was trying to bring attention to the police brutality that had been taking place across the country. The backlash Brees received was swift. Said teammate Michael Thomas in a tweet, "we don't care if you don't agree. He don't know no better." Athletes from other sports chimed in as well. Said LeBron James "Is it still surprising at this point. Sure isn't. You literally still don't understand why Kap was kneeling on one knee?? Has absolute nothing to do with the disrespect of (the flag) and our soldiers (men and women) who keep our land free."

Those comments also struck a nerve with Brees especially

after President Trump issued the following statement: "He should not have taking back his original stance on honoring our magnificent American flag. Old Glory is to be revered, cherished and flown high." Trump went on to tweet, "we should be standing up straight and tall, ideally with a salute, or a hand on heart. There are other things you can protest. But not our Great American Flag. NO KNEELING." Again, another person who missed the original message.

Brees wasted no time responding to the President as a picture was circulated bonding with Trump and both wives in the past. "Through much ongoing conversations with friends, teammates and leaders in the black community, I realize this is not an issue about the American flag. It Has never been. We can no longer use the flag to turn people away or distract them from the real issues that face our black community. We did this back in 2017 and regretfully I brought it back with my comments this week. We must stop talking about the flag and shift our attention to the real issues of systematic racial injustice, economic oppression, police brutality and judicial and prison reform. We are at a critical juncture in our nation's history. If not now, then when? We as a white community need to listen and learn from the pain and suffering of our black community. We must acknowledge the problems, identify the solutions and then put this into action. The black community cannot do it alone. This will require all of us." Not surprisingly, there was no Trump reply.

Not long after, Buffalo Bills first round draft pick (#5) Jake Fromm had text messages leaked in which he eluded to who should be able to buy guns. "Just make them very expensive so only elite white people can get them haha." Not very funny when the lives of black and brown people are dying as a result of gun violence by the police. As usual, Fromm tried to clear the air. Claiming he was "not an elite white person" Fromm said, "I am ex-

remely sorry that I chose to use the words 'elite white person' in a text message conversation. Although I never meant to imply that I am an 'elite white person as later stated in the conversation, there's no excuse for that word choice and sentiment. "I stand against racism 100%. I promise to commit myself to being part of the solution in this country." The Bills organization has not said whether or not Fromm will be disciplined after signing him to a 4 year contract.

Then there was NFL commissioner Roger Goodell who issued a statement claiming the NFL dropped the ball when it came to players taking a knee prior to the National Anthem started by Kaepernick. Was it in response to the video shot 10 days after the Floyd murder by NFL stars Odell Beckham, Ezekiel Elliott, Shaquan Barkley, Patrick Mahomes and other who said, "how many times do we need to ask you to listen to our players. We will not be silenced. We assert our rights to peacefully protest. It shouldn't take this long to admit it. So, on behalf the National Football League, this is what we, the players would like to hear you state: We the National football League condemn racism and the systematic oppression of black people. We the National Football League admit wrong in silencing our players from peacefully protesting. We the National Football League believe black lives matter."

It was heard loud and clear by Goodell in part by saying, "it has been a difficult time for our country. In particular, black people on our country. We in the National Football League condemn racism and the systematic oppression of black people. We, the National Football League admit we were wrong for not listening to NFL Players earlier and encourage all to speak out and peacefully protest. We, the National Football League believe black lives matter. I personally protest with you and want to be part of the much needed change in this country. Without black players, there would be no National Football League. The protest around the country were



**Fromm Feeling His Elite Oates**

Photo: Special to the PhiladelphiaObserver.com

emblematic of the centuries of silence, inequality and oppression of black players, coaches, fans and staff. We are listening. I am listening. I will be reaching out to players who have raised their voices and others on how we can improve and go forward for a better and more united NFL family."

Ironically, no NFL owner has issued a statement on comments made by the players or the Commissioner. Some of them expressed why they could not take a chance signing Kaepernick sighting they did not want to alienate their fan base. The league

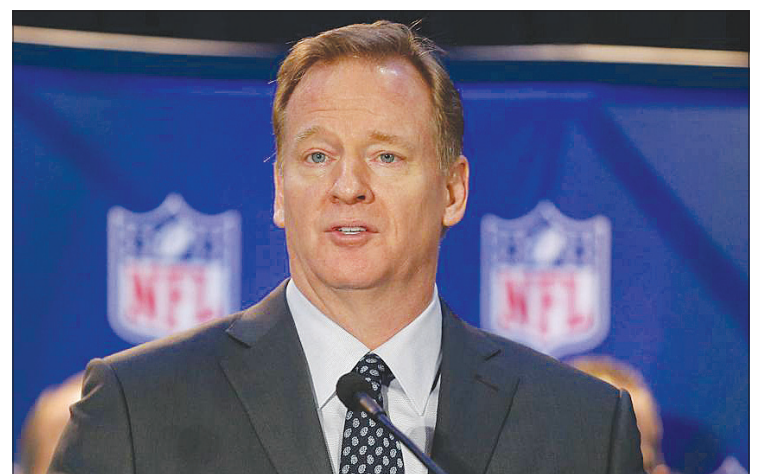
is on schedule to open training camp in late July. Whether or not fans will be allowed to attend regular season games is yet to be determined due the Coronavirus/ Covid19 pandemic as cities are in the process of trying to reopen on a full-time basis.

One thing is for sure. The death of George Floyd has not only sparked a country/world wide protest. It began a new voice among African American athletes who no longer fear repercussions for voicing their opinions. Let's see what happens when they begin taking a collective knee.



**Trump Supports Brees**

Photo: Special to the PhiladelphiaObserver.com



**A Little Late For Goodell**

Photo: Special to the PhiladelphiaObserver.com