

# BLACKS TREET™

## ILLUSTRATED

M A G A Z I N E



**TREE** G  
**VOCAL  
POWERHOUSE**

**R&B ARTIST  
POET  
SINGER | SONGWRITER**

**ON RELEASE OF ALBUM  
"U DON'T EVEN CALL"**

**1ST EDITION AUGUST 2017**

**INVESTING 101:  
MAKING  
ENDS MEET**

**GOOD GUY FILES  
W/OFFICER  
DEIDRE SPEARS**

**LOUISIANA RAP ARTISTS**

**RICKEY  
JONES**

**GUCH**

**YUNG**

**MIC**

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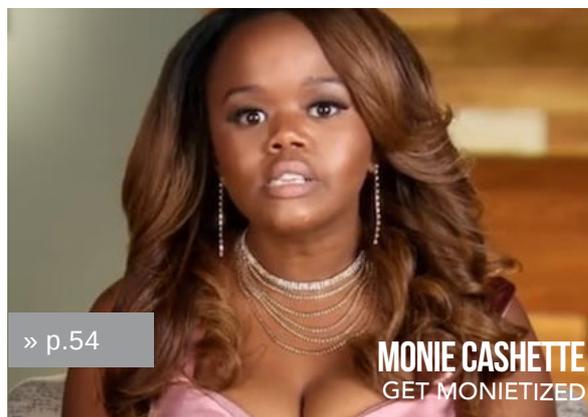
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## **GENEVA'S GROOVE**

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## A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

# HELLO & WELCOME

Ever since I was a small child, I had a passion. That passion was for music; for both writing music and performing music. I began writing and performing songs at a very young age. I also had another passion....that passion was reading magazines. I remember all of the magazines from my childhood such as: Word Up!, Right On!, Rap Pages, Yo!, and Rap Masters just to name a few; even the Ebony, Essence, and Jet magazines my mom would have on the coffee table in the living room. Every time I would go with her to the grocery store, she always knew that when we got to the checkout line, I would be selecting several magazines and putting them on the counter....lol. I would then get home and browse through them reading all about my favorite rappers in those days such as Salt 'n' Pepa, Queen Latifah, Heavy D, Slick Rick, Dana Dane, Kwame, Eric B & Rakim, DJ Jazzy Jeff & The Fresh Prince, and Whodini. My walls would be covered in the pull-out posters that came in rap magazines back then.... especially with Salt 'n' Pepa....lol.

It just always amazed me how these images and voices were brought to life through these publications and the interviews within them. It opened a door for me; it took me into my favorite artists' world. That's what I love about magazines....the ability to EXPRESS; the expression of creativity.... the expression of talent....the expression of art in itself. That is my intention with Blackstreet Illustrated Magazine.... to be the vessel for expression of our culture. As is evident through cultural



appropriation, our culture is very influential and very impressive. From our music to our hairstyles, from our fashion to our dances; we are a culture that is very unique and that has a beautiful, loud, and deserving voice to be heard.

I always say that you can know a music artist's songs and know if you like their music or not, but you don't truly know the artist until you read or hear their interview. The interview brings the person behind the music to life! There are so many things to know about an artist aside from how well they can sing or dance. They have a story. Everyone has a story. Magazines, radio shows, and television media shows are all outlets for the stories. Therefore, not only do I want this magazine to be an outlet for artists, authors, models, fashion designers, etc., but I want it to be an outlet for our community as a whole!

We are more than music....we are more than sports....we are more than movies....and we are more than fashion. We are doctors, chefs, bankers, police officers, lawyers, judges, politicians, poets, geniuses, entrepreneurs, and SO much more!!! We have a STORY! Thank you for listening!

Z'NARIO AZIZI ANTHONY-BENSON  
CEO | Editor-In-Chief | Publisher

# Putting God First

by Minister Darrion Stubblefield

There are so many things in our lives that are competing for our time and attention and if we're not careful, we will place those things on the high priority of our list and omit the one thing that matters the most, which is your relationship with God. Deuteronomy 5:8-9 (NLT) says, "You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind, or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods." This means the very thing that you may have deemed of "high importance" that may exalt itself above God in your life... This is why the bible instructs us in Matthew 6:33 to, "seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness..."

Let me let you in on a great secret... Believe it or not, your first thought is where your faith lies. And your first reaction to a problem may result in dire consequences or manifest life satisfaction. In other words, the very first thing that you think about or the first thing that comes to mind when you're faced with a decision or a difficult situation, shows what or who your faith is in and will ultimately determine your destination in life. This is why Proverbs 3:5-6 instructs us to "trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge (submit to) Him, and He shall direct your path."

Let's be honest, we may have all been in situations where very little time was spent praying and seeking God for wisdom and discernment concerning different issues that we may face in life. We may also tend to seek counsel from other sources... Or adapt to different

ideals and cultures that we use to measure how to make our best moves. We may allow our peers to influence our decisions and shape our views and opinions on what they consider to be their "best judgement" or what they believe is "the right thing to do." But, the fact of the matter is, even when we feel we are doing all the right things and we are doing everything that every financial guru, self-help book, magazine, or life coach tells you you're supposed to do to be successful in life, our efforts still seem to somehow fail us in one way or another. And that's why we need God to help us through the pitfalls and detours that we encounter along this journey of life.

Whether you believe it or not, we need God in every area of our lives... From our dealings with relationships, marriages, and raising children to our businesses, careers and finances. However, we may find it much easier and a lot more convenient to listen to a YouTube video on the secrets to becoming a successful millionaire overnight. Or seeking a friend or the unemployment office first before consulting with God on securing a job. Or go to counselors and confide in friends for advice on a ship wrecked marriage. Or we may even take to social media to vent instead of talking to God. Or look to a physic to give you all the answers to some of life's most complex issues. However, when we entertain this mindset, we will begin to put more trust in those things more than we trust God. But, I submit to you, there is a better way and it can only be found in God and God alone.

**M**atthew 6:33 instructs us to, “seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness...” And when you truly put God first, He becomes your absolute first option without hesitation... And it also gives us very specific directive that commands us to seek His righteousness... This means to be obedient to His will, His Word, His thoughts, and His ways of doing things. Our righteousness comes from the blood of the lamb and only the blood of Jesus covers us and declares us righteous (Romans 3:22). But there has to be obedience from the Kings people as well. After all, what kind of King would he be if his people didn't listen to his orders set forth in the Kingdom.

**E**very Kingdom has citizens and every citizen is under the Kingdoms commonwealth. Not only that, but the King is first in a monarchy and everything in the realm of the Kingdom is subject to His authority. Which means, there can only be one King on the throne. And when we put ourselves; or people, places, and things on the throne, we leave no room for God to work and move in our lives. And to truly witness a move of God in our lives, means to experience the power and presence of God.

**B**ut, in order to experience His presence, we must know Him. And to know Him means to fellowship with Him and know His ways. To know His ways means to know who He is and know His Word. And to know His Word means to know His thoughts. To know His thoughts, we must reprogram our thought process and practice a lifestyle of renewing our mind to the Word of God; which is the perfect will of God for our lives (Romans 12:2). In order to do this, you have to read what the word of God has to say about your situation and allow God to have full control over every area of your life by seeking Him first before taking matters into our own hands.

**T**he last part of the scripture says, “seek first the Kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you...” So, there you have it... “All these things” includes: your job, marriage, children, health, finances and more... Which, means that yes, God knows your problems and no, it doesn't come as a surprise to Him. In fact, the Word of God says that He is the Omnipotent, All-knowing, All-wise God; which means He sees all and he knows all. So surely, He has the answer to your problem if only you would ask. He loves you with an unconditional, undying, unending love and He knows what's best for you. So, don't think for one second that He doesn't know what you're going through or He doesn't care. As a matter of fact, the word says that, “He perfects all that concerns you (Psalm 138:8).” And, “He won't put more on you than you can bear (1Corinthians 10:13).”

**T**he second before a driver experiences a head on collision with another vehicle, their first instinct can be a matter of life or death... They can either panic and lose control of the car or they can make a split-second decision to quickly veer off to the right side of the road to prevent the wreck altogether. The same can be said about putting God first... When you allow God to take the wheel, he will always steer you in the right direction. And not only will he protect you, but He will lead and guide you down the path that leads to your divine destiny. So, make your first move, your faith move, by making a choice to put God first in every endeavor of your life.



**D**arrion Stubblefield is a Licensed/Ordained Minister of the gospel. He is a native of Houston, Texas and has obtained his Bachelor's Degree in Theology from Shalom Bible College and Seminary.



*In the end, you must get in the investment game as soon as possible. The longer you wait, the less time you have to save! I want to leave you with this final thought. Why do banks pay less than 1% on money you save with them and charge you 10-15% interest on a credit card you get from the same bank?! Think about it.*

# INVESTING: 101

## MAKING ENDS MEET

by Leslie K. Wilford

Every day I see Americans struggling to make ends meet when they see people around them living in large, fancy homes and driving exotic cars. The first question I always get from them is, how can I start living like that and what can I do to be like the “Joneses”? My response is almost always the same.....INVEST!

Investing in the market today can be challenging, if not downright intimidating to most people. From trying to find out whether one should invest in the stock market directly; to whether they should invest in mutual funds, bank CDs, or put their money in a bank savings account, the list of possibilities are endless. Interestingly enough, most people will choose to do what they have been doing most of their lives, nothing! Two mistakes that I see people make every day are: 1) They fail to invest in the market at all. 2) They invest in get rich quick schemes that turn bad and then sway them from ever investing again. Remember, it is your hard earned money you are playing with, so make a good decision when investing. Fortunately for me, I’ve had over thirty years of investment experience and know a bit about why people should not only invest, but invest HEAVILY! If you have ever heard the phrase “let your money work for you” versus “you working for your money”, then you will understand the intent of this story, which is to not only invest in the market, but invest early and consistently. I started investing in the market in

1987, when I was a 1st Lieutenant in the United States Air Force.

My first investment was in a mutual fund that I put \$100 per month in for over one year. Although I was a novice at the time, I wanted to start thinking about my future and wanted to increase my financial strength. The problem with being a novice in the financial game, is that you don’t always have the best information at hand. My first time investing in the market, the mutual fund I was funding charged a staggering 50% of my initial investment for the first year. They call this a Front Loaded mutual fund. After the first year, the cost went down to about 3% of my total investment. Needless to say, it took me some time to regain my initial investment and by that time I was looking for another fund to invest in. If you remember nothing else, any mutual fund or stock investment that takes greater than 5% of your initial investment, you should avoid like the plague and front loaded mutual funds are a SURE “no starter!” Bottom line is one must do their homework first before ever investing in stocks or mutual funds. With that being said, my second shot at investing went much better than the first because I did my homework! First, I had to get the 911 on what to invest in and how to invest. What I was introduced to was a very novel concept called “Dollar Cost Averaging (DCA)”. The term “Dollar Cost Averaging” has to deal with consistently investing the same amount of money

each day, week, or month and over time. Regardless of whether the stock market is a bull or bear market, the concept of DCA is that over time, your investment is more likely to turn a profit. As with anything else, there are no guarantees, but using this technique is much less riskier than lump sum investments. For me, those one hundred dollars a month grew over time and in the first two years, my portfolio was looking pretty good. A sample of how a \$100 investment in Apple stock over three years would look like (Table 1). A \$3,600 dollar investment would now be worth \$7,836.27.

My second point is to avoid get rich quick schemes because they never, I repeat NEVER work! If it is too good to be true, it ALWAYS is! About twelve years ago I was lured into investing in a Ponzi scheme that promised me some ridiculous rate of return border lining 44% return on my investment in just 12 days. The name of the program was called 12 Daily Pro and the company was called “Lifeclicks.” How this scheme worked was one would setup a program that had individuals auto surfing the internet.

Dollar-cost Averaging Calculator	
Stock:	AAPL
Initial investment amount:	\$100.00
Recurring investment amount:	\$100.00
Recurring investment interval (months):	1
Initial investment number shares	1.913
Number recurring investments	48
Total recurring investment amount	\$4,800.00
Number recurring investment shares purchased	49.244
Total number shares purchased: initial plus recurring	51.157
Average recurring investment cost per share	\$102.88
Highest recurring investment price shares	\$153.18
Lowest recurring investment price shares	\$59.65
Final value of all shares	\$7,836.27
<b>Note:</b> First dollar-cost averaging investment occurs one month after initial investment.	

Table 1 – Dollar Cost Average Example – Apple Stock

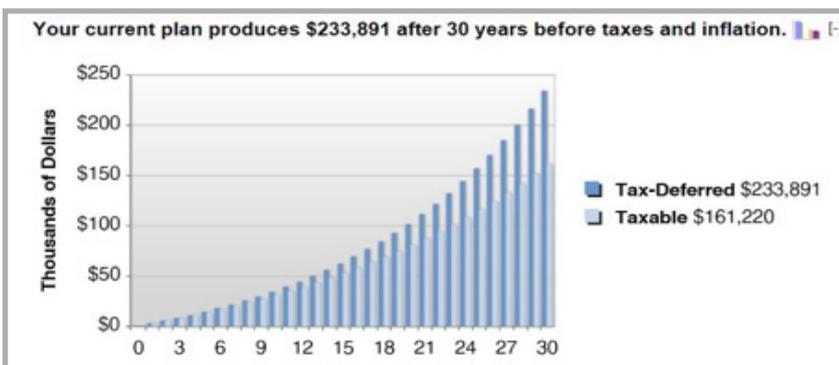
*What I can tell you is that this method worked well for me and what I did learn was that this method allowed me to achieve some financial freedom. So take it from me that the most importance rule is to start investing now!*

For each site you visited, you would be paid a certain amount of money, hence a paid auto surfing program. This program was purportedly setup to generate advertising revenue by moving from one website to another. The company petitioned investors to become “upgraded members” by buying “units” for a “fee” of \$6 per unit, with a maximum of 1,000 units. 12 Daily Pro promised to pay each upgraded member 12% of his or her membership fee per day for 12 days. At the end of 12 days, the member would technically have earned a total of 144% of his or her original membership fee, of which 44% would be profit on the membership fee. To receive this money the investor would have to view 12 web pages per day. What made this a Ponzi scheme was that each member’s investment was ultimately paid off by new investors. If you look on the internet and google the term 12 Daily Pro or Lifeclicks, you will find out everything you want to know about getting duped! Well over \$50 million dollars was collected from over 300,000 people worldwide before the bottom fell out. There was a federal securities lawsuit that froze

all the money that was in this auto surfing program and the owner ultimately went to court. To make a long story short, out of the \$4,500 that I initially invested, I got back about \$1,500 of my money via the courts. My better self knew this was a Ponzi scheme, but my greed allowed me to fall for the scheme. Also, because I had known of several Air Force officers who had invested and received numerous checks from this program, I thought it might be a great opportunity to get some quick money. In the end, a Ponzi scheme never works. If you are not familiar with how a Ponzi scheme works, it works just as I described above.

So, if you really want to make money, do it the old fashioned way and that takes time. Time and money equal a great retirement if you do it right. Interestingly enough, the number one statement I hear from people today is I don’t make enough money to invest in the market and that they are trying to make enough to survive, so investing is the last thing on their mind. I would say this unequivocally, it only takes a small amount of money to start this investment game. The longer you have to invest, the

better opportunities you have at becoming financially secure in the future. I had a couple of setbacks in my investment game like having children and going through a divorce that watered down my initial investments, so I have been playing catch up for the past ten years. What I can say is that money has a wonderful way of compounding and growing over time...it’s call Interest. The same interest you pay on your credit card is the same interest you make on money you invest in...it’s called Dividends! Now, what works for me might not necessarily work for you, but let me give you the best advice I can give you! Pay yourself first! If you treat yourself like a bill and pay yourself religiously, you will find that investing is simple. I will leave you a final pictorial of what an investment of \$200 per month over 30 years will look like with a standard annual rate of return of 7% (Table 2). That is if you start by age 30, otherwise you need to start with more money to achieve the same results.



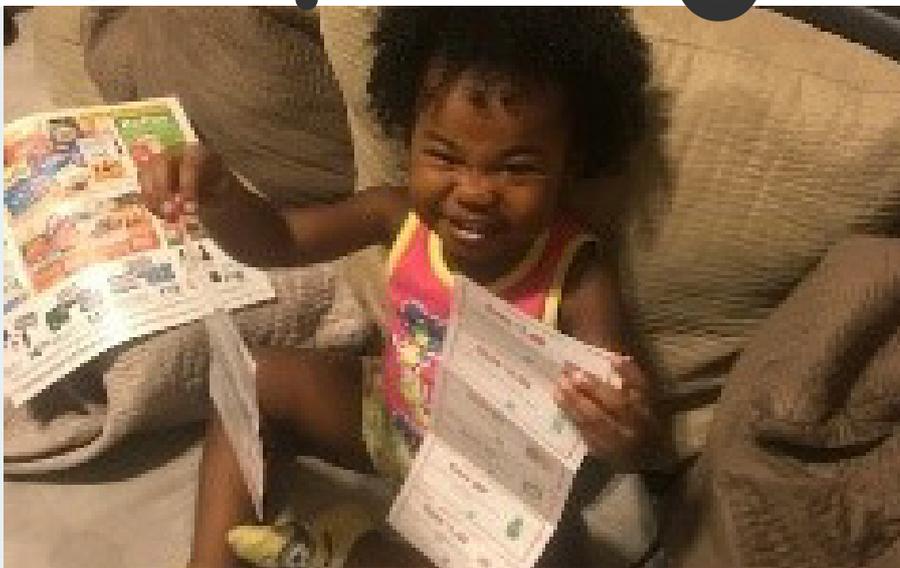
**L**t. Colonel (retired) Leslie Wilford was a career Air Force military acquisition’s officer with over 20+ years of active duty service time. In addition, he has 10 years of civil service time working for the Department of Defense. In addition, he has 30+ years of investment experience managing personal portfolios.

# Couponing

# COUPONING

# Couponing

by Nicole Younger



I'm sure you've seen an episode or two of the Extreme Couponing shows that demonstrate the ability to get hundreds or thousands of dollars of groceries for mere pennies. While that is indeed as the title explains (extreme), it is not impossible to achieve with the right planning.

I've never attempted an extreme haul, however, I have had smaller successes. I prefer to do my hauls in multiple trips, rather than one big one. Whatever your preference, planning is essential to ensure you receive your desired results.

Every Sunday, the local paper will have inserts detailing the sales of some of your local stores, along with a selection of

manufacturers coupons. Additionally, there are various websites in which you can sign up and print coupons as well. No matter the source of your coupons (manufacturers, printable, etc.) you must learn your local stores coupon policies. I have instances where a store chain, such as CVS or Kroger (in which there may be various locations in a town or city) may vary with their coupon policies from store to store. Additionally, policies are subject to change without notice, so it is up to you as the customer to keep up with the most up to date policies. You can find them on the store's website or in store.

The key to receiving the maximum deals is combining the different types of coupons in

conjunction with weekly sales. At any given time, you may use a manufacturer coupon, a Catalina (which is a coupon that is printed at the register—to be used at a later purchase) and any rewards points or bonus customer incentives available at the store. Since I've started couponing earlier this year, I've gotten to where I refuse to pay full price for certain items because I know they will be on sale at any given time during the month.

With coupons that would otherwise be discarded, have your babies help clip, and enjoy your savings!



*Being successful with Couponing first starts in the mind, because you will have to shift your way of thinking in order for it to work. Relax...change is good.....*



Couponing will save you money, but it will also get you to try new merchandise that you may not have normally tried. With this practice, I've been able to build a decent stockpile of nonperishable items such as laundry detergent, shampoos, conditioners, body wash, toothpaste, toothbrushes, razors, and other hair products that will last me clear through the next year or two. Additionally, with my stockpile, I am able to also donate necessities to local shelters or group homes that may have people in need.

While I have not accomplished an extreme haul, I have had many successes that have led to a decent stock of merchandise that I am extremely proud of. Learn your local stores policies, make friends with neighbors who may simply throw their Sunday papers way as a means to get more inserts with coupons that would otherwise be discarded, have your babies help clip, and enjoy your savings!

**Being organized is key when it comes to couponing. It will either make you or break you!**

## *Just remember to.....*

### **1 Start Slow**

Learn the method to couponing before jumping right in. There is a method to the coupon madness!

### **2 Sale Cycles**

Remember sales happen in cycles, so if you don't catch it on sale this time, wait a few weeks; it's guaranteed to come around again.

### **3 Buy Only What You Need**

Less can often times be more than what you actually need. No need to bulk buy if it is not necessary.

### **4 Set Limits for Yourself**

Prioritize. Set a time limit. Moderation is the key to preservation.

### **5 Relax, Relate and Enjoy**

When it's all said and done, couponing not only becomes a way of life but it becomes a hobby! Grab the kids and enjoy!



Nicole Younger is an Air Force veteran. She served 13 years total active duty and air national guard. She is now a Corporate Paralegal with an international water management company and loves to garden, read, watch Netflix, and have fun with her daughters.

# FASHION



## **NATHANIEL ELI**

BSI MODELING AND TALENT CHILD MODEL

**BOOTS:** TIMBERLAND

**CLOTHING:** ASPHALT

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** DENISHA MCCAULEY

A young boy with short hair and a small earring is looking directly at the camera. He is wearing a dark navy blue blazer with two gold buttons, a white dress shirt with rolled-up cuffs, and a grey bow tie with yellow and white polka dots. The background is a plain, light grey.

**BLAZER:** TOYS R US  
**SHIRT:** CHILDREN'S PLACE  
**TIE:** JOE BOWS  
**SHORTS:** CRAZY 8  
**PHOTOGRAPHY:**  
DENISHA MCCAULEY



**NATHANIEL ELI**

BSI MODELING AND TALENT CHILD MODEL

**SHOES:** JORDAN

**CLOTHING:** ASPHALT

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** DENISHA MCCAULEY

**BOOTS:** TIMBERLAND  
**CLOTHING:** ASPHALT  
**PHOTOGRAPHY:**  
DENISHA MCCAULEY





**SHANNON JACKSON**  
BSI MODELING AND TALENT MODEL

**BELT:** LAUREN BY RALPH LAUREN

**DRESS:** CALVIN KLEIN

**SHOES:** ALIVE



# LOUIS WILFORD

BSI MODELING AND TALENT MALE MODEL

**SUIT:** CALVIN KLEIN

**TIE:** CALVIN KLEIN

**GLASSES:** POLO

**CUFFLINKS:** POLO

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** PICS by ADRIANA



**SHIRT:** KYRIS KUSTOMS  
**TIE:** KYRIS KUSTOMS  
**PANTS:** KYRIS KUSTOMS  
**GLASSES:** POLO  
**WATCH:** GUCCI  
**PHOTOGRAPHY:** PICS by ADRIANA





**DOMINIC** WOULLARD

BSI MODELING AND TALENT MALE MODEL

**HAT:** GUCCI

**SHOES:** TIMBERLAND



**DOMINIC** WOULLARD  
BSI MODELING AND TALENT MALE MODEL



If you only know Dwyane Wade from basketball, chances are you don't know much about the fashion industry. Aside from being married to the talented and gorgeous Gabrielle Union, 3 time championship former Miami Heat shooting guard, and current Chicago Bulls shooting guard; Dwyane Wade is a certified fashionisto!

His most recent fashion buzz is when he KILLED it at Men's Paris Fashion Week. He is finally earning his respect in the fashion world. It is evident that he is already creating his own lane for life after the NBA. Most basketball players become sports commentators after retirement, but it seems Dwyane has very CLEAR intentions on continuing to become a major player in the fashion industry after the NBA.

He has stated before that he really became interested in fashion around age 23. One of his biggest fashion debuts was when along with accessory designer, Alejandro Ingelmo, he

# DWYANE WADE: FASHIONISTO

by Z'Nario

unveiled their collaborative design for the "Way Of Wade" Third Element collection of Li-Ning sneakers during Miami's Art Basel 2014.

Now at 35, Dwyane Wade has a line of socks, watches, and underwear, including The Tie Bar, based in his hometown Chicago. If you consider yourself a fashionista, fashionisto, or fan of fashion PERIOD....expect to see a lot more from Dwyane Wade. I know I do!

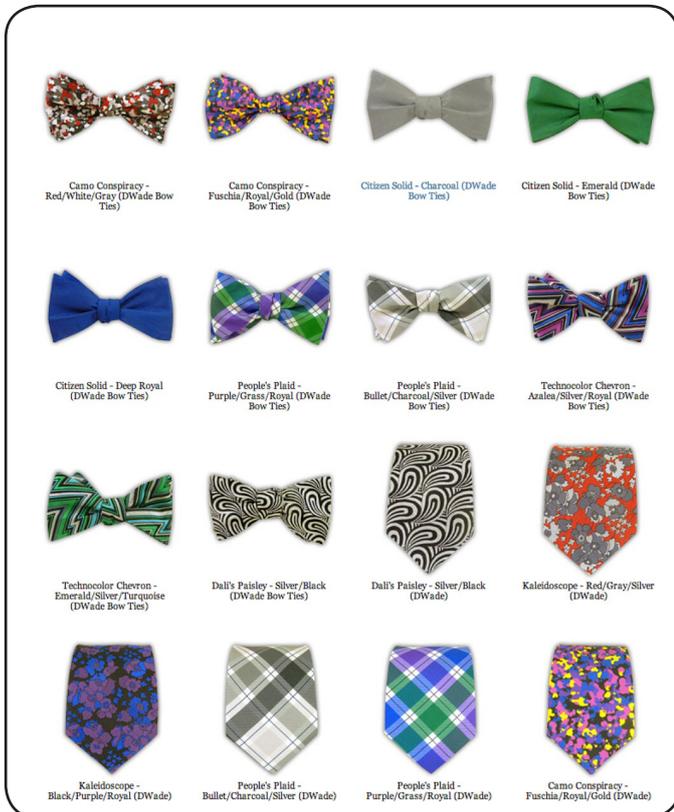
Miami Art Basel 2014 Miami, Florida  
Photo Credit: BOB METELUS



# STANCE SOCKS X DWYANE WADE COLLECTION



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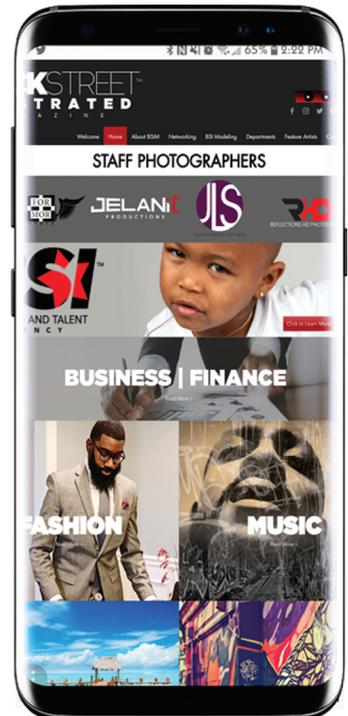
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**HAIR**

# SHORT SUMMER STYLE FOR THE SCORCHING HEAT

**by Halo Rockz**

We all would love to have that “get up and go” hair style, especially during the summer with this scorching heat! My short cut has been in play for over ten years and I find it to be a gift and a curse. I can style my hair and it can last for 2 weeks. I wake up in the morning, brush my teeth and hit the road. I don’t have to curl, nor style my hair because it’s already in tact. It’s fun and sporty as well as sexy, but many feel they can’t rock a short style. However it stands out as being different and unique. NOW, the down side is that humidity is not your friend. All you need is a few humid days to ruin that two week streak. So during those times be prepared to style your hair a little more often.

Normally when your hair is shaved you will need to keep it relaxed unless you rock a natural style. I

usually perm my shaved sides more often than my full head of course, or at least I try to. Oh, and going to the gym or even a slight jog is a killer. Sweat is not my friend, no cardio unless I wear weave, so I normally weight train if anything. I love adding color to spice it up; Cherry Cola is the color I love to use. Never bleach your hair! You can always use a blonde box color and a semi permanent rinse and it will bleed over the blonde if your hair is dark. Don’t be scared to try new things with your short style. Keep it trimmed and neat and remain classy.





# MEEK MAKE- UP BAG

## THE CHEAT SHEET

### HOW TO LOOK YOUR HOTTEST ON A BUDGET by Tamekia Hambrick

I'm always getting questions about the products that I use on my clients faces as well as my own. Well, I tell my clients all the time that you don't have to buy the top of the line products to achieve the looks that they go for. It's not the product, it's the artist behind the brush that achieves the looks. Now, we all know that makeup can cost sooo much money and everyone can't afford to pay high prices for simple everyday applications. I'm telling you, there is always a way around the high priced makeup products!

### Let's get into it!

#### THE SIMPLE LIST! (For everyday application)

- Brush on brow
- Eyebrow pencils
- Blush
- Liquid foundation
- Powder foundation
- Lip liner
- Lipstick
- Concealer
- Eye liner (liquid, pencil, or gel)
- Bronzer

#### *The Brushes*

- Angle Brush
- Blush Brush
- Spooley Brush
- Smudge Brush
- Eye Shadow Brush
- Foundation Brush
- Bronzer Brush





Model Photo Credit: healthyblackwoman.com

## CLEAN FACE CLEAN LIFE!

SEVEN STEPS TO CLEANING YOUR FACE CORRECTLY!

### 7 Summer Secrets to a Clean Face!

**STEP 1.** Wash your face with warm water. You can use a mild cleanser and pat dry with a clean towel.

**STEP 2.** Apply toner and wait until it dries. Use toner only if your skin is really oily.

**STEP 3.** Apply the acne treatment of your choice, or any medication the doctor may give you if needed.

**STEP 4.** Apply eye cream and let it dry (this procedure will help prevent collagen damage).

**STEP 5.** Apply moisturizer. Make sure you apply moisturizer, because if you don't, your skin will produce more oil.

**STEP 6.** Apply sunscreen. Use SPF30, that will protect your skin from UV rays.

**STEP 7.** Apply makeup primer or foundation that you may use to start your makeup application process!



## Where can I find these products for Cheap?

You find these products at your local beauty supply store, Walmart, or even Dollar stores.

I've used products from dollar stores that work better than some famous brands that are "supposedly" trendy and the best! Like I said before, it's the artist behind the brush, NOT the product!

The beauty supply store has great brands like NYX Cosmetics, which is one of my favorite. The beauty supply store also carry Ruby Kisses and Black Opal makeup brands.

The price range for concealers are as low as \$6.00; that's a STEAL versus going to the mall and spending \$15 to \$20 on ONE concealer! You can't beat those prices! The local dollar store also has the same product from \$2 to \$6, now THAT'S a wonderful price!

You can also get the foundation, foundation powders, eyeliners, lip liners, brush on brow and brow pencils, lip pencils, and lipstick from the same store for a discounted price as well!

### Tips That Every Girl Should Know!

- **T**he key to wearing makeup is to look like you aren't wearing any at all!
- **T**ry to look as natural as possible. It really doesn't take a whole lot of makeup to be beautiful.
- **W**hen it comes to your skin, ALWAYS moisturize! The moisturizer locks in active ingredients and helps products more effectively in repairing your skin.



**T**amekia Hambrick was born and raised in Atlanta Ga. The Atlanta bred makeup artist started her career in the makeup industry ten years ago and still flourishes today

## FITNESS

**WE'VE GOT  
EVERYTHING  
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Desmond retired from the US ARMY in 2015, while transitioning he continued to compete in National Bodybuilding Competitions and train others to meet their fitness goals. Desmond founded Time On Target Fitness in October of 2014.

# WHAT IS BODY FAT?

BY DESMOND ANTHONY

## FINDING SOLUTIONS

An individual's rate of metabolism affects the amount of fat in their body tissues. Health experts recommend numerous methods to increase metabolism and reduce body fat. The methods range from diet to physical exercise. For example, the consumption of low-fat dairy products three to four times a day enables women to lose approximately seventy percent of body fat. The outcome is attributable to the presence of calcium in dairy products that increases metabolism and consequently lead to weight loss (Stiegler & Cunliffe, 2006). This article will entail an analysis of methods to increase metabolism, and the necessary physical exercises to reduce excess body fat.

## DIET

Diet includes of the most effective ways to increase metabolism and avoid excess body fat. Nutritionists recommend people who desire to reduce body fat to consume foods rich in calcium and protein. Research shows that eating protein-rich foods can boost metabolism and cause an individual to burn an additional 150 to 200 calories every day (Stiegler & Cunliffe, 2006). Dairy products such as milk and yogurt are also integral to increased metabolism. Studies show that breakfast increases metabolism since it enables the body to burn calories. Breakfast eaters have a higher likelihood of reducing their body

fat than people who bypass their breakfast.

It is also advisable to avoid alcohol to reduce excess body weight since studies show that people who consume alcohol before a meal tend to eat two hundred calories more than people who do not partake (Stiegler & Cunliffe, 2006). Physical exercises, including weight training, include one of the best ways to increase the metabolic rate and reduce excess body fat. Fifteen minutes of lifting sessions twice a week provide an excellent outcome. Physical exercises such as aerobics can also boost metabolism and help to reduce body fat.

# QUAD EXERCISE

PLUS TIME ON TARGET FITNESS AND BOXING

LET'S GO!

**QUADS- WARM UP WITH 10 MINUTE CARDIO.**

**1st - SEATED LEG CURLS (2 SETS), 50LBS X 15-20 REPS**

**2nd- TRISETS, 3 EXERCISES BACK TO BACK FOR 3 ROUNDS, 90 SECONDS REST BETWEEN ROUNDS**

**A: LEG EXTENSIONS, 15 REPS (60 SECOND WORK TIME)**

**B: SIDE LUNGES, B/ W X 15 REPS ON EACH SIDE (60 SECONDS WORK TIME)**

**C: SUMO DB SQUATS, 20 REPS (60 SECONDS WORK TIME)**



LEG EXTENSIONS



SIDE LUNGES

**THIS SERIES OF TRAINING SHOULD TAKE YOU 3 MINUTES PER ROUND, 4 1/2 MINUTES INCLUDING REST. TOTAL TIME TRAINING SHOULD BE 15MIN-17MIN TO INCLUDE SETUP.**

**4th- SUPERSETS, 2 EXERCISES BACK TO BACK FOR 3 ROUNDS, 90 SECONDS REST BTW ROUNDS**

**A: LEG PRESS, 20 REPS (60 SECONDS WORK TIME)**  
(Add weight if you get all of your reps all 3 rounds)

**B: WALKING LUNGES B/W X 20 REPS EACH LEG.**  
(90 SECONDS WORK TIME)



WALKING LUNGES

**THIS SERIES OF TRAINING SHOULD TAKE YOU 4 MINUTES PER ROUND, 5 1/2 MINUTES INCLUDING REST. TOTAL TIME TRAINING SHOULD BE 17MIN-20MIN TO INCLUDE SETUP**

**3rd- SUPERSETS, 2 EXERCISES BACK TO BACK FOR 3 ROUNDS, 90 SECONDS REST BETWEEN ROUNDS**

**A: BARBELL SQUATS, 20 REPS (60 SECONDS WORK TIME)**

(Add weight if you get all of your reps all 3 rounds)

**B: DUMBBELL REVERSE LUNGE, 15LBS DB's X 20 REPS ON EACH LEG (90 SECONDS WORK TIME)**



DUMBBELL REVERSE LUNGE

## References

Stiegler, P., & Cunliffe, A. (2006). The role of diet and exercise for the maintenance of fat-free mass and resting metabolic rate during weight loss. *Sports medicine*, 36(3), 239-262.







# A DOCTOR'S HEART

*Dr. Mia Marshall, MD*

WRITTEN BY: JENNIFER WILFORD

This story is a little personal for me because I was blessed to be a part of Mia's life since the age of 10. Mia was always the sweetest and most pleasant child you could meet. She was always very helpful and courteous. What set Mia apart from your average 10 year old at the time, was that she loved to learn, so she would rather read than play outside. Mia assisted her grandfather running the business office at the college he owned at an early age. She has a heart of gold and a heart for people. I remember her saying that she wanted to be a doctor when she grew up because she loved to help people. As I sit back in awe of the young lady that she has become, I am proud to say that I know her and that the heart and compassion that she has for people is sure to spread to those around her.

Q: What inspired you to become a doctor when you were growing up?

A: I've always known I wanted to be a doctor since I was a little kid. My mom would buy me the little coat and medical bag with the plastic stethoscope in it. Also, a major event happened to me when I was around four or five years old. I stuck my foot out of a car and I ended up being pulled under, then the car ran over my foot. So I was introduced to the hospital at a very young age. I was introduced to the doctors, nurses, the entire hospital staff; they made me feel like everything was going to be ok. During that time I had to get surgery and I was on crutches for a very long time, but every time I went to the hospital for follow ups or to get stitches removed I was greeted with stickers and smiles, so I remember thinking at that very young age that I want to be able to make little kids feel like this when I get older. Not really knowing everything that comes behind being a doctor, but being

on the other side as a patient. I quickly realized that I also wanted to positively impact the younger generation. As I got older I became really interested in the human body...anatomy. I loved science, it was my favorite subject all throughout school. I loved helping people; I've always had a very big heart, so medicine just felt like my calling for a very long time. When I transitioned to college I was exposed to many things that confirmed what I always thought I wanted to be. I dove into volunteering at hospitals, doing research, going to conferences, and reading in general about what a doctor is composed of. Some people just think being a physician is about status, power, and money, but honestly it is one of the most selfless jobs because you're literally everyday not thinking about yourself the entire day, helping others who are more vulnerable than you, and putting their lives first before yours. That's actually one of the oaths that we take when we get our white coats.



Photo Credit: Artisan Photography

Q: What part of medicine do you specialize in?

A: I chose pediatrics based on my experience I had when I was younger. I love reaching out to the younger generation. I feel they are a population that you can impact more because they're not set in their ways and the majority of them are like sponges. I think if you can treat and prevent a lot of things at an early age you won't have as many hospitalizations as an adult. If you can catch them early and talk about smoking and substance abuse you won't have those heavy chronic smokers that are coming in with pulmonary or lung disease. If you catch them at a young age and talk to them about sexual health, they also won't have as many sexually transmitted diseases or infections which can lead to being infertile and not having children. So there a lot of things that pediatrics is at the forefront of to help prevent later on as an adult. Instead of being behind as an adult trying to treat what already happened, it's better to prevent those things from happening.

Q: As a young African American doctor just coming into the field, did you face any challenges with your residency or feel like people didn't take you seriously? If so, how did you overcome those challenges?

A: That's a good question. Yes, I could write a whole novel on the adversity. Overall, yes, I had a lot of challenges. I still to this day have a lot of challenges. A lot of factors play into my different challenges. One is being a female. In today's society being a doctor is still thought of as being a "man's career" so when some people see a female in scrubs they automatically assume she is a nurse, and they address me as a nurse. It doesn't matter

that I come in and introduce myself as a doctor, they still act like they forget and address my male coworkers over me. That's one challenge I've consistently had since I've been in medical school. Another one is how young I look. Many do not want me to be over their care because I'm so young. They feel as if I don't have the experience even though I've had all the training that I need to do what I have to do. A lot of the times I've had to reassure them that I've had the necessary training. Also, being African American has had its challenges. Surprisingly, I've gotten the most flack from other African American families. You would think it would be the opposite with the separation that is still going on in America due to all the prejudice and racism that still occurs.

Q: Is that something that's hard for you to separate yourself from once you go home?

A: Yeah, you know that's one of the things that I'm learning about myself...how to channel my energy that I get from the hospital into something positive. I'm human, so I have emotions too. Sometimes they try to get us to desensitize ourselves while in medical school to prepare us because it is a lot of emotional burden that is put upon us. Music really helps soothe me after a bad day. Crying, just letting it loose in my car after a long day helps. Talking to close friends and loved ones about my feelings. Praying, meditating, and self reflection also help. Those are the things I usually do.

Q: How do you feel about the new healthcare laws?

A: Healthcare is changing a lot. One of the cons of medicine is billing... insurance

companies, just the money aspect in general. Of course I love the patient interaction and helping, but that aspect is one of the things I don't like. Many patients often have questions like how they're going to pay for their medicine, hospital bill, etc. I have a lot of opinions about the new laws. I'm honestly scared for the future if things don't change. We spend billions on healthcare and medicine annually, yet we don't have one of the best healthcare systems. When we compare our healthcare to some other countries, we don't have a longer life span or shorter hospital stays when people come in; we actually have longer hospital stays. We have more healthcare acquired infections that occur, meaning they get infections once they're in the hospital. Hospitals are not that safe anymore. People are contracting things that they didn't even come in with. I'm very disappointed in our healthcare.

Q: Who has been your biggest inspiration?

A: Definitely my mom. No matter how many times I've wanted to quit or thought I wasn't good enough, she was always there telling me I have what it takes to do whatever I want to do and that she'll always be there no matter what. As a young kid I've always looked up to her. She's a very strong person who always did what she had to do and that spirit just fell upon me as I grew older. She has always shown me unconditional love and compassion. I've always wanted to make her proud. I've always wanted to give her everything she gave me and more!

Q: What advice would you give to younger people who are wanting to become doctors, especially African American doctors?

A: I would tell them to do it for the right reasons. It's a very long and tedious dream. You must understand what you have to go through to become a doctor. You have to be passionate about it. We need more African American doctors, but we need GOOD ones. Don't just do it for the money. Overall, remember why you did it in the first place...to serve. You're not doing it for you, you're doing it for others.





# GUIDE TO HEALTHY Eating



BY CHEF LORENZO MOORE AND CHEF Z

**W**e all love and appreciate good tasting, good looking, and good smelling food. However, not ALL foods should be eaten at ALL times. Here are a few ways to eliminate excessive eating.

**1**) Know your limit! Know what your body and metabolism can handle, and the amount of time that your body needs to breakdown foods.

**2**) Know between what times are the times to eat your last full meal; typically by 7:00 p.m. depending on your daily schedule.

**3**) Late night snacks should be something light i.e. fresh fruit, popcorn (low sodium), mixed greens salad with a light homemade vinaigrette, or fresh raw carrot/celery sticks.



**GREEN** light foods are GO foods. They can and should be eaten anytime and every day. They include entrees and side items that meet low calorie, fat and sodium levels as well as fruits and veggies that are nutrient dense-packed with vitamins, minerals, and fiber



**YELLOW** light foods are SLOW foods. They can be eaten every day but in small portions. They include items naturally high in fat such as nuts, oils, and olives OR moderate in calories, fat, and sodium due to sauces or cooking methods. The yellow light reminds us to slow down when we eat these foods and to keep portions in control.



**RED** light foods are STOP foods. They are high in calories, fat, and salt and should be eaten on rare occasions and in small amounts. They are high in calories, fat, and salt and should be eaten on rare occasions and in small amounts. These include fried foods, sugar sweetened beverages, and highly processed packaged food. The red light reminds us to stop and consider making a healthier food choice.



## SAUTEED CORVINA AND SHRIMP STEW

IN TOMATO BROTH WITH FRESH MUSSELS AND MINCED SCALLOPS



### INGREDIENTS

- 1 teaspoon of minced garlic
- 1 sprig of thyme
- 2 tablespoons of tomato paste
- 1 cup of water
- 4 mussels (fresh)
- 5 shrimp
- 1 tablespoon of olive oil
- 1 Corvina fillet diced
- 3 scallops minced
- Fresh diced tomatoes
- 3 scallion springs
- 1 teaspoon of salt
- 1 teaspoon of pepper
- 1/4 cup fresh basil leaves, thinly sliced
- Salt to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper

### DIRECTIONS

1. Place oil in heated sauté pan.
2. Add mussels and sauté until mussels are semi open
3. Add in your diced Corvina and shrimp along with your garlic and thyme and sauté for 2 minutes.
4. Add your tomato paste followed by the rest of the ingredients and bring to a simmer until sauce is thickened. Serve topped with diced tomatoes and scallions.

# LET'S TALK

by **JESSICA LORE'AL**

I am an African American woman; not only that, but I am the sister and mother of African American males and I have some thoughts and feelings on what's happening in the black community with police brutality. I know that at this moment we are all at a loss for words and feel helpless and enraged. Some are even feeling very fearful. I, myself, am feeling even more so protective of my family.

I have always been the older sister that wanted to protect my siblings from the hurt of the world, and that feeling got a lot stronger after Trayvon Martin. I remember watching the jury come back and say, "Not Guilty", and I tweeted my brother saying, "I put it on my life that I would hurt someone if they ever hurt you". In that moment, I realized that the only people that can protect my siblings, is ourselves.

We are all getting mad at the world, the justice system, and the police for what's going on, but we all have seemed to forgotten that history repeats itself. If we look into the history of racism, prejudice, and our "People" we will see that the storyline never changes; just the day and time has changed. We as a community have lost the fight we once had, like our ancestors. I am not saying that the police brutality is excusable or that I do not get upset when I see innocent African Americans dying at the hands of police officers who use excuses such as "I am intimidated by the color of their skin" or "I was in fear for my life", but when there are people of your own race doing things such as

resisting arrest or fighting back, they are still breathing and taken in to custody only to be let go.

It's crazy how we are raised to feel safe by the same hands that we watch shoot our family or beat up on the innocent just because they are in power, or do not like the color of their skin. I am not for any of the things I am watching. I am not okay with the fact that when I see a police car behind me I instantly get overcome with fear. I am not okay with the fact that I get nervous every time my brother drives places. I am not okay with having fear in me about police officers period.

Being that I am a person with a heart, I must also remind you that not every person that wears a badge or is in a uniform is a bad person. All police officers are not racist individuals that get trigger-happy and lie about their reasons for killing an innocent person. We have many women and men that took the oath to protect and serve their community and make sure that they show younger generations that not all people are bad. I feel that we need to make sure that we not only watch out for our children with those that are against us as people, but as with our own people who are against us.

Until the next rap session, stay prayed up and stay woke to everything.

INDICTED

Roy Oliver turned himself in Friday night after a warrant for his arrest was issued. (AP)



Photo Credit: BSIM

# GOOD-GUY FILES

Today I learned that EX Officer, Roy Oliver, of the Balch Springs, TX Police Department was indicted on a murder charge and 4 counts of aggravated assault. Roy Oliver decided to try to hide behind his badge and murder a child by firing his rifle into a vehicle that posed no threat to him, the public, or any other officer. Roy Oliver then lied about the incident and said that the vehicle was backing up aggressively towards him! Welp, as Maury says, "That was a lie!"

So many times people think we want to protect other officers that do wrong. That is not true for the majority of officers. We do not want a target placed on our backs for the actions of a few. Unfortunately, we usually find out about their true character the same time that the public does. I have never in my career

encountered an officer that came to me and said, "I am a bad individual. My plan is to go out and violate people's rights, kill someone for no reason, treat people unjust and unfair, and be brutal; thank you and have a nice day."

This profession is not perfect because people are flawed. As long as human beings police, it will never be perfect. However, as a police officer on this date, at this time, wanting to do the right thing, Roy Oliver was handled perfectly! Now let's hope the jury performs in a perfect manner and puts him in a cell where he belongs.

**#1LESSTARGETONGOODGUYSBACKS**

Signed,  
Mutual Respect/D. Spears



Photo Credit: BSIM | Co-CEO Jennifer and Officer Deidre Spears

# TREEG

**R&B ARTIST | POET | VOCAL POWERHOUSE**

**BY: JESSICA LORE'AL**



In the world of romance we always look to music to help heal, encourage, and bring us together with those we love. We look to music for answers to our everyday problems, as well as to ease our minds and emotions. Well, this electrical vocal powerhouse by the name of Tree G, who is a Houston native, has music that will bring you all the things you are looking for plus more.

I was recently able to get to know about her and her music. I must say her personality, vibe, and words will draw you into the world her music creates. In conversation, I was able to dig deep and find out her inspirations, her words of advice for the younger generation, and her thoughts on music past, present, and future. She has opened for many national recording artists and poets such as: Ledisi, Mario, Keith Sweat, Frankie Beverly & Maze, and Kirk Whalum to name a few. She has an extensive background in music and poetry including winning songstress awards and singer/songwriter competitions from Austin, TX to Atlanta, GA. She has impacted audiences performing all across the US, including the Virgin Islands.

She says, " Darling, I call everyone darling by the way. Whenever I'm asked who inspires me, I feel we always compare one artist to another; so I always think of my mother and my sister because they were the first women to pour into me music wise. They listened to artists such as Motown artists, Sade, Prince, Canton Spirituals, and Mahalia Jackson. Those are my early influencers if you will".

***"BOY, I'M TRYING TO TRY YOU OUT, I WILL NEVER DRY YOU OUT, MY SUPPLY IS MASSIVE". (MASSIVE BY: TREEG)***

Tree G is an awesome performer that draws you in with the way she takes over the stage. Her presence and voice bring you into a place that gets you to long for more of what she is pouring into with each word. She wants her music to let her audience know its okay to love, it's okay to be open and be vulnerable, but that it's also okay to protect yourself and love yourself so that you can love others. She wants her music to help people heal, and encourage people to talk to one another; to lead back to families healing and becoming whole again. She wants to start conversations that lead to more babies being made and healthy relationships to develop.



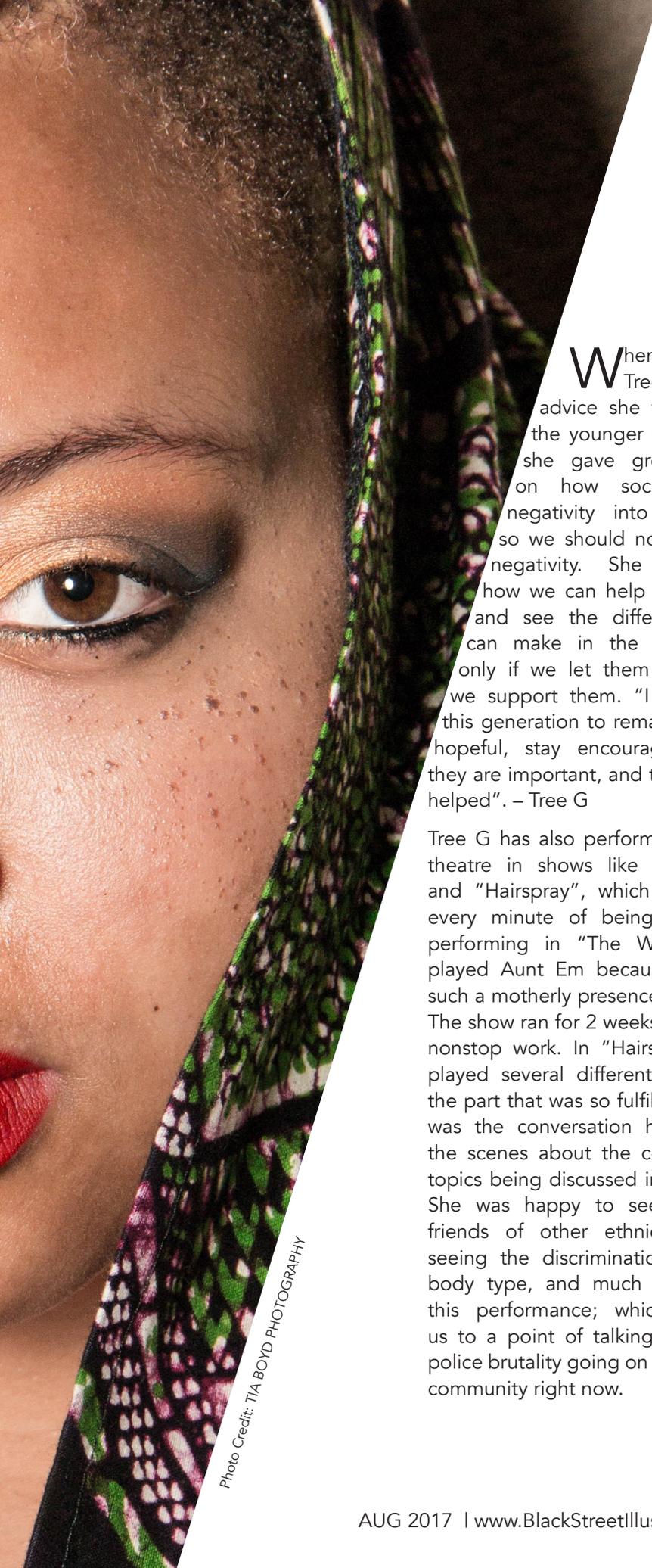


Photo Credit: TIA BOYD PHOTOGRAPHY

When I asked Tree G, what advice she would give the younger generation, she gave great insight on how society feeds negativity into our kids, so we should not back the negativity. She expresses how we can help them grow and see the difference they can make in the world, but only if we let them know that we support them. "I would tell this generation to remain fearless, hopeful, stay encouraged, know they are important, and they can be helped". – Tree G

Tree G has also performed musical theatre in shows like "The Wiz" and "Hairspray", which she loved every minute of being in. While performing in "The Wiz", Tree played Aunt Em because she has such a motherly presence and spirit. The show ran for 2 weeks and it was nonstop work. In "Hairspray" Tree played several different roles, but the part that was so fulfilling for her was the conversation had behind the scenes about the controversial topics being discussed in the show. She was happy to see how her friends of other ethnicities were seeing the discrimination of race, body type, and much more from this performance; which brought us to a point of talking about the police brutality going on in the black community right now.

"I find myself in mourning some days; thinking of my future husband, future brother in law, or extended family being killed or abused by the police."- Tree G

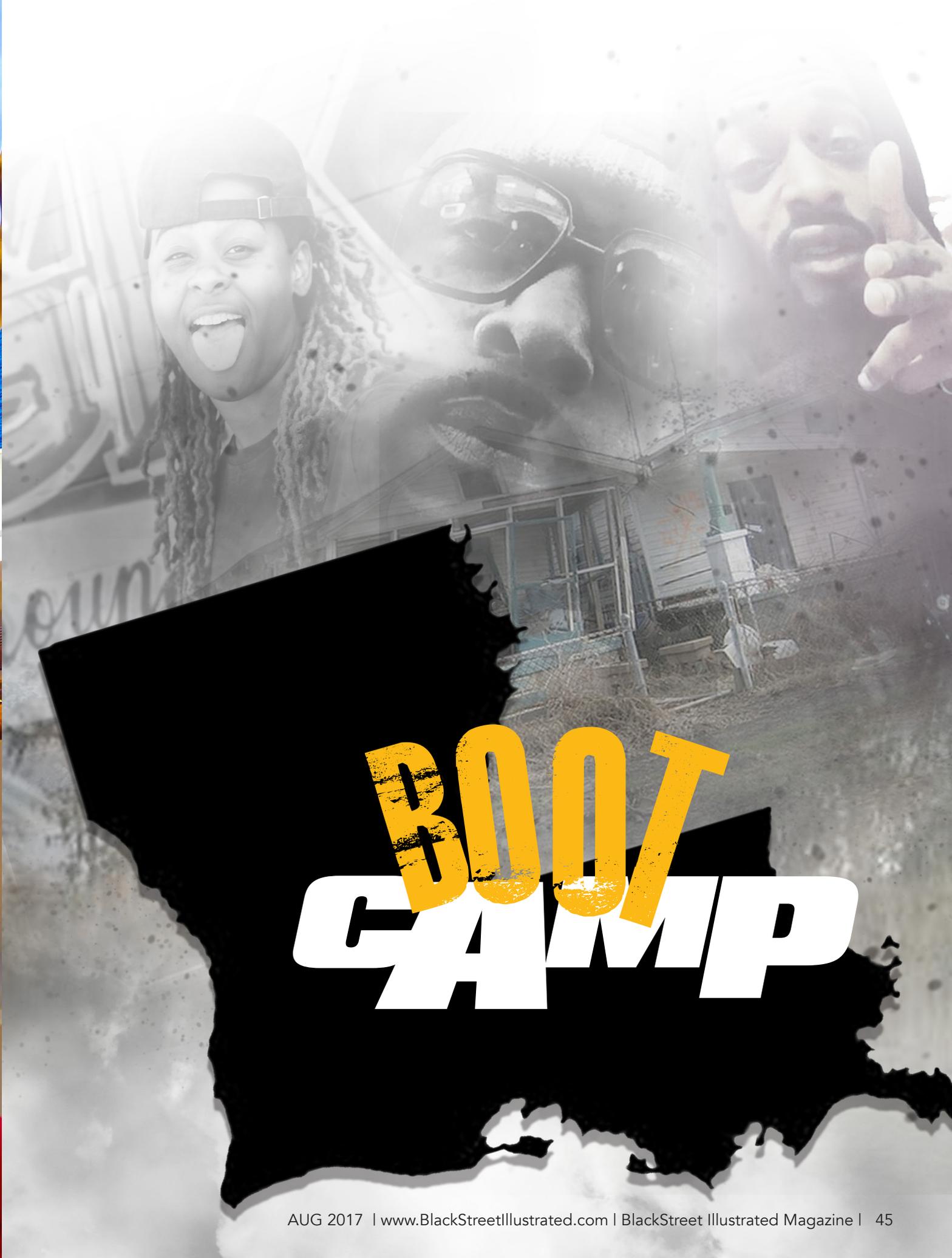
"We've passed fear a long time ago, and look forward to those bright eyes we know, Hush don't try to say a thing it will be okay cuz Rome wasn't built in a day" ("Rome" by: Tree G)

I could feel her heart crying out because our community is not standing together as a unit to protect ourselves against the brutality of the police. She expresses how she feels that once we are unified as a community we will be a force to be reckoned with, but until that day we strive to get to that point.

"I just want to be spontaneous, something we never done, I want to have some fun, I know you can think of one, I just want to be spontaneous" ("Spontaneous" by: Tree G)

I know the question you are asking is, "How do I get my hands on her music?" Her music can be found on Soundcloud, YouTube, and her Bandcamp page. Tree G is actually dropping new music the second week of August 2017. "Massive" and "Spontaneous" are among the new releases.





# BOOT CAMP

# RICK JONES

NAPOLEONVILLE'S FINEST

BY: JESSICA LORE'AL





Photo Credit: JeDesignsGraphix

Occasionally in life you may start off with a dream to do one thing and end up straying away from it, but in the end it comes right back to you full circle. Well with this Louisiana native, Rickey Jones, that's how it happened for him. He had a dream to do music from a young age, all because his mother was a local gospel singer; but Rickey had a different way he wanted to present his talents to the world.

He was a part of an all boy singing group that was patterned after New Edition; they made a name for themselves throughout the city. Unfortunately, when he got to high school he put all of his music dreams aside and fell in with the wrong crowd. Rickey still wrote his poems in his free time, but he got caught up in some trouble hanging with the wrong crowd. After going through this, he decided to go to college; but unfortunately yet again, life had a different plan for Rickey. He went back to his hometown and landed in trouble again. This time the trouble gave him a new perspective on life. One of his friends got wind of his poetry and told him to put it to music.

After taking the friend's advice he wrote a few rap songs, which brought his life back to music full circle. Rickey Jones currently has a few songs out there like "Lately" featuring Adam Thomas, "Love or Hate", and "Some Place Some Where" featuring Amanda Thomas. He recently dropped a new single "Leave Me Alone" and his long awaited EP Leave Me Alone will be dropping soon. You can find his music on iTunes and check out his website [www.rickeyjones.wixsite.com/rjones](http://www.rickeyjones.wixsite.com/rjones).





# GUCH

BY: JESSICA LORE'AL

**H**ip Hop gives a voice to political views, what happens on a day to day in certain neighborhoods, and brings forth a truth people try to ignore. This draws more and more people to the culture of this music because it speaks to their truths. In this day and time, there are not many that try to stand out and speak the truth, but those that do bring forth issues that you never thought you would hear about in music. Guch is an artist that brings both old school Hip Hop and new school Hip Hop to the table.

**L**ouisiana native, Andrea "Guch" Clay is out in the music industry making the biggest splash and she cannot be stopped or touched. She is inspired by Tupac; from the depth of his lyrics to how he stood out amongst the crowd. Guch, herself, prides on being that one artist that does not waiver or bend for what is going on around her. She uses her passion to tell her story and leave her mark on the world. She wants to give her fans insight on who

she is through her different musical projects and lyrics.

**I**n recent conversation with Guch, she let me know how honored and blessed she feels to be where she is today and all the opportunities she has had with her music. She really appreciates all the support she gets from her fans and she hopes that she can continue to bring forth music that gives a feel to who she is and what she stands for.

**G**uch has performed at different events during SXSW, done shows in different clubs, and had different showcases. She has music available to download on Spinrilla, Soundcloud, and all major digital music stores. Her newest project released this year is "7Hunnit" and it is leaving a massive wave on her fans. Her next tape "Lesbihonest Vol. 2" will be released August 21, 2017; be on the look out for this tape to hit the scene!

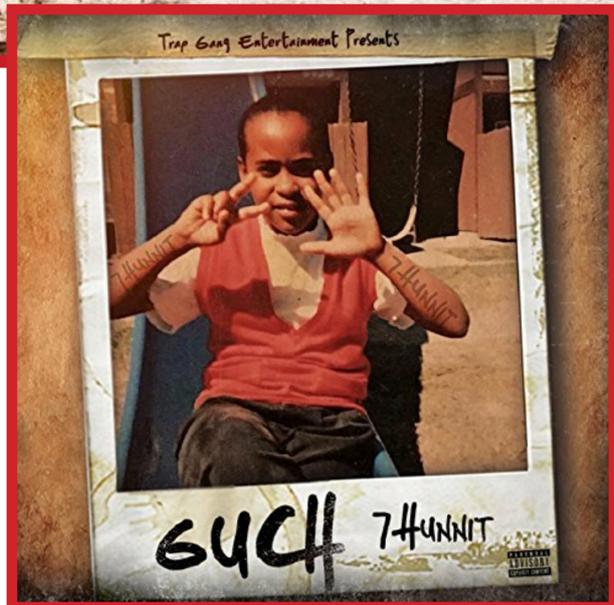


Photo Credit: GUCH



# 50 CENT

**BY: JESSICA LORE'AL**

Photo Credit: Yung Mic

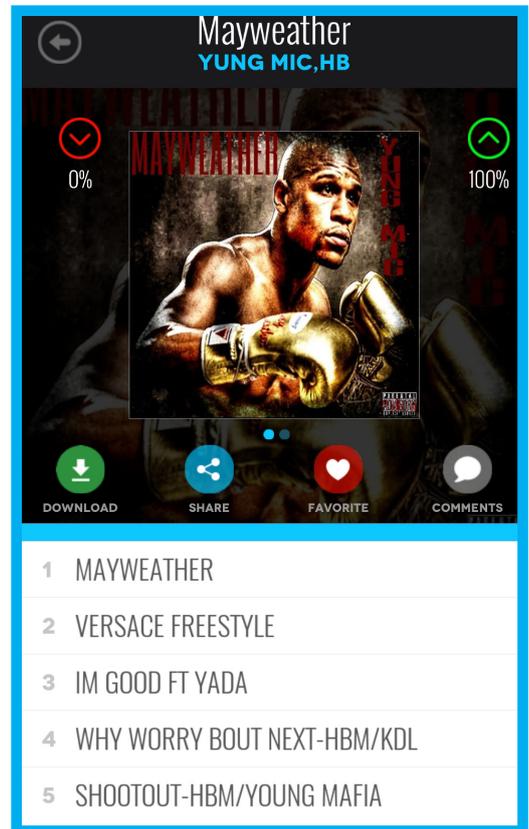


**Y**our dreams sometimes comes with a lot of hard work; you face obstacles, trials and tribulations, but it takes a true soldier to weather the storm and keep pushing through no matter what. This New Orleans native rapper, Yung Mic is true to the testament that no matter what he faces, he isn't going to give up on his dream.

Yung Mic, Micheal Peterson, grew up with a mother that wrote poetry and the knowledge that his father used to rap back when he was small. He started performing music at the age of 15 with a genuine passion for music. Being inspired by the lyricism of Lil' Wayne, Cassidy, Tupac, and Nas, Yung Mic creates music that he wants his fans to love and feel. His motivation comes from the fact that his father was not there and he wants to do something different for his family.

**“**When asked how he plans to stay relevant and take his music to the next level, Yung Mic stated: “By continuing to make music and putting out projects. Trying to do as many music videos as I can, whether via YouTube videos or just rapping on Instagram. My goal is to be relevant and not slack. I want as many people as possible to hear my music and know of me.”

Yung Mic's music can be found on YouTube, Soundcloud, and DatPiff under HBM Yung Mic. He will be releasing Mayweather 2 at the end of this year. Mayweather 1 is currently available on DatPiff.



## NEW RELEASES



### RAP

1. "Unforgettable" French Montana Featuring Swae Lee
2. "Mask Off" Future
3. "XO Tour Llif3" Lil Uzi Vert
4. "The Story Of O.J." Jay-Z
5. "Bodak Yellow" Cardi B

### R&B

1. "Redbone" Childish Gambino
2. "That's What I Like" Bruno Mars
3. "Wild Thoughts" Rihanna and Bryson Tiller
4. "Love Galore" SZA Featuring Travis Scott
5. "Feels" Calvin Harris Featuring Pharrell Williams, Katy Perry, and Big Sean

### ADULT R&B/NEO SOUL

1. "U+Me (Love Lesson)" Mary J. Blige
2. "Before I Do" Sevyn Streeter
3. "My Man" Tamar Braxton
4. "Until The Pain Is Gone" Daley Featuring Jill Scott
5. "Runnin' Out" After 7

### GOSPEL/INSPIRATIONAL

1. "You Deserve It" JJ Hairston & Youthful Praise
2. "Joy" VaShawn Mitchell
3. "I'm Blessed" Charlie Wilson
4. "Change Me" Tamela Mann
5. "My World Needs You" Kirk Franklin Featuring Sarah Reeves, Tasha Cobbs, & Tamela Mann

### REGGAE

1. "Medication" Damian Marley Featuring Stephen Marley
2. "All I Do Is Pray" Gyptian
3. "Money Man" Alkaline
4. "Stumbling Block" Buju Banton Featuring Freddy McGregor
5. "Dig It" Fabian Vendetta

### SOUNDTRACKS

1. "All Eyez On Me"
2. "Girls Trip"
3. "Power"
4. "Insecure"
5. "Queen Sugar"

Photo Credit: MARY J BLIGE.COM



by Varick Williams

**OMG!!!** If you are fan of Mary J. Blige and haven't purchased her latest album, "Strength of a Woman".... Baby....You are late! I absolutely LOVE LOVE LOVE this album.

I have been a huge fan of Mary since the summer of 1992, which happens to be exactly 25 years ago, the first time I heard "Real Love". I will never forget because it was the summer of '92 and I was on Summer Break from my first year of college. I would listen to the entire "Whats the 411" album back-to-back, without skipping songs...lol. When she first debuted, she was one of the first female singers that sang to hip hop beats. She ALWAYS had her own style and still does. She was the first female artist to come out in Timberland boots and jersey shirts. Her original style is one thing that I have always appreciated about her.

Now, on to this summer BANGER, her latest album, "Strength of a Woman. First of all, every single song is FIRE!!! The lyrics to the songs are very

profound, heartfelt, and relatable (which is why we all love her). To anyone that has been cheated on or taken advantage of in a relationship, this is the album for you. This album is also about loving yourself and women empowerment. She even has a spiritual song, "Hello Father".

One of my personal favorites is "Set Me Free", which is so compelling. Mary is singing from her soul and gut. Another one of my favorites is "Glow Up" featuring Missy Elliott, and when Missy is producing anything, you KNOW it's going to have a dope beat and some hardcore lyrics. DJ Khaled is also on "Glow Up". This song proves that Mary can also sing to the new type of music as well. My ultimate favorite single is "U + Me (Love Lesson)"....Now, this song right here is EVERYTHING to me! It is true, classic R&B music.

MJB has totally evolved from the little girl from New York that was afraid of interviews. When she first became a success she didn't do too many interviews, but now she seems so confident

and so sure of who she is. Sadly, Mary makes her best music when she's heart-broken. I get it because when I'm heart-broken, I write. Most artists use their craft for therapy.

I know a few of her last few albums weren't so successful, but trust, if you are a TRUE Mary J. Blige fan, you MUST get this album! It takes you on an emotional rollercoaster, which I love in an album. You may feel mad, happy, and dance...I ABSOLUTELY love it!! It definitely was of the best albums this summer...no I take that back, this YEAR!!!!



ENTERTAINMENT

# GETTING “MONIETIZED” with MONIE

by Varick Williams

Photo Credit: www.BUSTLE.com

Photo Credit: LAJOY COX



Monie officially got married on June 23, 2017 to her now husband, Morlin, resulting in her spin-off show "Monie Gets Married"

I had the pleasure and the privilege of interviewing the breakout star of Little Women: Atlanta....Yes, you guessed it, the breakout star, Monie Cashette. I consider her as the breakout star because she is the only cast member from her show that was granted her very own spin-off show, "Monie Gets Married" (which is a huge accomplishment in the reality tv realm).

Monie is originally from Houston, Texas. Actually, I knew her long before she was on Little Women: Atlanta. I used to style her hair and she was a very loyal client of mine. I can remember doing her hair in my studio apartment when she first informed me about her aspirations to be a part of a new upcoming show, which turned out to be Little Women: Atlanta. I immediately encouraged and supported her because I knew she would be perfect for reality tv. She is spunky, feisty, and has the gift of gab. Most importantly, she has a dream and goals, which is needed in all aspects of life. She also has the perfect personality.

As I interviewed her, I found it to be very easy and laid back because she is so humble and easy to converse

with. She has not let fame change her. I still find it strange sometimes when I see my friend/client on tv every week...lol. However, I am super proud of her and her success.

I asked Monie if she gets recognized on a daily basis whenever she goes anywhere and she replied, "Yes." I asked how she deals with that along with the criticism from social media since once you become a reality star it comes with some perks, but also criticism from social media as well. She said that she doesn't focus on the negativity and that the outpouring support from her newfound fans outweighs the negativity. Monie says she turns a blind eye to negativity, which I find is very smart.

Monie officially got married on June 23, 2017 to her now husband, Morlin, resulting in her spin-off show "Monie Gets Married". Which by the way, is a huge accomplishment in the Reality TV show realm. I then asked her if any of her exes have reached out to her because of her newfound success; she cutely laughed and said, "No, not really!"

She assured me that there definitely will be a Season 4 of Little Women: Atlanta and to expect more drama, as usual... lol!

Monie has future plans to launch her own line and ultimately has aspirations to become an actress on the Big Screen, i.e Movies.

I asked her about her relationships with her fellow cast members. She informed me that she has a good relationship with mostly all of them. I specifically asked about her and Minnie's relationship because according to the show they started off as best friends, but the last few seasons have been kind of "rocky". Monie responded that her and Minnie's friendship is Hot and Cold and On and Off, which doesn't surprise me.



Varick is a Houston native, but has also resided in L.A., Chicago, La and TX. He has been creatively writing for over 10yrs. Varick is also a professional stylist in Houston, TX.



REGINA HALL  
JADA PINKETT SMITH  
TIFFANY HADDISH  
QUEEN LATIFAH

# GIRLS TRIP

BY Z'NARIO

Photo Credit: UNIVERSAL PICTURES



Girls Trip premiered on June 14, 2017 at the American Black Film Festival in Miami, and was theatrically released in the United States on July 21, 2017, by Universal Pictures.

**GIRLS TRIP** is a 2017 American Rated-R Comedy film. It was directed by Malcolm D. Lee and written by Kenya Barris, Tracy Oliver, and Erica Rivinoja, who based the script off their own experiences with friends. The film stars Regina Hall, Queen Latifah, Tiffany Haddish, and Jada Pinkett Smith as best friends Ryan, Sasha, Lisa and Dina who are in for the adventure of a lifetime when they travel to New Orleans for the annual Essence Festival. Along the way, they rekindle their sisterhood and rediscover their wild side by drinking, dancing, and adventurously trying new things.....including new romances.

Girls Trip was directed by Malcolm D. Lee and produced by Will Packer and Malcolm D. Lee. It also stars male supporting actors Kofi Siriboe, Mike Colter, and Larenz Tate.

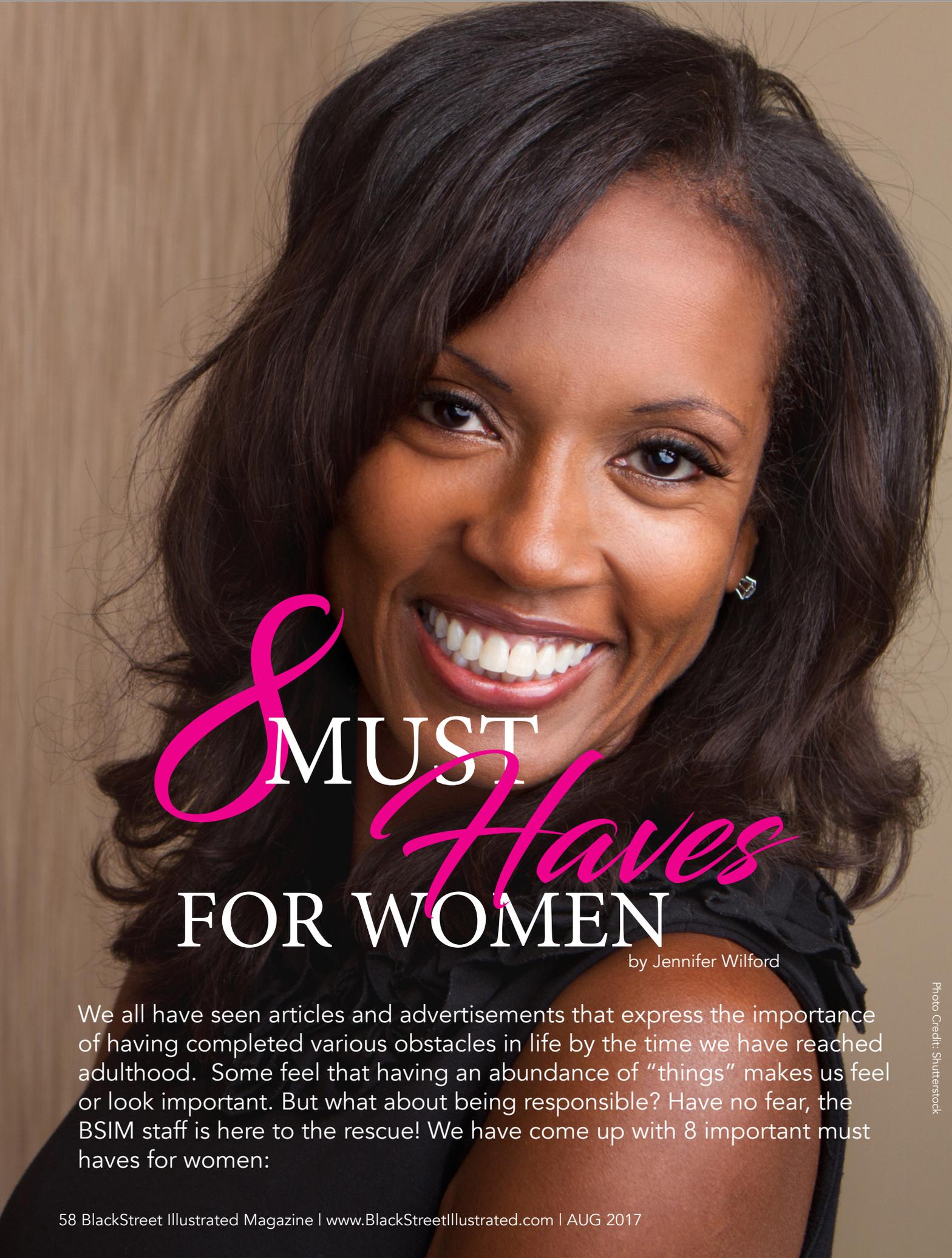
Girls Trip made me literally bust out laughing on SEVERAL occasions, while looking at the screen like, "Did she REALLY say that?!" This was a real feel good movie with a strong sense of sisterhood that reminds you why we all have the yearning for TRUE friends to have times like THOSE.... EPIC times!

Each character has her own identity, however throughout the movie you find yourself loving each one of them in their own way. Tiffany Haddish's character, Dina, has a very reckless, unpredictable mouth. Be prepared....she says ANYTHING...and it's HILARIOUS! Actually, in real life she says anything. If you don't believe me, watch any of her stand up comedy shows. She will have you cracking up and shaking your head. She is a very talented comedian/actress who also stars on the TV series The Carmichael

Show. This is DEFINITELY a Summer Must See!

As a lover of great music, I also found the soundtrack to be very entertaining. Some of the featured tracks are: "Ascension (Don't Ever Wonder) by Maxwell, "It's Like That" by Mariah Carey, "Because Of You (Girls Trip Remix) by Ne-Yo, and "Woman" by Diana Gordon. Don't miss out on the movie OR the music....watch the movie and download/purchase the soundtrack!

Music by: David Newman Cinematography: Greg Gardiner  
Edited by: Paul Millsbaugh  
Production company: Will Packer Productions  
Distributed by: Universal Pictures  
Running time: 122 minutes  
\$27.7 million (gross) \$19 million (net)  
Box office \$30.4 million



# *I* MUST *Have* FOR WOMEN

by Jennifer Wilford

We all have seen articles and advertisements that express the importance of having completed various obstacles in life by the time we have reached adulthood. Some feel that having an abundance of “things” makes us feel or look important. But what about being responsible? Have no fear, the BSIM staff is here to the rescue! We have come up with 8 important must haves for women:

Photo Credit: Shutterstock

**1** **[01] A Substantial Life Insurance Policy.** Have a policy in place that would be enough to take care your funeral expenses and any bills. You don't want your loved ones forced to raise an offering or have Friday dinners to bury you..or worse, set up a Go Fund Me account. This is not the proper way for burial or a good way for your family to remember you by. Contact a trusted insurance representative to assist you in obtaining a policy that best suits your needs

**[03] Diverse Portfolio of Investments**  
In today's timeline, more than one source of income is needed unless you are born with Platinum Parents. It's good to have another source of income that isn't tied to your main source. Be it rental property, side business, or stocks, but make the step to speak with an investor to make the start. Check your app store for investment apps; most allow you to start with only \$5 down!

**[05] Personal Bucket List**  
As women we all have things that we want to do, places we want to go, but time may not allow it. We have jobs, family and our lives that we have to make sure are in order first, however, we can't forget about ourselves, and most of all forget to live life. Grab a pen, a few good magazines (OURS), some good music, and let your mind take you away. Jot down things you want to do, places you would like to go. As you reach your mark, check it off!

**[07] Self Love**  
What do you see when you look in the mirror? Are you happy with who you have become? If you were asked if you loved everything about yourself, what would you say? This is a question many of us struggle with. Sometimes we are too busy seeking love from others and we can't appreciate the love we have within ourselves. We can't give what we can't provide to ourselves. Love starts at home.

**[02] A True Group of Girlfriends**  
Life is not meant to be spent alone, but best spent with real friends. You need a group of girls you can laugh with, cry with, one who will call you out on your ish; but be the shoulder you need in the midst of death or heartbreak. Be the friend you desire, but be selective about those in your space..

**[04] A Rainy Day Account**  
Things happen all of time that are out of our control. No matter how many doomsday buckets we make, we can never be too prepared for emergencies. If you can't afford to start with 6 months of savings, start with 1 month. Just start.

**[06] A Good Workout Partner**  
We all start off every year with a new resolution to lose weight, only to find out the only thing we lost was the will to resolve it. Being in good health is very important for us as African Americans and we have to keep our minds and our bodies in great shape. Exercise, eat healthy, and find an accountability partner who will make sure you are held responsible for your actions.

**[08] FAITH**  
We can have all of the above, but without an ounce of Faith, what are you doing it all for? Speaking things into existence is allowing the universe to listen and God to make it happen, but it can't happen if you don't believe it will. What you think, you bring out. Think positive and watch your life change.

# RELATIONSHIP MATH IN THE 21ST CENTURY

ONE PLUS ONE = 3?

by Hurchel Williams, MBA

**W**hen you are in a relationship with another of any degree, you always start with promise and grace. The goal is to be happy and feel special with the significant hope of growth for the future, right? Well, in the 21st century, let me be the first to tell you what I just outlined is not always the case. Before you start to rip the page out of this fresh new magazine, or dismiss the writer as a fiction writer with NO merit, allow me to introduce myself. My name is Mr. Anatomy. I am a life coach, relationship counselor, and sex therapist ([www.theanatomyofacheater.blogspot.com](http://www.theanatomyofacheater.blogspot.com)) who is not afraid to ask the real questions when it comes to relationships. At press time of this magazine, I carry an advanced degree in business, and undergrad focus on human resources; however in a few months, I will be Dr. Anatomy, ABD. I assure you, I've done my homework.

**N**ow, back to the meat and potatoes of this article. One plus One is supposed to equal two, but in my opinion, in modern day dating the aforesaid is not necessarily the truth. Boy meets girl, boy likes girl, but boy typically has to get rid of "other girl" before boy can pursue a full relationship with new girl, right? Or, are you in the old thinking that boy meets girl and the two will

live happily ever after? What if I told you men and women are not as different as you were once told or even learned as you progressed through life? What if I told you in today's dating scene, you should expect some level of cheating with the current climate of options both men and women have? Merriam Webster has three different definitions for the word infidelity, however the only one we will concern ourselves with is "the act or fact of having a romantic or sexual relationship with someone other than one's husband, wife, or partner." Why do I start the first article in this great new publication on the topic of infidelity? Well, simple really, it is the most talked about topic that no one wants to discuss in public. One of the most over-used words in the dictionary, in my opinion is the word "Love!" Today, we are in love, tomorrow, we are in divorce court!

**W**hat if dating came with a road map; a set of instructions? Well, I will tell the readers just as I would tell my own 9-year-old daughter; trust, but verify trust. Expect the man you care for to have a very short attention span. Most women love dating strong confident men. Men who command attention when they enter a room. Lammers & Maner (2016) explains "Previous



*What if I told you in today's dating scene, you should expect some level of cheating with the current climate of options both men and women have?*

research shows that powerful people are more likely than those lacking power to engage in infidelity." In my research, I would have to poignantly agree. What if the road map you are provided tells you this; what if the roadmap is set up to allow this to happen? You would navigate the shark infested waters of meeting people with caution, wouldn't you? Mr. Anatomy is simply stating, an educated dater is a smarter dater. A dater who is not setting themselves up for failure from the onset. Nothing pains me more than a new life coaching client who should have saw the writing on the wall from the beginning. Don't get me wrong, I love having new clients, but while reading the intake forms prior to talking to the client, I often wonder, "if they are explaining to me exactly what they suspected, then why did they continue their pursuit of unhappiness?"

**M**r. Anatomy, are you saying as men and women, we should

NEVER date; should we wait for the right person to come along and then interrogate them, run background checks, and ask for doctor's notes? No indeed my fancy new reader, the whole direction of this article...be a well-educated, well prepared architect of your domain. As a man who has dated well over the limit of ladies that one usually does in a lifetime, I always set my sight on what it is I want in a person. I never seek a partner with their wants and needs in mind, initially. Wait; before you call me insensitive, neither do you! You have NO idea who the other person is, so the initial contact with another is usually based on the outward appearance and their physical attributes that you find attractive.

**A**s Stephen R. Covey wrote in his book, "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People" habit 5 states "Seek first to understand, then to be understood!" This means take an extra moment to understand the person you seek to interact with, do a little

prep work as you check things off the list of "must-haves" for yourself. If at any time any of the attributes don't meet your needs, run, and run fast. If you don't take this advice, you will find yourself in one of those 1 + 1 = 3 relationships and you will be the one with the extra baggage! Never start a relationship with lies, dishonesty or doubt. Honesty will take you much further than an untruth. In this new century, it may be fair to say, he or she may be looking for the same "hook-up" you seek. You will never know unless you come in with your truth on your sleeves. In all my years of infidelity, honesty took me so much further than lying because once I showed my hand, the lady on the other side felt comfortable enough to show hers without the fear of being judged.



**H**urchel of Anatomy of a Cheater, a product of the Memphis inner city. Hurchel brings a twisted spin to millennial dating and hook-ups. Hurchel is also an Army Veteran.

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# HOROSCOPES

by Amber Alexander

## Leo Season JULY 23 - AUGUST 22



you  
they let

It's your month to shine Leo, and with the new moon in Leo it is important to tap into certain creative outlets in order to share more of yourself with others. With fun being your nature, it is a mystery that you will enjoy this month as it gives you time to be yourself and bask in your own uniqueness. Those around you will thank for your jubilant spirit, because they might need it more than on. All-in-all enjoy your limelight, but don't let it inflate your ego!



### Virgo

AUG 23 - SEPT 22

It's time to be all about your best interest and putting yourself first. Many projects need tending to and it's up to you and your determination to stop doubting yourself and finish them.



### Libra

SEPT 23 - OCT 22

Working on your communication will be important for relationships with family and friends. This month it is vital you let yourself be vulnerable in order to have peace amongst you.



### Scorpio

OCT 23 - NOV 21

Find time to balance this month as matters of career may be taking over. Use this month to come out of the shell you've been hiding in; breathe, you deserve it



### Sagittarius

NOV 22 - DEC 21

Try to keep your head this month as your stress levels begin to heighten. Find peace in the work place and within yourself, it's okay to relax



### Capricorn

DEC 22 - JAN 19

Take this month to explore your feelings and emotions. It is important to remember that they exist, no matter how hidden they are.



### Aquarius

JAN 20 - FEB 18

This month is all about reflection: with relationships, career, and yourself! Remain levelheaded and focused... it's decision time.



### Pisces

FEB 19 - MAR 20

Socializing is your biggest strength and this month will be more important than ever. Don't cave in to yourself, but use the energy from talking to others to fuel you.



### Aries

MAR 21 - APR 19

This month of August will be a time of assessment and reflection of your passion and work. Take this month to pay attention to the little things in order to appeal to the bigger picture.



### Taurus

APR 20 - MAY 20

Recently times have been tough with self-development and filled with inner turmoil, but August will be used as a month to grow. Make sure to share with those around you.



**T**hough you are known to keep things ankle deep with those around you, it is important that this month you try to delve deeper. Who knows, while learning them you might learn more about yourself.



**Y**ou might feel the need to rely heavily on family during this month for support, but don't forget to find your own standing and strength. Your family will always be there; yet and still you have to be there for yourself

## Love Horoscopes

**Aries:** It's time to take things further and deeper, no matter the seriousness and status of your current romantic situation.

**Taurus:** Certain sparks will arise in your love life causing new feelings, don't be scared. You got this!

**Gemini:** Have fun dating around and seeing what you might want. Who knows? You might just find it!

**Cancer:** Your relationship is not a burden, understand that love takes patience and though things may change, it's up to you to make it work!

**Leo:** Make sure all other aspects of your life are in order before embarking on matters of the heart; you can wait!

**Virgo:** Don't expect your happily ever after so soon. Everything doesn't have to be serious, relax. It'll happen.

**Libra:** If you can smooth over the rough patches, you're sure to do well with your partner!

**Scorpio:** PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR PARTNER! Don't let things distract you from love and what matters.

**Sagittarius:** You are in no mood for love, though you yearn for it. Don't force the matter, take time to yourself.

**Capricorn:** Stop planning love, it's not realistic. Let things happen naturally; yes it's hard, but not everything has a plan.

**Aquarius:** Learn yourself before trying to learn others. No one can love and know someone who doesn't know themselves.

**Pisces:** Don't let love be your demise. Set boundaries, and stop letting yourself be trampled for the sake of love.



*Amber Alexander is a College student currently studying Psychology and Astrology in her spare time.*

# GENEVA'S *Groove*

by *Ericka Linnete*

“**G**eneva sat in front of her vanity. Facing herself in the mirror, now unrecognizable. Her long auburn hair resembling a lion’s mane, wild and untamed. Her tear soaked face made her look like a clown. Red lipstick smeared, mascara running down her face as if it too were running away. She felt as if everything and everyone were running away. Her son having moved 1600 miles away. Her daughter just recently going away to college.

And now her husband of 25 years left her to be with a younger woman. As Geneva sat in front of the mirror, at the same vanity that her husband Damien had surprised her with as an anniversary present, she beheld herself, searching within her eyes to find some semblance of herself. Where was she in there? Now clawing at her face leaving red marks down her cheeks, she wondered if she were in fact losing her mind. After all, she was losing everything else. The house was eerily quiet, which intensified the sound of the ticking of the watch on her left wrist. He’d given her this watch for a birthday gift. Glancing around the bedroom they shared, she realized everything here was stained by his presence. The bed they had slept in and made love on, the chaise lounge where they had cuddled, the window they had stood in front of with his arms around her waist standing behind her as he so often did. They liked to watch the sun rise together, that was their thing. Was. But not anymore. Geneva tore the Michael Kors watch from her wrist and hurled it toward the window. She wished it would shatter into a million pieces, but instead it bounced off

the drapes and landed on the floor. She chuckled. She couldn’t even do that right. Now glaring at herself in the mirror with a crooked grin on her face, she began to laugh uncontrollably. Head back, mouth open, she laughed the most insane and sinister laugh she had ever heard. She laughed because she thought she had the perfect life. She laughed because she thought he loved her. She laughed because she had been made a fool of. Geneva stood underneath the shower head allowing it to beat down upon her face. Chin up, head back she said aloud, “Look towards the hills from whence your help come from.” She pondered that scripture she’d heard her grandmother say a multitude of times. Oh how she missed her grandmother. As the warm shower beat down upon her face, she didn’t know which was water and which were her tears, yet both were cleansing just the same.

Overcome with emotions that ranged from fear to loneliness, anger, and unforgiveness; gripped with pain and the love of God all at the same, her legs became weak with the weight of it all. Geneva slid down the shower wall and sat crouched in the flow of the shower stream sobbing. Was this really her life? How would she tell the children? What would her friends say? Would everyone think she was a failure because she couldn’t keep her man? Letting out a wail, she hoped that as the sound escaped her body, somehow all the pain would leave out and float away as well. It seemed to make her feel better. She screamed again. And again. And again. She was glad that her neighbor’s house was vacant because certainly her cries would’ve been heard.

Stepping out of the shower, too exhausted to even bother with lathering herself, she wrapped a towel around herself and stood before the fogged bathroom mirror. Wiping it in a circular clockwise motion so she could see her face, it continued to fog back up. Her image looked distorted, but she could make out that her eyes were red and puffy. She barely recognized herself, especially now with her short hair. Who was this woman that stood before her? How would she pick up the pieces and start anew? Closing her eyes and inhaling deeply, she channeled the strength of her grandmother and repeated the mantra, "I can do this. I can do this."

The sound of the doorbell chime startled her. Grabbing her favorite peach terrycloth bathrobe, she put it on wondering who could be at her door at this time of morning. She wasn't expecting anyone and her neighbor had moved away months ago. Walking downstairs apprehensively and slower than usual, the doorbell chimed again. Now standing in front of the door arms folded, and rubbing her arms, somehow the soft texture of the terrycloth robe always comforted her, she asked, "Who is it?" The voice on the other side of the door said, "It's Toni. I'm your neighbor." Geneva knew she shouldn't open the door for a stranger and certainly not a man, while she stood there in her robe, but the voice sounded like a woman. Confused, she asked, "Who? Wh... who did you say you are? I don't have a neighbor." The voice replied, "My bad I'm sorry. My name is Toni. Well... Antoinette, but everybody calls me Toni. Toni Maxwell. I just moved in next door. I just didn't want you to hear me banging around and you and your husband think I was an intruder. The realtor told me y'all were my only neighbors so I just wanted to introduce myself. Sorry if I disturbed you."

Geneva placed her hand on the door-knob hesitant to open it but curious enough to see who the new neighbor was. She didn't want to be rude but she knew she looked a mess. She smoothed her hair down with her hand, still wet from her shower, the short curls felt unfamiliar. Opening the door quickly so as not to give Toni a chance to leave, Geneva said, "Wait!", just as she caught a glimpse of her walking away. Toni turned around. Walking back to the door she had a crooked smirk on her face and said, "I didn't catch y'all at a bad time huh? Looks like you just got out the shower. Leave it to me to bother somebody when they're getting their groove on." Geneva felt herself blushing and said, "I...I was just getting out the shower. You didn't disturb anything. No one is here but me. It's nice to meet you." Geneva was a very observant person. She noticed Toni was dressed in men's clothes. Actually had she not heard her voice first, she probably would've thought the new neighbor was a man had she caught a glimpse of her before being introduced. She was very tall, looked at least 6'0 tall with an athletic build. She was wearing a tank top, basketball shorts and Nike slides with white socks, her thick natural hair pulled up onto a puff but shaved into a tapered cut all the way around, neatly lined in the front. Her arms were muscular. Toni cleared her throat and said, "Dang I look that bad huh? I been messing around the house and moving sh..I mean stuff in." Geneva felt the oddest feeling of butterflies in her stomach. "Uh...no you don't look bad. Sorry, I just have a lot on my mind." Geneva stuck out her hand and said, "I'm Geneva. Geneva Tillman. It's nice to meet you Toni. I apologize for my appearance. I know I must look a mess." She reached up self consciously and smoothed her

super short tresses down again. Their hands still engaged in a handshake just a few moments too long, she now embarrassingly pulled it away. Toni said, "No you don't. Not at all. Not at all. Well, I'm not gonna hold you up any longer. Don't be a stranger nah ok?" Geneva wondered to herself why on Earth did it feel as if her cheeks were flushed? Was she blushing? And what's the deal with these butterflies in her stomach?

Geneva assumed by the way that Toni was dressed that maybe she was a lesbian. Then she quickly thought to herself that she was stereotyping her and she had taught her children better than to judge a book by its cover, but now here she was doing just that. Geneva replied, "I won't be. I'm sure we'll be waving to each other from our mailboxes." Toni smiled. Geneva thought to herself, "Damn there goes that crooked grin again." Toni said, "Well Miss Geneva, I hope that's not gonna be the only time I see you is at the mailbox." She winked, smiled, turned and walked away. It was the sexiest walk, up there in her book with President Obama and Denzel. Geneva felt a feeling in the pit of her stomach and thought to herself that she wished Toni hadn't left just yet. She felt a feeling that she'd known her before. She felt..."familiar."

Watching Toni walk away until she was out of sight, Geneva closed the door, locked it and stood with her back against it. She was intrigued by this Toni. Hugging herself, and rubbing up and down her arms as she often did for comfort, an unexpected smile suddenly crossed her lips.



# MANIFEST HEALTH *and* Happiness

## WITH THE USE OF CRYSTALS

*by Ericka Linnete*

I'm sure you've been hearing a lot about crystals lately. From celebrities sharing photos of their collections, to beauty suppliers adding them to their products. But the truth is, the use of crystals is not a fad or new trend.

Crystals have been used by Ancient civilizations since the beginning of time. Some people are still on the fence about their use, but trust me, the use of crystals can shift your energy and literally change your life. They hold from thousands to millions of years of healing energy along with the earth's history within them. God has placed on and within this Earth the tools we need to have an abundant life. All we have to do is utilize them. I will be helping you to understand the many different crystals that are placed here for our use and healing, their uses, and how they can benefit and change your life.



Rose Quartz is a silicon dioxide mineral compressed over eons of time at extremely high temperatures and then cooled into a soft pink crystallization of energy

It is the crystal of unconditional love. It speaks directly to the heart chakra. Not familiar with chakras? That's okay as I will also use this platform to shed light on other natural ways to heal our bodies whether it be chakra cleansing, natural herbal remedies, or meditation, among others. Now back to Rose Quartz...it is a gentle pink stone of the heart. Having been used as early as 600 B.C., it can heal emotional wounds, attract love, and enhance intimacy and romance in your relationship (Rose Quartz is known as a powerful aphrodisiac). It can strengthen bonds within your family and/or relationships. Also known as a mothering crystal, it aids in self love and nurturing for those who have lost their mother; it is an excellent stone to

comfort those who are grieving. It is a wonderful stone to take with you into the delivery room. It increases imagination for artists, whether of the written word, musically, or all types of creative thinkers. It aids those with sleeping issues, whether it be nightmares or children afraid of the dark, as it is a very calming crystal.

As far as physical healing, Rose Quartz may be used to soothe burns and reduce blistering if the area is rubbed lightly, being sure to use only a polished stone. You may also use it to lessen the appearance of scars. Rose Quartz aids in the proper functioning of our circulatory systems and helps our hearts to function properly. Some have found it eases heart palpitations and arrhythmia, also calms and reduces stress

is also a great stone for fertility and is very compatible with the female reproductive system and genitals. I could go on and on. The uses and benefits of this gift from the Earth are endless. I hope that you will join me here in each issue to shed light on the plethora of healing crystals and their many, many healing uses and benefits. Until next time...



Rose Quartz Bracelet - \$19.99  
justforthezen.com

**Rose Quartz**  
 Chakra: Heart chakra

- A "Love" stone
- Brings love of self, others, and any situations needing love  
 -Also said to attract love
- Calming and peaceful
- Helps us to understand our emotions to create emotional healing

psychicmediumrebecca.wix.com/Ano1



Ericka Linnette is the author of novella *Skeletons: Tron's Saga of Secrets* and poet. She is a clairvoyant and spiritual healer who uses the therapeutic healing properties of crystals along with other gifts from the Earth.



**“I AM  
NO LONGER  
ASHAMED”**

**I LIVE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS**  
BY ARYANNA KELLY

Photo Credit: Aryanna Kelly

I have a message, my personal story, and it is for those who may need to hear this. I'm nervous as hell typing this right now, but I feel that God laid this on my heart to share. I am 19 years old and I've struggled with mental illness since I was 13. There, I said it. I've been diagnosed with bipolar disorder for the past three years. I've been on a dozen different medications over the years and have received counseling. I am often reminded of Erykah Badu's lyrics "bag lady, you gone hurt your back dragging all them bags like that." I have always felt like the bag lady carrying around so much. Sexual assault. Self mutilation. Drug abuse. Low self esteem. Mental illness. These are things I've carried on my back for years.

I became so good at hiding my struggles that I almost convinced myself they didn't exist. I was so embarrassed about people coming over and seeing all of my pill bottles. I feared they would think that I was sick or crazy. I didn't want pity. I didn't want help. I got comfortable in my own misery. I got accustomed to it. It astounded me how no matter how cute I dressed or how my makeup looked, no matter how many people told me I was beautiful or smart... I still couldn't love myself. Depression can get so bad to where the only thoughts you have are negative. You feel hopeless. Dumb. Ugly. Unloved. Isolating yourself during these times is the worst thing you could do. You have to reach out because if you don't, those negative affirmations you have about yourself are all you become consumed with. You will lie to yourself and believe it.

Recently I spent a week in a psychiatric hospital after having a mental breakdown that was so bad I felt that I wanted to end my life. A lot of people will call me weak for that, but mental illness isn't always about strength or about being weak. Mental illness is just as real as any physical ailment or illness anyone may have.

When I first got to the hospital a lot of the patients said I didn't look like I belonged because they felt I was "too pretty" or was too well spoken. During my time in the hospital I was forced to look at my naked self. Not in nude per say, but without my makeup... without hair products...without the attention that I get on social media. I felt ugly for days. I realized I had to look at my naked self in the mirror and find love and truth in MYSELF without the adornments. I had to tell myself that I was beautiful, that I loved myself, and that I would be happy. I was forced to accept who I really was, and not the facade I tried to put on for everyone else, in real life and on social media.

I want everyone to know that mental illness knows no face, no occupation, no race. ANYONE can struggle with substance abuse, addiction, and mental illness. I once was ashamed of what I struggled with, but I realized there is nothing to feel ashamed about. There is no shame in getting help. There is no shame in needing medication. I wouldn't have made it without my family coming to visit every day, my friends, and the beautiful people I met in the facility. I thank you all so much. But even with all that support, I had to learn it started with

ME. No one else can do it for you. If me telling my story can help even one person, then I feel it was all worth it.

**"Bag lady, you gone hurt your back, dragging all them bags like that... so...pack light."** And I am reminded of just that every time I see those words etched in ink into my skin on my rib cage; I got that tattoo as a reminder to do just that...to "pack light."

My name is Aryanna Kelly. I am 19 years old. And I live with mental illness. I am no longer ashamed.



**A**ccording to the Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, African Americans are 20% more likely to experience serious mental health problems than the general population

Source: [www.Nami.org](http://www.Nami.org)

# SUGGESTED READS

Here are a few of the HOTTEST books out right now. Be sure to check them out and support!



**BLACK PRIVILEGE:**  
Opportunity Comes To Those Who Create It  
by Charlamagne Tha God

Charlamagne Tha God, co-host of Power 105.1's The Breakfast Club, shares his success story using his signature no-filter style. He keeps it one hundred percent authentic as he encourages his readers to embrace their own truths in order to achieve happiness and success.

Publisher: Touchstone  
Publication date: 4/18/2017  
Pages: 320



**I CAN'T MAKE THIS UP**  
Life Lessons  
by Kevin Hart

Superstar comedian/actor, Kevin Hart, releases his latest brilliant masterpiece in the form of a memoir on survival, success, and the importance of believing in yourself!

Hart previously described life as a collection of chapters that each person gets to write for himself or herself.

Publisher: Atria/37 Ink  
Publication Date: 06/06/2017  
Pages: 256



**FRIENDS WITH BENEFITS**  
by Bishop Rudolph McKissick

In his most recent book, Friends With Benefits, Bishop McKissick, Jr. breaks down what friendships should REALLY bring to your life. Often times we choose our "friends" for the wrong reasons. After reading this book, be ready to reevaluate your friendships as he takes you through biblical principles on how to carefully select and nourish your friendships.

Publisher: Won't He Do It Ministries  
Publication Date: 05/25/17  
Pages: 62

by Leviticus King

# PERSONAL TALK

## PAIN IS REAL

The pain is real and we try to hold it inside...

As much as we try, it is something we can't hide.

Today we may feel weak and our hearts are filled with sorrow....

But we have to remember that there's always tomorrow.

We're all different people, but our emotions are the same....

We all experience life's struggles, we all feel the pain.

It will be felt throughout different perils of our life....

It comes from friends and family, even our husband and wives.

No matter how good your life may be at this moment of time....

You will eventually feel pain, the sun won't always shine.

You may be feeling tired, a little stressed and depressed....

Don't let the pain win and keep you from doing your best.

Never give up on life, never let it cause you to question yourself....

Pain seems to do that to us all, it will always be felt.

Just like a wound, in time, it will heal....

Life is a struggle and the PAIN is so REAL.

## YOU ARE

A failure, a disappointment...that's what they say you are.

But God says different, he says he will take you far.

Always believe and have faith that his word is true.

He can move mountains and He would do it all for you.

You are more than what they say you are; you are a child of God.

He will pick you up and carry you when times are hard.

Keep your head up high; move forward and forget about the past.

Put God 1st in your life, and He will never put you last.

I have been called many names, I know you have too...

I let it discourage me; don't let it do it to you too.

You are more than they say you are; you are never alone.

Even if it's one person, he or she will motivate you to stay strong.

Stay prayed up and one day you will succeed.

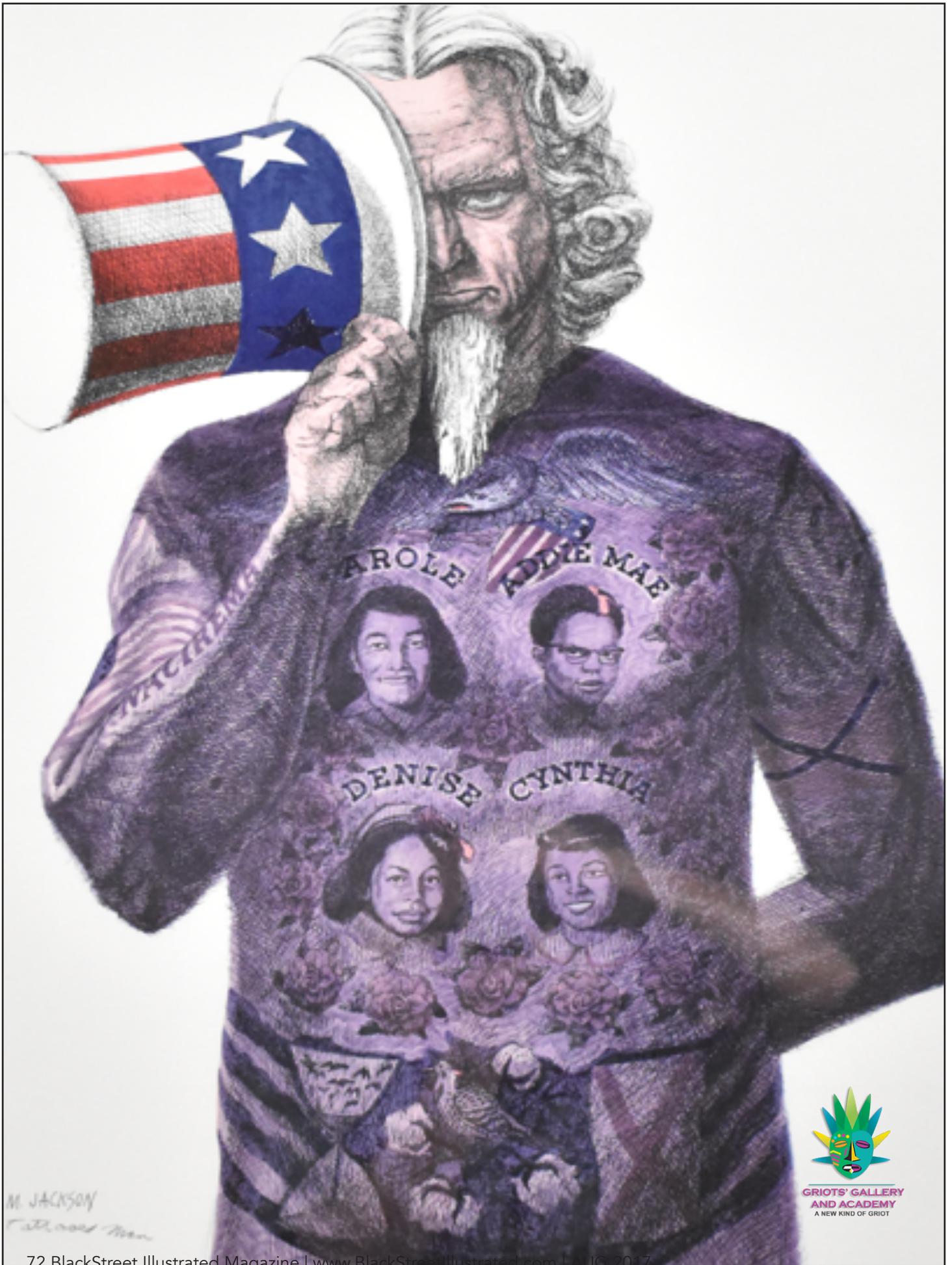
You'll always have somebody on your side during your time of need.

We all make mistakes; we live and we learn.

Life's lessons are what we make us, so keep moving and stand firm.

If you look up in the sky you'll see a shining star.

If you look even closer, you'll see that's what you are.



GRIOTS' GALLERY  
AND ACADEMY  
A NEW KIND OF GRIOT

# The Tattooed Man

## The Civil Rights Prints of Billy Morrow Jackson

by Michael K. Butler

The image of Uncle Sam with a Top Hat partially (half) covering his face implies a degree of “shadiness”. Uncle Sam has multiple tattoos on his arms and completely covering his torso. The tats on his torso have the faces of four little girls: Addie Mae Collins, Carol Denise McNair, Cynthia Wesley, and Carole Robertson who were killed in the September 15th, 1963 at the 16th Baptist Church bombing.

The Uncle Sam figure suggests that the government and the country as a whole are complicated and “inextricably linked” to their murder and are indelibly marked by the “stains” (tattoos) of violence and racism.

Their deaths were the result of an organized terrorist effort. Mr. Jackson has the name of a terrorist organization—“Nacirema”—American spelled backwards on his right forearm. This was a group that recruited and trained terrorist cells in bomb making and

bombing techniques. Though this group was based in Georgia, it trained people from all over the south and had numerous sympathizers, acolytes, and fellow travelers.

Robert Chambliss, Ku Klux Klan member, placed the bomb at the church. Chambliss was originally found not guilty of murder and only received a fine and a six-month jail time for possessing dynamite. In 1977, he was tried again with new FBI evidence and sentenced to life in prison (where he died in 1985).

The surrounding red roses denote love and grief. The lower abdomen is imprinted with the Alabama State flag, bolls of cotton, and a hourglass with apparent time running out. Sand is filling up the lower half of the hourglass and the top of the hourglass is filled with carrion birds (vultures or buzzards).

The American Flag is on his right biceps and the Confederate Flag is on his left.

Birmingham earned the “nickname” of Bombingham due to large number of unsolved bombings in the city over two decades.

Uncle Sam’s upper chest tattoo has an eagle clutching a number of arrows and a shield with the eagle’s head turned toward the arrows. When the eagle’s head is facing the arrows this usually indicates a state of conflict or war. The traditional olive branches have been replaced by an implement of war—a shield.

The image of the Tattooed Man can be contrasted with another piece in the collection—“I Remember Birmingham,” by Mr. John T. Scott, an artist who created his own memorials in honor of the four little girls.

*M*ichael K. Butler, MD, MHA, CPE is Executive Director of Griots’ Gallery and Academy in Miami, FL. He recently retired from the Jackson Health System (Miami) where he served as the Chief Medical Officer and the Chief Medical Administrative Officer. Dr. Butler is married



to Marion Thompson Butler and is passionate about African American art and American history. He has also collected art over 31yrs.

Wexler, Stuart, *America’s Secret Jihad: The Hidden History of Religious Terrorism in the United States*, Counterpoint Press, 2015, p

# A Journey to MALDIVES

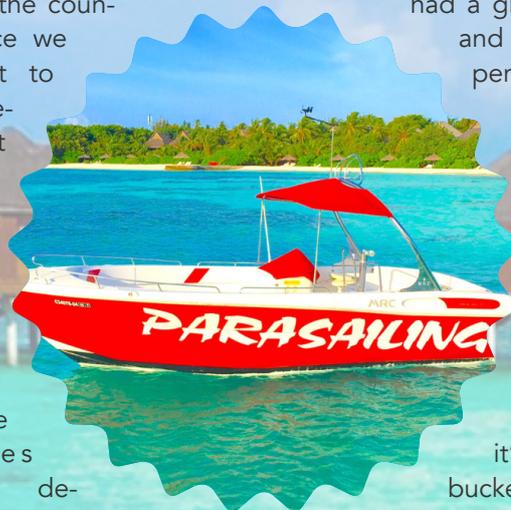
by Sprite Deon

I love traveling to new places, so I wanted to do something different for my last birthday. My fiancée and I decided to take a vacation to Maldives for our birthdays. This would be a different experience for the both of us being that we've never been to Asia or anywhere near the Indian Ocean. We chose Maldives because of the pictures we had seen from different vacation sites and also from people that had visited there before. The blue water, blue sky, and private villas sitting above the water all played a big part in being our birthday destination. There are many vacation sites that you can use to book an overseas vacation; most of them will let you choose what type of airline and resort you would like. When choosing a vacation site make sure that you find out about any hidden fees such as transfers, hotel security deposits, etc. We had to pay an extra \$500 for boat transfers to the resort, which was not mentioned by the travel agent when booking the trip. We also decided to pay extra for the private villa with the jacuzzi tub on the patio to give us more of an exclusive feel. Leaving out of Houston our flight took approx-

imately 21 hours including a lay-over in Istanbul, Turkey. Once we arrived in Male, we were greeted by the travel guides that took us to board a speed boat that would be taking us to our resort. The speed boat trip took about 30 minutes, which was nice because we had a chance to pass by other resorts in Male and also get a good look at the country. Once we made it to the resort, it was a seven more beautiful person than the pictures could describe. We were then welcomed by the resort staff; they handed us our first drinks on the island (Pina Coladas) and gave us some small talk about the different restaurants and bars that were available to us and what time breakfast would be served. The food and drinks at the resort

are a bit costly. For example, for a burger we would pay around 10 dollars and for a soda we would pay around 4 dollars. On the day of my birthday, my fiancée had the resort surprise me with a private dinner that was made with fresh lobster and fish right out of the ocean! They also made me my very own birthday cake. We had a great time in Maldives, and the weather was also perfect for our stay. I was initially worried about the weather because September is normally rainy there, but we lucked up and didn't see much rain at all. I would definitely consider going back to Maldives; it's a check off of our bucket list of travel goals.

Sprite Deon is a resident of Houston, TX and has developed a love for traveling over the past 4 years. "It's a blessing to show people it's a whole world out there that everyone can easily reach."





BEST OVERALL SITE FOR VACATION TRAVEL: Booking.com Best Deals for short window



BEST SITE FOR LAST MINUTE TRAVEL: Priceline.com Name it, Claim it!



Photo Credit: Joy

BEST SITES FOR HOTEL RESERVATIONS: Booking.com, Hotels.com and Hotwire.com

Vacaton Site Source: [www.reviews.com](http://www.reviews.com)

*Raina Reign*

# ZELEVEN





## FINAL WORDS



*There will come a time when you will either stay in the place where you are, or you will take the ultimate sacrifice and jump... and that is what I did.*

# The *P*OWER of SACRIFICE

by Jennifer 'Je' Wilford  
Co-CEO | Publisher | Digital Art Director

Every now and then, we get to that point in life where we become physically and emotionally tired. Tired of life, tired of work, just tired of it all. We are ready to give up because where we are in life has become too overwhelming. We look in the mirror and we just want to say enough is enough. But it is at your lowest of low, that you are able to see what you are made of.

I just wanted to drop in your spirit today that you are enough. No one ever said the road we are traveling would be easy, nor were we told that we won't have any problems in life. All we were told was to endure and things would get better. Any change that must occur in life starts within. Once we are able to change our way of thinking, everything around us will change. The saying is true, "What you think and believe, your mind can cultivate into existence." This is why we must keep our thoughts positive, even when everything around us gives us reason to doubt and remain negative. Unless we are willing to change things within ourselves, the company we keep, and the places we go, then we are the only ones that we can hold accountable.

Change begins with sacrifice, even if that means removing yourself from an uncomfortable situation. I worked at my previous employer for several years, and although I truly loved what I did, it became physically and emotionally overwhelming for me. I suffered with severe migraines and developed anxiety, until one day I had to make a choice. Stay in my current position and continue to become more ill, or step out on faith and live a dream that only God gave me.

I chose to walk, with nothing but a few bucks and my faith. Sometimes you have to trust yourself enough to know that what God put in you is enough to take you to the next level. He would not provide you with the gifts that you have, if they were intended to be of service to someone else and not Him. Think about it. If you had a gift, that you know you have no training for, but you are very good at what you do, why would that door not open for you? Know that the gifts God blesses us with will always make room for us as we go along. We won't have to ask others for help, or even beg for it. God hears our prayers, and he will deliver.



*Dedicated to  
Margie "Locky" Anthony  
October 7, 1952 - July 5, 2017*



**BLACK STREET**  
**ILLUSTRATED**  
M A G A Z I N E