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TRUMP APPOINTED JUDGE CANNON MAKES MIND-BOGGING RULING IN DOCUMENTS CASE



Legal experts worry about her fitness to preside over the high profile classified documents case against Trump, p3



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Trump appointed judge makes mind-boggling ruling in documents case

On Monday, Aug. 7, the Trump appointee, and unabashed fan of the ex-president rejected special counsel Jack Smith's attempt to preserve "grand jury secrecy" through sealed filings, raising more questions about her handling of the case.

By Stacy M. Brown (NNPA Newswire)

Judge Aileen Cannon's fitness to preside over the high-profile classified documents case involving former President Donald Trump has become increasingly worrisome for legal experts.

On Monday, Aug. 7, the Trump appointee, and unabashed fan of the ex-president rejected special counsel Jack Smith's attempt to preserve "grand jury secrecy" through sealed filings, raising more questions about her handling of the case.

In her ruling, Cannon questioned the "legal propriety" of Smith's use of an "out-of-district grand jury to continue to investigate and/or seek post-indictment hearings."

She demanded that Smith explain this by August 22.

The complexity of the Mar-a-Lago documents case, with portions of the grand jury work conducted in Cannon's district

and Washington, D.C., appeared to perplex the judge, some legal analysts opined.

Former U.S. Attorney Joyce Vance expressed concern online, suggesting that Cannon's latest order might call into question her fitness to preside over the case.

Andrew Weissmann, a former Assistant U.S. Attorney, echoed the sentiment, stating that Cannon's order seemed "off base."

Weissmann further criticized Cannon's understanding of the case, arguing that the obstruction charges under investigation could have been brought in either Florida or D.C., thus warranting investigation in either district.

He also highlighted that certain alleged conduct occurred outside Florida.

"I'm betting that Judge Cannon's account of the out-of-district investigation is not the full story," former senior Department of Justice official Harry Litman said in a Raw Story report.

"But hard to see how she can justify not sealing her order referring to another Grand Jury. Could this be a possible vehicle for taking her up and seeking her recusal? Not clear yet."

Further, MSNBC host and former prosecutor Katie Phang also

remarked that Cannon's moves could result in her recusal.

"If the DOJ filed under seal certain documents, and Judge Cannon just disclosed the existence of an otherwise confidential grand jury proceeding, we might be at the motion for recusal stage for the DOJ," Phang stated.

On Monday, Cannon also removed two filings by prosecutors regarding defense attorney Stanley Woodward's potential conflicts of interest from the record.

Prosecutors had sought a so-called Garcia hearing to address the conflicts, but Cannon rejected the request.

She said prosecutors failed to explain why the meeting must be kept confidential adequately.

Previously, Cannon slowed down the FBI's investigation by issuing rulings in favor of Trump, including appointing a "special master" to review seized files at Mar-a-Lago, a decision later overturned by an appeals court.

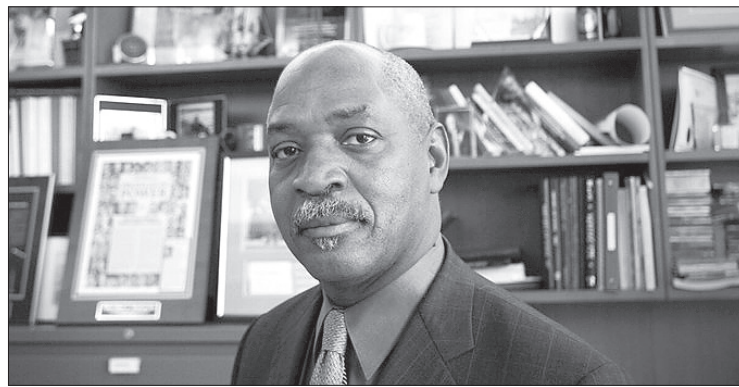
Critics have pointed out other errors in Cannon's short tenure as a judge, such as closing jury selection in a child pornography case, potentially violating the defendant's right to a public trial, and neglecting to swear in a prospective jury pool, a mandatory procedure.

Trump appointed Cannon, 42, during the final days of his presidency in 2020.

Experts said she has limited experience on the bench, with only eight criminal trials resulting in jury verdicts.

Trump faces 40 counts in the classified documents case, a trial that would count as Cannon's most high-profile.

"Judge Cannon clearly shows her ignorance (bias? both?); the obstruction crimes that were investigated are charges that could have been brought in [Florida] or in DC and thus could be investigated in either district," Weissmann wrote on Twitter. "And there was conduct that is alleged to have occurred outside [Florida]."



Renowned civil rights advocate Charles J. Ogletree Jr. dies, leaving a legacy of justice and empowerment

Ogletree, who had battled Alzheimer's disease since 2015, reportedly died at his home in Maryland.

By Stacy M. Brown (NNPA Newswire)

Charles J. Ogletree Jr., a distinguished Harvard Law School professor, celebrated attorney, and leading civil rights advocate, has died at 70.

Ogletree, who had battled Alzheimer's disease since 2015, reportedly died at his home in Maryland.

"Charles was a tireless advocate for civil rights, equality, human dignity, and social justice," Harvard Law School Dean John F. Manning said, according to the Associated Press.

"He changed the world in so many ways, and he will be sorely missed in a world that very much needs him."

Dorothy Roberts, a writer, social advocate, and professor at Penn Law, praised Ogletree's impact at Harvard Law School.

She admired his role in inspiring confidence, promoting learning, and encouraging activism among Black students and future generations.

"When I started at Harvard Law School in 1977, Tree was a third-year student and president of the Black Law Students Association,"

Roberts recalled in a tweet.

"Thank goodness he was there. He set a tone for me and the other Black students — then, and for generations to come — to be confident learners, lawyers, and activists. Rest in love and power."

Affectionately known as "Tree," Ogletree was born in California and graduated with a law degree from Harvard Law School in 1978.

He became an influential legal theorist and a prominent figure in the legal community.

Throughout his illustrious career, Ogletree actively contributed to the National Bar Association (NBA) and its affiliate, the Washington Bar Association (WBA).

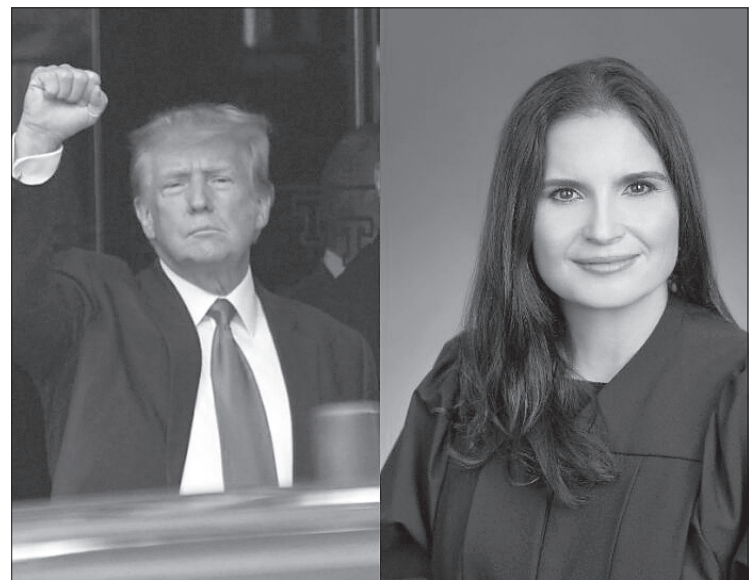
In 2001, he received the Charles Hamilton Houston Medallion of Merit from the Washington Bar Association.

Then, in 2010, he was inducted into the WBA Hall of Fame.

In a news release, the NBA remarked that Ogletree was known for his mentorship and service, in which he emphasized the need to use the law as "an instrument of social and political change" and "a tool to empower the dispossessed and disenfranchised."

"Professor Ogletree was an invaluable member of our Association," said NBA President Dominique D. Calhoun.

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U.S. District Judge Tanya S. Chutkan to oversee former President Trump's election interference case

Chutkan has a history with Trump. She denied his 2021 motion to prevent records from being given to the January 6 committee.

By Stacy M. Brown (NNPA Newswire)

Judge Tanya S. Chutkan will preside over the case of former President Donald Trump's alleged efforts to overturn the 2020 election.

This decision comes after Chutkan's previous involvement in key motions related to the January 6 committee's investigation.

Chutkan has a history with Trump. She denied his 2021 motion to prevent records from being given to the January 6 committee.

In her decision, she emphasized that "Presidents are not kings, and Plaintiff is not president." This ruling showcased her commitment to upholding the principles of de-

mocracy and the rule of law.

A trailblazer in her own right, Chutkan's background is impressive.

She was born in Kingston, Jamaica and moved to the United States to pursue higher education.

She earned a bachelor's degree in economics from George Washington University and later graduated from the University of Pennsylvania Law School.

Chutkan began her law career working in private practice and later at the District of Columbia Public Defender Service.

After that, she joined the law firm Boies, Schiller, & Flexner LLP, where she specialized in white-collar criminal defense for a total of 12 years.

Legal experts described Chutkan as incredibly dedicated to justice and fair representation as a public defender. They said her commitment to ensuring equal

access to justice was evident.

Her colleagues said her extensive experience in complex legal matters and criminal defense undoubtedly contributed to her well-rounded understanding of the law.

Chutkan was appointed to the District Court for the District of Columbia by former President Barack Obama in 2014.

Chutkan has a reputation for being a fair and committed judge.

Still, she hasn't shied away from imposing harsher sentences than the Justice Department initially requested in cases involving January 6 defendants.

When federal prosecutors suggested that Matt Mazzocco serve three months of home confinement and probation after he pleaded guilty to misdemeanor charges of storming the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, Chutkan insisted that there must be consequences "beyond sitting

at home" for individuals involved in an attempted violent overthrow of the U.S. government.

"If Mr. Mazzocco walks away with probation and a slap on the wrist, that's not going to deter anyone trying what he did again," Chutkan asserted from the bench.

"It does not, in this Court's opinion, indicate the severity — the gravity of the offenses that he committed on Jan. 6."

Ultimately, she sentenced Mazzocco to 45 days in jail and 60 hours of community service.

Many observers said her stance reflects a belief in the importance of holding individuals accountable for their actions during the insurrection.

The judge has refused to bow to political pressure or executive privilege.

In addition to denying Trump's emergency motion in 2021, attempting to prevent the National



Archives from turning over his administration's records to the January 6 committee, she has remained steadfast in upholding the law.

"For a lot of people, I seem to check a lot of boxes: immigrant, woman, Black, Asian. Your qualifications are always going to be subject to criticism and you have to develop a thick skin," Chutkan was quoted as saying in a February 2022 profile posted by the federal judiciary.

With Trump facing as much as 641 years in prison, experts don't have definitive answer if a former president can be jailed

By Stacy M. Brown(NNPA)

Former President Donald Trump once famously said he could shoot someone on Fifth Avenue and go unpunished.

"I could stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody, and I wouldn't lose voters," he boasted during a 2016 rally in Iowa.

Seven years, two impeachments later, a civil sexual assault conviction, three indictments, and a fourth coming soon — Trump just may have been right.

The GOP's 2024 presidential frontrunner currently faces a staggering 78 felony charges spanning three criminal cases, many of which carry the potential for significant prison time.

Having faced judges in Florida, New York, and Washington, Trump hasn't been required to take the standard mugshot, be perp walked, or even post bail or bond.

For example, he faces 34 criminal charges in New York where the average cash bail amount for a felony is approximately \$39,000 per offense, or, in his case, a total of \$1.36 million.

Typically, federal bail for felonies could run as much as \$200,000 per felony, according to the Bail Agents Network.

That means that an individual seeking bail on 44 felony charges could have to ante up as much as \$8.8 million to remain free pending trial.

Meanwhile, if Trump is convicted on all 78 counts, assuming he receives the maximum statutory penalties, he could receive an astonishing 641 years in prison.

But there remains the Fifth Avenue question.

Could a judge legally sentence the former president to a prison cell?

A major obstacle could be a law that guarantees lifetime Secret Service protection to all ex-presidents.

President Obama signed an updated version of that law in 2012, granting protection to minor children until the age of 16 and spouses unless and until they remarry.

The law could mean that Trump may have some say in his incarceration and the safety measures taken during any potential prison sentence.

Since 1965, lifetime protection has been afforded to former presidents, except for Richard Nixon, who waived it 11 years after his resignation.

Chuck Rosenberg, a former top federal prosecutor, and counsel to then-FBI Director James B. Comey, offered his insights.

"Any federal district judge ought to understand it raises enormous and unprecedented logistical issues," Rosenberg told the Washington Post.

He said probation, fines, community service, and home confinement are all alternatives.

According to Rosenberg, the possibility of Trump serving prison time is "theoretically, yes and practically, no."



On the Secret Service's role, experts and commentators have varying opinions.

Mike Lawlor, an associate professor at the University of New Haven, suggested that Trump would likely have "one or two secret service details sitting outside his cell with the correctional officers" if he were to serve prison time.

Michele Deitch, an expert on prison oversight at the University of Texas at Austin's LBJ School of Public Affairs, told Business Insider that a former president would "have a target on his back" and be closely monitored by the Secret Service.

Ronald Kessler, an author specializing in the Secret Service, provided further insights into the potential security arrangements.

He estimated that Trump's current Secret Security detail could consist of up to 30 officers, with 10 to 12 agents on duty at any time.

Kessler dismissed the notion of just two agents posted at a prison, deeming it "crazy" given the dangerous environment. "Just think it through," he told freelance journalist Dave Roos.

"What would just two agents do in such a dangerous environment?"

However, Kessler emphasized that if Trump were imprisoned, he would receive no other special treatment and would not be granted access to privileges like a telephone.

"[The prison] would have to serve him meals in his cell," Kessler said. "It would just be pure protection."

The prospects of Trump's potential prison sentence and the accompanying Secret Service protection have raised complex questions that prosecutors may not consider.

Still, the charges the twice-impeached and thrice-indicted ex-president faces come with the possibility of serious prison time.

If Trump is remanded to prison, he "certainly would not be part of the general population," retired FBI special agent Ken Gray told Business Insider.

"You could almost put him in a separate little hut."

Finally, in an interview on MSNBC, Former Attorney General Eric Holder said the Secret Service could punt its responsibilities of protecting Trump to the Bureau of Prisons.

"If they were called upon to imprison a former president, I think they could come up with a way to do it," Holder said.

"There is a way in which the Justice Department, the Bureau of Prisons could actually do it," he insisted.

Enraged Trump wants Supreme Court to intervene on indictments

By Stacy M. Brown(NNPA Newswire)

Former President Donald Trump wasted no time after his most recent arraignment on charges of attempting to manipulate the 2020 presidential race, as he called upon the U.S. Supreme Court to intervene in the 2024 contest.

In his latest rant, Trump ironically argued that the ongoing prosecutions constitute "election interference," the allegation he is facing in his latest indictment.

Through a post on the social media platform Truth Social on the day following his latest indictment, Trump vented his frustrations.

"My political opponent has hit me with a barrage of weak lawsuits, including D.A., A.G., and others, which require massive amounts of my time & money to adjudicate," he railed.

"Resources that would have gone into ads and rallies will now have to be spent fighting these Radical Left Thugs in numerous courts throughout the Country. I am leading in all Polls, including against Crooked Joe, but this is not a level playing field."

Claiming "Election Interference," Trump urged the U.S. Supreme Court, with most justices appointed by and friendly to the former president, to step in and stop his prosecutions.

It's not immediately clear what, if anything, the Supreme Court can do for Trump now.

Typically, the high court considers cases on appeal from lower courts.

The latest indictment against Trump included four criminal counts relating to his efforts to overturn his defeat to President Joe Biden in 2020.

The special counsel, Jack Smith, led the investigation, which revealed an extensive conspiracy involving Trump and six co-conspirators.

The plot aimed to maintain Trump's hold on the presidency through a complex scheme that violated several federal statutes, including Conspiracy to Defraud the United States.

The indictment focused on Trump's actions leading up to and during the events of January 6, 2021,



when a violent pro-Trump mob stormed the U.S. Capitol, disrupting a congressional meeting meant to confirm Biden's electoral victory.

Pleading not guilty in federal court in Washington, D.C., Trump has suggested that the case be moved to West Virginia, which heavily supported him in the 2016 and 2020 elections.

He argued that a jury in D.C. might be biased due to its Democratic-leaning population.

Trump Indictment video
In June, Smith arraigned Trump on federal charges related to mishandling classified documents after leaving the presidency.

In April, prosecutors in New York charged the twice-impeached former president with falsifying business records connected to hush money payments made to a porn star who claimed to have had extramarital affairs with him.

Trump has denied all allegations of wrongdoing.

It has also become evident that Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis will pursue indictments against him this month, investigating his and his allies' attempts to overturn his defeat in Georgia's 2020 election.

Still, despite three indictments, a pending indictment, a civil sexual assault conviction, and a conviction of his New York-based business for fraud and other financial crimes, Trump is the leading contender in the Republican presidential primary.

His popularity and support among Republican voters continue to propel him as a top contender in the 2024 presidential race.

White boaters in Montgomery messed around and found out

Within moments, several African American men came to the guard's rescue, pulverizing the aggressors.
By Stacy M. Brown(NNPA Newswire)

UPDATE:
Montgomery Police Chief Darryl J. Albert announced assault charges were filed against Richard Roberts, 48; Allen



Todd, 23; and Zachery Shipman, 25; at a Tuesday news conference. Albert said one of the men is in custody and the two others are expected to turn themselves over to police Tuesday afternoon.

"There was no need for this event to take the path it did," Albert told reporters. He said investigators do not believe the incident was racially motivated. "The people of Montgomery, we're better than that. We're a fun city and we don't want this type of activity to shed a dark eye on what this city's all about."

In a quintessential mess around and find out moment, a group of

white boaters on the riverfront in Montgomery, Alabama, attacked a Black security guard simply for doing his job.

Within moments, several African American men came to the guard's rescue, pulverizing the aggressors.

Among those helping the guard was an individual dubbed "Black Aqua man" because he swam across the river to intercede.

The guard had been diligently working and requested the boaters move their vessel to allow a ship to dock.

Continued on page 5

Renowned civil rights advocate Charles J. Ogletree Jr. dies, leaving a legacy of justice and empowerment

From page 3

"His contributions toward the profession and efforts to advance reparations for our people left an indelible mark on the conscience of America for generations to come."

Calhoun called Ogletree a visionary leader and vowed that the Bar Association would continue strides toward justice and equality.

Ogletree's work mainly centered around race, class, and criminal justice.

He served as the lead counsel to Anita Hill during her sexual harassment allegations against Clarence Thomas, then a U.S. Supreme Court nominee.

His involvement provided legal counsel and helped Hill devise a media strategy, including a news conference to announce her successful lie detector test.

Ogletree credited much of his professional success to the opportunities afforded him due to the Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education*, which found segregated public schools unconstitutional.

He organized Harvard's Criminal Justice Institute, establishing the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice and co-chairing the Reparations Coordinating Committee.

Many recounted how strongly he believed in using the law as a catalyst for social and political change, advocating for the empowerment of marginalized communities.

He led efforts to improve clinical training in public and indigent defense.

By establishing Harvard's Criminal Justice Institute, Ogletree paved the way for students to gain valuable experience in Boston's juvenile and district courts.

Additionally, he created the Saturday School program, supporting Black students on Harvard's predominantly white campus.

The program featured several influential speakers, including the Rev. Jesse Jackson, philosopher and now presidential candidate Cornel West, and actor Danny Glover.

One notable attendee of the Saturday School was Barack Obama, who considered Ogletree

a mentor and sought his advice frequently, even during his presidency.

"Michelle and I are heartbroken to hear about the passing of our friend Charles Ogletree," Obama said in a statement.

"He took time on weekends to run something called 'Saturday School' for Black students who didn't necessarily have the support systems at home to get them through the difficult first years of law school," Obama recalled.

The former president noted that the school had become so popular that students from every background began showing up to hear Ogletree explain subjects in a way they all could understand.

"It was an example of the kind of person Charles has always been unfailingly helpful, and driven by a genuine concern for others," Obama asserted.

"He was an advocate for social justice, an incredible professor, and a mentor to many — including us."

Ogletree is survived by his wife, Pamela Barnes, and his children, Charles Ogletree III and Rashida Ogletree.

White boaters in Montgomery messed around and found out

From page 4

However, the white boaters violently refused, attacking the guard who tossed his hat in the air, apparently as a way of acknowledging that "it's on."

Eyewitness Lauren Spivey told CNN that for nearly 45 minutes the vessel obstructed the docking space at Harriott II Riverboat at Riverfront Park.

"The man, the white individual, hurried down there, and that's when things escalated," Spivey said, adding that the guard simply informed the man that he needed to relocate to create space for the larger riverboat.

"[The white boaters] just didn't think the rules applied to them. It was so avoidable. This never had to have happened," Leslie

Mawhorter, an eyewitness to the incident, told Yahoo! News.

"Everything just spiraled from there," Mawhorter said. "I knew something was going to go down, because their attitude was just, 'You can't tell us what to do.' They were going to be confrontational regardless of who you were."

The confrontation escalated, with punches thrown and chairs wielded as weapons.

At least one individual was tossed into the water amidst the chaotic clash.

Police detained several individuals, and charges are pending.

Montgomery Mayor Steven Reed commended law enforcement for their rapid response to detain those responsible for assaulting the security guard.

"Those who choose violence will be held accountable by our

criminal justice system," he said. "While there is a lot of activity and interest in this, we know that we'll come through this together as a community collectively as we have other situations."

Major Saba Coleman said an ongoing investigation has led to the issuance of four active warrants.

However, the number is flexible, as authorities meticulously review additional footage, indicating the likelihood of more warrants.

"It was inexcusable behavior," Christa Owen, who was on the Harriot, told NBC News, adding that she believes alcohol was a factor.

"I can't imagine anyone just disregarding moving their boat 2 feet so that a three-story dinner cruise boat could park back in that spot."

Concerns mount among democrats as Black voter turnout drops, impacting Biden's reelection bid

By Stacy M. Brown (NNPA Newswire)

Democrats are increasingly worried about a potential drop in Black voter turnout next year, particularly among Black men, their most loyal constituency, who played a pivotal role in securing President Biden's victory in 2020 and are crucial to his bid for reelection.

The Washington Post analyzed the Census Bureau's turnout survey and found that Black voter turnout saw a significant ten percentage-point decline in last year's midterms compared to 2018, a more substantial drop than among any other racial or ethnic group.

While Democrats initially downplayed these warning signals due to other victories in 2022, such as gaining a U.S. Senate seat in Pennsylvania and Senator Raphael G. Warnock's reelection in Georgia, the decline in Black turnout has become a significant concern for the party as they look ahead to the next presidential contest in 2024.

States like Georgia, which are crucial to Democrats' strategy for mobilizing Black voters in significant numbers, saw lower turnout among younger and male Black voters in the midterms, according to internal party analysis.

W. Mondale Robinson, the founder of the Black Male Voter Project, highlighted the urgent turnout problem among Black men, telling the Post that many are "sporadic or non-voters" registered but haven't voted in recent presidential elections.

He expressed disappointment that the Democratic Party seems more focused on converting conservative-leaning white women in the suburbs, considering Black men as potential swing voters who need targeted efforts to be mobilized.

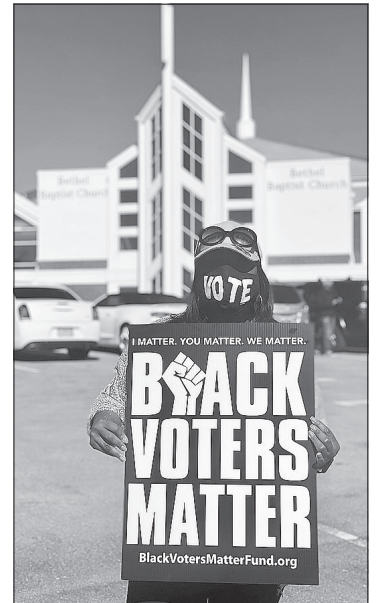
In response to the growing concern, Biden's political team acknowledged the issue and pledged to act, especially among younger Black men.

Cedric L. Richmond, a former Biden adviser now serving as a senior adviser at the Democratic National Committee, emphasized to the Post's researchers the need to connect with Black voters, highlighting the benefits they have received from Biden administration policies.

The party aims to learn from past shortcomings and draw explicit connections between its policies and the well-being of Black communities.

The challenge is particularly acute among Black men who often feel alienated from the political process due to historical policies that increased incarceration and job losses in manufacturing sectors.

Many express disillusionment after experiencing upheaval from a global pandemic and witnessing escalating violence in urban areas. To win their support, Demo-



crats must focus on highlighting specific policy benefits rather than solely concentrating on criticism of former President Trump and Republican extremism, the analysts found.

Despite Black women historically showing more robust voting enthusiasm, concerns over Black voter turnout also extend to this group.

Biden's reelection garnered a tepid reaction in a Washington Post/Ipsos poll of Black Americans, with only 17 percent expressing enthusiasm about another term.

The poll also revealed that most Black Americans wouldn't consider voting for Trump, but a significant portion is not enthusiastic about Biden's reelection.

Terrance Woodbury, chief executive of HIT Strategies, a polling firm focused on young, non-white voters, warned liberal groups of the urgency to convince Black voters that they have benefited from Biden's time in office.

The messaging needs to shift from attacking Trump to emphasizing policy benefits and addressing the belief among Black Americans that their votes don't matter—a significant barrier to voter participation.

Brittany Smith, executive director of the Philadelphia-based Black Leadership PAC, which mobilizes Black voters, said she has noticed a shift in how Black people respond to get-out-the-vote efforts.

Also, as much as Biden has praised Black voters and the Black Press, the campaign has done little thus far to utilize Black-owned newspapers and media companies to help reach African Americans.

"Everybody knows that there's no path, whether it's President Biden or any other Democrat, federal or state, there's no path to win that does not involve massive turnout from Black voters," Cliff Albright, co-founder and executive director of Black Votes Matter, told the Post.

"But they can't just think that it's just going to happen on its own. They've got to invest in making that happen."

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Editorial - Opinion

Safeguarding charitable medicines programs in America

By Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., President, CEO, National Newspaper Publishers Association

All Americans should have equal access to high quality healthcare. As our nation steadily emerges out of the awful debilitating aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the majority of communities of color, and in particular the African American community, are all facing lingering challenges and prolonged difficulties in having access to affordable and quality healthcare.

The United States Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has many important and life-saving public health related programs that are structured and funded to ensure access to the best of healthcare offerings including the provision of affordable pharmaceuticals with respect to the most vulnerable and underserved communities across the nation.

One of those important governmental healthcare programs is known as the Charitable Medicines Program (340B). The 340B program began in the early 1990s when Congress wanted to require pharmaceutical manufacturers, as a condition of benefiting from government programs, to donate at low or no cost prescription drugs to charitable hospitals. These hospitals, overwhelmingly located in underserved urban and rural communities with patients of all races and ethnicities, were in turn expected to use these discount price medicines to serve patients who otherwise could not afford these drugs.

Today, Americans are facing unprecedented times. We are rebuilding our economy from a global pandemic. But there is another epidemic in this country (Entities putting profits over people) which must be addressed, and it must be addressed now. It's one of the few things reasonable Americans on all sides of the political spectrum can agree on these days. Where it happens, there ought to be robust, bipartisan reform efforts to fix it. When it happens inside the context of a government program meant to help the poorest among us, it should mean robust oversight from the Congress and the Administration. That's exactly



what's going on now with the charitable medicines program known as "340B."

For a while, the program worked as intended. The average discount on a 340B drug is nearly 60%, and for many drugs it's much more than that. But over time, greed has cropped up and made a mockery of the program resulting in practices which furthers health inequities in our nation.

The definition of a "charitable hospital" was never well-defined in law, and today 57% of all hospitals participate in the drug discount program. They are happy to accept the cheaper medicines, but where do they end up? Out of the nearly 13,000 hospitals and community pharmacies participating in the 340B program today, fully six in ten are in middle class and affluent areas, not the poorer zip codes the program is meant to serve.

How is this possible? How has a program Congress created to get Big Pharma to give affordable drugs to charitable hospitals gone so far off the rails? The answer is that no one is minding the store in Washington. There are zero requirements for hospitals to use the cost savings from 340B to help needy patients, and there isn't any rule requiring these hospitals to let

patients know they are eligible for these drugs.

In addition, stand-alone hospitals are now the exception compared to the rule of a broad hospital network with facilities in diverse income areas. A hospital or clinic that qualifies for the discounted drugs in this program might be one of dozens of health care centers in a network conglomerate. As a result, the drug price reductions are eagerly gobbled up and the drugs fed into the larger system. To put a fine point on it, medicines intended for poor urban and rural areas are being re-routed and sold at full price to insured patients in more affluent areas. That's the definition of health inequity.

This is not a mere theoretical concern. Last year, the New York Times <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/24/health/bon-secours-mercy-health-profit-poor-neighborhood.html> broke a story that Bon Secours, a hospital network in the Richmond, VA area, was accepting 340B discount drugs at Richmond Community Hospital, not telling local patients they were eligible for these free-to-inexpensive medicines, and selling the drugs for full price to patients in more affluent hospitals in their network. This led Richmond mayor

Levar Stoney to send a letter to Bon Secours, charging them with using "loopholes [to increase] profit margins for the hospital system while they have reduced services in one of our predominantly Black communities."

Notably, Mayor Stoney also called on the Biden Administration to increase oversight of the 340B program: "I request for your administration to urgently investigate the effectiveness and unintended consequences of 340B—not only regarding Bon Secours in the City of Richmond, but in other localities across the country."

Untold stories like this exist in communities across the country. But the fact is the hospital lobbyists have influenced Congressional and Administration oversight officials from both political parties for decades. Every Congressman has a hospital in their district, and the 340B program must be used by the hospitals as Congress mandated.

That's why I was proud to hear about a panel earlier this year organized by the Rev. Al Sharpton on this topic where he stated, "This affects everybody. If you are having people abuse government funds that should be reinvested, this is not a right-wing or left-wing issue."

The executive branch runs the 340B program out of the Health Resources and Services Administration, a branch of the Department of Health and Human Services. HRSA, as it's known, makes determinations of what entities are covered by the program, and they have been very generous over the years. According to the Government Accountability Office, the number of hospitals and clinics HRSA has approved has increased from fewer than 10,000 in 2010 to nearly 13,000 today—an increase of 30 percent in a little over a decade.

And while HRSA is supposed to collect information and conduct audits on 340B covered entities, they simply don't have the manpower to do so. The little number of questions they do raise are answered and accepted, because there is no real oversight possible. There are only the staff resources to facilitate drug discounts to hospitals.

What's urgently needed is a combination of Congressional hearings and a more inquisitorial HRSA. Until that happens, low income patients across America will be the excuse giant hospital chains use to get drugs at a discount rate and sell them at full price to more affluent patients.



Frederick Douglass statue unveiled in Belfast

(GIN) –

A statue of anti-slavery campaigner Frederick Douglass is now on display in Belfast city center—“amongst the people he loved.”

Douglass gave around 50 speeches in his time in Ireland and could speak for up to two hours without notes.

Professor Christine Kinealy, director of Ireland’s Great Hunger Institute at Quinnipiac in Connecticut, said the statue was a homecoming for Douglass, who often expressed his love for the city.

“Frederick Douglass is increasingly a symbol of international social justice,” she said.

“This is something that’s very dear to many people within Belfast, so I hope this place becomes a rallying point for people who want to effect real change and to have a more inclusive, equitable future for all people of Ireland.”

Douglass first visited Belfast in 1845 at the invitation of the Belfast Anti-Slavery Society and returned for a second visit in 1846.

“I think the most beautiful thing is that when he was leaving Belfast, he said: ‘Wherever else I feel myself to be a stranger, I will always know I have a home in Belfast.’”

“And to me that’s what today represents, Frederick Douglass finally coming home to Belfast to be amongst the people he loved.”

Some 12 students from the US attended the unveiling as part of their work with the Frederick



Douglass Global Fellowship, a program that studies social justice leadership in America, South Africa and Ireland.

“We’re able to remember him for his work,” said fellowship student Akil Cole from George-

town University, “but I think more importantly, there are people that actually still care about his work, about social justice, about equity, about access to rights, not just in a historical sense, but in a very present sense.”

Rioting breaks out at Eritrean festival, hundreds detained

(GIN) –

Long-held grievances between anti- and pro-government Eritreans exploded in the streets of Stockholm this past week, amidst an annual festival of Eritrean culture that drew thousands.

Eritreans who oppose Pres. Isaias Afwerki tore down tents and set cars on fire, according to the Swedish newspaper Expressen. The protesters then marched

towards the festival grounds, pushing past police cordons and using sticks and rocks as weapons.

“Between 100 and 200 people have been detained,” said Swedish police spokesperson Daniel Wikdahl. A significant police presence is still at the scene and investigations are underway, he added.

Sweden is home to tens of thousands of people with Eritrean roots.

According to the local Nyhetsbyrå Järva news site, the Festival Eritrea

Scandinavia has long been criticized for its connections to the Eritrean government of Pres. Afwerki.

Human rights groups describe Eritrea as one of the world’s most repressive countries. Since winning independence from Ethiopia three decades ago, the small Horn of Africa nation has been led by President Afwerki, who has never held an election.

The festival began in the 1990s but was suspected of accepting millions of kronor (Swedish dollars) from the Eritrean government to hold the event.

In previous years, demonstrations against the festival were held by the “Dawit Isaak Campaign”, a group named after the Swedish-Eritrean writer who has been imprisoned in the country in appalling conditions without trial since 2001.

Isaak, winner of Unesco’s Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize is being held incommunicado, without access to his family or lawyers, says Reporters without Borders, because he did his job as a reporter and covered the political debate in Eritrean society 16 years. w/pix of protest in Stockholm



Military intervention in troubled Niger faces pushback

(GIN) –

Nigerian President Bola Tinubu, as the new head of the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS), is facing pressure from some neighbors and his own government to reject a military solution to the troubles in Niger, where military men recently removed President Mohamed Bazoum of Niger in a coup.

The 15 member ECOWAS bloc last week gave the Niger coupsters a week to return Bazoum to power or face “all measures... [which] may include the use of force.”

“We are ready, and as soon as we receive the order to intervene, we will do so,” Christopher Musa told Radio France Internationale’s Hausa service on Monday.

But voices against a military solution are growing louder. Algeria has now joined Mali and Burkina Faso, categorically against any military intervention in Niger, Ennahar TV said, citing President Abdelmadjid Tebboune.

“A military intervention could ignite the whole Sahel region and Algeria will not use force with its neighbors,” Tebboune said in an interview with local media.

On Saturday, Nigeria’s Senate urged the government to look at “political and diplomatic options”, supporting other steps being taken by Nigeria and ECOWAS to reverse the coup while rejecting the option of a military action.

President of the Senate, Godswill Akpabio, suggested that the President did not seek the approval of the Senate to go to war in Niger Republic.

“The Senate has not asked for approval of the parliament, approval of this Senate, to go to war as being erroneously suggested in some quarters,” Mr Akpabio said.

“Rather Mr President and the Commander-in-Chief had expressed, and I quote: ‘a wish to respectfully solicit the support of the National Assembly in the successful implementation of the ECOWAS resolutions as outlined in the said communications.’”

President Tinubu refuted the Senate’s claim, maintaining that the Senate had been informed of the measures which include “military build-up and deployment of personnel for military intervention to enforce compliance of the military junta in Niger should they

(the coupists) remain recalcitrant.”

Not following the military solution may create new problems, said Djiby Sow, a senior researcher at the Institute for Security Studies in Dakar. “If (the West Africa countries) don’t go in, it will be a major problem of credibility. They have laid down a red line.”

Meanwhile, ECOWAS has imposed a no-fly zone on Niger and has been sending emissaries to the junta to restore democracy.

The ECOWAS ultimatum has been rejected by neighboring Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea—all countries of the Sahel belt across Africa.

Meanwhile, a message from President Bazoum, who has reportedly been locked up in the presidential palace by his own guards for ten days, appeared in an opinion column published in The Washington Post. He called on the U.S and other allies to help restore constitutional order.

“I write this as a hostage,” the President said in his opinion essay. “Niger is under attack from a military junta that is trying to overthrow our democracy.”

He warned that attacks from jihadist groups could increase and that Russia could expand its influence in the region if the coup leaders remain in power.

But sanctions could weaken the economy of Niger, one of the world’s poorest countries, and could therefore stoke support for the junta and Islamist groups who offer money and shelter.

“We want diplomacy to work, and we want this message clearly transmitted to them (the military) that we are giving them every opportunity to reverse what they have done,” ECOWAS commissioner Abdel-Fatau Musah said on Friday.

But he warned that “all the elements that will go into any eventual intervention have been worked out,” including how and when force would be deployed.

Back in Niger, Adama Oumarou of the capital Niamey told an Agence France Press reporter: “We’re going to fight for this revolution. We’re not going to retreat faced with the enemy, we’re determined... We were waiting for this coup for a long time. When it arrived, we breathed a sigh of relief.” w/pix of Nigerian soldiers



Audrey J. Bernard

Disney's 'Haunted Mansion' stars attend 2023 Essence Festival of Culture in New Orleans



The stars of Disney's "Haunted Mansion" were special guests at this year's Essence Festival of Culture in New Orleans where Disney was the major entertainment sponsor. Director Justin Simien, along with his starry cast LaKeith Stanfield, Tiffany Haddish and Rosario Dawson dazzled guests at the popular festival with their stunning elegance. Thousands of festivalgoers were enthralled by their friendly demeanor and accessibility for photo ops and autographs. In addition, festivalgoers were treated

to special footage from the fun film which opened in theaters Friday, July 28, 2023. On Friday, July 7, Simien, Stanfield, Haddish, Curtis, and Dawson kicked off their festival weekend by attending a haunting and frightfully fun Influencer Brunch at the Grand Oaks Mansion at River City Venues where they charmed the 100+ influencers in a Q&A moderated by ABC's Race and Culture executive producer Nzinga Blake, mixed and mingled and enjoyed themed food, specialty drinks and live entertainment. Brunch guests received special gift bags with mini posters, water bottles, fanny packs and Fandango movie tickets on behalf of "Haunted Mansion." The film's ensemble cast also includes Owen Wilson, Danny DeVito, Chase W. Dillon and Daniel Levy, with Jared Leto as The Hatbox Ghost.

Friday evening on the mainstage at the Superdome, Simien, Stanfield, Haddish and Dawson took to the stage to greet the thousands of ecstatic attendees, discuss "Haunted Mansion" and introduce the film's trailer, which caused major excitement when it was shown on the giant Caesars Superdome screens. The audience



Cast in scene from Disney's 'Haunted Mansion' (L-R) Rosario Dawson, Tiffany Haddish, LaKeith Stanfield and Owen Wilson



(L-R) Tiffany Haddish, Rosario Dawson, LaKeith Stanfield, Justin Simien and Angeliqe Roche attend the Haunted Mansion Q & A at EssenceFest 2023 at New Orleans Convention Center on July 1, 2023



(L-R) LaKeith Stanfield, Tiffany Haddish, Justin Simien and Rosario Dawson attend the Disney Studios Showcase at EssenceFest 2023 at Film Festival Theater at the Convention Center on July 1, 2023

was also treated to a 30 second spot that highlighted new and upcoming movies and series from Disney, Pixar, Marvel Studios and Lucasfilm. The evening featured concert performances by headliner Lauryn Hill, along with Doug E. Fresh, Big Daddy Kane, EPMD, KRS-One, Slick Rick, Ari Lennox, Tobe Nwigwe, Jagged Edge and Guest DJ Clark Kent. Saturday morning, the "Haunted Mansion" talent assembled on the Essence Stage at the Convention Center for a lively conversation, moderated by Angélique Roché, in which they regaled the audience with fun anecdotes from the making of the spooktacular saga accompanied by a 30 second spot. It was a magical moment. Later that afternoon, guests were invited to the "Disney Studios Showcase" at the Essence Film Festival where one lucky attendee received four tickets to the world premiere of "Haunted Mansion."

Inspired by the classic theme park attraction, Walt Disney Pictures' "Haunted Mansion" is about a woman and her son who enlist a motley crew of so-called spiritual experts to help rid their home of supernatural squatters. Justin Simien ("Bad Hair," "Dear White



A view of the ambiance during the Haunted Mansion Influencer Brunch at Grand Oaks Mansion at River City Venues on June 30, 2023 in New Orleans, Louisiana

People") directs from a screenplay written by Kate Dippold ("The Heat," "Ghostbusters"), and the film features a standout comedic ensemble cast of LaKeith Stanfield ("Knives Out"), Tiffany Haddish ("Bad Trip"), Owen Wilson (Marvel's "Loki"), Danny DeVito ("Jumanji: The Next Level"), Rosario Dawson

("Zombieland: Double Tap"), Chase W. Dillon ("The Underground Railroad") and Daniel Levy ("Schitt's Creek") with Academy Award winner Jamie Lee Curtis ("Everything Everywhere All at Once") and Academy Award winner Jared Leto ("House of Gucci"). The producers are Dan Lin and Jonathan Eirich ("Aladdin"). Nick Reynolds ("Easter Sunday") and Tom Peitzman ("The Lion King") are executive producers. Simien's behind-the-scenes brain trust of creatives includes director of photography Jeffrey Waldron ("Dear White People"), production designer Darren Gilford ("Spider-Man: No Way Home"), Academy Award-nominated costume designer Jeffrey Kurland ("Tenet"), editor Phillip J. Bartell, ACE ("Dear White People"), visual effects supervisor Edwin Rivera ("Joker"), original score composer Kris Bowers ("Chevalier") and Academy Award-winning special effects makeup designer Joel Harlow ("Black Panther"). (Production photos courtesy Walt Disney Pictures) (EssenceFest photos by Leon Bennett/Getty Images for Disney)



(L-R) Nzinga Blake, Justin Simien, Rosario Dawson, Jamie Lee Curtis, Tiffany Haddish and LaKeith Stanfield attend the Haunted Mansion Influencer Brunch at Grand Oaks Mansion at River City Venues

On the scene

The Turtle Bros. are back in town with a fun-filled flamboyant adventure. Cowabunga, Dude!



By Audrey J. Bernard

Paramount Pictures presents exciting new adventures of the four turtle brothers — Leonardo, Michelangelo, Raphael and Donatello — starring in “Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem.” Since their finding in neon ooze by the big rat Splinter these turtles have been thrilling generations of fans for decades. These dudes are astounding, and their panache makes other warriors green with envy. During a flashback big rat Splinter with his baby turtles in tow are attacked by a Times Square crowd for being different. He then decides to teach the boys self-defense through kung fu movies. That brings us to date and four new iconic reptilian superheroes who deliver vigilante justice to clean up New York. They are young, fearless, fierce, fun, and fashionable. Four for four! The animation is sensational, the visual is smokin’ and the action is swift and mesmerizing. So, sit back and watch an amazing display of kung fu fluidity at its best. Their quick and meticulous moves and wisecracking gab resonates. It’s so New York!

One of this franchise’s biggest fans is Seth Rogen who is now one of the producers and writers



TNMT DONATELLO-Micah Abbey



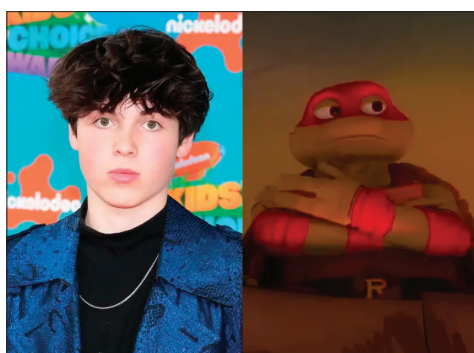
TNMT LEONARDO-Nicholas Cantu



TNMT MASTER SPLINTER-Jackie Chan



TNMT-MICHELANGELO-Shamon Brown Jr



TNMT RAPHAEL-Brady Noon



TNMT-APRIL O'NEAL-Ayo Edebiri

of the film. His involvement was a dream come true as he loved the Turtles at an incredibly early age. “The animated series came out in 1987, when I was five. The first movie came out in 1990, when I was eight,” he says. “It was perfectly geared toward someone my age and I loved it. They were funny. They were referential. I started taking karate probably because of the Turtles. I was just kind of obsessed.” So, imagine his surprise when he received a phone call from Brian Robbins, President and CEO of Paramount and Nickelodeon to inquire of his interest in creating the next chapter of the story of his favorite ever characters. Cowabunga! “It’s Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles,” Rogen says. “Of all those words, the teenage

part was the most under-explored, and the most interesting to me.” And that is how “Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem” began. Rogen saw in it a Turtles movie made with a genuine teen spirit – breaking all the rules, ripping up the playbook and doing everything on its own terms. A film made with the same anarchic panache that led to their creation 40 years ago.

SYNOPSIS: After years of being sheltered from the human world, the Turtle brothers set out to win the hearts of New Yorkers and be accepted as normal teenagers through heroic acts. Their new friend April O’Neil helps them take on a mysterious crime syndicate, but they soon get in over their heads when an army of mu-

nants is unleashed upon them.

CAST: TMNT’s all-star cast includes Nicolas Cantu (Leonardo), Sharon Brown Jr. (Mikey), Micah Abbey (Donnie), Brady Noon (Raph), Jackie Chan (Master Splinter), Ayo Edebiri (April), Ice Cube (Superfly), Seth Rogen (Bebop), John Cena (Rocksteady), Paul Rudd (Mondo Gecko), Rose Byrne (Leatherhead), Post Malone (Ray Fillet), Hannibal Buress (Genghis Frog), Natasia Demetriou (Wing Nut), Maya Rudolph (Cynthia Utrom), and Giancarlo Esposito (Baxter Stockman)

CREATIVES: From Paramount Pictures and Nickelodeon Movies Present A Point Grey Production based on the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Characters Created by Peter Laird and Kevin Eastman. “Teenage

Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem” is produced by Seth Rogen, p.g.a., Evan Goldberg, p.g.a., and James Weaver, p.g.a. Executive Produced by Ramsay McBean, Josh Fagen. Directed by Jeff Rowe. Co-Directed by Tyler Spears. Screenplay by Seth Rogen & Evan Goldberg & Jeff Rowe and Dan Hernandez & Benji Samit. Story by Brendan O’Brien and Seth Rogen & Evan Goldberg and Jeff Rowe. The adventures of four turtle siblings has inspired a long-running comic book series, hit cartoon shows, a huge toy line, multiple video games, and six theatrical releases that have collectively made over \$1.7 billion at the global box office. The film was released on Friday, August 2, 2023 to favorable reviews. (Photos courtesy Paramount Pictures)



L-r, backrow, BEBOP, LEATHERHEAD, SCUMBUG, ROCKSTEADY, RAY FILLET, next row l-r, WINGNUT, GHENGIS FROG, DONNIE, SPLINTER, LEO, RAPH, MIKEY, and MONDO GECKO, center, talking to SUPERFLY. in PARAMOUNT

International

Greensboro apartment manager arrested after assaulting Black children

Philadelphiaobserver.com

A 62-year-old Greensboro apartment manager has been arrested after police confirmed an assault occurred on Thursday, August 3 at Sedgefield Gardens Apartment Complex.

Kimberly Jennings has been charged with two counts of assault on a child under 12. A viral video shows a woman who looks like Jennings pouring soda on a young child and hitting him with the bottle while two other adults watch.

Jace Eury, the 11-year-old boy in the video, was standing up for his sister when Jennings apparently turned her wrath on him. Eury's mother Jae told Yes Weekly that she would like Jennings to be fired. "I'm pissed off. The kids were angry, especially my son. It started because she hit my daughter and her brother stood up for her. I want her fired. I want her life destroyed. I want her to have nothing and be nothing like she made my kids feel."

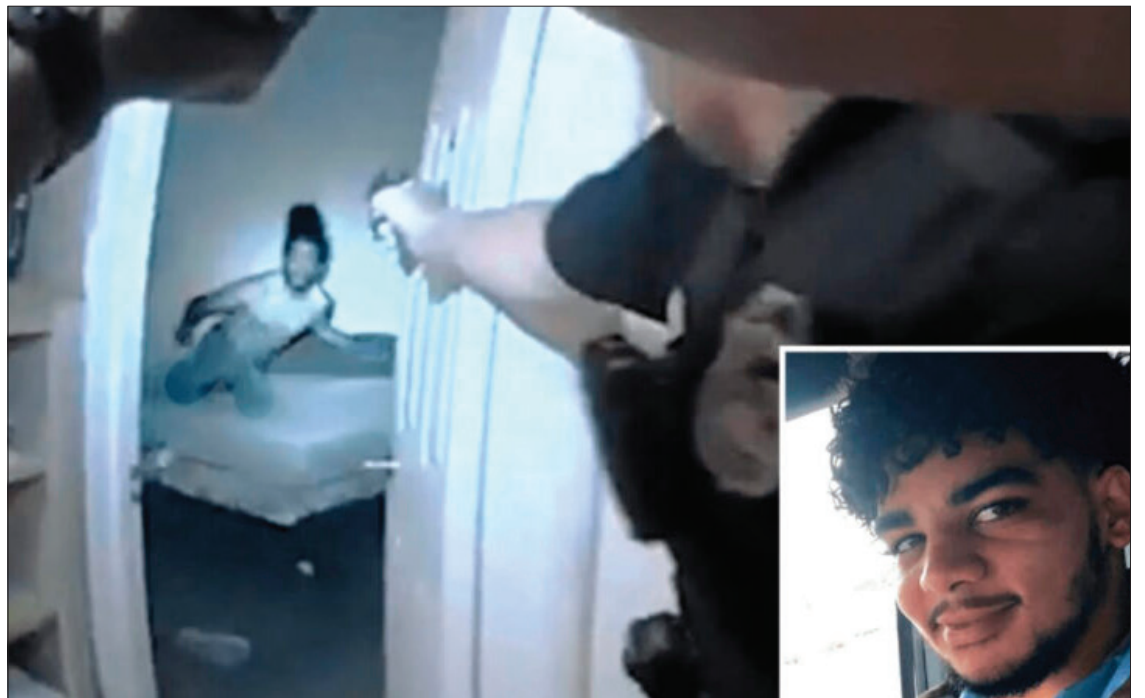
The Gate City Coalition is supporting Eury in her fight against Jennings, John Awolowo, the supervisor for the west side corridor area, is lending Eury support in calling for her to be fired. Awolowo told Yes Weekly "We try to keep the violence down in the area and mentor the kids, so this goes hand in hand. The children are the future and we are not standing for that. You don't harm a child. You don't assault a child." Awolowo is also concerned about how this will potentially impact Jace down the road and wants to support the young boy if he needs therapy



for the trauma he has no doubt incurred as a result of this attack. Awolowo also wonders how many other children have had to deal with these kinds of incidents.

The Greensboro chapter of the NAACP says the family has their full support, President Kay Brown talked to Yes Weekly, "Racism will not be tolerated. Housing discrimination will not be tolerated and we stand behind the family. I have two young sons myself and I know that I would be very upset if somebody laid hands on my child."

Though Jennings was arrested, she was released from custody after giving a promise to appear, according to a spokesperson from the Guilford County Sheriff's office. The community gathered for an impromptu protest outside the apartment complex on Friday, August 4. The Greensboro community appears united behind the children and their mother, who is determined that her kids receive the justice they so richly deserve.



Donovan Lewis captured on video within seconds of waking up before he was fatally shot by officers (Screenshot/Bodycam Footage)

Ohio police officer charged with murder for fatally shooting Black man in bed

Philadelphiaobserver.com

A former Ohio cop, Ricky Anderson, who had served for 30 years with the Columbus Division of Police, has been indicted by a local grand jury for the fatal shooting of 20-year-old Donovan Lewis almost a year ago.

Anderson faces charges of murder and reckless homicide in connection with the shooting that occurred on August 30, 2022, on Sullivant Avenue.

On that day, officers were at the scene to apprehend Lewis, who had multiple warrants, including charges related to domestic violence and assault.

Body-camera footage from the incident showed Anderson opening the door to a bedroom in an apartment and immediately firing at Lewis, who was in bed. No weapon was found on Lewis, who appeared to be holding a vape pen at the time.

Lewis was handcuffed, taken out of the apartment, and received life-saving measures, but he succumbed to the gunshot wound at a nearby hospital. The coroner's report showed that Lewis died within minutes of being shot in the abdomen, causing damage to

internal organs before the bullet lodged in his pelvis.

Toxicology testing indicated the presence of nicotine and THC in his blood, but it did not confirm whether he was under the influence at the time of the shooting.

The officer had a history of citizen complaints, including issues related to the use of force and violating police rules, dating back to 2001. He retired from the police department in March 2023, in bad standing, due to the ongoing criminal and administrative investigation.

Robert Gresham, one of the family's attorneys, said, "The family has been asking for officer Anderson to be fired since August 2022, when the shooting happened, and it was 'cowardly' for him to retire."

A warrant has now been issued for Anderson's arrest.

Anderson's attorney, Mark Collins, said the case should revolve around the reasons behind Anderson's decision to use deadly force and not if he used it.

"As we progress through litigation, the evidence will show that it was because he was justified in doing so," Collins said.

Family reaches settlement after man died in bedbug-infested Georgia jail cell

Lashawn Thompson died in September covered in insects

ATLANTA (AP) — Georgia's Fulton County has reached a settlement with the family of a man who died in a bedbug-infested cell in the county jail's psychiatric wing, the family's lawyers said Thursday.

Lashawn Thompson, 35, died in September, three months after he was booked into the Fulton County Jail in Atlanta. Attorneys Ben Crump and Michael Harper, who represent Thompson's family, said in a news release Thursday that the family has reached settlements with the county "and other unidentified entities."

Thompson's death gained public attention in April after Harper released photos of his face and body covered in insects.

The U.S.

Department of Justice cited Thompson's death last month when announcing an investiga-



tion into jail conditions in Fulton County.

The family is satisfied with the

settlements, but the lawyers said in the statement that "we are nowhere near the end of this journey

to full justice."

"We will continue to work with the Thompson family — and the

community that rallied behind them — to ensure that a tragedy like this one never happens to another family or takes one more life," the statement says. "Lashawn's life mattered, and together, we can demand and motivate significant change in his name. That will be the legacy of Lashawn Thompson."

The lawyers said the settlements are for "undisclosed amounts." The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported Tuesday that Fulton County commissioners on Wednesday voted to approve a \$4 million settlement but said detailed terms of the settlement were not immediately disclosed.

An independent autopsy released by the family in May said Thompson "was neglected to death."

An earlier report from the Fulton County medical examiner's office found no obvious signs of trauma on Thompson's body but noted a "severe bed bug infestation." It listed his cause of death as "undetermined."



Sometimes the person who helps you finish high school hasn't even started preschool.

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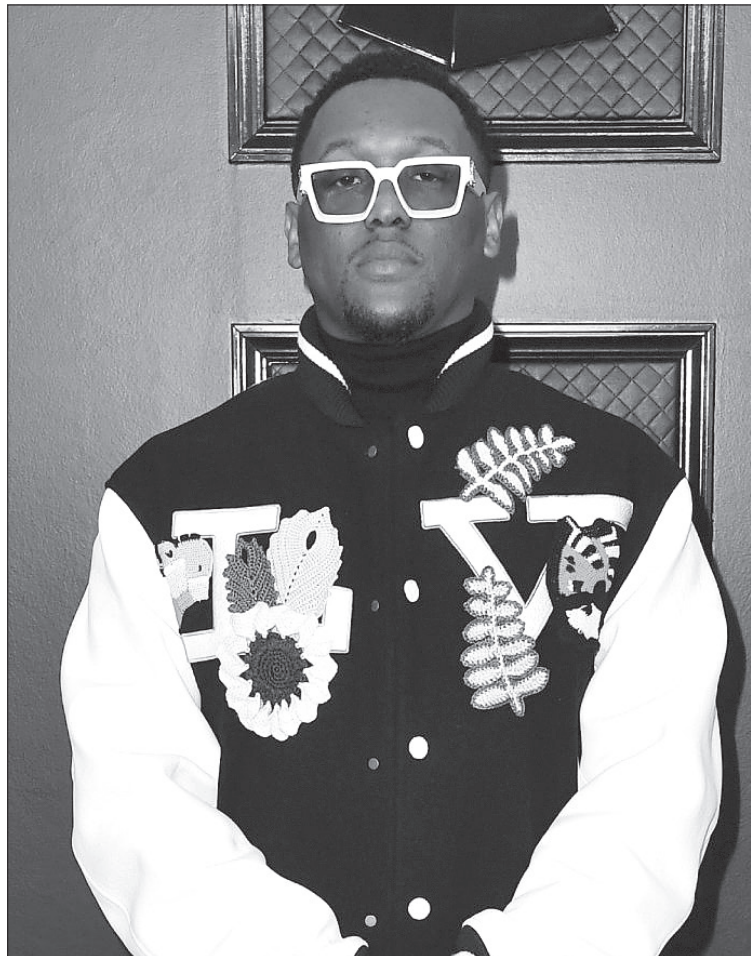
By Don Thomas

Rap Icon Nas connects with Collaborator Hit Boy

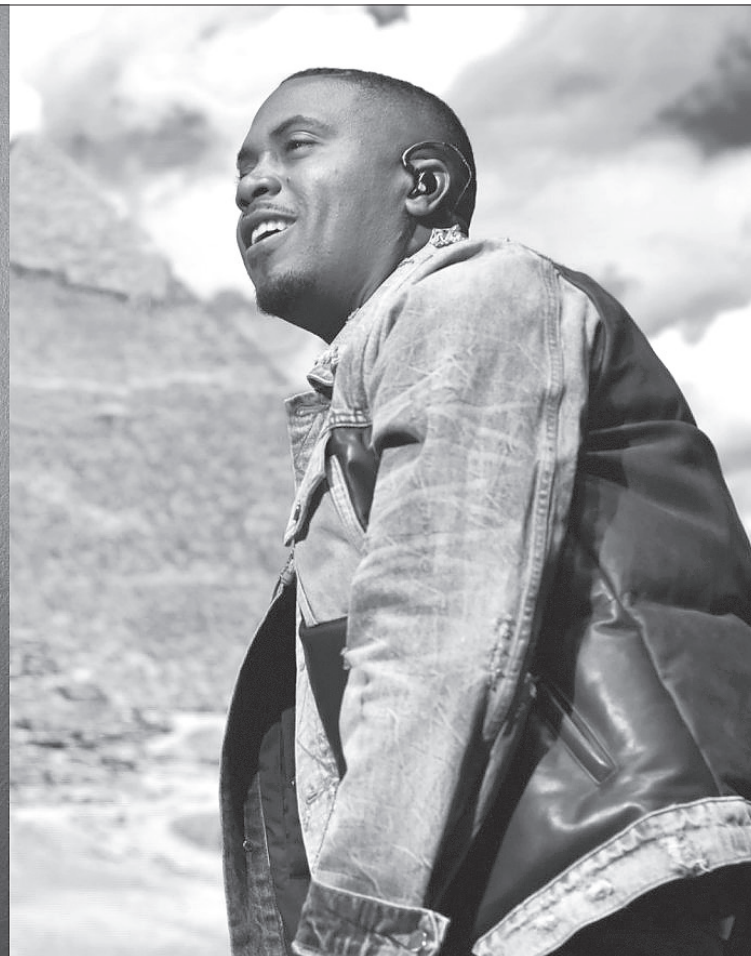
Grammy-Award winning Rap Icon Nas released *Magic 2*, produced by longtime collaborator Hit-Boy. The 10-song set includes features from 50 Cent ("Office Hours") and 21 Savage, who makes an appearance on the bonus track "One Mic, One Gun." *Magic 2* marks the duo's fifth album in three years and serves as the sequel to their surprise 9-song LP, *Magic*, released Christmas Eve, 2021.

The album follows the November 2022 release of *King's Disease III*, the third installment of Nas' Grammy Award winning *King's Disease* series. Both the first and second *King's Disease* albums were nominated for a Grammy Award for Best Rap Album, with Nas receiving his first-ever Grammy win for *King's Disease* in 2020. Due to high demand, Nas and Wu-Tang Clan are bringing their co-headlining NYC State of Mind Tour back to North America beginning September 20 in Nashville, TN before wrapping in Highland, CA in October. Tickets available on livenation.com.

It's also important to note that Hit-Boy has been hard at work, too. Outside of collaborating with the prolific rapper named Nasir, Hit's consistency is something to marvel at. Most recently, the multi-platinum producer dropped off his defiant studio album *SURF OR DROWN 2*, which includes features from fellow trailblazing artists Big Sean and Dom Kennedy, as well as up-and-comer Garren.



Nas a/k/a Nasir (right), Hit Boy (left)



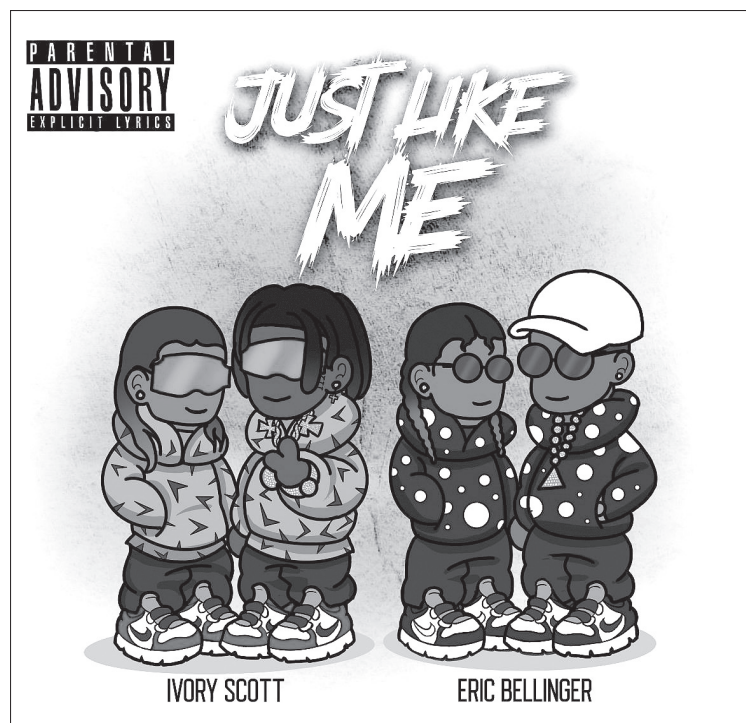
SOD 2 adds to Hit's busy slate of releases so far in 2023, including *March's Victim* and *Villains* (with Musiq Soulchild), and the first installment of his dynamic

series. Not to mention, he executive-produced Belly's new album *Mumble Rap 2* that dropped earlier this year (May 19), and Benny the Butcher's highly-anticipated

Everybody Can't Go that arrived August 11.

On top of this, just last month, Hit-Boy's dad Big Hit was released from prison after serving a 9-year

sentence. He celebrated by going to the studio and making music with his son. Now, the father and son team is slated to take the music industry by storm.



IVORY SCOTT

ERIC BELLINGER

Songwriter

Ivory Scott steppin' into the spotlight

Posted by Don Thomas

Grammy-nominated Songwriter Ivory Scott is stepping into the spotlight as a solo artist, and he is ready to captivate the world with his talent. He is thrilled to announce the release of his debut single, "Just Like Me," featuring R&B Singer Eric Bellinger. The collaboration will give fans a taste of what's to come on Scott's forthcoming full-length album, titled *Ebony*, slated for release later this year.

Scott's transition from being a behind-the-scenes to a solo artist

marks a significant milestone in his career. As a sought-after songwriter, Ivory has worked with some of the biggest names in the music industry, including Beyoncé. Now it's his turn to take center stage and showcase his artistry, leaving a mark on the music scene.

The accompanying video was directed by Caleb Seales and has Ivory on a speed dating journey with Eric Bellinger as his wingman to find a compatible partner. Fans will have an exciting opportunity to immerse themselves in Scott's brilliance even before the release of his full-length album. In Au-

gust, Scott unveiled the *Ebony* EP, a taste of his forthcoming album. In addition to Eric Bellinger, the EP features Queen Naija, Suki-hana, and Hitmaka. Each track showcases Ivory's versatility and ability to create soul-stirring music.

Scott is an artist poised for greatness, and "Just Like Me" is just the beginning of what promises to be an incredible solo journey. With his upcoming *Ebony* EP and a full-length album on the horizon, Ivory Scott is set to captivate audiences worldwide with his unparalleled talent and artistic vision.

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Tuning out danger: Music artists battle risky trend of object throwing at concerts

The rise in concert misconduct has become a cause for concern, as various incidents have been reported involving artists from different genres.

By Stacy M. Brown
(NNPA Newswire)

Adele, the renowned pop superstar, counts among the latest artists to take a stand against the recent surge in onstage incidents involving thrown objects.

During a show at her Las Vegas residency, Adele used colorful language to address the audience, urging them to respect show etiquette and cease throwing objects while artists are onstage.

Adele queried her audience, drawing attention to the apparent disregard for show etiquette prevalent in recent times.

"I f**king dare you, dare you to throw something at me," Adele asserted.

Her remarks emphasized the need to prioritize the safety of the artists.

Ironically, Adele wielded a t-shirt launcher, intending to shower her audience with gifts, exemplifying her commitment to a positive concert experience.

Several artists, including Bebe Rexha and Kelsea Ballerini, have fallen victim to the alarming and dangerous acts of disrespect, with some suffering direct hits during live performances.

The rise in concert misconduct has become a cause for concern, as various incidents have been reported involving artists from different genres.

Lil Nas X recently encountered a bizarre incident during a performance in Sweden when a sex toy unexpectedly landed on stage.

Similarly, a thrown object struck Harry Styles in the eye during his recent gig, while Pink had a bag of

human ashes thrown in her direction during a performance.

Additionally, a fan slapped singer Ava Max during a live performance, and a misbehaving attendee threw a bracelet at country singer Kelsea Ballerini.

That incident prompted singer Charlie Puth to implore fans on Twitter to bring an end to this alarming trend.

"This trend of throwing things at performers while they are on stage must come to an end," Puth asserted.

"It's so disrespectful and very dangerous. Please just enjoy the music I beg of you."

Dr. Lucy Bennett, a lecturer at Cardiff University specializing in fan-artist dynamics, shared her insights on this disturbing shift in concert behavior.

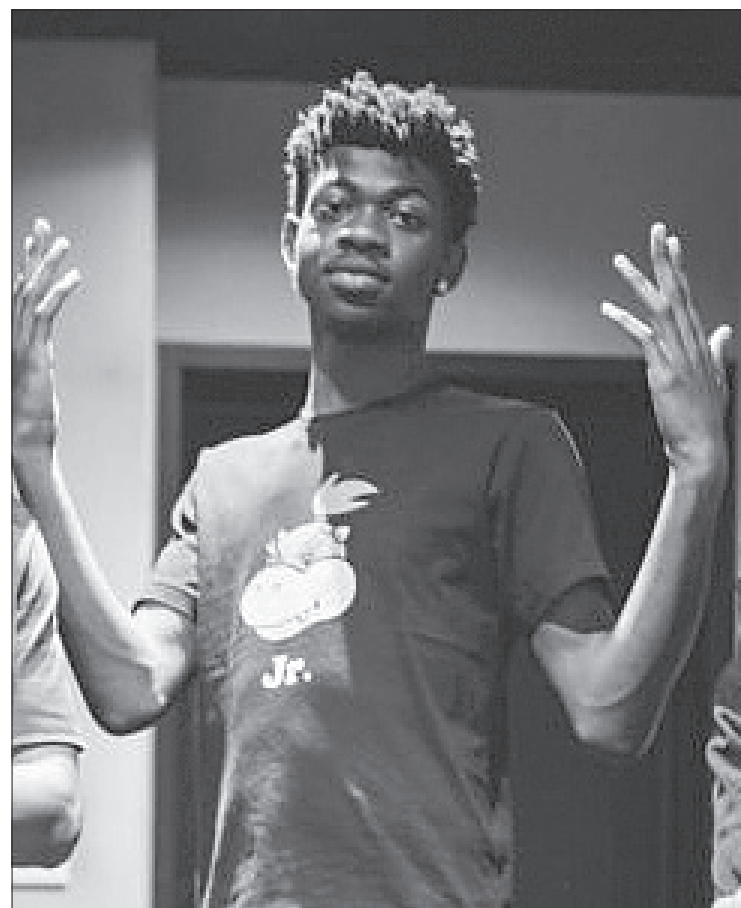
She explained to BBC News that collective fan actions have traditionally fostered a sense of belonging and allowed individuals to express their identity.

However, recent incidents indicate a change towards isolated and disruptive acts such as throwing objects.

Dr. Bennett suggested that evolving attitudes and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which restricted physical presence at concerts, may contribute to this concerning trend.

Further, Dr. Bennett postulated that the desire for visibility in the age of social media could drive some individuals to resort to these attention-seeking actions.

"If you're in the same physical space as them, and you're throwing something, then you're going



Lil Nas X/wikimedia commons

to get noticed," she remarked.

Dr. Bennett and others stressed that concerts should be a platform for unity, where people come together to share in the magic of live music.

"As a society, we need to work to overcome these attention-grabbing moments and look beyond that and really get back to the root

of why we go to concerts," Morgan Milardo, the managing director at the Berklee Popular Music Institute, told NBC News.

Milardo emphasized the "importance of reconnecting with the true essence of live performances and fostering a sense of community rather than seeking fleeting viral moments."



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Ponder this!

Real or Artificial Intelligence



By Hazel Rosetta Smith

It is becoming more difficult every day to figure out what is real when so much of what is circulating sounds ridiculous, simply scandalous, purely sensationalism, and too often just plain mean-spirited. Finding ourselves in a state of constant fact-checking, it has become the norm to ask Alexa or Siri for answers to our most curious or urgent concerns, hoping they get it right. The real concern is what is real and what is artificial.

Artificial intelligence is the term applied to the project of developing systems endowed with the intellectual characteristics of humans, such as the ability to reason. Human behavior is ascribed to intelligence, which includes the ability to adapt to new circumstances. The development of the computer in the 1940s has demonstrated that computers can be programmed to carry out complex tasks with great proficiency.

One general-purpose technique used in artificial intelligence is stated as means-end analysis—a step-by-step reduction of the difference between the current state and the final goal. This is the purpose of AI. To seek and adapt to the best possible end result. Fear and a lack of knowledge about artificial intelligence can lead an imaginative mind to recreate Gort, a fictional humanoid robot that appeared in the film, *The Day the Earth Stood Still* in 1951.

Some concerns about AI are not as foolish or farfetched, as we approach a new concept of driverless cars. As artificial intelligence arrives full steam ahead, one might wonder what humans will be do-

ing, as they sit behind the wheel waiting to arrive at their destination with their hands in their lap.

Whether we are ready to accept it or not, the profound reality is that artificial intelligence is not new, will not turn back in any form or manner, and is developing in giant leaps daily, quiet as it is kept from the public eye. We can, however, be mindful that it takes a human mind with intelligence, education, and training of specific skills to create the unique programming that is artificial intelligence.

The ability of a computer or computer-controlled robot to perform tasks commonly associated with human beings is the way of life. I am a witness to how robotic surgery is a neater and more efficient surgical process from my own experience.

Human intelligence will not always be on point, and neither will the ongoing experimentation of artificial intelligence get it perfect every time. But for sure, AI is being worked on, evaluated over and over, and improved to meet its purpose and it will prevail. Fear not, research your concerns and broaden your knowledge, assured there are no programs that can



Gort, Hollywood's humanoid robot

match full human experts and professionals.

Lots of chatter about artificial intelligence and other new innovative ideas may not be clear or make sense to you, however, they have already been inducted in your healthcare and other areas that never crossed your mind. Inquiring

minds breed intelligent thinking. [Hazel Rosetta Smith is a journalist, playwright, and artistic director for Help Somebody Theatrical Ministries. Retired, former Woman's Editor and Managing Editor of the New York Beacon. Contact: misshazel@twc.com and online www.hazelrosettasmith.com]

Review

Ruben Studdard shares Luther's power of love

By Dwight Brown

Ruben Studdard is a love ambassador and a superstar. It's been a journey. Let him tell you... It seems like Studdard won *American Idol* yesterday. But that was 20 years ago. He's grown as an artist since then. His talent as a vocalist extraordinaire is on view as he tours his Luther Vandross tribute show, *Ruben Studdard Sings Luther*. A logical extension to his cover album *Ruben Sings Luther*. On July 19th Studdard and his band took the stage at Sony Hall in New York City's Time Square area. His voice rang out from backstage as the band played. Then he walked out, to thunderous applause, looking the same as he's looked for years, 30ish but now age 45. Very professional, polished and folksy. A showbiz persona he's honed since boyhood.

Studdard started his career as a kid singing in church and at weddings all over Birmingham, Alabama. He was trying to break into the music industry and letting his mom book his shows. She would charge clients \$30 for two hours of her son's singing. Ruben would show up for the wedding rehearsal, sing his butt off and impress the dads. Then he'd explain that his services for the practice, wedding and reception would actually cost \$150. But by then everyone was so impressed with him they gave him the money gladly. When he'd tell his mother what he'd done, she'd



Ruben Studdard woos fans at Sony Hall

scold him, then slyly say: "Get your money baby!" Charming tales like this warmed the audience up and invited them into Ruben's life.

Studdard crooned the Brenda Russell written ballad "If Only For One Night." With eyes closed and feeling the moment he sang: "Let me, hold you tight, if only, for one night. Let me keep you near, to ease away, your fear." The audience was enraptured. Bringing the pace up he bounced around singing "Til My Baby Comes Home," "Never Too Much" and "Bad Boy/Having A Party." The festive atmosphere was in every corner of the hall.

The quicker pace got the crowd excited, as they clapped their hands and danced in their seats. That vibrant vibe over-stimulated an audience member who screamed out: "I have to catch my breath!" Heeding her slow-it-down SOS, Studdard sat and talked. He thanked some concertgoers from Alabama for supporting him and coming to his shows. That led him to recollect how his parents would throw parties. The adults played cards, and as the evening came, they shooed the kids upstairs, while they stayed downstairs and played music. Music that would

influence him forever and always. "Everyone was alive back then. If you got all your people around you, live in the moment and enjoy being around folks you love."

Then the hits kept coming: "So Amazing," "Don't You Know That," "Here and Now," "Creepin'." Supported by a guitarist, bassist, drummer, two keyboardists and two backup singers the sound felt rich and filled the venue. The bond between performer and fans grew. Studdard's version of "Superstar" has become as iconic as Luther's, and his rendition was soulful and heartfelt. However, his musician-

ship went up several notches when he sang "A House Is Not a Home." Jazzy, filled with subtle riffs, soft loud then soft again. He wrung the nuances out of the song, and it was at this moment when you felt like Luther was hovering over everyone.

Studdard's relationship with Vandross has evolved. As a kid he didn't like the singer. Not the voice or the songs, but there was another reason. His mom played Vandross's music endlessly, leaving her young, naive son to believe that his mother was having an affair with a man named Luther Vandross. At some point that misconception was cleared up, and as Studdard grew into his manhood so did his love for all things Luther. This night he sang and conjured the spirit of Vandross. He also jokingly took absolutely no responsibility for the setlist. "My momma did the set list. You, don't like it, go to talk to Emily Studdard. She's the one." The audience laughed their approval.

Love, nostalgia and happiness permeated the final song, "Power of Love (Love Power)." Studdard, a/k/a "The Velvet Teddy Bear," left the crowd with the message it needed to hear. One that Luther started, and the former *American Idol* winner continues as he tours the country: "When I say goodbye it is never for long. 'Cause I know our love still lives on ... We've got love power. It's the greatest power of them all." Visit NNPA News Wire entertainment critic Dwight Brown at DwightBrownInk.com.

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