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# MONTGOMERY COUNTY PROSECUTORS APPEAL TO U.S. SUPREME COURT TO REINSTATE COSBY'S CONVICTION



Michael Abbott/Getty Images

**Cosby's conviction in April 2018 was overturned this June, after the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled that Cosby's due process rights had been violated**





## Banksy creates T-Shirt to help alleged topplers of slave trader statue

Philadelphiaobserver.com

LONDON (AP) — People lined up Saturday in the English city of Bristol to get the latest work by elusive street artist Banksy — a T-shirt created to help four defendants charged over the toppling of a local statue of a slave trader. The gray shirt features the word Bristol above an empty plinth like the one on which the statue of 17th-century slave merchant Edward Colston long stood. Anti-racism demonstrators pulled down the statue and dumped it in Bristol harbor in June 2020 amid global protests over the police killing of George Floyd.

Four people have been charged with criminal damage over the statue's felling and are due to go on trial next week. Customers inside the Rough Trade store in Bristol hold T-shirts designed by street artist Banksy that are being sold to support four people facing trial over the toppling of a statue of slave trader Edward Colston. VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS "I've made some souvenir shirts to mark the occasion," Banksy said on social media Friday. "Available from various outlets in the city from tomorrow. All proceeds to the defendants so they can go for a pint."

## Founder of NY's largest Black-owned insurance provider dies at 98

Philadelphiaobserver.com

Ernesta Procope founded E.G. Bowman INC., the first Black-owned brokerage company on Wall Street. Ernesta Procope, whose company called itself the first Black-owned insurance brokerage company on Wall Street, died on November 30 in her home in Queens. She was 98-years-old, according to the New York Times. In 1953, the real estate maven founded E.G. Bowman INC, which is reportedly New York's largest African American-owned provider of insurance brokerage services. The highly profitable business was birthed in the Bedford-Stuyvesant or Bed-Stuy neighborhood in Brooklyn. When the company was relocated to Wall Street in 1979, it made history again as the first and largest minority-owned insurance company in the financial district. Dubbed "The First Lady of Wall Street," by the Black Enterprise, Procope overcame many barriers to become one of the most influential women on Wall Street. Born to West Indian immi-



grants in 1923, Procope began selling auto and home policies for small business and homeowners in the early 1950s. Her company, located in Bed-Stuy at the time — a majority Black neighborhood that many insurers avoided due to racism — specifically fought to provide African Americans and other marginalized groups with access to insurance.

## Barbados to build slavery museum following split from British monarchy

By Victor Omondi

It's been a week since Barbados Island was declared a republic, free from its decades-long ties to the British monarchy. The long-awaited split from the monarchy seems to have come with major plans. The young republic is planning to build a trans-Atlantic slave museum in commemoration of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The museum will be the largest slave heritage outside the United Kingdom that will host a collection of British slave records. Besides, the heritage will include an international research center, according to Ghanaian-British architect, David Adjaye, who's been appointed to design the site. The plan also includes

setting up a memorial for hundreds of slaves whose remains were discovered in a burial ground adjacent to the site's set location. Barbados's Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley said in a statement, "Barbados is authentically enshrining our history and preserving the past as we reimagine our world and continue to contribute to global humanity. It is a moral imperative but equally an economic necessity." The heritage site is set to open on the Island's first anniversary, on Nov 30, 2022, according to Art News. The young republic has left behind other islands like Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts, and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and the Grenadines and the Bahamas and

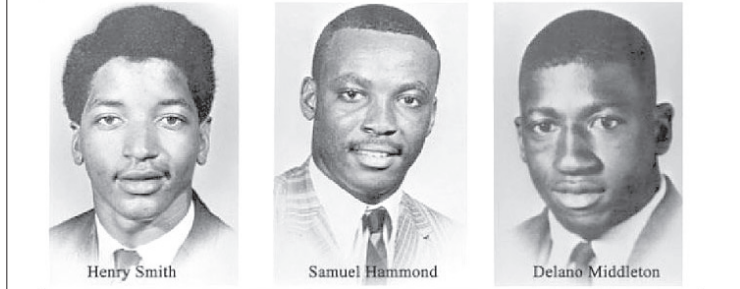
Tuvalu, according to Forbes, which are still under the rulership of the Queen of England. United Kingdom's historical archive is the largest in the region, with a record of more than 3 million African slaves who were captured and subjected under slavery from 1662 to 1807. The archive also holds a record of rebellion and revolution through the slavery era. Barbados is under the leadership of Black women, with Mottley as its prime minister and Sandra Mason as its first president. The Barbados museum will be built just outside Bridgetown (the capital city). This will be adjacent to the Newton Enslaved Burial Ground Memorial, which is the earliest slave burial ground, New Arts reports.



## Justice Department continues to look at 20 cold cases from the Civil Rights era

Philadelphiaobserver.com

This week the United States Justice Department closed its investigation into the death of Emmett Till. Despite finding no new evidence to bring new charges in the 14-year-old's 1955 lynching, the FBI's Cold Case Initiative continues to investigate other cold-case crimes with racial bias implications from the civil rights movement era. The Justice Department Cold Case Initiative was founded by the FBI in 2006. The mission of this department is to "identify and investigate racially-motivated murders committed decades ago." The program was influential in getting the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act ("Emmett Till Act") passed and signed into law on Oct. 8, 2008. Three Black students, Henry Smith, Samuel Hammond Jr. and Delano B. Middleton, were shot to death during the Orangeburg Massacre. Credit: ABC 4 News Screengrab Through partnerships with the National Association for the



Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), and the National Urban League this department has been able to identify over the years unsolved race-related cold cases where the victims might have had their civil rights criminally violated. The Justice Department reported to Congress in July that 20 cold cases from the '60s and '70s where American citizens' civil rights were violated continue to be investigated by the DOJ. Some 13 of the 20 cases are police-involved killings of Black people in Southern states. One such case was a 1970 demonstration in Augusta, Geor-

gia, that exploded after a 16-year-old boy named Charles Oatman was killed while in the custody of the county jail. The uprising lasted for two days and included thousands of Black residents protesting in a 7-mile radius. During this act of civil unrest, six Black men were shot by local police, but no one paid a criminal penalty for those deaths. An all-white jury acquitted the two white officers who were charged with the police-involved shootings that wounded five protestors and resulted in the death of John Stokes. The DOJ could determine that the victims' federal civil rights were violated in those shootings.



# U.S. Supreme Court asked to flip decision and put Bill Cosby back in jail

By Lauren Victoria Burke, NNPA Newswire Contributor

**K**evin Steele, the prosecutor who put legendary actor and comedian Bill Cosby, 84, in jail in 2018, has filed an appeal to the United States Supreme Court to reinstate Cosby's conviction.

Cosby was released on June 30 after the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled that former prosecutor Bruce Castor's decision not to prosecute in 2005 should have prevented Cosby from being charged in 2015.

"Unwilling to accept its epic loss in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, the Montgomery County District Attorney has now filed a Petition for a Writ of Certiorari to the United States Supreme Court. In short, the Montgomery County D.A. asks the United States Supreme Court to throw the Constitution out the window, as it did, to satisfy the #metoo mob," Cosby's spokesman Andrew Wyatt said in reaction on November 29.

"There is no merit to the DA's request which centers on the unique facts of the Cosby case and has no impact on important federal questions of law. The United States Supreme Court does not typically interfere with the rulings of a State's high court unless it conflicts with the decisions of other state high courts or our federal court



The Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruling, which was 6-1, found that Cosby relied on his deal with Castor that he would not prosecute.

of appeals. This is a pathetic last-ditch effort that will not prevail. The Montgomery County's DA's fixation with Mr. Cosby is troubling to say the least," Wyatt added.

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court decision in the case that would later be overturned was brought forward by Andrea Constand, a former Temple University employee, who alleged that Cosby drugged and sexually assaulted her at his home in a Philadelphia in 2004. Steele called the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's June 30 decision on Cosby, "a dangerous precedent."

"A prosecution announcement not to file charges should not

trigger due process protections against future criminal proceedings because circumstances could change, including new incriminating statements by the accused," Steele argued.

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruling, which was 6-1, found that Cosby relied on his deal with Castor that he would not prosecute.

*Lauren Victoria Burke is an independent journalist and the host of the podcast BURKEFILE. She is a political analyst who appears regularly on #RolandMartinUnfiltered. She may be contacted at LVBurke007@gmail.com and on twitter at @LVBurke*

# Despite economic recovery, Black workers continue to experience financial difficulty

Philadelphiaobserver.com

**W**hile the economy is gradually rebounding, a new poll found that some Black people are still struggling. According to the November Temperature Check Poll from Black to the Future Action Fund, 42 percent of Black adults described their financial situation as "bad." And one-third of respondents reported their financial situations have worsened.

Partnering with Socioanlaítica Research, Black to the Future Action Fund published its first temperature check poll in July. The national survey seeks to engage Black people about pressing issues and their impact on their families

and communities.

Other significant findings from the November poll include that 52 percent of Black adults polled were satisfied with the country's direction. Still, an almost equal amount, 54 percent, were dissatisfied with the current state of the economy.

While the percentage of people behind in either rent or mortgage declined since September, the poll reflected an increase in people "not confident" in their ability to make the next payment on time. Nearly two-thirds of respondents said they weren't sure about making timely payments, up from 54 percent in September.

But Black workers and their families have seen some reprieve

this year with the updated child tax credit. Allowing parents to receive the child tax credit as a monthly cash payment has improved family finances and led to significant decreases in child poverty.

Last month, Chalkbeat reported parents spending money on regular household expenses, with food being the most commonly bought item. With increased costs hitting many families hard, the additional money has been needed boost.

Unfortunately, the credit is set to expire if the Build Back Better Act is not passed in the Senate by the end of the month. Millions of families have benefited from the monthly tax payments, which started in July.



# First anti-critical race theory complaint in Tennessee targets Martin Luther King, Jr. book

By Lauren Victoria Burke, NNPA Newswire Contributor

**A** group called Moms for Liberty has filed an 11-page complaint alleging that the book "Martin Luther King Jr and the March on Washington" is "anti-American."

The complaint is the first to be filed under Tennessee's new anti-critical race theory law. The new law specifically targeted a book about Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights movement, calling it "anti-American."

The group Moms for Liberty is in Williamson County, Tennessee. The complaint would forbid the book to be used by teachers at Williamson County Schools, a district south of Nashville, Tenn.

The Tennessee Department of Education refused the request. The department declined to investigate the allegations because the lessons referenced were not taught during the 2020-21 academic school year.

"The relentless nature of how these divisive stories are taught, the lack of historical context and difference in perspective, and the manipulative pedagogy all work together to amplify and sow feelings of resentment, shame of one's skin color, and/or fear," the complaint from Moms for Liberty read.

Moms for Liberty protested a photo of segregated water fountains and images showing Black children being blasted with water by firefighters during the civil rights movement.

Though "critical race theory" is a part of college level curriculum at law schools, the term has become a wide-ranging catch all in conservative circles. Many have loosely defined to mean any



curriculum that includes efforts towards greater diversity and equity as well as discussions about how exclusion and bigotry has played a role in the shaping of American history and present-day events.

"Critical race theory" gained energy as an answer to the publication of the New York Times' 1619 Project by journalist Nicole Hannah Jones. That project greatly centered the history of African Americans and the impact of slavery in American history, politics and culture.

On November 19 in New Hampshire, the New Hampshire Department of Education made it easier for citizens to help enforce a law passed during the summer that restricts how teachers can discuss race with an online questionnaire to prompt investigations.

The state chapter of Moms for Liberty added a cash reward of \$500 for those reporting violations.

*Lauren Victoria Burke is an independent journalist and the host of the podcast BURKEFILE. She is a political analyst who appears regularly on #RolandMartinUnfiltered. She may be contacted at LVBurke007@gmail.com and on twitter at @LVBurke*

# 'The taser is yellow; the firearm is black': jury hears the differences between Kim Potter's gun and taser

Philadelphiaobserver.com

**O**n April 11, former Minnesota Officer Kim Potter shot and killed Daunte Wright. Since then, it's been a mystery how a 26-year police veteran could mistake her gun for a taser.

On Monday, the jury finally had to grapple with that.

While the first few days focused on testimonies recalling the aftermath of the shooting and Potter's hysterics, the fourth day of trial focused on Potter's claim that she meant to tase Wright when he got back in his car.

Special agent Sam McGinnis of the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension talked about the weight, colors and placement of the taser and handgun on Potter's belt, according to CNN, during questioning by the prosecution.

"The Taser is yellow; the firearm is black," McGinnis said. "The Taser



has a stocky body to it compared to the Glock handgun. The grip of the Taser is shorter and wider than the Glock."

The prosecution is arguing that Potter was reckless and negligent, but her defense continues to call the shooting an accident and that Potter was still right to use deadly force to protect a fellow officer.





## A remarkable thesis on Sam Cooke!

Philadelphiaobserver.com

This is a wonderful thesis written by Gabriel Jacob Rosenberg and submitted in 2016 to the faculty of Wesleyan University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts.

Today marks the 57th year since soul singer Sam Cooke was killed, December 11, 1964. Coincidentally, it was 1957 when Cooke crossed over from gospel to sec-

ular music with the release of his breakthrough hit "You Send Me."

Rosenberg who graduated from Wesleyan with Departmental Honors in American Studies is a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Society. His senior thesis: "A Conscious Citizen: Sam Cooke, Racial Performativity, and the Crisis of Crossover Music" is a must-read for Cooke aficionados who want to know more about his influence and the impact he had in the music industry.



## Little Known Facts:

Dec. 7, 1941, hero 'Dorie' Miller defends US ships during Pearl Harbor attack

Philadelphiaobserver.com

On this day in 1941, Doris "Dorie" Miller defends U.S. ships during the attack on Pearl Harbor. He was the first Black American to be awarded the Navy Cross, the highest decoration for valor in combat after the Medal of Honor.

Less than a month before his twentieth birthday, Miller enlisted

in the United States Navy. Following boot camp training in Norfolk, Virginia, he was assigned to the USS West Virginia as a messman, an enlisted man on temporary duty in the sailors' or officers' dining quarters who serves food, clears the tables and other duties. When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, Miller was doing laundry below decks.

During the attack, he helped several sailors who were wounded, and while manning an anti-aircraft machine gun for which he had no training, he shot down several Japanese planes.

## Man with dreads sues employer for hair discrimination

Philadelphiaobserver.com

How white should your hair be to work at an event planning company?

That's what Jeffrey Thornton, a Black man from San Diego, wants to know. He's suing his former employer, Encore Global, in what CBS News reports is the first-ever case based on the CROWN Act, a statute meant to protect people with natural hairstyles from workplace discrimination.

Thornton, CBS News reports, has dreads that he says were never an issue at work before he moved to San Diego from Florida to ride out the pandemic. But that's when his trouble started—Thornton alleges that an Encore manager told him he needed to cut his hair to get a new job as a technical supervisor even though he had already worked for the same company in Florida.

According to the CBS story, Encore issued a statement denying the charge and saying it was a "miscommunication." They say they've offered him a job if he wants it.

Whether you believe that or not, if Thornton's case goes to court without a settlement, it would be the first opportunity to see if the CROWN Act can be used to hold an employer accountable for discrimination based on natural hair.

From CBS News:

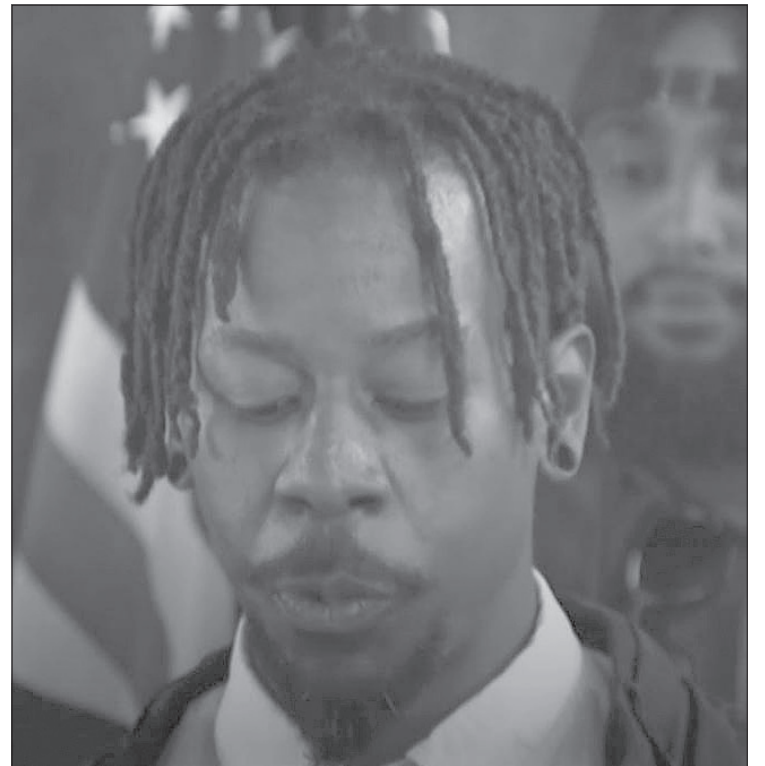
While there have been lawsuits centered on hair discrimination before that, the Thornton case

specifically invokes the CROWN Act, experts noted.

The CROWN Act bans companies from discriminating against employees or job applicants based on natural hairstyles, including afros, Bantu knots, braids and cornrows. California became the first state to ban discrimination against natural hair in workplaces. A dozen more states, including New Jersey, New York and Virginia, now have similar legislation. The law draws from decades of

Black employees sharing tales of being denied employment or shunned at work for wearing natural hairstyles.

Some cities are passing their own versions of the law, and in some corners of corporate America, anti-hair-discrimination is its own marketing campaign. Sen. Cory Booker even proposed the legislation at the federal level in 2019 during his presidential campaign, but like his run for the White House, it didn't go anywhere.



## Ex-Jet Zac Stacy told cops girlfriend staged brutal attack caught on video: report

Philadelphiaobserver.com

Zac Stacy, the former Jets running back who was arrested in November after allegedly attacking his girlfriend in front of their infant son, reportedly told police the incident was staged.

Stacy, who played in the NFL for three seasons, faces charges of aggravated battery and criminal mischief for the brutal Nov. 13 incident that took place in Oakland, Fla., and was caught on video.

According to the arrest warrant, the woman, Kristin Evans, told authorities she had been "extending an olive branch" to Stacy when he allegedly "got physical" with her, striking her and throwing her "against the television, causing it to crack and fall over." He also allegedly knocked her over once again after that before fleeing the scene.

Former St. Louis Rams and New York Jets NFL running back Zac Stacy is sworn in for testimony during a bond status hearing in

Orange circuit court in Orlando, Fla., Wednesday, Nov. 24. (Joe Burbank/AP)

Stacy went on the run and was arrested in Orlando. According to video obtained by TMZ, Stacy told arresting officers Evans "staged" the incident because she was upset he had rejected her romantically.

"It's just a case of just bitterness, man," Stacy said. "That's why she did this. The whole assault thing, she staged it. She set me up."



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# Editorial - Opinion

## National Black Business Chamber champion Harry C. Alford dies

It is with great sadness that our Warrior Leader and President/CEO and Co-Founder of the National Black Chamber of Commerce (NBCC), Harry C. Alford, transitioned Monday, December 6, in Washington, DC. He was preceded in death by his wife, Kay DeBow, Vice President and Co-Founder of the National Black Chamber five months ago.

In 1993, Harry C. Alfred moved the newly established National Black Chamber of Commerce from Indianapolis, Indiana to Washington, DC. The first Board Chairman was the former Assistant Secretary of Labor, Dr. Arthur Fletcher, the "Father of Affirmative Action." Most of the existing Black Chambers derived from Harry's initiatives and influence over the years.

Today, the National Black Chamber is the largest Black business organization in the world, consisting of regional organizations of Black Chambers in the

United States, eight (8) countries in Africa, eleven (11) membership Chambers in the Caribbean and five-member Black Chambers in Central and South America. Black Chambers were also established in London and Paris under Harry's leadership. In addition to coordinating this global operation, Harry C. Alford spoke before Congress on behalf of Black business, often several times a month. For many years, he served on the Board of Directors of the most influential Chamber in America, the United States Chamber of Commerce, in Washington, DC.

"When President George Bush asked Harry Alford to assist him with a strategy to identify any Black owned businesses remaining in the Hurricane Katrina impact zone and a plan for helping them survive, he selected the right man," said Arnold Baker, President Baker Ready Mix, LLC. Harry brought a fresh perspective and renewed vision that

nothing was impossible and held the White House accountable for making available unfettered access to the Corps of Engineers, HUD, the Department of Commerce, and DOT for the nation's greatest rebuild.

"Today the lessons learned and visioning processes that Harry and Kay brought to fruition are responsible for tens of billions of dollars in small business inclusion programming which are now the basis for every disaster relief program. They not only made history in New Orleans but designed the base principals for recovery programs now implemented across the globe," Baker said.

As word spread of Harry's death condolences and personal memories of Harry's business acumen began to pour in.

John Harmon, who is the President of one of the most successful Black Chambers in New Jersey, said that it was the guidance of Harry and his beloved wife Kay,

that guided him through many business initiatives. He also said it was because of his influence that he served on the NBCC Board and the Board of Directors of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

"I knew Harry and Kay before they left Indianapolis to establish the national chamber in Washington, D.C. I had a great relationship with him in Indiana when he served in the cabinet of former Governor Evan Bayh. I went into a meeting with him expecting resistance and I was met with agreement and a solution that led the way for Indiana Black newspapers to do business with the state," said Dorothy R. Leavell, Publisher of the Chicago and Gary Crusader newspapers.

"When he started the National Black Chamber, our relationship expanded to include me as a board member of NBCC and when I was chairman of the National Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation he served

with distinction on our board. He was always eager to help The Black Press 'as a business,'" Leavell said.

Members of the NBCC Board of Directors including Fred Jordan, NBCC's outstanding member of San Francisco and Oakland, CA, representing the west coast, said that the future of NBCC is bright and presently Charles H. DeBow, III is Executive Director and had served previously as Vice President of Global Development and Programs.

Current NBCC Board Chairman and President of the Illinois State Black Chamber of Commerce, Larry Ivory, stated, "Harry Alford was the Godfather of Black Chambers in the United States and from his Washington, DC headquarters, gave Black business a seat at the table for over 28 years. Harry and Kay's legacy will live on as we continue moving the National Black Chamber of Commerce's agenda forward."

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# 'Sacramento Karen' falsely accuses man of phone theft at mall

\*Footage of a white woman accusing a Black man of stealing her phone has gone viral, but the phone was in her purse the entire time.

The incident reportedly occurred at Spencer's inside the Sunrise Mall in Sacramento, and the footage has gone viral. The clip was originally uploaded Monday by a person claiming to be the spouse of the Black man named Kinley.

The video has amassed over 2.2 million views and has the caption: "Karen really pulled this at a Spencer's. Racism alive and well." In the video, the unnamed woman accuses the Black man of walking behind her and taking her cell phone out of her bag.

"I had it, and then you walked right behind me and you took it," she says in the video.

Kinley responds: "I did not take it."



Newsweek writes, "The video starts midway through the altercation with the woman with the misplaced phone speaking with the clerk, while the man accused and a woman he is with record the incident."

The woman behind the camera (Kinley's partner) suggests

resolving the issue by having the male store clerk call the woman's phone. The "Karen" refuses to give up her cell number and continues to search through her bag for the phone. The accuser then claims the Black man could have turned off the ringer.

# Nashville man charged with assault after viral attack on worker

Philadelphiaobserver.com

A Nashville man has been charged with assault after he and his mother physically assaulted a Black male worker in the secure garage of their apartment building on Saturday night.

As reported by The Daily Dot, cellphone footage shows "a white woman and her son shouting at a Black employee that he didn't 'belong' in the garage," the outlet writes. The worker, Johnny Martinez, was checking for parking permits on the cars when the woman and her son demanded to see his identification. When Martinez refused, the duo became unhinged, assaulted the man and the woman called police.

The white male in the clip, Edward Brennan, can be seen striking Martinez, who filmed the encounter and shared the footage online.

"As I was doing my rounds...I noticed people watching me," Mar-



tinez told the Daily Beast. Watch the moment via the YouTube clip below.



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# On the scene

## 1st Black actress Brittney Johnson to play Glinda in 'Wicked'

Posted by Audrey J. Bernard

**B**rittney Johnson will take over the role of Glinda in the Broadway blockbuster "Wicked" beginning performances on February 14, 2022 at Broadway's Gershwin Theatre (222 West 51st Street) making her the first Black actress to assume that role. She's a perfect pick for that role as she is currently Glinda's standby! Johnson is no stranger to the Broadway stage having appeared on Broadway in Les Misérables (Éponine), Motown, Sunset Boulevard, Beautiful: The Carole King Musical, and Kristin Chenoweth: For the Girls. Johnson will assume the role of Glinda opposite Lindsay Pearce as Elphaba, Alexandra Billings as Madame Morrible, Michael McCormick as The Wizard, Sam Gravitte as Fiyero, Jordan Barrow as Boq, Mili Diaz as Nessarose, and Michael X. Martin as Doctor Dillamond. The Broadway sensation "Wicked" looks at what happened in the Land of Oz... but from a different angle. Long



Brittney Johnson

before Dorothy arrives, there is another young woman, born with emerald-green skin, who is smart, fiery, misunderstood, and possessing an extraordinary talent. When she meets a bubbly blonde who is exceptionally popular, their initial rivalry turns into the unlikely

of friendships...until the world decides to call one "good," and the other one "wicked." With a thrilling score that includes the hits "Defying Gravity," "Popular" and "For Good." For more information about "Wicked" please visit [www.WickedTheMusical.com](http://www.WickedTheMusical.com).



Brittney Johnson assumes the role of Glinda in 'Wicked'

## 44th Annual Kennedy Center Honors' Honorees Joni Mitchell, Justino Diaz, Lorne Michaels, Bette Midler and Berry Gordy

By Audrey J. Bernard

**T**he 2021 Kennedy Center Honors returns to their traditional home and December slot on Sunday night in Washington, D.C. The honorees for the 44th annual event celebrating the arts were Justino Diaz, Berry Gordy, Lorne Michaels, Bette Midler and Joni Mitchell. After four years of no presidential involvement, President Joe Biden was seated with the honorees in the balcony box. The two-hour ceremony will be broadcast by CBS on Wednesday, December 22, 2021. The two-hour program is hosted by KCH recipient David Letterman. Past honoree Yo-Yo Ma opened the program with "The Star-Spangled Banner." Here is the complete list of performers and presenters to be seen on the two-hour program hosted by previous KCH recipient David Letterman. Past honoree Yo-Yo Ma opens the program with "The Star-Spangled Banner."

**JONI MITCHELL** (singer and songwriter): Presenters are Cameron Crowe, Dan Levy. "Case of You" and medley performed by Norah Jones "Big Yellow Taxi" performed by Ellie Goulding. "River" performed by Brandi Carlile "Both Sides Now" performed by Brittany Howard and Herbie Hancock.

**JUSTINO DIAZ** (opera singer): Presenters are Grace Bumbry, Denyse Graves, Chita Rivera.

Toreador song from "Carmen" performed by Denyse Graves, Hannah Shea, Christian Van Horn, Ariana Wehr. Finale from "Faust" performed by Anna Maria Martinez, Matthew Polenzani, Christian Van Horn. "En Mi Viejo San Juan" performed by his daughters Katya and Natascia.

**LORNE MICHAELS** (creator of "Saturday Night Live"): Presenter is Steve Martin; "Weekend Update" with Michael Che and Colin Hanks; "Weekend Update" with Seth Meyers and Amy Poehler; "Weekend Update" with Kevin Nealon; Other presenters are Jimmy Fallon, Kate McKinnon, Kenan Thompson, Kristen Wiig. "America" performed by Paul Simon.

**BETTE MIDLER** (singer and actress): Presented by Goldie Hawn, Barbara Hershey, Scarlett Johansson, Melissa Manchester. Film narration by Adele. "You Gotta Have Friends" performed by "Hello, Dolly!" cast members Kate Baldwin, Beanie Feldstein, Taylor Trensch. "Wind Beneath My Wings" performed by Kelli O'Hara. "From a Distance" performed by Billy Porter.

**BERRY GORDY** (Motown founder): Presenter is Smokey Robinson. Film narration by Oprah Winfrey. "Ain't Too Proud to Beg" segment performed by Broadway cast. Performances by Andra Day, Smokey Robinson, Stevie Wonder. "Higher Ground" performed by Stevie Wonder and many others.



2021 Kennedy Center Honors Honorees (bottom) Justino Diaz, Joni Mitchell, Berry Gordy (top) Lorne Michaels, Bette Midler



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# Culture



## Simone Biles is 2021 Time Athlete of the Year

Philadelphiaobserver.com

One thing's for sure: Time magazine always understands the assignment.

In a year in which both the coronavirus and mental health had a significant impact on the wonderful world of sports, the prestigious publication has made the perfect choice for its 2021 Time Athlete of the Year—and that would be the greatest gymnast of all time, Simone Biles.

From Time Magazine:

At a time when anxiety and depression rates are skyrocketing—the CDC reports a 50% rise in suicide attempts by teenage girls during the pandemic—and many people are struggling with what

they owe themselves vs. what others demand of them, Biles made clear the importance of prioritizing oneself and refusing to succumb to external expectations. With the eyes of the world upon her, she took the extraordinary step of saying, That's enough. I'm enough.

As we previously reported at The Root, the seven-time Olympic medalist entered the Tokyo Olympics as the overwhelming favorite in every event she was set to participate in. Sadly, she was forced to withdraw from nearly all of them due to a serious case of "the twisties" before she felt comfortable enough to compete in the balance beam competition and earn the bronze medal.



WWE Superstar Roman Reigns and daughter Joelle

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## 'Godfather of Hip-Hop journalism' Greg Tate dies at 64

By Stacy M. Brown, NNPA Newswire

Greg Tate, the renowned godfather of hip-hop journalism, has died.

The music and culture writer, who excelled as a musician, was 64.

"This hurts," radio host and music journalist Errol Nazareth exclaimed on Twitter. "I worshipped his writing. His book, 'Flyboy in The Buttermilk,' hugely impacted how I approached writing about music. And 'Everything but the Burden: What White People Are Taking from Black Culture' is essential," Nazareth wrote.

Public Enemy founder Chuck D retweeted Nazareth's post.

"Hurts indeed," Chuck wrote in response. "Greg Tate, a giant just like you, Errol."

In Tate's widely popular "Flyboy in The Buttermilk," he wrote about Ice-T, Miles Davis, Public Enemy, and others. In one of his many prolific pieces, Tate dissected the power of Chuck D.

"Those who dismiss Chuck D as a bull [crap] artist because he's loud, pro-black, and proud will likely miss out on gifts for blues pathos and black comedy," wrote in a 1988 piece on Public Enemy's "It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back."

"When he's on, his rhymes can stun-gun your heart and militarize your funny bone," Tate proclaimed.

Born in Dayton, Ohio, Tate



An active member of the Black Rock Coalition and the leader of the Burnt Sugar ensemble, Greg Tate leaves an astounding legacy

wrote for The Village Voice from 1987 to 2003.

He received global acclaim for his writings on culture and politics, featured in the New York Times, Washington Post, Rolling Stone, VIBE, and many other publications.

He interviewed a who's who of celebrities including Richard Pryor, Erykah Badu, Ice Cube, Jill Scott, and Chuck D.

His pen went beyond politics and music, writing for prominent museums like The Whitney and the Museum of Modern Art.

Of course, Tate also proved himself as a great author.

His books included "What White People Are Taking from Black Culture," "Flyboy In The

Buttermilk," and "The 100 Best Hip Hop Lyrics."

An active member of the Black Rock Coalition and the leader of the Burnt Sugar ensemble, Tate leaves an astounding legacy.

"Impossible to mimic, though we all tried," Hua Hsu, author of "A Floating Chinaman" and "Stay True."

"A giant, a good and big-hearted person, the realest one," Hsu continued.

Added Columbia Journalism Professor and New Yorker writer Jelani Cobb: "Hard to explain the impact that 'Flyboy in the Buttermilk' had on a whole generation of young writers and critics who read every page of it like scripture. It's still a clinic on literary brilliance."

## Tiger Woods set to return to golf with his 12-year-old son Charlie at PNC Championship

Philadelphiaobserver.com

After being involved in a car crash last year, professional golfer Tiger Woods will return to the green later this month, on Dec. 18.

Woods announced to his 6.5 million followers on Twitter

that he would be playing at the PNC Championship. He also mentioned that he wouldn't go at it alone as his 12-year-old son, Charlie, will be playing alongside him.

According to The Golf Channel, the PNC Championship, a father-son tournament, will

take place in Orlando, Florida, and is spread over two days. The 36-hole event will be Woods' first tournament since the duo participated in last year's PNC Championship. On Feb. 24, he suffered major injuries to his right leg in a car accident near Los Angeles.





## Truth Commission concludes inquiry into 'reign of terror' under Gambia's former Head of State

(GIN) –

**A** Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC) in the West African nation of The Gambia has wrapped up a sweeping three-year public inquiry into the rule of former president Yahya Jammeh, an ex-military man who held the nation in his grip with torture, killings and lootings while holding office.

Some 500 victims and witnesses gave statements to the Commission of the "reign of terror" that characterized life under Jammeh's despotic rule. In their final report, the Commission said it found that abuses resulted in the deaths of hundreds of Gambians and non-Gambians at the hands of the State or its agents.

"This report begins the countdown to the day Yahya Jammeh will have to face his victims," said Reed Brody of the International Commission of Jurists, who works with Jammeh's victims. "Whether it's in The Gambia or before an international court, it will be very difficult now for him to escape justice."

The Commission's 17 volume report was delivered to the President last week. It buoyed victims who, after hearing nearly three years of harrowing witness testimonies, feared the twice-delayed report could be shelved with a change of power.

The report calls for the prosecution of those most responsible for the murder of political opponents and a massacre of over 50 West African migrants in 2005 blamed on "rogue" elements of



Gambia's security services.

"The results are in," said Baba Hydera, whose father, the newspaper editor Deyda Hy-

dara, was assassinated in 2004. "We have the truth. Now we need justice, justice for my father, justice for all of Jammeh's victims,

and justice for Gambian society as a whole."

Jammeh and his family have been living in political exile in nearby Equatorial Guinea where the President of that nation said he would "protect" Jammeh from prosecution so that other heads of state would not fear harassment when they leave office.

Meanwhile, on Saturday, Dec. 4, some 860,000 voters or 53% of the vote total re-elected President Barrow with a comfortable margin. The results, however, have already been contested by four opposition leaders who on Sunday held a press briefing questioning an "inordinate delay" in the announcement of results. Barrow's recent alliance with Jammeh's old party has also raised fears of a possible return of the despot



## Mozambique gas project – over \$1B investment in a vulnerable nation

(GIN) –

**A**n investment of \$1.15 billion in a gas project in northern Mozambique is being challenged by Friends of the Earth which foresees a major increase in greenhouse gas emissions by up to 10 percent by 2022.

That's the equivalent of the combined annual emissions of all 27 EU member countries, according to FoE.

The decision to provide the finance package – one of the biggest ever offered to a foreign fossil fuel project by the UK Department of Trade and Foreign Affairs – is unlawful, the group maintains.

Mozambique is not only one of the poorest countries in the world, but also one of the most affected by the climate crisis and most vulnerable to its impacts. It is also in the middle of a violent Islamic State-led insurgency.

Under the contract, the \$20 billion development will extract 43 million tonnes of liquid natural gas (LNG) per year for 32 years from offshore gas fields in Cabo Delgado and will create 4.3 billion tonnes of combusted emissions.

FoE, represented by the UK law firm Leigh Day and the law firm Matrix Chambers will argue primarily

that the failure of UK's export credit agency to quantify the emissions produced from the use of the liquid natural gas (LNG) meant the conclusion that financing the project was compatible with the Paris Agreement, was unlawful.

The project undermines Mozambique's ability to meet its climate commitments under the Paris Agreement, claims FoE.

"How can Boris Johnson expect the rest of the world to pull the plug on fossil fuels when his government is giving such enthusiastic support to a development that could have the same climate impact as the entire EU aviation sector?" asked Will Rundle, head of legal at Friends of the Earth.

"The UK government should be supporting the building of a cleaner, safer future – not projects that will continue to fuel the climate emergency for many years to come," Rundle added.

Last month, the UK government ended overseas fossil fuel subsidies, ruling out support for a \$3.5 billion oil pipeline in East Africa.

"We believe the government acted unlawfully by failing to comply with its climate obligations, which is why we are taking legal action.

UK's export finance office had been accused by activists of "rank hypocrisy" over its record on fossil fuel financing. They acknowledged that there were both environmental and reputational risks in providing funding.

Lawyers at Friends of the Earth recently claimed that the gas development has worsened conflict in Cabo Delgado, northern Mozambique, where armed militants have killed an estimated 2,500 people and displaced almost 700,000 since 2017.

The construction stage of the project alone displaced more than 550 families from their land, destroyed the local fishing industry and attracted radicalized militants looking to cash in on the development, the lawyers said.

The US is also backing the \$20 billion methane gas development. The US Export-Import Bank (Exim) has provided a \$4.7bn loan to the project.

The government of Mozambique hopes the development will generate billions of dollars in revenue and catapult the country to middle income status by the mid-2030s – a big gamble at a time when the coronavirus pandemic has hit gas demand. w/pix of fishing in Cabo Delgado

## Lawyers for Democratic opposition in Benin cry foul as another popular leader is jailed

Dec. (GIN) –

**R**eckya Madougou, one of the strongest challengers to Benin's autocratic leader, Patrice Talon, will be observing the next election from her cell in jail. The 47 year old activist was found guilty of conspiring to assassinate political figures and sentenced to 20 years behind bars.

Madougou was the head of the party Les Démocrates and had been the face of "Don't touch my constitution!" – a civil society campaign that rallied against leaders seeking to extend their reign under the guise of constitutional reform.

The movement spread across West Africa. Supporters say she could have been Benin's first female presidential candidate from a major party.

But Madougou's historic bid for the presidency ended abruptly when security agents arrested her after a rally protesting the president's controversial electoral reforms.

Madougou was one of several Benin opposition leaders banned from running in an election in April in which Talon won a second term with 86 percent of the vote.

Critics say Talon, one of the richest men in Francophone Africa today, has eliminated almost all possibility of legitimate opposition. The judiciary's independence

has evaporated. Talon's former personal lawyer became president of Benin's Constitutional Court.

A new judicial body, the Economic Crime and Terrorism Court, or Criet, has targeted Talon's political rivals. After the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights repeatedly ruled against his administration's policies, Talon's government prevented the court from hearing cases brought against him by individuals and nongovernmental organizations

"The arbitrary arrest of opponents has led to the degradation of democracy in Benin," said Oumar Ndongo, academic director of the African Center for Strategic Intelligence in Dakar, Senegal.

"There was no justice," said Essowe Batamoussi, the judge who fled Benin and has applied for asylum in France, in an interview with the Washington Post. "We received an empty file and a threat: If we did not put her in jail, we were in danger."

Benin was long praised for its thriving multi-party democracy in a troubled region. But critics say the West African state's democracy has steadily eroded under Talon, a 63-year-old cotton magnate first elected in 2016.

"It's a sad day for our justice system," one of her lawyers, Robert Dossou, told the AFP news service. "I maintain there is no proof."





# Editorial–Opinion

## Why Stacey Abrams is important for Georgia and our democracy



By Ben Jealous

- You know the old game, two truths and a lie? Here are two truths and a lie about Georgia and Stacey Abrams, who recently announced that she's running for governor.

Let's start with the lie. The big lie is that Donald Trump lost Georgia in 2020 because of illegal votes. The big truth is that Stacey Abrams helped achieve not one, not two, but three legal statewide victories in Georgia for President Joe Biden and Senators Raphael Warnock and John Ossoff.

Another truth is that Brian Kemp was Georgia's vote suppressor-in-chief long before he became the governor. In every cycle, he manages to come up with new strategies that are even more

aggressive than ones he used before. Like a comic book villain, Kemp does not grow weary in his evildoing. He's always hatching a new plan more dastardly than the last one.

That's why we cannot take anything for granted, even though Abrams demonstrated last year how effectively she can mobilize voters. She has seen every anti-voting-rights trick in the book. Many of them were used against her when she ran for governor in 2018. Back then, Kemp was secretary of state and used the power of his office to shape election rules in his own favor.

As Abrams said at the time, Kemp "won under the rules of the game, but the game was rigged against the voters of Georgia."

If we want Georgia to be safe for democracy, two things need to happen in the next 12 months. First, Congress must pass urgently needed voting rights legislation in time to go into effect by next fall.

And second, everybody who showed up and turned out in Georgia in 2020 has to show up and turn out again—every individual and every group.

I'm proud that the organization I lead, People For the American Way, was among those that



Abrams credited with helping to achieve the historic victories of the past year. We're going to spend the next 11 months fighting to help her get elected. And we're asking everyone to join us in making the same level of commitment in Georgia that they made in 2020.

Because here's one more big truth. Stacey Abrams' campaign is not only important for Georgia.

It's important for our democracy.

It is easy to get discouraged by what's happening across the country, where politicians are passing laws to discourage voting and protect their own power. Right-wing activists who are angry that Donald Trump lost the election—who refuse to admit that he lost—are being put in positions with authority to oversee next year's elections. The very

basis of our democracy is being undermined.

There's something profoundly important about Stacey Abrams demonstrating leadership at this moment. Abrams has always been guided by a fundamental faith that people can make the system work. That faith has been at the heart of her organizing. It inspired her 2018 race and her work to make Georgia's law fair for all voters.

Many people might be tempted to lose faith in democracy when they see elected officials abusing their power to make it harder for some people to vote—and to limit the ability of their votes to make a difference.

Stacey Abrams knows what she is up against. And knowing all that, she still isn't giving up on our democracy. That's inspiring.

As governor, she will work tirelessly to make democracy, and Georgia, work for everyone. So let's get to work for her.

*Ben Jealous serves as president of People For the American Way. Jealous has decades of experience as a leader, coalition builder, campaigner for social justice and seasoned nonprofit executive. In 2008, he was chosen as the youngest-ever president and CEO.*

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## Paperback details Black students activism

Posted By Don Thomas

**M**ore than 50 years ago, African American students changed the course of history at predominantly white Swarthmore College by staging an eight-day takeover of the Admissions Office. Their book, *Seven Sisters and A Brother: Friendship, Resistance and Untold Truths Behind Black Student Activism in the 1960s*, portrays their strides to overcome family, economic and academic challenges, while documenting their struggle for equality and respect in a hostile environment. Their account is being released in paperback.

Located outside Philadelphia, PA, Swarthmore College has cited the demonstration as the most consequential action in its 157-year history. The book details privacy breaches by Swarthmore that would spark outrage today, but was of little concern in 1969 when Black students and their families were the victims: Swarthmore completed a report on Black admissions containing personal information such as SAT scores, Swarthmore grades, family incomes and occupations. The report was openly available to fellow students, professors and the public at the school's McCabe Library.

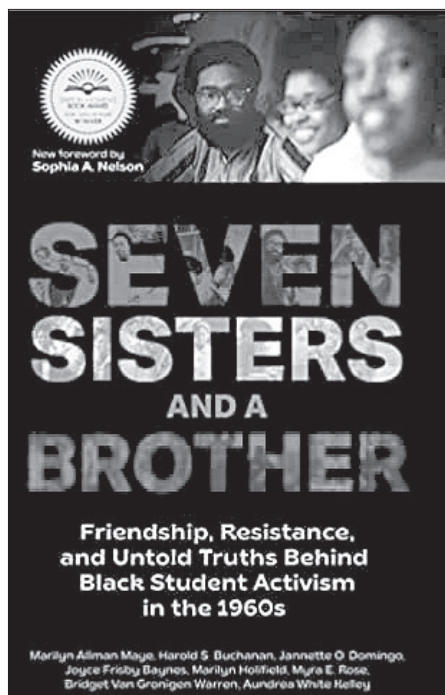
"We thought that was a breach of trust. That motivated us to just say, 'Enough is enough, something has to change,'" says Marilyn Holifield, one of the book's authors, who is a partner

at the mega law firm, Holland & Knight LLP, and a member of Swarthmore's Board of Managers.

Another student, Joyce Baynes recalled that the Black students gathered in their dorm rooms to discuss the racism they faced at the private liberal arts college, and to plot their response. "We would talk about how we were feeling and some of the things that were going on in our classes. We got agitated by the unfairness," says Baynes, who helped plan the protest but didn't participate because she had graduated the previous semester.

On January 9, 1969, the students sprang into action. Holifield, Marilyn Allman Maye, Harold S. Buchanan, Jannette O. Domingo and Aundrea White Kelley took over the Admissions Office, stopping all school activities. Soon students, Bridget Van Gronigen Warren and Myra E. Rose joined them, along with other Black students. Among their demands were that the college recruit more Black students and start a Black Studies Department.

With America still reverberating from the massive demonstrations after the police killing of George Floyd and other racial injustices, this narrative by the Black Swarthmore students underscores the lasting impact that activism can have, even if it isn't immediately apparent. The next year, Black enrollment increased and a Black Admissions Dean was hired. And, today Swarthmore is led by President Valerie Smith, a Black, female



scholar of African American literature.

Last year, at an event celebrating the book, Smith said, "The activism of these courageous alumni paved the way for future generations of Swarthmore students. At great risk to themselves, they fought for justice at the College and forever changed our trajectory."

The new 2021 paperback edition includes a foreword by award winning author and journalist Sophia Nelson as well as an Afterword that puts the students' 1960s era

protest in perspective with today's racial justice movement.

In the foreword, Nelson writes: "I cannot recommend this book enough. For years the media and some in the Swarthmore community portrayed the peaceful 1969 protest in a false light these collective narratives provide a very necessary and overdue retelling of the revolution that took place at Swarthmore College in 1969. The group of eight student protestors only recently have begun to receive credit for the school's greater inclusiveness, as well as

the influence their actions had on universities around the country. As they should."

The authors will donate their share of the proceeds from the sale of the book to support study, research, and celebration of Black history and culture at Swarthmore, and to support the Swarthmore Black Alumni Network Endowment Fund (SBAN). The SBAN Endowment will support student internships in collaboration with the Eugene Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility.

## Ponder this!

### Commitments should be sincere and serious



By Hazel Rosetta Smith

**W**ebster's dictionary defines the word commitment as: to bind, as by a promise, to do or perpetrate, as by a pledge. This is a word that is often a challenge, or one taken very lightly in our days of busyness. How or why, we do not keep commitments as promised may be related to the importance we apply to the commitment in the first place.

How many times have you waited for a return call from someone who said, I will call you right back and you find yourself waiting and waiting, until you decide to redial. While in the waiting spot, we get frustrated and angry, instead

of recalling that we too are guilty of falling short on a commitment.

Keep in mind, a commitment can get renegotiated. A promise may necessitate a change of mind as times change. What is most important to note is that it takes deep thought as to what the commitment entails and whether you are willing but may not be able to fulfil its responsibilities before you step into the fray. If your word cannot be held as your bond, you are not the one to commit and therefore set yourself up for ridicule after the fact.

I invite you to give thought to commitments you may have on your plate as I share a story, I watched on a nature program. The events leading to an epic love story of true commitment began in 1993, when Stjepan Vokić in eastern Croatia, came across an injured female stork whose wing had been severely damaged by a hunter's bullet.

Vokić decided to adopt the helpless bird, who had permanently lost her ability to fly and named her Malena, which means little or small in Croatian. To try to provide the bird with as normal a life as possible, he would build a nest for her on his roof every spring.

During winter, when the other storks migrated to warmer locations, Vokić would house Malena inside his warm garage.

In spring 2003, Vokić noticed that Malena had a regular companion, a male stork, whom he named Klepetan. When winter came, the stork flew away to warmer grounds, but to Vokić's astonishment, he returned the following year to spend the spring and summer months with Malena, a routine he has maintained for fourteen years.

An electronic tracker fitted on Klepetan indicated that he spends the winters 8,000 miles away in Cape Town, Africa. The exhausted bird's migration route takes him over the Horn of Africa, Somalia, Sinai, and the Iraqi deserts before arriving in Croatia by March 24th annually.

Over the years, the stork couple have had sixty-six chicks, have become national and global celebrities, with a children's book and a play dedicated to their undying affection for one another. The storyline is captivating because it focuses on Klepetan's unflinching commitment.

The storks have been the joy of the villagers who gather around



Storks Klepetan and Malena

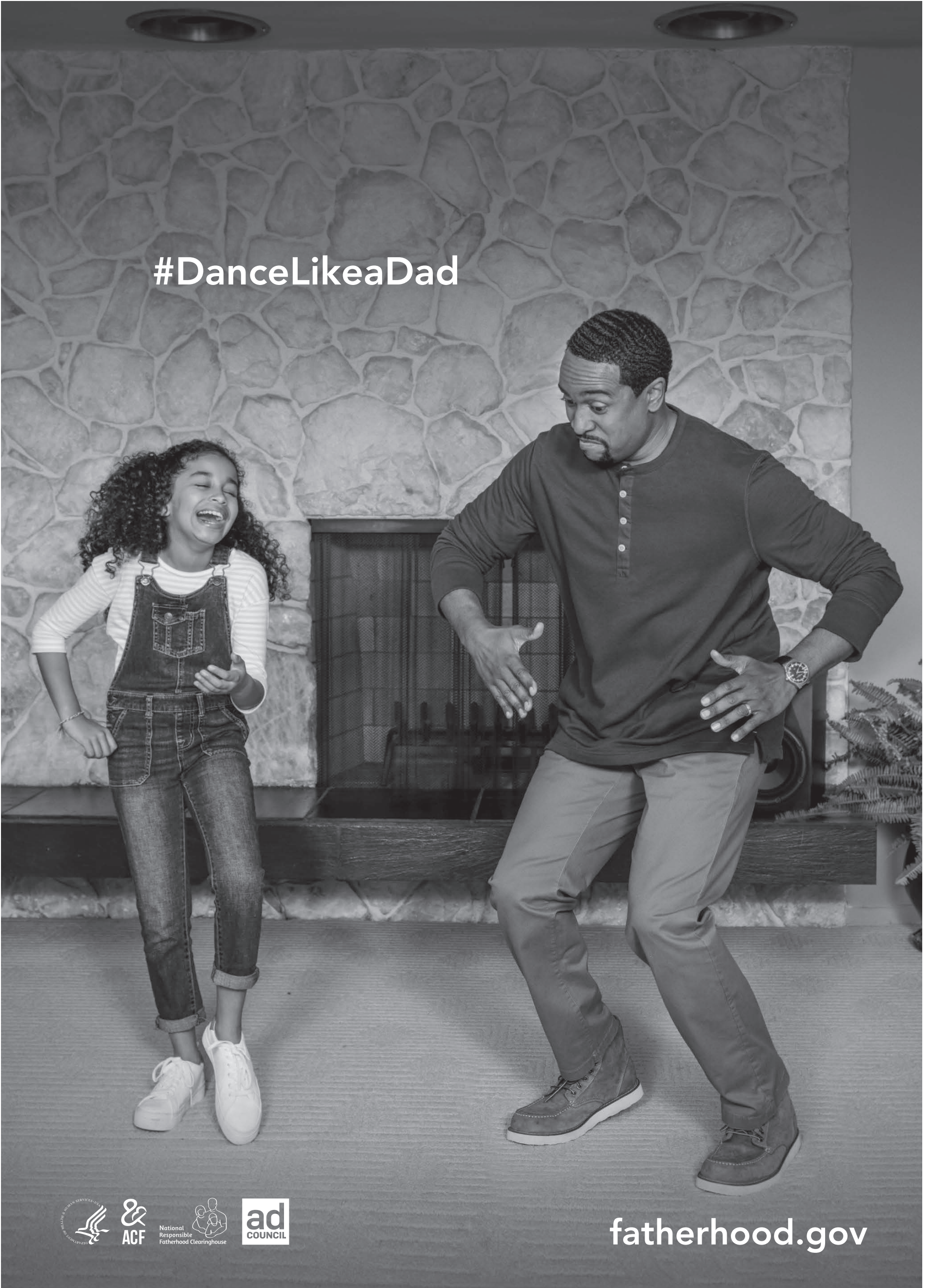
the house come springtime, watching the sky for Klepetan's return. Ask yourself these questions: Is there anyone or anything that you accepted as a commitment? Is it a burden or a passion?

[Hazel Rosetta Smith is a journalist, playwright, and artistic director

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# Sports



**Andrew  
Rosario,  
Sports  
Editor**

## NFL: not for long part 1

By Andrew Rosario

If there is one thing that has been consistent about the National Football League this year, it is that week after week, there has been no team that is guaranteed to come away with a victory. Hence the moniker that the NFL stands for: "Not For Long!" This week the Philadelphia Observer takes a look at the teams in the American Conference.

**AFC East:** After getting to within one game of the Super Bowl last year the Buffalo Bills led by quarterback Josh Allen (they lost to the Chiefs) were the heavy favorite to not only win the division but represent the conference in the big game this year. After 7 weeks, they sported a 5-2 record justifying their expectation. Since then, after losing to the reigning Super Bowl champion Tampa Bay Buccaneers in overtime last Sunday, their record fell to 7-6. The Bills host Carolina Sunday (Allen expected to play after an ankle injury) will be looking to get back on track before traveling to face the first place New England Patriots (9-4) who for the first time under head coach Bill Belichick failed to get to the postseason or the first time since 2008. Belichick drafted quarterback Mac Jones, cut veteran Cam Newton and are currently on a 7-game winning streak. The Pats have a big test Sunday when they travel to Indianapolis to face the Colts.



*Bills Allen Has Struggled This Year  
Photo: Special to the NY Beacon*

**AFC North:** You talk about a rollercoaster division just look at the records of these teams. They don't call it the Black and Blue

division for nothing. First place Baltimore (8-5) loses to Cleveland (7-6) in a game that saw Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson go

down with an ankle injury. The Cincinnati Bengals (7-6) loses to the San Francisco 49ers and the Pittsburgh Steelers (6-6-1) lose to

the Minnesota Vikings. Currently, the Bengals have the best division record (3-1) and best conference record (5-3). As it looks now, only one team will come out with a playoff spot.

**AFC South:** The Tennessee Titans are on top (9-4) after shutting out the Jacksonville Jaguars 20-0. The Jags go on the road to face a very desperate Steelers team. The Indianapolis Colts (7-6) threw a shutout as well taking down the Houston Texans 31-0. Know that the Belichick defense will throw everything at Colts quarterback Carson Wentz.

**AFC West:** The Kansas City Chiefs, who lost to the Bucs in last year's Super Bowl, started the year not looking like that same team. They began the year 3-4 as head coach head Andy Reid took heat for the team's early struggle. After destroying the Las Vegas 48-9, the Chiefs' (9-4) winning streak is at 6 and they are back in the conversation of going deep the playoffs. Right behind them are the Los Angeles Chargers (8-5) after taking out the New York Giants 37-21.

Week 15 begins tonight when the Chiefs and Chargers clash in Los Angeles. Pundits who claim they know the eventual outcome of the games are delusional. That is why the NFL stands for: Not For Long!

Next week, the Philadelphia Observer will take a look at the teams in the National Conference.



*Jones Thrives Under Belichick  
Photo: Special to the NY Beacon*



*Jackson Injury Hurts The Ravens  
Photo: Special to the NY Beacon*