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## Investigation reveals more than 1,000 unnecessary deaths from police use of non-lethal tactics

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National Correspondent

More than 1,000 people have died in the past decade after encounters with law enforcement, despite officers using non-lethal tactics, according to a recent investigation by The Associated Press, the Howard Center for Investigative Journalism, and PBS' Frontline. The findings again show systemic issues within policing and raise questions about accountability and reform.

Each victim was unarmed and posed no immediate threat. Yet, they met tragic ends after police resorted to methods such as physical holds, Tasers, and body blows, which are typically meant to subdue individuals without causing harm. The investigation underscored the potential lethality of these tactics when misused, echoing the outcry sparked by the death of George Floyd in 2020.

In one of many examples, investigators highlighted an incident in South Boston, Virginia, where one of three officers who shocked a man rolling on a hospital sidewalk said a suspect's actions—not Taser guidelines—dictate what to



The investigation underscored the potential lethality of these tactics when misused, echoing the outcry sparked by the death of George Floyd in 2020. (Photo via NNPA)

do. They noted that officers fired their Tasers a combined 20 times, even after handcuffing the man. "There are eight pages of warnings, and basically, if I read and abided by every single warning, I would not tase anyone," the officer said in response to a civil lawsuit later settled out of court. Federal prosecutors said they didn't see enough evidence to pursue civil rights charges against the three officers.

For the report, investigators filed thousands of requests for government documents and body-camera footage, unearthing over 700 autopsy reports or death certificates and uncovering video evidence in

dozens of cases previously unreported.

The victims hail from diverse backgrounds, including Black Americans like Donald Ivy Jr., who were disproportionately affected, comprising a third of the fatalities despite representing only 12% of the population. A former three-sport athlete, Ivy, left an ATM alone one night when officers sized him up as suspicious and tried to detain him. The unarmed Ivy ran, and police tackled and shocked him with a stun gun, belted him with batons, and held him facedown. Like so

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### People In The News ...



Ed Dwight



Rep. Jasmine Crockett

NDG Quote of the Week: "Just don't give up what you're trying to do. Where there is Love and inspiration, I don't think you can go wrong."

- Ella Fitzgerald

## Ed Dwight

Ed Dwight, the pioneering African American who came close to becoming America's first Black astronaut six decades ago, achieved his long-awaited journey into space at the age of 90.

On Sunday, May 19, Dwight, along with five crewmates, soared aboard Blue Origin's New Shepard rocket.

The liftoff from Blue Origin's West Texas launch site was the company's first passenger flight in nearly two years.

This approximately



10-minute suborbital flight etched Dwight's name in history as the oldest person to reach space, surpassing Star Trek actor William Shatner, who held the record at age 90 until Dwight's

journey.

Dwight's fellow passengers included venture capitalist Mason Angel, French craft brewery founder Sylvain Chiron, entrepreneur Kenneth Hess, aviator Gopi Thotakura, and retired accountant Carol Schaller.

Together, they experienced a brief but transformative journey as the rocket ascended over 347,000 feet, crossing the Kármán line, the internationally recognized boundary of space.

After a few moments of weightlessness, the New Shepard booster landed smoothly near the launch site, with the crew capsule

following under two of its three parachutes.

Emerging from the capsule, Dwight expressed his elation, shaking his fists in triumph. "Fantastic! A life-changing experience. Everyone needs to do this!" he exclaimed.

Reflecting on the experience, he added, "I didn't know I needed this in my life, but now I need it in my life."

In the 1960s, Dwight, then an Air Force captain, was fast-tracked for space flight following President John F. Kennedy's call for a Black astronaut. Despite his top-half graduation from a

prestigious test pilot school, he was passed over for astronaut selection.

His autobiography, "Soaring On The Wings Of A Dream: The Untold Story of America's First Black Astronaut Candidate," recounts that challenging period.

Following his Air Force tenure, Dwight became a celebrated sculptor, specializing in depictions of historic African American figures. "I've got bragging rights now," Dwight told NPR post-launch.

"All these years, I've been called an astronaut, but now I have a little [astronaut] pin,

which is a totally different matter."

Recalling the flight, Dwight remarked on the pronounced curvature of the Earth at their altitude. "That line between the atmosphere and space—it was like somebody pulled the curtains down over the windows."

The cost of Dwight's ticket was shared among Blue Origin, Space for Humanity, and the Jaison and Jamie Robinson Family Foundation. Reflecting on his achievement, Dwight expressed his eagerness for

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## Rep. Jasmine Crockett

A nighttime session of the House Oversight Committee intended to discuss a resolution recommending Attorney General Merrick Garland be held in contempt of Congress, descended into chaos amid personal attacks and partisan bickering.

The rare evening session took a contentious turn when MAGA Republican and rabid Donald Trump supporter Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia responded to a question from Rep. Jasmine Crockett (D-Texas) with a personal remark. "I think your



fake eyelashes are messing up what you're reading," Greene incredulously lashed out.

Democrats immediately reacted negatively to the remark, with Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) leading the charge. She de-

manded that the unhinged Greene retract her comments and offer Crockett an apology. "That is absolutely unacceptable," Ocasio-Cortez declared amid the crosstalk. "How dare you attack the physical appearance of another person?"

Greene, undeterred, taunted Ocasio-Cortez, asking, "Are your feelings hurt?" Ocasio-Cortez responded sharply, "Oh, girl? Baby girl, don't even play."

Just minutes later, Greene, of all members, attacked Ocasio-Cortez's intelligence, challenging her to a debate and asserting, "You don't have enough intelligence." This prompted

audible groans from other members.

During the contentious exchange, political pundits and others couldn't help but to note the difference between Crockett and Greene, whom many on social media allege is a staunch racist. The Texas Democrat has routinely

demonstrated her passion for justice and the protection of rights and has platformed criminal justice reform. Meanwhile, Greene remains a lightning rod for what's plaguing government servants. In March of 2022, numerous Georgia voters filed legal challenges to her reelection campaign,

alleging that she was disqualified from public office because she helped to facilitate the January 6, 2021, insurrection.

"The way she represents herself ... seems unhinged to Republicans, but Greene is twice as destructive,"

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## Sean 'Diddy' Combs

Sean "Diddy" Combs' former head of security, Roger Bonds, revealed he witnessed the hip-hop mogul being violent toward women "four or five times," expressing no surprise at the 2016 footage of Combs brutally beating then-girlfriend Cassie Ventura.

"It didn't surprise me when I saw it because I've seen things of this nature before," Bonds said in a televised interview this week. "I've gotten in between things like this back in 2012." He described the 2016 incident where Combs was seen shoving, kicking, stomping and dragging Ventura in a hotel



hallway.

When asked how many times he'd seen Combs become violent toward women, Bonds replied, "Around four or five times." He added, "I've seen him [be violent] with Cassie and Kim Porter, his kid's mother. I've seen him get physical, grabbing them up and

getting into wrestling and punching matches."

Combs apologized for the 2016 incident in a recent Instagram video, calling his behavior "inexcusable" without directly addressing Ventura. "I take full responsibility for my actions in that video. I'm disgusted," he said.

However, Ventura's lawyer, Meredith Firetog, criticized Combs' apology, calling it self-serving. "Combs' statement is more about himself than the many people he has hurt. He only apologized after his repeated denials were proven false," she said.

In a separate incident, rapper Cam'ron, also

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# How President Biden and the Democrats can lose 2024



**Dr. John E. Warren**  
Publisher,  
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Voice &  
Viewpoint

While the mainstream news media is fixated on the Trial of Donald Trump and his soaring poll numbers in spite of his legal problems, someone needs to have a conversation with President Biden about how he got in office and why he is losing the Black vote in particular, when he and the Democratic Party appear to think they have done enough for Black folks.

The Democratic Party appears to have forgotten that all states are "battle-ground states" if you are losing where you should be winning. Wake up call: the Black Vote is not con-

cerned with a speech at Morehouse, or a meeting with the "Divine Nine", which does not represent rank and file voters in the Black communities.

The Democratic Party continues to "Cherry Pick" the Black communities of this nation and the Black Press along with them. Well guess where the Black Press is located, in the Black communities. There is an assumption that Black people will vote for Joe Biden because they did the last time. Well, Black people have not forgotten that he did not deliver on the George Floyd Act or the John Lewis Voting Rights Act. Neither did he put the same energy into seeking passage of these two pieces of legislation as he did in trying to find ways, through Executive Orders, to bring

relief in the face of the Supreme Court's overturn of Roe vs. Wade.

Vice President Harris is Black and a HBCU graduate, but that does not mean she is in touch with the Black Voter. She is respected for the position she holds, but that will not be enough to keep it.

Donald Trump, on the other hand, is a known entity that is increasingly appealing to a Black male voter who has no knowledge of the Civil Rights struggle and what we stand to lose under Trump. They are not bothered by the Stormy Daniels affair or any of the other women in Trump's life. Some are out of jail because of Trump actions during his Presidency. They are not concerned about Democrats or Republicans, only higher food and

gas and rent and inflation. You reach these men and women through the Black Press. Remember, they don't have to vote. All they have to do is stay home and Trump wins. I think now - and not in September or October - is the time for a media campaign with the Black Press. Without such a campaign, there is no need to go to the Democratic National Convention. The absence of a Black media campaign is the exclusion of the Black Vote.

Black Americans who have lived through less than equality, with all sorts of disparities, will survive under a Donald Trump no matter what he does.

Question: Will it be Biden or Trump? It's up to you, Mr. President, and not your advisors who have failed you so far.

## On Reasonable Suspicion: The perilous drives of 'Big Baby' Anderson



**Allen Gray**  
NDG  
Special  
Contributor

Would you like to go for a ride?

You had better buckle up tight, because there are a few things you should be aware of before you turn on the car's ignition. If you plan on driving while Black or Hispanic, you are much more likely to become a "reasonable" suspect (of what it does not matter), being pulled over, searched, and even arrested. Heavy-weight boxing phenom, Jared "Big Baby" Anderson has discovered this unfortunate fact the hard way.

Anderson, lives and trains in Houston, Texas,

but he is originally from Toledo, Ohio, where he will sometimes visit as he did this past November 2023. Anderson was born in Toledo, Ohio...Ohio is also the birthplace of Terry v. Ohio—the seminal court case that gave birth to the phrase Terry stop.

Terry v. Ohio (1968) was landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision that has had profound and lasting effects on the rights afforded to citizens by the Fourth Amendment of the United States Constitution.

The Fourth Amendment prohibits unreasonable searches and seizures. In Terry v. Ohio, the Court ruled that it is constitutional for the police to "stop and frisk" a person they suspect is armed and with criminal intent—even when there is no probable cause to do so.

(Can you see where this is going?)

Terry established the constitutionality of a limited search, of whomever, for weapons when a policeman has a reasonable suspicion that—based on the circumstances—there is a crime at work. The Court found that a policeman's interest in the safety of himself and others outweighs an individual's Fourth Amendment right. Albeit not every judge on that panel agreed with the Court's ruling.

The dissenting opinion from the Court was: "A magistrate must establish probable cause before issuing a warrant. Permitting a police officer to conduct a search and seizure on the basis of reasonable suspicion provides an officer with greater authority than a judge and is improper."

Probable cause is a reasonable belief, based on facts.

Reasonable suspicion is pretty much whatever an officer personally feels is suspicious.

Now which segment of the United States population do you suspect is reasonably suspected the most?

Anderson knew nothing of the intricacies of Fourth Amendment rights or Terry stops when he visited Ohio on November 6, 2023. He was just cruising on the highway in his loud-orange Dodge Challenger taking in the sites of his birth state. Besides, he said, "I wasn't doing anything." But he was already guilty of the most damning of all crimes: Driving while Black. It

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# MSU Expert: How mental health and wellness are connected in the Black community — and beyond

(Newswise) — EAST LANSING, Mich. — Mental health has become a part of wellness discussions in schools, workplaces and health care organizations. In higher education, there has been a greater focus on mental health as one component of wellness that supports students in learning and persisting through to graduation. LeConté Dill, associate professor of African American and African Studies at Michigan State University, finds her students are taking control of their health more holistically in ways that include creative expression, community building and therapy.



*LeConté Dill is an associate professor in the Department of African and African American Studies at Michigan State University. (Michigan State University photo)*

Dill has spent 25 years working with and researching public health, health and social policy, and intersections of the arts and health. She has been writing, publishing and teaching poetry even longer. During her doctorate at the University of California, Berkeley, she studied how creative expression and writing can be used to understand and articulate health issues, particularly among youth of color in urban neighborhoods.

A certified mindfulness instructor, Dill is focused on ensuring her teaching and research intersect with the arts and humanities and health care fields to explore ways of centering wellness for all. Her most recent funded project at MSU enables her work specifically with Black women in student and staff roles to better understand how community-building and wellness practices are supported through physical space and time together.

Here, Dill discusses how a broader understanding of wellness could affect modern public health now and in the future.

## How does mental health relate to overall health and wellness?

In the United States,

mental health and public health are seen as different. It's not just in framing, it's how agencies from the federal, state and local levels are run and funded.

I've worked in public health departments and at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and their focus is on physical health and diseases. Mental health is in a separate office or department at national, state and county levels fragmenting health and wellness within these agencies and within our own understandings. This fragmentation can lead to poor health outcomes and well-being. We have to cut across these silos as we think about people's holistic health.

There are eight dimensions of wellness — emotional, spiritual, physical, financial, social, intellectual, environmental and vocational — and those give us a more holistic frame. It is important to also consider how we foster wellness collectively and think about being accountable to each other and to community-building.

## Why is mental health and wellness important, especially for Black women and girls?

Being a Black woman, if I'm only hearing about health disparities, health inequities, negative statistics and narratives, that's depressing.

The narrative is that Black people don't go to

therapy or that Black people don't engage in mental health. It's not that there isn't a stigma or barriers to access, but some of the most marginalized folks are indeed engaging in and demanding mental health support in different ways.

For Black women and girls, trained therapists are critical, but there are other mental health practitioners in their communities. It could be faith-based leaders or cross-generation 'sista circles' of Black women who act as support groups or community leaders and folks living out expansive types of health and wellness practices and cultural practices. People are engaging in it more than we talk about.

A lot of my research has been with middle school and high school students, and I work closely with college students as well. They are readily asking for mental health support, seeking it out. They're engaging in types of therapy and asking for it in a way that's different from my generation and the generations prior. I'm excited and grateful for this.

## What are some missed connections in the public health system?

Right before I started my doctorate, I was working in the Department of Public Health for the city of Berkeley, California. The release of the city's health status report found that 30% of Berkeley's Black

population had left in the previous 10-year period. We casually talked about this as we discussed social determinants of health, but we weren't really asking questions of why these people left or where they went or how it was related to health inequities.

Because my doctoral program in public health drew upon approaches from multiple academic disciplines, I went to classes in the departments that were asking these questions. They weren't always calling it health or tied to health, but

they were talking about the social and structural determinants that we talk about in the public health field. Sociology was theorizing about social factors. Urban planning was creating interventions and doing historical analysis. Education was connecting changes with public agencies and policies. English was putting language to social phenomena that connect to personal experiences.

By studying in these different departments, I was able to learn that public health might talk about

social determinants and health equity, but it didn't always have the framing or the analysis for the deeper story.

## What kind of training is important for the health care practitioners of tomorrow?

Because of the way health care is structured in the U.S., the psychologists are not in the same learning spaces as the future physicians or as the social workers or as the public health practitioners when they're

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# Primary runoff elections to be decided in May 28 ballot

In what is shaping up to be a contentious election year, the final slate of Republican and Democrat candidates is not yet fully decided for Dallas County ballots.

Early voting is currently underway from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. (ending on Friday), and Election Day is on May 28 for a Joint Primary Runoff election. A Joint Primary Runoff election is held when no candidate in the Joint Primary Election receives more than half plus

one of the votes. This runoff enables the top two candidates from the March 5th Primary Election to compete head-to-head, aiming to determine a clear winner who secures more than half the votes and advances to the November election.

Election polling locations are available on the county's election website (dallascountyvotes.org).

On Election Day, polls will be open from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m., and voters are reminded

to bring acceptable ID with them when they go to vote.

On the Democratic side, the race for Sheriff features incumbent Marian Brown facing off against former Sheriff Lupe Valdez.

There is also a still-contested race for the Chair of Precinct 2100, with Javan Gonzalez and Eli Hernandez both seeking to capture a vote majority.

There are three primary runoffs taking place in the Dallas County GOP. In the race for

U.S. Representative of District 32, David Blewett faces Darrell Day for the Republican nomination.

In the race for the State Board of Education in District 12, Jamie Kolmann and Pam Little are competing for the General Election spot; and in Precinct 2114, Warren Johnson and Sandra R. Morgan are running for the Chair position.

As of Wednesday, Dallas County reported 1,435,700 registered voters eligible to vote.

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# U.S. removes Cuba from list of counterterrorism non-cooperators

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National Correspondent



Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced that the United States has officially removed Cuba from its list of countries deemed less than fully cooperative against violent groups. This week's decision marked a notable shift in the often-

turbulent relationship between the two nations.

Following a review of

Cuba's status, Blinken made his announcement as a result of improved law en-

forcement cooperation between Cuban and American agencies in the fight against terrorism. The collaboration represents a marked departure from previous tensions, particularly regarding extradition requests from Colombia, which had strained relations between the countries.

Cuba's removal from the list highlights a nuanced history between the United States and the island nation, dating back to the Cuban Revolution of 1959, when Fidel Castro overthrew the U.S.-backed government of Fulgencio Batista. The aftermath saw the United

States impose economic penalties as Cuba increased its trade with the Soviet Union and nationalized American-owned properties.

The relationship further deteriorated during the Cu-

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## COMBS, from Page 2

known as Cameron Giles, appeared on CNN with Abby Phillip to discuss the developments surrounding Combs. However, the

interview went awry as Cam'ron seemed unaware of the topic and focused on promoting his product, an all-natural sexual supple-

ment called HorsePower. After making non-committal remarks about the security footage, Cam'ron asked his team off-camera, "Who booked me for this joint?"

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# Happy Birthday Head Start: 59 years and still learning

By National Head Start Association

Head Start is an important cornerstone of the social and educational investment the United States has undertaken for children, families, and communities. It is the national commitment to provide children, ages 0-5 years old, with the foundation they need to thrive and set them up for a lifetime of learning and growth in school and the wider world. "Project Head Start" was launched in 1965 as a comprehensive child development program. Over the last six decades, it has served more than 39 million children and families. On May 18, Head Start turned 59 years old. Happy Birthday, Head Start!



The Head Start community across the country will be celebrating Head Start's birthday! NHSA appreciates your dedication to ensuring every child can succeed—and we hope that you will join us on social media in celebrating the history and continuing importance of Head Start. In 1964, President Lyndon Johnson asked Sargent Shriver to convene an interdisciplinary panel of experts to design a program to help communities meet

the needs of preschool children – in and beyond the classroom. The committee's "Cooke Report," named after its chair Dr. Robert Cooke, became the blueprint for Project Head Start.

Designed to help break the cycle of poverty, Project Head Start provided preschool children from low-income families with a comprehensive program to meet their educational, health, and nutritional needs as well as offer sup-

port and resources to their parents. Over the years, numerous studies have shown that Head Start students and graduates have improved life circumstances, including better health and a greater likelihood of graduating high school and earning a college degree or post-secondary certificate or license.

Head Start is rooted in the unwavering philosophy that where you come from shouldn't stand in the way of where you're going. The program now serves more than 800,000 children from income-eligible families each year in urban and rural areas in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and all U.S. territories, as well as American Indian and Alaska Native and migrant

and seasonal communities.

Every Head Start classroom takes the same rigorous approach to learning, and our dedication extends far beyond the classroom as we focus on the development of the whole child. Parents and caregivers are treated as partners in their child's education; Head Start provides support related to their child's health, nutrition, and developmental needs. Head Start families have varying levels of experience navigating the educational system – we meet them where they are, treat them with respect, and support them to become a part of the community.

This approach has long demonstrated success – kindergarten teachers notice that Head Start

graduates are more likely to demonstrate the skills needed for success in elementary school, such as raising their hands and waiting their turn patiently. The Office of Head Start is part of the Administration for Children and Families, a division of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.

The National Head Start Association's mission is to coalesce, inspire, and support the Head Start field as a leader in early childhood development and education.

We hold the belief that every child, regardless of circumstances at birth, can succeed in life. We are the voice for more than 1 million children, 275,000 staff, and 1,600 grant recipients in the U.S.

## Biden administration unveils new initiatives to combat school segregation on Brown v. Board anniversary

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National Correspondent

On the 70th anniversary of the historic Brown v. Board of Education decision, President Joe Biden emphasized his administration's commitment to educational equity by announcing new funding and resources aimed at enhancing school diversity and tackling racial segregation. The landmark 1954 Supreme Court ruling declared racially segregated schools unconstitutional, but recent data reveals persistent inequities in U.S. education.

"Every student deserves access to a high-quality education that prepares them to be the next generation of leaders," President Biden stated. To further this goal, the Biden-Harris Administration introduced several

initiatives, including a \$20 million investment through the Department of Education's Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP). This funding will support magnet programs in states such as Arkansas, Colorado, and Florida, designed to attract students from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, the administration's 2025 budget proposal seeks \$139 million for MSAP and \$10 million for the Fostering Diverse Schools program.

Moreover, a new Technical Assistance Center on Fiscal Equity will assist states and districts in developing fair resource allocation strategies. The initiative aims to address the stark resource disparities that exist between racially and economically segregated schools.

Stephen Benjamin, senior adviser to Biden and

former mayor of Columbia, South Carolina, acknowledged the ongoing challenges. "There's an acknowledgment every day with our president that we're not where we ought to be, but we're certainly not where we used to be. Still a lot of work to be done," Benjamin declared.

The research underscores the strong correlation between school segregation and racial achievement gaps. The desegregation following Brown significantly boosted graduation rates for Black and Latino students. However, recent decades have seen a reversal, with segregation between white and Black students increasing by 64% since 1988, and economic segregation rising by 50% since 1991. According to the Department of Education's State of School Diversity

Report, racially isolated schools often lack the critical resources necessary for student success.

To combat these trends, the Department of Education announced the release of new data on access to math and science courses, highlighting ongoing racial disparities. The administration said it also plans to launch an inter-agency effort to preserve African American history, ensuring that students and the public have access to essential historical and cultural resources.

Officials noted that the American Rescue Plan has directed \$130 billion to the nation's schools, with a focus on underserved institutions. This includes nearly \$2 billion in additional Title I funding, and a five-fold increase in funding for Full-Service Community Schools, which provide es-

ential services to students and families in need.

Recognizing the importance of teacher diversity, the administration has prioritized efforts to increase the number of educators of color. Competitive grant programs have awarded \$450 million to support teacher recruitment and retention, with a particular focus on diversity. Additionally, the Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence Grant program has provided over \$23 million to HBCUs, TCCUs, and MSIs for teacher preparation.

The president met with family members of the plaintiffs from the Brown v. Board case. Cheryl Brown Henderson, daughter of lead plaintiff Oliver Brown, expressed the ongoing struggle for educational equity. "We're still fighting the battle over

whose children do we invest in. Any time we can talk about failing underfunded public schools, there is a problem," Henderson said. NAACP President Derrick Johnson, also in attendance, affirmed, "We must continue to fight on all fronts."

As the nation reflects on seven decades since Brown v. Board of Education, the White House said that the Biden Administration's initiatives signal a renewed effort to fulfill the promise of equitable education for all. Schools "remain divided along racial, ethnic, and economic lines," according to a 2022 report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office. "With around 18.5 million children attending schools where 75 percent or more of students were of a single race or ethnicity."



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# More than 77,000 sign petition for Justices Alito and Thomas to recuse in Capitol attack cases

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

A petition calling for conservative Supreme Court Justices and noted Donald Trump supporters Samuel Alito and Clarence Thomas to recuse themselves from major cases related to the January 6, 2021, Capitol attack has amassed 77,000 signatures as of 11 a.m. Tuesday, May 21. Following a report from The New York Times that highlighted potential conflicts of interest for the conservative justices, MoveOn launched the petition.

The Times reported that an upside-down American flag, a symbol associated with the twice-impeached and four-times indicted Trump's false claims of election fraud, was displayed outside Alito's home in January 2021. The flag appeared outside the Alito



Following a report from The New York Times that highlighted potential conflicts of interest for the conservative justices, MoveOn launched the petition. (Photo via NNPA)

residence in Alexandria, Virginia, on January 17, just days after Trump supporters stormed the Capitol. Alito told the Times that the flag was "briefly placed" there by his wife during a disagreement with neighbors.

The revelation has again raised concerns about Alito's impartiality as the Supreme Court considers two significant cases: one addressing charges against the January 6 rioters and another determining whether Trump

can claim immunity from prosecution on election interference charges. Justice Thomas also faces scrutiny for his involvement in cases related to the 2020 election, particularly because his wife, Ginni Thomas, contacted Trump officials and lawmakers, urging them to overturn the election results.

MoveOn's petition argues that Alito must be held accountable for what they describe as a breach of ethics. "He must recuse himself im-

mediately or be removed by Chief Justice John Roberts," Epting said. He criticized Chief Justice John Roberts for failing to address these "conflicts of interest," contributing to the Supreme Court's lowest public approval ratings ever. The petition also calls for the Senate Judiciary Committee to investigate the alleged conflicts of interest and consider impeachment if necessary. "Our country and our democracy deserve better," Epting asserted. Democratic Senator Dick Durbin of Illinois, chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, has also urged Alito to recuse himself from cases related to the 2020 election and the Capitol attack. "Flying an upside-down American flag—a symbol of the so-called 'Stop the Steal' movement—clearly creates the appearance of bias," Durbin said in a statement. In response to growing public pressure, the Supreme Court adopted a code of ethics in November last year, following reports of undisclosed luxury trips and gifts received by some justices, including Thomas and Alito. However, the code lacks enforcement mechanisms, prompting continued calls for stronger accountability.

didn't seem to be breathing. A federal judge who reviewed the video ruled in the officer's favor in a civil lawsuit, saying the law didn't require police to stop prone restraint once a person quit struggling. Researchers said that legal interpretation was out of step with federal courts in other regions, which provide broad direction on the use of force. "Every day, police rely on common tactics that, unlike guns, are meant to stop people without killing them, such as physical holds, Tasers, and body blows," researchers concluded. "But when misused, these tactics can still end in death—as happened with George Floyd in 2020, sparking a national reckoning over policing. And while that encounter was caught on video, capturing Floyd's last words of 'I can't breathe,' many others throughout the United States have escaped notice."

## POLICE, from Page 1

many others, investigators said Ivy was not a threat to public safety. "And despite that, each died after police used a kind of force that is not supposed to be deadly and can be much easier to hide than the blast of an officer's gun," they determined.

Researchers also revealed a pattern of misconduct, with officers breaching established guidelines in approximately 45% of deaths. Many victims had underlying medical conditions or were under the influence of drugs or alcohol, factors that heightened their vulnerability to force.

Specific instances of misuse were highlighted, such as the widespread use of prone restraint, despite known risks of positional asphyxia. In numerous cases, individuals were pinned facedown for minutes beyond necessity, resulting in fatal outcomes. Similarly, researchers documented

the excessive use of Tasers, with officers administering shocks beyond recommended limits, often with deadly consequences.

Researchers found that officers restrained someone face down in at least 740 of 1,036 deaths—usually with one, or sometimes more, using their bodyweight. In about half of the prone restraint cases, police didn't turn the person over as soon as they were handcuffed or did so only after they had stopped responding. They noted a video showing a police officer in Ava, Missouri, handcuffing a man experiencing a drug relapse and restraining him in a prone position for eight minutes. The officer warned that he wouldn't ease up until the man stopped kicking. Once still, the officer asked the man, "Are you going to be calm now?" He didn't answer. Another two minutes passed before the officer realized the man

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# Biden amplifies civil rights legacy in NAACP speech

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

President Joe Biden delivered a stirring speech at the National Museum of African American History and Culture on Friday to help commemorate the 70th anniversary of the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. That ruling struck down the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision that institutionalized racial segregation under the doctrine of “separate but equal.”

“My name’s Joe Biden and I’m a lifetime member of the NAACP,” injecting a moment of levity by adding, “When I said that a little earlier to the president, he said, ‘Are your dues paid up?’ I got to check.” Biden noted that, “together, the NAACP and this museum are monuments to the power of Black history. And Black history is American



Biden noted that, “together, the NAACP and this museum are monuments to the power of Black history. And Black history is American history. We have a whole group of people out there trying to rewrite history, trying to erase history.” (Photo via NNPA)

history. We have a whole group of people out there trying to rewrite history, trying to erase history.”

He called the historic museum a “tribute to heroes known and unknown who pursued our nation’s North Star.” The president also drew historical parallels between the civil rights struggles of the past and contemporary efforts to dismantle affirmative action and diversity initiatives.

He would later join Vice President Kamala Harris in a meeting with leaders of the Divine Nine, a coalition of historically Black sororities and fraternities, reinforcing his commitment to civil rights and equity. But during his address, he evoked the courage of the Little Rock Nine, who faced violent opposition in 1957 while integrating Central High School, linking their bravery to mod-

ern-day challenges against equality.

“The Little Rock Nine were met with vitriol and violence,” Biden remarked. “Today the vitriol comes in other insidious forms—an extreme movement led by my predecessor and his MAGA Republican allies.”

He also criticized the Supreme Court’s recent decision to limit affirmative action in college admissions. “They want a country for some — not for all.” And turning his attention back to the plight of American schools since the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, the president declared that “because of the nation’s legacy of discrimination, Black children start school with an average of seven months behind their white peers in reading.”

“But one year of universal, high-quality pre-K could eliminate 98 percent of that gap. Just one year,”

Biden insisted. “And children who go to preschool are nearly 50 percent more likely to finish high school and go on to earn a two-year or four-year degree, no matter what their background is. That’s why my administration is working to support Black children.”

The president continued: “And as soon as I came into office, I signed the American Rescue Plan. And I’m going to be political by just saying this, because we’re having problems—not one Republican voted for it—not one. But the American Rescue Plan expanded Childcare Tax Credits, that delivered monthly checks to working families that cut Black child poverty in half. My Republican friends let it expire.

“Well, I’m going to keep fighting to reestablish it. We’re going to get it reestablished. And I’m going

to keep fighting to make sure preschool is universal for every three- and four-year-old in America. We can afford to do this. It’s not hard. Instead of giving multibillion-dollar breaks to the super wealthy, let’s make the wealthy begin to pay their fair share of taxes. We can afford all this.”

The president’s remarks were part of a broader effort to shore up support among Black voters, a crucial demographic that was instrumental in his 2020 victory. According to polling by the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, there is a widespread sense of disappointment in Biden’s performance among some of his staunchest supporters, including Black adults.

On Sunday, May 19, Biden delivered the commencement address at

See NAACP, Page 13

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Chris Hemsworth in Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga (Courtesy photo)

# Film Review: 'Furiosa' is downright furious filmmaking

By Dwight Brown  
NNPA Film Critic

(\*\*\*)1/2 Wow. It's a re-birth. There's a new badass. It's a phoenix.

In 1979, Australian director George Miller introduced the post-apocalyptic and eerily dystopian action film Mad Max to audiences around the world. Forty-five years later he's resurrecting the saga and has created a new storyline

that's as worthy as all the others in: Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior (1981), Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome (1985) and Mad Max: Fury Road (2015). Fans of this timeless, enduring allegory will wonder if this latest epic could be as good as the others. Visually and auditorily, yes. Narratively, it's close.

Miller wisely reassembles the tech team that won Oscars for their work

on Mad Max: Fury Road: Margaret Sixel (editor), Jenny Beavan (costume designer), Colin Gibson (production designer), Lesley Vanderwalt (makeup and hairstyling) and Ben Osmo (sound editor). The rest of the stellar creative team is equally up to the challenge: composer Tom Holkenborg, cinematographer Simon Duggan (The Great

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# Freestyle Digital Media acquires music doc 'The Blues Society' For July release

(EINPresswire) Freestyle Digital Media, the digital film distribution division of Byron Allen's Allen Media Group, has acquired North American VOD rights to the music documentary "The Blues Society", narrated by actor Eric Roberts, which opens at the DCTV's Firehouse Cinema in New York City on May 24, 2024 and Malco Studio on the Square in Memphis on May 31, 2024.

In addition to additional theatrical screenings scheduled in Pittsburgh, Washington, DC and Portland -- "The Blues Society" will



be available to rent/own on all digital HD internet, cable, and satellite platforms in North America, as well as on DVD, starting on July 9, 2024, through Freestyle Digital Media.

• Theatrical run and festivals:

• May 24-30: New York, NY @ Firehouse: DCTV's Cinema for Documentary Film

• May 31-June 6: Memphis, TN @ Malco Studio on the Square

• June 1-9: Pittsburgh, PA @ Three Rivers Arts Festival

• June 5-8: Washington DC @ Light Reel Film Fest

• July 1: Portland, OR @ Hollywood Theatre

"The Blues Society" is a feature-length documentary that reevaluates the life of the Memphis Coun-

try Blues Festival (1966-1970) through the lens of race, the counterculture of the 1960s, and the genre of Memphis blues.

"The Blues Society" tells the story of blues masters Furry Lewis, Nathan Beauregard and Reverend Robert Wilkins. It's also the story of a group of white artists from the North and the South who created a celebration of African American music in a highly segregated city.

Reaching into the present, the film ends in a 2017 concert where John Wilkins returns to the stage that he

last shared with his father, Reverend Robert Wilkins, 48 years earlier.

"The Blues Society" was written, directed, and produced by Dr. Augusta Palmer, and is narrated by actor Eric Roberts. Co-producer is J. Tinneney.

"I didn't want to just make a concert film. Everyone can appreciate the unforgettable music in "The Blues Society", but love for the blues didn't cure white supremacy," said filmmaker Augusta Palmer.

"I wanted to recapture the idealism of the white organizers, but also to spot-

light Black voices and reveal the paternalism in the 1960s blues revival.

Structural racism has become much more visible to the nation since the pandemic. We've come a long way, but we still have a long way to go."

Freestyle Digital Media negotiated the deal to acquire "The Blues Society" with Cultural Animal, LLC and Glen Reynolds of Circus Road Films.

More info on "The Blues Society" can be found at its website: [www.thebluessocietyfilm.com](http://www.thebluessocietyfilm.com).

## CUBA, from Page 5

ban Missile Crisis in 1962, a thirteen-day showdown between President John F. Kennedy and Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev that brought the world to the brink of nuclear war. However, a resolution was reached, averting disaster

but cementing decades of tense relations.

Efforts at normalization occurred sporadically, with Presidents Barack Obama and Raúl Castro taking significant steps towards diplomatic thawing in 2014, restoring full diplomatic

ties and easing travel and trade restrictions. Yet, those efforts faced reversals under the subsequent Donald Trump administration, which reimposed many sanctions and tightened restrictions.

President Joe Biden's approach has been nuanced, balancing calls for democ-

racy promotion with the desire for improved relations. Recent events, including widespread protests in Cuba and a renewed crackdown by the government, have further complicated the relationship.

Despite those challenges, there have been signs of progress, such as the re-

cent removal of Cuba from the counterterrorism non-cooperation list, signaling the potential for further engagement and cooperation between the two nations. According to Reuters, a State Department official cited the resumption of law enforcement cooperation between Cuba and the U.S.

as one the reasons why the previous designation was deemed "no longer appropriate."

"The department determined that the circumstances for Cuba's certification as a 'not fully cooperating country' have changed from 2022 to 2023," the official said.

# Federal judge halts new CFPB rule on credit card late fees, leaving \$14 billion in annual consumer savings at risk

By Charlene Crowell

May 14 was the day that the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) was set to implement a new rule that would save credit card holders an estimated \$14 billion each year. The rule would provide savings of \$220 per year on average for people who are charged late fees. Instead, a federal district judge imposed a temporary injunction that halted the rule's implemen-

tation.

Reactions to the injunction marked a clear divide between corporate business interests that claimed and cheered a legal victory while many government and consumer groups saw the decision as harmful to the more than 167 million consumers who have credit cards.

CFPB seeks to lower credit card late fees to \$8 per month, instead of the current \$32 now charged

by a \$1 trillion industry that has steadily jacked up the price of delinquent fees for years. Further, the rule would only apply to card issuers that have one million or more accounts. It would also allow these very large issuers an opportunity to justify future proposed increases by showing the CFPB actual costs incurred.

Speaking on behalf of the Biden administration's ongoing efforts to end a variety of junk fees, spokes-

man Jeremy Edwards said, "We are disappointed that a court sided with House Republicans, big banks and special interests to hit pause on a critical measure to save American families billions in junk fees."

"It is disappointing that the court has granted this last-ditch effort by the banks to prevent these critical limits on credit card late fees from going into effect next week," said Chuck Bell, advocacy program

director for Consumer Reports. "Credit card companies have been bilking consumers out of billions of dollars in excessive late fees for far too long."

"The financial burden of late fees falls most heavily on people living paycheck-to-paycheck, low- and moderate-income consumers, and people of color," continued Bell. "CFPB research has found that people with low incomes pay proportionately big-

ger fees because they tend to have smaller credit card balances."

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation and lead plaintiff in the litigation, issued a statement that underscored the long-standing and anticipated future opposition to the CFPB.

"The CFPB's attempted micromanagement would

See CFPB, Page 12

## FILM, from Page 9

Gatsby), supervising sound editor Robert Mackenzie, co-editor Eliot Knapman, visual effects supervisor Andrew Jackson and supervising colorist Eric Whipp.

The debt Miller and the audience owe to the sound and visual crews is evident in every frame—start to finish. The mesmerizing beige, mushroom, copper, brown color palette. Barren landscapes for as far as the eye can see. The steel gray and silver vehicles. Costumes and sets that look like they were stolen from the Metropolitan Opera House, that's if The Met ever staged a post-civ production. The lighting, in interiors and on exteriors is eerie, haunting or exquisite. The outposts look like society has crumbled into villages filled with marauders ruled by tyrants. You can't take your eyes off the screen; the footage controls your gaze.

She was a little girl when she first encountered the devilishly crude men who were part of the Biker Horde, led by the very treacherous Warlord Dementus (Chris Hemsworth, Thor). Years went by and her entanglement with the gang pulled her into a range war between other malicious fiefdoms in the immense Wasteland. A vast, arid landscape in the Australian wilderness where food, water, ammunition,

oil and other survival essentials are rare and coveted.

As an adult, Furiosa (Anya Taylor-Joy, *The Queen's Gambit*) finds her place among the warring factions and their battles. She has no choice; she must become a warrior to survive. Though that isn't as important to her as finding her way back to the verdant hidden oasis of Green Place of Many Mothers. A place of abundance where she was born and still longs for with her every breath. She'll get there. Her mother's last words are her driving force. "Whatever you have to do. However long it takes. Promise me you'll find your way home."

Miller and co-writer Nico Lathouris (*Mad Max: Fury Road*) have accomplished what the filmmakers of *Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes* could not. They've kept their franchise alive by taking an old setup, refreshing it with new distinctive characters, stunning vistas and a fascinating storyline. They've picked a worthy protagonist, who suffers so much loss and hardship audiences have to root for her as she develops into her own person. While Dementus gives filmgoers someone to loathe. And if he isn't vile and narcissistic enough, the screenplay throws in other bad guys who bully their degenerate

followers and are as desperate for supplies as the next despot. Their script starts with a bang. No letting up after that. Just a few chances to breathe.

Road warrior caravans and their journeys are the franchise's lifeblood. Astounding chase and fight scenes are a key part of this chapter too, but not in the non-stop way showcased in previous episodes. The cast ventures off road to places like Citadel, Gas Town and Bullet Farm. Outposts so bizarre whole movies could be filmed on their premises alone. With the aide of action designer Guy Norris, and stuntpeople galore, the turmoil is well measured throughout with just a few strategic lulls. Fights, explosions, arrows, snipers, dogged pursuits, turbo-boasted cargo trucks, speedy motorcycles, parachutists, hang gliders. Is the action on view as mindboggling as that in the other *Mad Maxes*? Maybe not as consistently frenzied. However, the vision of Dementus riding a chariot pulled by three motorcycles is an indelible image. Watching Furiosa fight so furiously, putting life and limb on the line, is increasingly mesmerizing. There's plenty for the most hardened action fan to enjoy. Whether it's on or off the main thoroughfare dubbed *Fury Road*.

No young Mel Gibson. No fiery Charlize Ther-

on. Yet Anya Taylor-Joy handles the lead character role well. Tough in the action scenes. Determined at all times. Sad, scared, brave and wild when Furiosa needs to be. Fighting harder than the men as if she has something to prove. She's more than ready to lead this renaissance. Hemsworth could be her demonic, stone-in-her-shoe

rival for an eternity. He's bold, brassy and over the top in a theatrical way. Supporting characters, from Charlee Fraser as Furiosa's courageous mom to Lachy Hulme as warlord Immortan Joe of the Citadel, add certain power to the mix.

Try as you may, you won't be able to fathom where this storyline leads. In that way, Miller is inge-

nious. Able to keep moviegoers guessing for 2h 28m. Not a wasted moment. Not an inkling who will survive. Stay until the unpredictable finale. A transitory conclusion. It's a wow moment. A fitting coda to a surprisingly good rebirth. A rapturous phoenix.

Visit Film Critic Dwight Brown at [DwightBrownInk.com](http://DwightBrownInk.com).



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# HUD announces \$40 million boost for housing counseling nationwide

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

Ten California and seven Washington, D.C., agencies are set to receive a substantial boost in funding totaling nearly \$11 million, aimed at expanding housing counseling services for underserved communities. Among the beneficiaries in California are A-1 Community Housing Services in Hayward, the Rural Community Assistance Corporation in

Sacramento, and the San Francisco Housing Development Corporation in the Bay Area. Those in D.C., are Housing Counseling Services, Lydia's House in Southeast, the National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development, the National Community Reinvestment Coalition, the National Foundation for Credit Counseling, Neighborhood Reinvestment Corp., dba NeighborWorks America, and UnidosUS.

Agencies in Alabama,

Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, and other states will also receive millions in funds as Vice President Kamala Harris and HUD Acting Secretary Adrienne Todman announced that the Biden-Harris Administration will allocate almost \$40 million to broaden comprehensive housing counseling services nationwide. The funds, administered through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Office of Housing Counseling, will

facilitate counseling services catering to the needs of homebuyers, homeowners, and renters across America.

During a stop in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, which marked the third leg of the Vice President's nationwide Economic Opportunity Tour, Harris emphasized the significance of homeownership beyond mere shelter. "Homeownership represents more than just a roof over our heads," she stated. "It represents financial security, the opportu-

nity to build wealth and equity, and a foundation for a better future for ourselves, our children, and future generations."

Todman echoed Harris's comments, highlighting the administration's commitment to addressing housing barriers and closing the racial homeownership gap. Todman emphasized the pivotal role of HUD-approved housing counseling agencies, which served nearly one million Americans last year alone, providing crucial advice

on financial literacy, home maintenance, and foreclosure prevention.

"This past year, HUD-approved housing counseling agencies reached almost one million Americans, providing them with invaluable advice on important topics like financial literacy, maintaining a home, and avoiding foreclosure," Todman asserted.

The awarded grants are poised to benefit more than 165 housing counseling

**See HUD, Page 13**

## CROCKETT, from Page 2

USA Today opinion columnist Nicole Russell wrote. "Greene has a history of incendiary behavior, banned from Twitter and stripped of committee assignments in 2021, she even adopted QAnon conspiracy theories and used violent rhetoric against political foes."

Despite agreeing to strike her comments toward Crockett, Greene refused to apologize for her remarks.

"You will never get an apology out of me," she declared. Committee Chair James Comer (R-Ky.) ruled that Greene's insult did not violate House rules, which led to further disputes. When Democratic ranking member Jamie Raskin (D-Md.) attempted to appeal this ruling, Republicans moved to table his appeal.

Following the vote, Crockett sought clarification

on the committee's standards regarding personal attacks. "If someone on this committee then starts talking about somebody's bleach blond, bad-built butch body, that would not be engaging in personalities, correct?" she asked, causing another uproar.

The controversy moved Comer to admit, "I have two hearing aids. I'm very deaf. I'm not understanding — everybody's yelling. I'm doing the best I can."

Comer later agreed to strike Greene's insult of Ocasio-Cortez from the record, and Democrats pushed to enforce rules that would prevent Greene from speaking for the remainder of the hearing. However, Republicans voted to allow her to continue speaking. After a short recess, Comer reminded members to adhere to the House's standard of decorum.

Greene was ultimately recognized to speak for

over four minutes, reiterating her refusal to apologize. "I will not apologize for my words, and I will not change them," she said.

Nearly an hour after the disruptions began, the committee returned to the original agenda of debating whether Garland should be held in contempt of Congress for not providing audio recordings of President Joe Biden's interview with special counsel Robert Hur regarding classified docu-

ments.

The session had been moved from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. to accommodate members who attended former President Donald Trump's trial in New York. Despite the turmoil, the committee voted 24-20 along party lines to recommend holding Garland in contempt. House Speaker Mike Johnson's office has yet to announce when the resolution will be presented to the full House.

## CFPB, from Page 11

have raised costs for most credit card users and made it harder for businesses to meet consumers' needs," said Maria Monaghan, the organization's Litigation Center Counsel. "The U.S. Chamber will continue to hold the CFPB accountable in court."

Similarly, Rob Nichols, the president and CEO of the American Bankers Association, speaking on behalf of the nation's \$23.7 trillion banking industry said in part, "We thank our co-plaintiffs for their collaboration, and we look forward to the Court ultimately ruling on the merits of our case."

The veiled references to continued legal efforts to oppose the CFPB, were anticipated by a U.S. Senate Banking Committee hearing held on May 9, the day before the federal judge's ruling.

Ohio Senator Sherrod

Brown, the committee's chair, opened the session saying, "The CFPB took a major step towards reducing costs for consumers when it issued its Credit Card Late Fee rule. Credit card late fees are the most costly and frequently applied junk fee. According to one report, 1 in 5 adult Americans, an estimated 52 million people, paid a credit card late fee last year."

"By law, credit card late fees are supposed to be 'reasonable and proportional' to the cost that companies incur for late payments," continued Sen. Brown. "So, let's be clear: these are massive, trillion-dollar Wall Street companies. The idea that you missing your payment due date by a day or two is imposing some huge cost on the credit card company is ridiculous."

Testifying at the hearing, Adam Rust, the Consumer Federation of America's Di-

rector of Financial Services, noted how industry trends impose harms — especially to consumers of color.

"While the existence of junk fees is not new, their presence in the daily lives of consumers is growing," stated Rust. "As a result, junk fees now exist in places where they have previously not occurred. Junk fees are multiplying in number, variety, and frequency. Americans are being 'nickel and dimed' by these practices."

"The system is harmful to everyone but more harmful to vulnerable low-wealth consumers and consumers of color," continued Rust. "The CFPB's campaign against junk fees will help consumers save money. The Consumer Federation of America is strongly supportive of the credit card late fees rule."

Although it is probable that the temporary injunction will lead to more litigation appealing for the rule's

reinstatement, at press time no related developments were filed. But as more than 90 national, state, and local organizations noted in a joint advocacy letter to Members of Congress and the Senate this April,

"low-income individuals and people of color bear the brunt of these fees, with those making less than \$32,000 annually paying twice as much in late fees as those making \$150,000."

The bottom line in this

continuing saga: civil rights include silver rights.

*Charlene Crowell is a senior fellow with the Center for Responsible Lending. She can be reached at [Charlene.crowell@responsiblelending.org](mailto:Charlene.crowell@responsiblelending.org).*

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## TUCKER, from Page 11

agencies and intermediary organizations. Notably, fourteen grantees will collaborate with 60 historically Black colleges and universities and minority-serving institutions to support new homeowners of color and other marginalized communities.

The White House said the allocated funds will bolster counseling services covering various topics, including financial management, homeownership, and affordable rental housing. For instance, UnidosUS aims to pave pathways for Latino homebuyers to en-

hance credit, access down payment assistance programs, and secure sustainable mortgage loans.

In Wisconsin alone, HUD estimates that over \$300,000 of the new funding will aid consumers, with nearly 35,000 Americans already assisted by the program, 19,000 of whom reside in Milwaukee.

Officials said those counseling services, currently serving nearly 12,000 families in Wisconsin, including 40 percent Black families, play a crucial role in navigating housing challenges amid rising costs and limited inventory.

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Housing Counseling, David Berenbaum,

emphasized the essential role of HUD-certified housing counselors as the first point of contact for those seeking housing support.

He said since 2020, HUD has been at the forefront of supporting housing counseling initiatives, aiding over 3 million individuals and families to obtain,

sustain, and retain their homes. Berenbaum added that HUD's ongoing initiatives, such as the introduction of programs aimed at historically underserved communities and the distribution of grants to bolster housing counseling services nationwide, underscore its commitment to extending housing counseling.

## NAACP, from Page 8

Morehouse College, a prestigious historically Black institution in Atlanta, where he noted that an HBCU student, Vice President Kamala Harris, will eventually be president. His appearance, however, sparked peaceful protests on campus over his administration's handling of the conflict between Is-

rael and Hamas. Despite the unrest, Biden highlighted the significant contributions of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) to American society. "I've got more Morehouse men in my Administration than Morehouse," Biden quipped, noting that HBCUs have educated

70% of Black doctors and dentists and 80% of Black judges in the U.S.

House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries praised Biden's efforts to advance school desegregation. "Under the leadership of President Biden and Education Secretary Cardona, we've made important progress toward school desegregation efforts across the na-

tion, though we still have a long way to go," Jeffries stated. "Equal access to high-quality education should not be a partisan issue. It's a problem we must confront together as Americans."

The president's recent speeches and meetings underscore his administration's focus on combating the rising tide of right-wing

extremism and protecting the civil rights advances of previous decades. "My predecessor and his MAGA friends are responsible for taking away other freedoms, from the freedom to vote to the freedom to choose," Biden declared. "But I've always believed the promise of America is big enough for everyone to succeed."

Biden's efforts come as he faces a challenging reelection campaign, with a need to galvanize the Black electorate, that was pivotal in his defeat of Donald Trump. His administration's emphasis on defending civil rights and promoting equality aims to rekindle the support that proved crucial in his ascent to the presidency.

## DWIGHT, from Page 2

further space exploration. "I want to go into orbit. I want to go around the Earth and see the whole Earth. That's what I want to do now," he said.

Born in 1933 on the outskirts of Kansas City, Kansas, Dwight grew up under the guidance of his mother, Georgia Baker Dwight, who instilled in him the belief that he could achieve anything.

An avid reader and talented artist, Dwight pursued an aviation career, joining the United States Air Force in 1953 and earning a degree in Aeronautical Engineering from Arizona State University.

Selected as the first Negro astronaut trainee in 1962, Dwight's journey was marred by discrimination and political setbacks, leading to his resignation in

1966.

Transitioning to a career in art, Dwight received a Master of Fine Arts and established himself as a renowned sculptor.

His works, including monuments to the Under-

ground Railroad and memorials to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and George Washington Williams, have earned a permanent place in American cultural history.

When asked what he'd like to do for an encore,

Dwight told NPR he'd like a second trip into space. "I want to go around the Earth

and see the whole Earth," he proclaimed. "That's what I want to do now."

## HEALTH, from Page 4

getting advanced training. They could be but, oftentimes, it's not the way that schools are created. And they definitely are not in the same learning spaces as the city planners or educators or historians or artists. But again, they could be. In thinking about connecting this learning, this teaching, this training — it's apparent these divisions hamper practitioners from deepening their learning and understanding for the benefit of the larger community.

When I'm teaching in the public health and medical space, I remind students that they are telling and collecting stories all the time. Health histories, intake conversations — it's storytelling and, in addi-

tion to being for patients and clients, it's also for health practitioners. It's helping them remember — remembering the practices of wellness that patients and community members already have or remembering tools of family members, of ancestors, of cultural touchstones. These are wells of knowledge that aren't in traditional health textbooks.

In health care, a lot of practitioners do practice art as an outlet, but don't always connect that to their method or their practices in their offices, clinics or waiting rooms. The arts expose us to deeper histories, as well as to strategies of recovery, rehabilitation and healing.



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# Mount Pisgah celebrates 160th church anniversary

Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church (MPMBC) also known as The ROCK will celebrate her 160th Church Anniversary, Sunday, June 16, 2024.

On the third Sunday in June (1864) a few black missionaries and Rev. Robert Fabius Butler, a white minister from Richardson, met under a large elm tree in Alpha, Texas, in the Upper White Rock Settlement of Dallas County, on a farm owned by Billie Wilburn. The law prohibited slaves from congregating without



the presence of a white man.

Mount Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church has been in continuous existence for 160 years and is the oldest African American Baptist

church in Dallas County. Mount Pisgah is among the oldest churches in Dallas County of any denomination and any ethnicity, established in 1864. Mt. Pis-



gah was awarded a Texas Historical marker in 2019, which is installed at her original site at 14000 Preston Road, Dallas, TX.

The 160th Church Anniversary events will include:

## • History/Archive Ribbon Cutting

Saturday, June 1, 2024

Noon to 3:00 pm

1010 S. Sherman St.

Richardson, TX 75081

• 160th Sneaker Ball

Saturday, June 15, 2024

5:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Ticket \$50 per adult

• 160th Anniversary

## Worship Service

Sunday, June 16, 2024

10:30 am

Pastor S. Michael Greene stated, "I am elated to serve a church with such rich history, and I feel privileged to be a part of the next chapter at THE ROCK". Pastor Greene, is Mt. Pisgah's newest pastor at the oldest African American Church in Dallas, County.

## Whatever Happened to Reality?

Dr. James L. Snyder

During my health hiatus I did things I never had time to do before. One of them was to check out some Reality TV Shows.

I never had much interest in these TV shows, but I thought now would be a good time to check some of them just to see what their idea of reality really was.

Of course, my health probably affected my mental capacity, so I wasn't going to take much seriously. I checked them out all the more and discovered that if what I saw on TV was their idea of reality, I had a good deal on a Brooklyn Bridge for one of them.

I thought, and it's just me speaking, that reality had something to do with, what's that word? Oh yes, "truth." I watched several, and if there was any truth in what they were doing or even saying, I could not find it.

I found one show called Naked and Afraid, and I must tell you I didn't come anywhere near that because I was afraid. I was afraid that their idea of naked reality was nowhere near the truth. Who in their right mind, and there are plenty who aren't in their right mind, would spend their time watching such nonsense?

I checked out a few of these reality shows but could never find any reality in anything they showed.

After watching some of

these, I got to thinking about the reality in my life. Is my life a "Reality Show", or is it for real?

That's what I got out of looking at some of those shows. I don't want to blame somebody else for doing things I might be doing myself. After all, reality is reality.

During my health hiatus, I was beginning to think that health was not a reality for me. The only thing real about me during that time was sickness, which was characterized by coughing and sneezing.

I must admit that the sickness was a reality at the time. But, it wasn't a reality forever.

Coming out of that health hiatus, I realized that there are more important things in life than just feeling sorry for yourself because you're sick.

During my sickness The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage was a reality to me. She brought me pill after pill after pill. At the time, I referred to her as my drug Lord. I got so tired of taking pills that I just did not know what to do.

Looking back on that, I realize that wasn't reality. Oh yes, I was sick for a short period of time, but the key is that it was a short period of time.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage told me time after time that I would get better. At the time, I didn't

care if I got better or not. But, eventually, I realized that she was right. After all, isn't she right all the time?

Now that I'm up and getting back to a somewhat normal schedule, I've been thinking a lot about reality. There are things in my life that just are not reality.

My challenge is to find what is real in my life and what is artificial.

My wife and I agree on many things except for one. I'm a firm believer that the strongest aspect of reality is an Apple Fritter. She thinks that broccoli is a reality.

The reality is that both of us are right, and both of us are wrong. I'm not going to try to explain that because if I do, I'm not going to understand it myself.

The one thing that got me through all that health nonsense was thinking about an Apple Fritter when I was healthy.

The danger is that if I got an Apple Fritter and The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage found out, it might be a challenge to my health at that time.

Every day, my wife asks me how I'm feeling, and I always reply, "I'm fine."

She responds, "No, you're not fine."

And then reality sets in.

At my last doctor's visit, the doctor examined me quite thoroughly and went over all of the forms. Finally, the doctor looked at me and said, "I have good news

for you. You're fine."

Sitting right next to me was The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, and so I said, "I'm sorry Dr., what did you say?"

"I said, you're fine."

Looking at my wife with a giggly smile, I said, "My dear, did you hear that? Doctors don't lie."

All the way home from the doctor's visit, I kept chuckling and saying under my breath, "I'm fine."

I did not want to say it out loud because The Gracious

Mistress of the Parsonage was driving, and that's all I'll say about it.

It's a beautiful day when you find reality in your life.

Thinking about this I was reminded what the Apostle Paul said. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these

things" (Philippians 4:8).

This is a challenge for everyone. Personally, my reality starts in the Bible. I work on adjusting my life to the reality presented in the Bible. Each day I search for that reality that applies to me.

*Dr. James L. Snyder lives in Ocala, FL with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. Telephone 1-352-216-3025, e-mail jamesnsnyder51@gmail.com, website www.jamesnsnyderministries.com.*

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# Being Choked by Wealth



**Sister Tarpley**  
NDG  
Religion  
Editor

*“Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income....”*

- Ecclesiastes 5:10

Christians believers are especially susceptible to a trap in their spiritual lives - one to which others may not be so susceptible. That trap is wealth.

Scripture tells us that if we are having our basic needs met for food and clothing, we are considered to have riches.

Jesus cautioned us against living a lifestyle that required more than our basic necessities. However, it is clear that Jesus was not against wealth, but against a dependence on wealth.

Jesus continually taught that a dependence on anything other than God was evil. Whenever Jesus determined that money was an issue for an individual, He



addressed it and found that the individual could not let go.

This was true for the rich young ruler. When talking about what he must do to inherit the Kingdom, Jesus told him to do the one thing that would be the most difficult - to give away his wealth and follow Him.

Jesus was not saying this was what every person must do, only the rich young ruler, because Jesus knew this was his greatest stumbling block. For others of us, it could be something else Jesus would ask us to give up

(see Matthew 19:16-30).

In the parable of the sower in which He describes four types of people, Jesus also gave us another example of the problem money creates for any follower of Jesus.

“A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil.

It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up,

the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants.

Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop - a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown” (Matthew 13:3b-8).

“The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful” (Matthew 13:22).

Much like the frog in the boiling pot, if we are not careful we gradually begin to acquire and walk the treadmill of material gain. Those around us begin to expect more and more. Soon we begin expanding our lifestyle.

Before we know it, we are worrying about how to take care of what we

acquire. Our emphasis becomes what we own versus our relationship with Jesus and His Kingdom.

One day I woke up and realized I had a cold heart toward God. Apathy toward the things of God became apparent. I was still going through the motions of service toward God, but with no power.

We wake up to realize Christ is no longer Lord of our lives, much less of our money. The greater independence money gives us, the less dependence on God we need.

Christ talked much about

money in the Kingdom because He knew how much of a problem it was. This is why we have so few who are bearing 100, 60, or 30 times what is sown.

Do you have the same hunger for God that you once had? Has financial blessing had an adverse effect on your passion for Jesus Christ? Ask Him today if your heart has grown cold as a result of financial blessing. Ask Him to keep you hungering for more of His presence in your life.

*(Editor's Note: This column originally ran in May 2017.)*

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# NDG Bookshelf: 'Ella' is a book that will leave you singing

By Terri Schlichenmeyer



Beyonce does it. So does Misty Copeland, Drake, Alicia Keyes, and Chaka Khan. You'd do it, too, if you thought you could sing and dance and make a living at it. Alas, not everyone can be a paid performer on a big stage, but Whitney Houston was. So was Ray Charles and Michael Jackson. Katherine Dunham did it and as you'll see in the new novel "Ella" by Diane Richards, so did a little girl from Yonkers. You can do anything. That's what Ella's mother, Tempie, always said, and

Ella took that to heart. She decided that she was going to make a living with her feet by dancing at the clubs in her neighborhood. Ella loved to dance, and she was

good at it.

But everything changed in the winter of 1932. Times were hard and Tempie had to tell Ella that she couldn't dance at the clubs anymore. Doing laundry brought in more cash, so Ella had to help Tempie with white folks' wash.

The two clashed. They yelled and screamed at one another. Ella couldn't have regretted her words more when Tempie died and everything changed.

Dancing? No more, said Ella's stepfather, and he followed it up with punches. You need an education, said Aunt Virginia, who

took Ella in when she ran away from that man. Here's where real money is, said the man in charge of numbers running, just before Ella skipped school to break the law. Get to work, snarled the supervisor at the New York State Training School for Girls, a sort of juvenile hall where Ella was sent for truancy.

Get outta here, said the bouncer at a club, after Ella escaped the School and made her way to Harlem.

One day, she'd have lunch with Marilyn Monroe. She'd perform with Duke Ellington and she'd appear on TV and in movies. But

when she finally landed a spot on Amateur Night at the Apollo, she didn't dance.

No, Ella Fitzgerald opened her mouth and sang...

Based on a few years in the life of the real singer, "Ella" is great for readers who like a deep dive into historical fiction. Author Diane Richards says in her Author's Notes that she holds a long-time fascination for the singer, and it shows in Richards' detailed retelling.

Covering about twenty-two important months of Fitzgerald's life (with book-ends set in 1948), Richards gives readers a subtle sense

of the tough times that surrounded her subject. With the Great Depression as a back-drop, we get to know a determined Fitzgerald, a teenager who'd do anything to follow her dreams, but who needed to make money first – and we meet the women who launched her. It's a story you'll like, with highs and lows that will make you happy and make your heart pound.

Don't be surprised if you forget that this book is a novel; if it turns you into a fan, check out the resources near the back cover for more. For you, "Ella" is a book that'll make you sing.

## SUSPICION, from Page 3

was not long before a law enforcement officer spied him. Based on a reasonable suspicion, Anderson was pulled over, detained, and searched.

During the examination of Anderson's Dodge, the officer found a gun. When the Terry search was over, the boxer was arrested and charged with possession of a firearm and driving under the influence (DUI).

That stop should have taught Anderson a valuable lesson...but it became a matter of fool me once, fool me twice...

On February 29, 2024, Big Baby decides to go for another cruise on the highway and through Huron Charter Township of Wayne County, about 25 miles southwest of Detroit, Michigan. The problem for a Black motorist driving through Huron Charter Township is that the township has about 31,000 residents and 95% of them are white. So, a Black driver in an orange muscle car is going to be extremely conspicuous, to say the least.

There was Anderson, doing 70 mph in his Dodge Challenger, driving while Black in a lily-white town. A policeman saw "Big Baby" and "Big Baby" saw the policeman. Anderson said he was "emotional" when he pushed his car's pedal to the metal, and

ripped speeds clocked at upwards of 130 mph. He eluded the Huron Township highway patrol three times before he lost control of the Dodge and harmlessly crashed in the mud.

So why did "Big Baby" run from the police on the second encounter?

Anderson might have known from his resident state of Texas what might happen when an officer pulls you over for a second time and you are already on the law's radar. Texas' data on motor vehicle stops and subsequent arrests is a cause of concern.

The Texas Department of Public Safety published its Statewide Motor Vehicle Stop Data Report in 2022. This report provides indisputable data that details the glaring disparity in DPS Troopers' practices on making stops, searches, and subsequent arrests of motorists.

From January 1 through December 31, 2022, Texas law enforcement officers made a total of 1,671,833 motor vehicle stops, that were then categorized by race and ethnicity as well as actions taken post-stop. Almost 90% of those stops were made on highways.

Of those stops, whites represented 38.39% of the total, Hispanics represented 48.56% of the stops, and Black people accounted for

11% total number of stops.

This DPS data may not mean much until one weighs the number of stops (and the racial distribution of those stops) against the demographic composite of the state. While Hispanics account for 40% of the population, they represent 46% of the number of all arrests that are the result of being stopped. And Blacks, who account for only 12% of the population, are the subjects of 20% of the total arrests post-stops by law enforcement officers.

Whites, who also account for 40% of the Texas population, account for only 33% of all arrests resulting from stopped vehicles.

Law enforcement officers can do warning stops and they did so 1,101,039 times in 2022. Hispanics were 48% of the total, whites received 41% of those warnings—but Black motorists were only warned without action being taken 9% of the time.

Of the 17,533 arrests made because of the stops, whites were taken to jail 33% of the time, Hispanics were cuffed 46% and Black lock ups made up 20% of the total.

As it is their right to do so, as determined in Terry, officers opted to search Blacks and Hispanics 70% of those times they made stops. Those citizens consented only 75% of the time, and Blacks and His-

panics were arrested about 75% of the time.

There are times when an officer deems it necessary to use force on a motorist. The officers deemed it necessary 75% of the time with Blacks and Hispanics.

According to the DPS report, during those stops, law officers claim to have little to no knowledge of the driver's race or ethnicity. Although, after the sun goes down—and it is much more difficult to determine the drivers' race—the number of Blacks who are stopped on reasonable suspicion and then arrested tends to decrease considerably.

Given the disproportionality in the number of stops that Blacks and Hispanics lead all contenders when various forms of contraband are discovered. Those two races combined account for 69% of seized weapons, 88% of seized currency, and 72% of seized currency.

A national survey conducted by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (November 2023 brief) listed whites as the chief abusers of marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and opioids at a rate greater than any other race. So, it would stand to reason that it would be whites are subjected to the most Terry stops. Terry stops are a byproduct of the War on drugs that was initiated in the 1980s.

The November 2023 "driving while Black" incident, where the gun was found on Anderson, was only a misdemeanor according to Ohio law, and "Big Baby" received a \$200 fine, and a 180-day suspended sentence. Both charges were eventually dismissed, though.

Now, Big Baby is facing charges that are much more serious. During the February 2024 "driving while Black" incident, the boxer committed a cardinal sin for Blacks and Hispanics. He ran from the police. That is a felony punishable by a fine of \$1,000 and/or a possible 5-year prison sentence.

Once again, Anderson would have to stand face-to-face with a magistrate, but this time it will be with a prison term and the loss of his career on the line. (A court appearance for his recent charges is still pending.)

The war on drugs of the 80s and Terry stops have generated a vicious cycle that has proven to be inescapable for Blacks and Hispanics.

The police hit the streets with an engrained reasonable suspicion that without a doubt drugs will be found among Blacks and Hispanics. That suspicion results in a disproportionate number of those classes of citizens to be found with some form of contraband.

The disproportionality then results in more of them being arrested, prosecuted, convicted, and finally jailed with harsher penalties. Now, for the officer, the reasonable suspicion has been justified and the end justifies the means. Now that the officer believes that his actions have been justified, a profile has been created and that results in more stops of the profiled individuals.

Ironically, a recent ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) report lists the greatest purveyors of illegal drugs and weapons are neither Black nor Hispanic, but instead are whites. Yet, Black people alone are responsible for about 43% of the contraband hit rate.

In another lane of the same highway, a white driver slips under the radar simply because he does not fit the profile. Less whites are stopped so less whites are caught with some form of contraband. If a white driver is pulled over, they are more likely to receive a warning—and less likely to be detained, searched, or arrested.

These practices and unfounded suspicions are why Blacks and Hispanics are reluctant to cooperate with police during criminal investigations...And that is why "Big Baby" tested the speed of his orange Dodge Challenger through the highways and byways of Huron Charter Township