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## Return to Jim Crow? Federal regulations rolled back to allow segregation

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National Correspondent

The Trump administration has blatantly resurrected segregation in federal contracting, undoing decades of civil rights progress by removing anti-segregation mandates.

The alarmingly regressive move reopens the door for racially divided facilities, eerily reminiscent of the Jim Crow era, with potential "Whites Only" and "Colored" signage in government-funded workplaces.

"This isn't just a policy shift; it's a moral catastrophe," stated Melissa Murray, a constitutional law professor at New York University, in an NPR interview. "We are witnessing the deliberate dismantling of civil rights protections that generations



The changes, initiated without the customary public comment period, have been implemented to align with new executive orders on diversity, equity, and inclusion. (Photo via NNPA)

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secure."

The changes, initiated without the

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#### People In The News ...



Mayor Karen Bass



Flau'jae Johnson

NDG Quote of the Week: "If there is no struggle, there is no progress."

- Frederick Douglass

## Mayor Karen Bass

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass is pushing forward with her administration's crime reduction efforts as she faces a recall campaign. Standing with Los Angeles Police Department Chief Jim McDonnell, members of the Board of Police Commissioners, and community members in the Hollenbeck Division, Bass addressed the latest crime data, which shows a 14% decrease in homicides in 2024 compared to the previous year. The Operations-Valley Bureau saw a 28% drop, while communities involved in the Gang Reduction and Youth Development pro-



gram and the Community Safety Partnership recorded a 40% decline in homicides. Chief McDonnell reported that shooting victims decreased by 19%, with 7,634 illegal firearms—790 of which were ghost guns—seized as part of the city's

crime prevention strategy. Property crimes, including burglary and motor vehicle theft, dropped by more than 7,200 incidents in 2024. The Organized Retail Crime Task Force recovered over \$36 million in stolen merchandise, and the Heavy Metal Task Force made more than 100 arrests while recovering thousands of pounds of stolen copper wire.

Bass' handling of the Palisades Fire has drawn criticism, leading to a recall effort led by Nicole Shanahan, Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s former running mate. To move forward, the campaign needs 330,000 signatures within

four months. Bass, the first woman and second African American to serve as the city's mayor and who has already launched her 2026 reelection campaign, said she remains committed to leading the city. Following a multi-victim shooting in MacArthur Park in January, Bass directed the LAPD to increase foot patrols and target gang-related activity. The city installed fencing to disrupt illegal drug and stolen goods sales, reducing violence in the area. In the three months before these measures, nearly 100 violent crimes were reported in the neighborhood. Over the last five weeks, violent crime decreased by 57%,

including reductions in robberies and aggravated assaults. Property crime, including burglaries and thefts from vehicles, also declined. Bass said work continues to make MacArthur Park safer for residents, businesses, and vendors. She is working with Councilmember Eunisses Hernandez on establishing legal vending spaces where vendors can operate without gang intimidation and extortion. LAPD's ongoing actions include disrupting drug sales through patrols, investigations, and arrests, while public health services are assisting individuals struggling with addiction. Hernandez's office has

implemented several community safety initiatives, including two full-time Peace Ambassador teams that work to reduce violence and prevent retaliation following incidents. The teams responded immediately after the January shooting on Alvarado Street. A Mobile Overdose Response team launched in December has collected hazardous materials and reversed 24 overdoses in one month. The team reported a 44% reduction in dangerous materials left in the park after four weeks. "We know there is still much work to be done in the MacArthur

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## Flau'jae Johnson

Flau'jae Johnson is no stranger to pressure. As a standout junior guard for LSU's women's basketball team, she has learned how to manage the intensity of big games, the demands of academics, and the responsibility of being a high-profile athlete in the era of Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) deals. Now, she's adding another role to her résumé—helping relieve consumer debt for thousands of African American families in Louisiana. "I've been working with Experian for quite some time now," Johnson said during an appearance on the Black Press of America's Let It Be Known News. "We did a lot of things just for helping students learn about financial literacy. So, when this opportunity came about, I was ecstatic. I was like, wow, this is really going to help change lives because debt can really hold people back. They're just fighting to survive instead of learn-



ing how to build more finances."

Experian's latest initiative will relieve \$5 million in consumer debt for 5,000 families in Louisiana, one of the states with the highest percentage of poverty in the U.S., according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The credit organization noted that 50 percent of African Americans over 18 are "very/fairly worried" about getting out of debt, and the state has one of the highest unbanked rates in America at 8.1 percent. Further, 52 percent of African American adults indicated they are working to rebuild their credit, and about 1 in

4 have their mortgage applications denied. The initiative, which was carried out in partnership with ForgiveCo, a public benefit corporation (PBC), aims to ease the financial burden of those struggling with debt. To further incentivize success, Experian will add \$100,000 in additional debt relief for every game LSU wins in the upcoming college basketball tournament, up to \$500,000. "Helping it aligns with the tournament, the more games we win, that'll be 100K more that we're adding into the pot," Johnson said. "Coming to the Louisiana community and trying to help is what I want to do because they poured into me, and they kind of adopted me since I came here."

The initiative isn't just about canceling debts. It's also about giving people the tools to manage their financial future. Beneficiaries will receive a free one-year premium Experian

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The North Dallas Gazette, formerly Minority Opportunity News, was founded  
in July 1991, by Mr. Jim Bochum and Mr. Thurman R. Jones. North Dallas  
Gazette is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Minority Opportunity News, Inc.

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# They cannot rob us of our history and our place in America's story

By Ben Jealous

My grandfather's first cousin was Lieutenant Colonel Howard Lee Baugh. Cousin Howard was part of the 99th Pursuit Squadron, the first unit of the Tuskegee Airmen. This month marks the 84th anniversary of the activation of the Squadron at Chanute Field in Rantoul, Illinois, about 120 miles southwest of Chicago.

A few years ago, I sat with my friend Norman Lear, the late TV legend behind shows like *All in the Family* and *The Jeffersons* that became important American cultural staples. Norman and I figured out that my cousin Howard was one of the Tuskegee Airmen who escorted Norman on some of his bombing missions during World War II. (In addition to creating those social consciousness-raising shows and founding People For the American Way, Norman's patriotic resume also included 52 bomber missions in America's fight against global fascism.)

It was an amazing connection to make to this piece of my own proud piece of family history. A lifesized bronze statue of Lt. Col. Baugh stands in permanent tribute to him and the other Tuskegee Airmen in the Black History Museum in Richmond, Virginia.

This history is personal

to me because of the family connection to the Airmen – Lt. Col. Baugh was actually one of two of my grandfather's cousins who were Tuskegee Airmen – but this is history that is important to countless Black Americans. It is also history the Trump administration seemingly wants to erase from existence.

Beyond the federal government no longer recognizing celebrations such as Black History Month and

Pentagon database because they apparently arouse Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's suspicion of DEI. Among them: photos of the Tuskegee Airmen.

To give you an idea of the precision of this whitewashing frenzy, also targeted on the list are images captioned with or including the word "gay." And, as of last week, that included references to the Enola Gay, the B-29 bomber that

dropped the atomic bomb old Gonsalves, who was posthumously presented the Medal of Honor for military valor during World War II and happened to be Mexican-American.

In his perverse view of DEI, Secretary Hegseth thinks removing DEI initiatives means erasing history. And he says "DEI is dead" in the US military because it puts certain groups ahead of others and erodes cohesion and camaraderie among the ranks. But the truth is the opposite. It is not only just and moral that we recognize the contributions of people from marginalized groups (especially when they are military heroes who opened up doors for future generations). It is unifying.

We are all Americans. But some of us have just had our communities' histories and contributions ignored, and even suppressed. Protecting every community's, every family's place in the American story is vital. It is vital for the children who otherwise would not see people they identify with in our history books. And it is vital for America to be what Frederick Douglass knew we could be: "the perfect national illustration of the unity and dignity of the human family."

*Ben Jealous is the Executive Director of the Sierra Club and a Professor of Practice at the University of Pennsylvania.*

*In his perverse view of DEI,  
Secretary Hegseth thinks  
removing DEI initiatives  
means erasing history.*

Women's History Month, the Pentagon is removing every program, mention, image, or individual they say is associated with diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts. The Trump administration already fired Air Force General CQ Brown, Jr. – another history-making Black fighter pilot like my cousin Lt. Col. Baugh – as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Admiral Lisa Franchetti, the Navy's first female chief.

Now, it was reported last week that more than 26,000 (so far) photographs or online posts have been flagged for deletion in a

over Hiroshima, and photographs of people whose last name is Gay. And it would not be Women's History Month under the new Trump administration without targeting references to pathbreaking women among the various war heroes and historic military firsts – women like Air Force Colonel Jeannie Leavitt, the country's first female fighter pilot, and Private First Class Christina Fuentes Montenegro, one of the first three women to graduate from the Marine Corps' Infantry Training Battalion. Also listed in the database was an image of Private First Class Har-

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# Blind to the Burn: Misconceptions about skin cancer risk in the U.S.

(Newswise) — Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States and a significant health issue, with millions of non-melanoma cases and tens of thousands of melanomas diagnosed annually. Furthermore, treating skin cancer costs the U.S. approximately \$8.9 billion annually.

Those with fair skin, a history of sun exposure or tanning bed use, and a genetic predisposition, are at higher risk. Key barriers to prevention include a lack of awareness, cultural preferences for tanned skin, and limited access to sun protection.

A study by researchers at Florida Atlantic University's Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine is one of a few to explore associations between reported number of sunburns and sociodemographic characteristics, in addition to examining prevalence of protective skin behaviors adopted by the U.S. adult population in



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a nationally representative sample. According to the American Academy of Dermatology, experiencing five or more blistering sunburns between ages 15 and 20 increases one's melanoma risk by 80% and nonmelanoma skin cancer risk by 68%.

Using data from the U.S. National Cancer Institute's 2022 Health Information National Trends Survey 6 (HINTS 6), researchers selected questions focused on respondents' confidence in their health, perceived cancer risk, and worry about getting diagnosed with cancer, as well as their sunburn experiences over the past year. Sociodemographic

factors that were studied included age, gender, occupational status, marital status, educational level, Hispanic origin, race and income due to their potential link to skin cancer risk.

Among 6,252 participants surveyed, when asked how confident they felt about their ability to take good care of their own health, most respondents felt either very confident (44%) or completely confident (27.3%). Findings, published in the American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine, also showed most respondents had moderate concerns about skin cancer risk. Only 9.1% reported being extremely worried,

while the majority were either somewhat (26.6%) or slightly (25.6%) concerned.

For sunburn and skin protection, 67.6% reported no sunburns in the past year, while 30.3% had 1-5 sunburns. Additionally, 6.4% reported consuming alcohol while sunburned, a known risk factor for increased sunburn incidence. Activities like drinking alcohol, working outside or swimming were common among those who reported sunburns.

Using multinomial regression analysis, statistically significant associations were reported between the number of sunburns and sociodemographic factors. Adults (over 40) had lower sunburn risks, as did women. Disabled, unemployed, and multi-occupation participants reported fewer sunburns. Married or partnered individuals had higher risks of sunburn, while divorced or single participants had lower risks. Higher education levels, being

Hispanic, Black, Asian or of mixed race were linked to lower sunburn risks. Higher income groups had significantly higher risks of sunburns, with the highest income group being more than four times more likely to report a sunburn.

"Social determinants such as race/ethnicity, sex, income and employment status are closely linked to sunburn and skin cancer risk," said Lea Sacca, Ph.D., senior author and an assistant professor in the Department of Population Health and Social Medicine, within the Schmidt College of Medicine. "While Hispanics and Black Americans generally report lower rates of sunburn, Hispanics often perceive greater benefits of UV exposure, which increases their risk. Factors such as sex, education, and income also influence sunscreen use, with lower use observed among Black Americans and Hispanic Americans. However, within these groups, wom-

en with higher education and income are more likely to use sunscreen. Interestingly, higher income is associated with more frequent sunburns."

Skin cancer includes three main types: basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma and melanoma. Basal cell carcinoma is the most common and least aggressive, typically appearing as a shiny, pearly bump or pinkish patch, often on sun-exposed areas. Squamous cell carcinoma usually appears as red, scaly patches or open sores and can spread to other parts of the body if not treated early. Melanoma, the most dangerous form, develops in pigment-producing cells (melanocytes) and can appear as a new mole or changes to an existing one. It is highly aggressive and can spread quickly to other organs if not caught early.

"Understanding perceptions of skin cancer risk

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membership, which offers access to credit reports, FICO Scores, credit monitoring, and other financial resources. Johnson understands firsthand how valuable those tools can be, especially for young people navigating newfound financial independence. "I didn't know a lot going into college," she said. "I came into college with NIL, and we get paid all these dollars. Thankfully, I had a mom that was into her finances, but everybody doesn't have that. So, it's just kind of taking that initiative to do it yourself and learn. A lot of people don't know about

credit, don't know about finances. You can't grow that way." Johnson has balanced basketball, NIL deals, music, and school while ensuring she stays on top of her finances. Time management, she said, is key. "I got to get school out the way before I do anything," she said. "Top of the week, so I'm not stressing on due dates. If I have to study for an exam, that will take more days. If I have different assignments, I use one day to get everything done. It's all about scheduling and time management."

For Johnson, this partnership is about more than just

this moment—it's about helping create long-term financial knowledge that can benefit families and young people alike. "I'm the type of person who says, put your money where your mouth is," she said. "If you really want to help, do that. And that's what they're doing. Five million dollars is a lot of money, and 5,000 families, that's a lot of people. This is just the start." Johnson hopes this partnership and her platform will encourage more young people to take financial literacy seriously. "Learn how to use credit," she said. "A lot of people don't know how to use credit. There are so many ways to use credit

for what you need, your business, and your future. There are so many entrepreneurs in my generation now. If they know how to use credit to be financially successful, that would be one of my tips."

Johnson has big plans, both on and off the court. As LSU gears up for March Madness, she knows that every victory means more relief for Louisiana families. "No matter what, when we win, we help more people, more families," she said. "We got six games—first round, second round, Sweet 16, Elite Eight, Final Four, and the championship. That could be \$600,000 extra." She's

also keeping her music career going. "I just dropped a song today," she said. "It's called 'What It Takes.' It's about the trophy, the tournament, everything like that." Even with so many pursuits, Johnson never loses sight of the importance of financial stability, a lesson she's learned from her mother and her own experiences.

"I think it's important to have a team, especially when you have so many different streams of income," she said. "LSU does a really good job of bringing in people to help us understand finances, credit, and taxes. That's why when I'm talking to the Experian peo-

ple, they think I'm so cool because they're like, 'How do you know this?' I really study. I pay attention." For Johnson, financial literacy isn't just about making money, it's about sustaining it. "Money isn't everything, but it keeps the world going around," she said. "You want to protect that, build that, grow that. I see these athletes signing multimillion-dollar deals, and then they go bankrupt. And I'm like, what was the disconnect? Because I don't want to go that route. I really pay attention to everything."

More information about Experian's debt relief initiative can be found at [experian.com/relief](http://experian.com/relief).



# Lawmaker: Statue of Liberty belongs in France, not Trump's America

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

The words inscribed on the Statue of Liberty—"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free"—once stood as a beacon of hope, a promise that America would welcome those seeking refuge and opportunity. A French politician is now calling for the monument's return, arguing that the United States no longer deserves it. Raphaël Glucksmann, a member



Photo via NNPA

of the European Parliament and co-president of France's left-wing Public Place party, made headlines with his call to reclaim the statue, a gift from France nearly 140 years ago.

"Give us back the Statue of Liberty. It was our gift to you," Glucksmann declared, speaking before an applauding crowd. "But apparently, you despise her. So, she will be happy here

with us." The Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World was conceived as a symbol of French American friendship and shared democratic values. Designed by

French sculptor Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi, the statue was transported to the United States in 350 pieces and dedicated by President Grover Cleveland on October 28, 1886. It was designated a National Monument in 1924 and maintained by the National Park Service since 1933. UNESCO recognizes it as a World Heritage site but remains U.S. government property. Glucksmann's remarks are the latest in a wave of criticism from European leaders over the direction of American de-

mocracy, particularly under former President Donald Trump. His policies on immigration, which included detaining families at the border, restricting asylum, and implementing travel bans, drew widespread condemnation. Glucksmann and his party argue that Trump's approach not only abandoned the ideals symbolized by the Statue of Liberty but actively undermined them, targeting Black and Brown immigrants while fueling nation-

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customary public comment period, have been implemented to align with new executive orders on diversity, equity, and inclusion. However, this sudden shift has sparked accusations of undermining democracy and transparency. An anonymous federal employee expressed outrage to NPR.

"This is an outright assault on democratic norms, a covert operation to reintroduce segregation without public scrutiny," the unnamed employee remarked. The National Institutes of Health and other federal agencies have received directives to disregard previous anti-segregation

clauses in their contracting processes. Inquiries to the General Services Administration about bypassing established procedural protocols were met with vague assurances. "The GSA is committed to implementing executive orders effectively and promptly," GSA spokesperson Will Powell stated.

Kara Sacilotto, an attorney

specializing in federal contracts, pointed out the broad attack on civil rights, noting that the targeting of these protections extends beyond racial lines to include gender identity, pre-

viously expanded under the Obama administration. "It's clear the target is not just racial equality but all forms of civil rights progress," Sacilotto explained. Professor Murray

added, "This isn't just a rollback of civil rights protections—it's a signal that we're stepping back into a darker past, one that we've worked hard to move beyond."

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

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## Fulfilling Promises: Strengthening school boards for a stronger future

By Ethan Ashley  
CEO of School Board  
Partners

As our education system is increasingly destabilized, it is more important than ever that our local elected leaders have the knowledge, skills, resources, and capacity to fill in the gap should federal structures, guidelines and oversight go away. Across the country, there are nearly 90,000 school board members who are preparing to make decisions that will impact their communities for years to come. While national discourse is capturing so much



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of our attention, now more than ever, it is actually at the local level where policies are shaped in ways that directly affect our daily lives.

School boards, in particular, wield tremendous

power in shaping the future by deciding what students learn, which schools they can attend, what resources are available, and how discipline policies are enforced.

If we want our students to thrive, it is imperative that

school boards function as high-performing, effective governing bodies.

School Board Partners' (SBP) latest paper, Fulfilling Promises: What America's School Boards Actually Need to Succeed identifies three core challenges that hinder the effectiveness of school boards nationwide: a lack of representation, a lack of role clarity, and a lack of training and resources. To address these obstacles, we need to ensure school boards are more representative of the students they serve, provide clear guidance on the responsibilities

of board members, and dignify the role of board members through professional development and effective governance resources.

Our organization has watched the impact of these challenges play out in school systems across the country. When board members lack lived experience or deep relationships within the communities they serve, members often struggle to understand the real implications of their policies. For example, when boards do not include members who have personally navigated biased disciplinary policies, they may not grasp the ur-

gency to reform them. Similarly, when board members fail to recognize the importance of culturally relevant curriculum, they may overlook the need for inclusive learning materials that reflect the rich histories and identities of their students.

But we also know what happens when boards get it right. Take the Tempe Union High School District in Arizona. Four years ago, the district was grappling with leadership tensions and unclear priorities. Three of the five board members received profes-

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## The Heart of Early Childhood Education: Child care providers and families working together

By Allyson D. Andrews,  
MSW, LLMSW  
Director of Early Childhood  
Education, 20 Degrees

The Reality...

Running a childcare center is more than a job — it's a labor of love. Providers pour their hearts into nurturing children, creating safe and enriching environments, and building relationships with families. But behind the joy of watching little ones grow, there's the exhaustion of endless paperwork, financial worries, and the daily hustle to keep every-

thing running smoothly. Many childcare providers wear multiple hats: teacher, administrator, mentor, and problem-solver. There's never enough time in the day, especially when so much of it is spent buried in compliance reports, payroll issues, and operational challenges. For nonprofit centers, keeping up with financial leadership and board expectations can feel like an uphill battle. And the bureaucracy? It's overwhelming. Repeating the same information across different systems steals precious time, time

that should be spent with children.

On top of these operational hurdles, providers are also navigating a workforce crisis. High turnover rates, difficulty retaining qualified staff, and inadequate compensation create instability within childcare programs. Many providers struggle to offer competitive wages, leading to burnout and staff shortages that directly impact on the quality-of-care children receive. Without systemic changes and community support, the burden on providers will only

grow heavier. Providers can't do it alone and when families play a vital role in supporting their childcare community, it is better for everyone: children, families, and providers. Here's how parents and families can partner with childcare providers:

10 Ways that Parents and Families Can Partner with Their Providers:

- Show Appreciation: A simple thank-you note, small gift, or words of encouragement can go a long way in boosting morale. Childcare providers dedicate countless hours

to caring for and educating young children, often going above and beyond to create a nurturing environment. Taking the time to acknowledge their hard work, whether through a handwritten note, a kind message, or a small token of appreciation, can make them feel valued and motivate them to continue providing high-quality care.

- Be Patient and Understanding: Recognize that providers are juggling many responsibilities, so trust their expertise in caring for your child. Childcare professionals manage

multiple children, planning educational activities, ensuring safety, and meeting administrative requirements, all at the same time. Instead of expressing frustration when challenges arise, approach them with patience and empathy. Giving providers the benefit of the doubt and trusting their professional judgment strengthens the relationship between families and caregivers.

- Support Communication Efforts: Respond to messages, forms, and

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# Mobilizing for 2026: Chavis urges Black Press to act

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

The National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) marked the 198th anniversary of the Black Press, and the culmination of Black Press Week with a powerful State of the Black Press address by NNPA President & CEO Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr., who spoke on the vital role of Black-owned media amid the growing threats of far-right extremism and American fascism.

Held at Howard University, the event celebrated the resilience of Black journalism while also honoring the late Walter “Ball” Smith, publisher of New York’s Beacon and the Philadelphia Observer, who was posthumously enshrined in the Black Press Hall of Fame. Smith, who died in 2017 at 83, was remembered by his family and the Black publishing community for his tireless advocacy and contributions to Black media.

Chavis did not mince words when addressing the urgency of the times. He warned of the condescending weaponization of terms like “high and woke” to incite fear, hatred, and social regression, emphasizing that the Black Press must



Dr. Chavis Speaking at the 2024 NNPA National Leadership Awards Reception (Photo via NNPA)

remain steadfast in combating misinformation and right-wing efforts to dismantle democracy.

“We have to continue to plead our own cause, and that cause today includes confronting and challenging the rampant contradictions of the far right who are trying to usher in American fascism,” Chavis declared. “The Black Press of America is needed today more than ever before.”

Chavis highlighted the expansive reach of the Black Press, boasting 245 print publications and 13 digital and online outlets under the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), with more poised to join. He rejected the narrative of “fake news”

and “alternative truths,” pledging that Black-owned media would persist in exposing lies and amplifying the voices of Black communities nationwide.

“There’s no other national news reporting organization that has the local, national, and global reach of the Black Press,” he said.

Comparing the NNPA’s reach to that of mainstream outlets, Chavis noted that while the Associated Press has bureaus in all 50 states, the Black Press operates 258 bureaus across the country. Beyond reporting, he stressed that Black media’s role extends to influence and advocacy, describing it as “a syndicate, a collaboration, and a togetherness of not only the

progress in the neighborhood here in MacArthur Park and I know the work will continue even as assistance is being provided to Angelenos impacted by the Palisades fires,” said Norm Langer, owner of Langer’s Deli. “I want to thank the city for the work being done to help our community.”

production of news but its distribution and its impact.” Chavis called for a renewed partnership between the Black Press, Black churches, HBCUs, and Black-owned businesses to proactively plan for the future rather than merely react to oppression. He urged publishers and clergy in every city to organize mass meetings—historic gatherings that have long served as mobilization platforms for Black communities—to discuss progress and collective action.

“We cannot afford to get overly distracted every day, reacting to the current, repressive, and backward policies and actions of those in high places,” he said, citing the White House, Congress, and the Supreme Court as institu-

tions plagued by “spiritual wickedness in high places.” Chavis reiterated the importance of faith, community unity, and proactive planning.

He referenced the 60th anniversary of the 1965 Selma to Montgomery march, noting how mass meetings at Black churches laid the groundwork for transformative movements.

“We just can’t react to oppression. We need to be planning our liberation, planning our progress, planning our advancement as a people,” he stated. Looking ahead to 2026, Chavis called on the Black Press to lead a national mobilization effort to secure the largest Black voter turnout in history. With the growing threats to voting rights, HBCU funding, healthcare,

and economic stability, he insisted that preparation must begin immediately.

“Are we going to allow these backward people to continue to represent us in Congress? Are we going to allow them to keep chipping away at our voting rights, our HBCU scholarships, our healthcare?” Chavis asked.

“The Black Press will work diligently over the next 18 to 20 months to arouse our communities on the importance of civic education, voter registration, and engagement.” Chavis also highlighted the immense economic power of Black Americans, who spend more than \$2 trillion annually in the U.S. economy. “We’re the richest poor folk in the world,” he said. “\$2 trillion.”

## BASS, from Page 2

Park community but over the past month, progress has been made in returning the park to the community. Crime in the area is down – theft and organized retail crime will not be tolerated in the City of Los Angeles,” said Bass. “I want to thank

the LAPD for their dedication to stopping crime in MacArthur Park and across the city. I also want to thank Councilmember Eunisses Hernandez and community organizations for their continued work to improve this area for all.” “There is



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# Dallas Cowboys get busy early in the offseason

By Jamal Baker  
NDG Contributing Writer

The Dallas Cowboys stuck with their usual theme of not making a splash in NFL free agency. However, it is hard to argue that the team did not improve with smart and team friendly signings. Losing key contributors on the defensive side of the ball certainly left voids on the team, but the Cowboys replaced players like Chauncey Golston, Demarcus Lawrence, and Jourdan Lewis with serviceable athletes. Lawrence and Lewis's impact goes beyond the gridiron and their leadership off the field will allow current players on the roster to step up—Micah Parsons and Daron Bland, it is your turn to



lead.

Let's get into the signings the Cowboys made, starting on the offensive side of the ball. Dallas agreed to deals with running backs Javonte Williams and Miles Sanders. Before suffering a devastating knee injury in 2022, Williams put to-

gether a respectable 903-yard rookie season. At just 24 years old Williams will look to have a bounce back year with the Cowboys after not being the most ideal fit in Sean Payton's offense with the Denver Broncos last year.

"I've been watching

Miles since he was at Penn State, and then with the Eagles and a little with Carolina," Williams said, via the team's official website. "I've always respected his game, and I'm ready to get in here and compete with him and grind."

Sanders made the Pro Bowl in 2022 with the Philadelphia Eagles before signing with the Carolina Panthers. Sanders never could find his footing during the two seasons he spent with Carolina but is ready for a fresh start in Dallas.

"I feel like I made the right decision," Sanders said. "This is a fit for me, and I like what coach [Brian Schottenheimer] is doing -- as far as identity. I came from stuff like that.

I'm just ready to ball out and contribute to the team."

Dallas also inked wide receiver Parris Campbell and offensive linemen Robert Jones and Dakoda Shepley to new deals providing much needed depth to both position groups.

The Cowboys have been very impressive with their defensive signings, headlined by potential starters Kenneth Murray Jr., Kaiir Elam, and Dante Fowler Jr. Murray Jr. is an athletic freak from the middle linebacker position and was named a team captain with the Tennessee Titans last year. Defensive Coordinator Matt Eberflus is known for getting the best out of linebackers and will have a fast and violent unit at his disposal. Elam steps in to be

Lewis's replacement at the cornerback position with a chip on his shoulder. The former first-round pick is a great athlete and the ideal fit in Eberflus's scheme. Fowler Jr. returns to Dallas after producing 10.5 sacks for the Washington Commanders last season.

Other notable defensive signings include linebacker Jack Sanborn, defensive end Payton Turner, and defensive tackle Solomon Thomas.

The Dallas Cowboys have set themselves up to select the best player available in the upcoming draft instead being forced to pick for need. Dallas has gotten better so far this offseason and will look to carry that momentum by nailing their picks in the draft.

## New Diamond Verification Device Introduced

### Natural Vs. Lab-Grown Diamonds: Know What You're Buying

*A new device, the DiamondProof, can rapidly and reliably distinguish natural diamonds from laboratory-grown diamonds and other diamond simulants*

One of the most common misconceptions in the ongoing debate between natural and non-natural diamonds is that it's impossible to tell the difference between the two. Research shows that almost half of consumers are unaware that laboratory-grown diamonds (LGDs) can be detected from their natural counterparts. For consumers who are investing in diamonds and diamond jewelry, this means there is perhaps a lack of assurance that they are getting what they think they are paying for.

This spring, with the introduction of a new verification device, the DiamondProof, to retail stores for the first time, consumers will be able to make informed purchasing decisions and distinguish natural diamonds from non-natural diamonds, like LGDs and other diamond simulants, with a zero percent 'false positive rate'.

Developed by De Beers Group, the DiamondProof technology is able to detect the distinct chemical compositions of natural diamonds, allowing for precise and rapid identification. Early adopters of the DiamondProof include some of the largest jewelry retailers in the U.S., and the device will also be available in a number of independent retail outlets to ensure that any diamond consumer is able to try out the technology and gain assurance on their own jewelry, or diamonds they are planning to purchase.

The first DiamondProof prototype instrument was unveiled last June at the JCK show in Las Vegas, the premier jewelry expo for retail professionals. Many quickly jumped on board and ordered the device for



Karen Blanchard testing jewelry at the Bernard James Jewelry store in Brooklyn, NY. Image courtesy of Bernard James and Miller Lyle.

their stores, noting the ability to rapidly and easily screen both loose diamonds as well as stones set in jewelry.

"Natural diamonds and lab-grown diamonds are two fundamentally different products. Natural diamonds are rare, one-of-a-kind miracles of nature that come to us from the earth through heat, pressure and time," notes CEO of De Beers Brands Sandrine Conseiller. "This incredible journey is what makes them the ultimate marker of life's most profound emotional moments. Consumers should be able to have confidence in such a meaningful purchase, and DiamondProof allows retailers to offer them greater peace of mind. We are in a new era of transparency at retail, and customers deserve to know what they are buying."

"By rapidly and reliably identifying whether a diamond is natural, DiamondProof is instrumental in enhancing consumer confidence in natural diamond purchases. Consumers deserve clarity and having DiamondProof available in retail settings helps them make informed decisions, while appreciating the unique value and story behind each natural diamond. With decades of leadership in synthetic detection technology, we are committed to providing the level of transparency that consumers expect," stated Sarandos Gouvelis, SVP, Pricing, Product and Technology Development at De Beers Group.

For anyone looking to evaluate and verify their own diamond jewelry, or looking for assurance in new diamond purchases, a major retailer near you will soon have a DiamondProof available.



# Film Review: 'Brown Bag' offers a suspense-filled riddle

By Dwight Brown  
NNPA Film Critic

(\*\*\*) “There’s been a breach.” “We have a traitor.” “Who’s a suspect?” “Your wife!”

Titillating bits of conversation run the ground work for this fairly engrossing British spy/drama/thriller. Within minutes audiences will figure out the problem, complications and where the intricately laid out script by David Koepp (Mission: Impossible) will take them. It’s all administered and guided by the Oscar®-winning director Steven Soderbergh (Traffic), who is back on his game—big time. He makes



Claudette Barius/Focus Features

this excursion intriguing from beginning to end.

Two secret agents at Britain’s National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) are sleeping together. Well, they’re married, so that’s to be expected. What’s not to be expected is that one,

George Woodhouse (Michael Fassbender, Shame), a top British intelligence officer, is being asked to track down and ferret out a double agent who’s ready to activate a destructive cyber worm called “Severus.” Malware run amuck. Clues

## BOARDS, from Page 6

sional development and training focused on student outcomes from SBP. There, they were able to establish clear goals, align their budget to those goals, engage the community, and hire a superintendent who shared a similar vision. Today, Tempe Union is an A-rated district in the state, demonstrating that when boards are supported and set for success, students can excel.

The lesson is clear: school boards don’t have to operate the way they always have. We can—and must—equip board members with the tools to be effective partners in governance. This requires intentional action from multiple stakeholders:

- Communities must engage in the process of electing and supporting representative school board members. This means voting for individuals who reflect the lived experience of students and advocating for boards that truly understand the challenges and strengths

of the communities they serve.

- Superintendents, district leaders, and education advocates must view themselves and school boards as essential partners in student success. This means calling for clarity in their roles, ensuring they have access to the right resources, and respecting their critical function in shaping the future of our education system.

- State and local governments must allocate dedicated funding for school board training and professional development. We would never allow untrained individuals to run billion-dollar companies, yet we routinely place school board members in charge of massive public education systems without equipping them for the task. It is time we invest in them properly and consistently so they may deliver on their campaign promises.

At the end of the day, this goes beyond school boards—this is about the

social contract that underpins our democracy. Public schools educate the vast majority of America’s children and the quality of their education will determine our country’s standing in decades to come. If we fail to set up our boards for success now, we risk failing an entire generation of students—and, by extension, our nation’s future.

The time to act is now. Let’s commit to strengthening our school boards so they can fulfill their promises to students, families, and communities. When we get this right, we can transform education and ensure a brighter future for all.

*Ethan Ashley is the Co-CEO & Cofounder of School Board Partners, an organization that connects emerging, inspired elected community leaders serving on local school boards with the training, support, and mentorship needed to successfully push for high quality school systems. For additional information, visit: <https://schoolboardpartners.org>.*

point in several directions, and too many of them lead to Woodhouse’s sultry wife Kathryn St. Jean (Cate Blanchett, Carol). She isn’t the only suspect, but she’s on the list. And he can’t always track her whereabouts because she’s, in her own words, “Black Bag,” under-

cover.

The couple invites co-workers, who rouse suspicion, over for dinner. George and Kathryn host. Guests sit around the table. The womanizer Freddy Smalls (Tom Burke, Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga) shows up with his much younger

and very jealous lover Clarissa (Marisa Abela, Back to Black), a cyber expert. The company’s resident shrink, Dr. Zoe Vaughn (Naomie Harris, Moonlight), sits beside her paramour and patient Col. James Stokes

**See FILM, Page 12**



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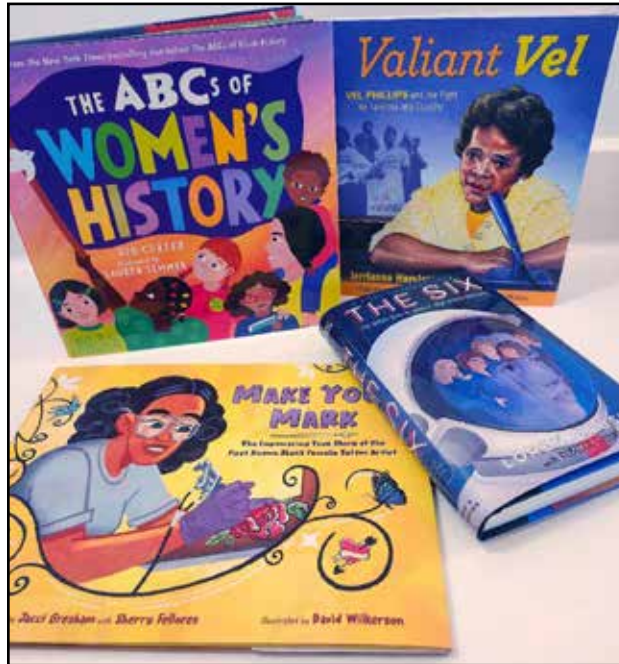
# NDG Book Review: Women's History Month books for kids

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

Mom and Grandma know a lot of things.

They know what you like for breakfast and for lunch. They help you find the coolest clothes and the best toys. They're really good at telling stories, teaching you chores, and giving you hugs. You know they do great things and so have other women throughout history – so grab these great books and learn more...

March is Women's History Month and learning about it is easy when you have "The ABCs of Women's History" by Rio Cortez, illustrated by Lauren Semmer (Workman, \$18.99). From artists and activists to Zora Neale Hurston, this book takes very young readers on a tour



Terri Schlichenmeyer

through the decades, other cultures, countries, and careers, music and more. Parents will be surprised at the breadth of this book and the women in it; kids ages three

to six will love the fun, vibrant artwork.

The child who likes to draw and create will find inspiration inside "Make Your Mark" by Jacci

Gresham with Sherry Fel-lores, illustrated by David Wilkerson (Dial Books for Young Readers, \$18.99). It's Gresham's story of being the first known Black female tattoo artist, the struggles she had and the boundaries she ignored on her way to a career in ink. This is a great tale that parents won't mind reading aloud because each short chapter starts with words meant to empower kids and to remind them that they can do whatever they put their minds to doing. Be sure to call your 4-to-6-year-old's attention to the afterword.

Slightly older children who are looking for a good Women's History Month book can't go wrong with "Valiant Vel" by Jerriane Hayslett, illustrations by

Aaron Boyd, afterword by Michael Phillips (Wisconsin Historical Society Press, \$20). Even when she was a kid in the 1940s, Vel Phillips was an activist in her Milwaukee hometown, speaking out against racism. She became a lawyer in 1951 and she continued to fight for equality and Civil Rights through politics and protest. For the 9-to-13-year-old who longs to make a difference in the world, this book is full of photos, artwork, kid-friendly chapters, and inspiration.

And finally, for readers ages 9 and up, "The Six: The Untold Story of America's First Women Astronauts" by Loren Grush with Rebecca Steffoff (Simon & Schuster, \$17.99) may be just right for Women's History Month. This "young

readers edition" is all about America's first female astronauts – Sally Ride, Anna Fisher, Kathy Sullivan, Rhea Seddon, Judy Resnik, and Shannon Lucid – and their groundbreaking, history-making work at NASA and beyond. Here, your child will thrill to tales of their training, their work, what it's like to be an astronaut, and what it's like to struggle while focusing on a big dream. Older children will think this book's out of this world.

And if these books aren't enough, be sure to ask your favorite bookseller or librarian for help on finding more. They've got books for you to consider and take home. Plus, for Women's History Month and otherwise, they know lots of things.

## SUN, from Page 4

and the prevalence of protective behaviors is vital to reducing the likelihood of developing skin cancer, particularly among vulnerable groups," said Madison Etzel, first author and a second-year medical student in the Schmidt College of Medicine. "Our study underscores the importance of raising awareness about skin cancer susceptibility as we found that all sociodemographic factors were significantly linked to the number of reported sunburns in the past year. Future research should explore how additional social determinants of health influence sunburn incidence and prevention behaviors. A deeper understanding of these factors is critical to addressing the widespread harms of skin cancer in

U.S. adults."

According to the American Cancer Society and other health organizations, practicing sun safety and skin awareness is vital to preventing skin cancer. Regularly applying a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher, especially when spending time outdoors, and reapplying every two hours is essential as a first step for skin cancer prevention. Avoiding direct sunlight, particularly between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., when UV rays are strongest, and seeking shade whenever possible are also additional preventive strategies to consider to reduce the risk of this disease. Moreover, protecting skin further by wearing long-sleeve clothing, wide-brimmed hats

and sunglasses with 100% UVA/UVB protection has also been recommended. It's also crucial to avoid tanning beds, as they increase the risk of skin cancer.

Regular self-exams of the skin for any unusual moles or changes, along with professional skin screenings by a dermatologist, can help with early detection. Surfaces like water, sand and snow also can reflect UV rays, so reapply sunscreen more frequently in these environments. Finally, staying hydrated supports skin health and resilience against UV damage.

Study co-authors are Nada Eldawy; Sahar Kaleem; Austin Lent; Adrienne Dean; Ayden Dunn; Paige Brinzo; and Samantha Jimenez, all medical students in the Schmidt College of Medicine.

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# Black homeownership faces persistent barriers despite hard-fought gains

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Senior National  
Correspondent

Sonia Reed believed she had achieved the American dream. In December 2024, the Black grandmother and former homeless individual became a homeowner in San Leandro, California. But her triumph quickly turned into a nightmare when neighbors began harassing her with racial slurs and vandalizing her property.

“I worked so hard to finally have a place to call my own, and now I have to fear for my safety in my own home,” Reed said.

The Alameda County Sheriff’s Office said it is investigating the incidents as hate crimes. For many, vandalism is part of an ongoing

pattern where Black homeowners have faced some kind of discrimination.

Reed’s experience is far from isolated. Black Americans remain locked in a battle for homeownership, confronted by systemic inequities, economic challenges, and, in some cases, environmental disasters that threaten to strip them of generational wealth. A new Urban Institute report revealed that Black homeownership rates remain far behind those of white Americans. Researchers said it’s a gap rooted in decades of discriminatory housing policies, redlining, and predatory lending practices.

“Homeownership remains one of the most significant drivers of wealth, yet Black families face

disproportionate barriers to achieving this milestone,” researchers wrote.

The crisis extends beyond acts of overt racism. In January 2025, devastating wildfires tore through Altadena, California, a historically Black community with a homeownership rate of 81.5 percent—far higher than the national average. Thousands of homes were reduced to ashes and rubble, leaving families displaced. Many now face the daunting task of rebuilding and the looming threat of gentrification.

“Developers are circling like vultures,” said longtime Altadena resident James Carter. “We’re trying to rebuild, but the fear is that we won’t be able to afford to stay.”

Economic barriers re-

main a defining struggle. Brooke Scott, a litigation assistant in Los Angeles, calculated that achieving homeownership and financial security requires an annual household income of \$300,000—far beyond what many Black families can attain. Housing costs, healthcare, taxes, and child-rearing expenses leave little room for savings or investment.

“The numbers just don’t add up,” Scott said. “Even with two incomes, we’re barely able to put away anything for a down payment.”

The Urban Institute’s

findings represent a clear picture of the obstacles Black homeowners face. Disparities in income, lending practices, and generational wealth accumulation continue to create barriers that make Black homeownership an increasingly difficult goal.

While federal and local initiatives have sought to close the gap, the road ahead remains steep.

“Without significant policy changes and investment in Black communities, the homeownership gap will persist for generations to come,” the Urban Institute report warns.

For Reed, Scott, and the residents of Altadena, the challenges of Black homeownership are deeply personal. Whether confronting racial harassment, economic hurdles, or the aftermath of natural disasters, their stories serve as a reminder that the fight for equity in housing is far from over. If these barriers persist, the promise of homeownership will remain an elusive dream for too many Black Americans.

“We just want what everyone else has—a fair shot at building a future,” Carter asserted.

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## EARLY, from Page 6

updates promptly to help providers stay organized. Childcare providers rely on clear communication with families to ensure the best care for children. Whether it's filling out required forms, reading important notices, or providing updates about your child's needs, timely responses allow providers to stay on top of operations and minimize administrative burdens. When families actively participate in communication, it creates a smoother and more supportive environment for both children and caregivers.

- **Advocate for Fair Wages and Funding:** Join local advocacy efforts to push for better wages and resources for childcare professionals. Childcare providers are among the lowest-paid professionals, despite the critical role they play in early childhood development. Many struggle to make ends meet while providing high-quality care. Families can support them by advocating for fair wages and increased funding, whether through signing petitions, attending local meetings, or voicing their concerns to policymakers.

- **Volunteer Time or Skills:** Offer to help with small projects like organizing supplies, reading to

children, or sharing your professional skills. Many childcare providers operate with limited staff and resources, making extra hands invaluable. Parents can assist by helping organize classrooms, preparing materials, or volunteering during special events. If a parent has a specific skill — such as graphic design, accounting, or event planning, offering those services pro bono can significantly ease the administrative burden.

- **Respect Policies and Procedures:** Following health, safety, and payment policies allow providers to maintain quality care. Policies are designed to ensure the safety and well-being of all children. Arriving on time for pick-up and drop-off, adhering to illness policies, and making timely tuition payments contribute to the smooth operation of a center. Respecting these guidelines means providers can focus on creating a positive learning environment instead of resolving avoidable conflicts.

- **Recommend the Center to Others:** Positive word-of-mouth referrals help providers grow and sustain their business. Families play a crucial role in supporting centers to maintain enrollment and financial

stability. Sharing positive experiences on social media, leaving online reviews, and recommending the center to friends or colleagues can help providers attract new families, ensuring long-term success.

- **Contribute to Wish Lists or Fundraisers:** Donating supplies or participating in fundraisers helps ease financial strain. Many childcare providers operate on tight budgets, and even small contributions — such as donating books, art supplies, or cleaning materials — can make a significant impact. Families can also organize fundraising initiatives, such as silent auctions or community donation drives, to aid providers in acquiring necessary resources that enhance the learning environment.

- **Stay Engaged in Your Child's Experience:** Build a partnership with providers by asking questions, sharing feedback, and showing interest in your child's daily activities. Engaged families lead to a stronger learning environment. Ask your child about their day, communicate regularly with teachers, and attend events when possible. This involvement reinforces the importance of early education and shows providers that their work is valued.

- **Celebrate Their Hard Work:** Recognize the dedi-

cation and passion that goes into creating a nurturing environment for children. Recognizing and celebrating childcare providers' dedication fosters a culture of appreciation and respect. Consider organizing appreciation events, writing positive testimonials, or highlighting their efforts in community newsletters. A little recognition can go a long way in sustaining their motivation and reminding them that their work is valued by the

families they serve.

By working together, families and providers can create thriving childcare communities where both children and those who care for them are supported and valued.

*Allyson D. Andrews leads a team at 20 Degrees working to support child care, which offers shared services and back-office programs to ensure its provider-centric approach delivers new business solutions for childcare leaders*

*so educators, families, and, most importantly, children, all benefit. With over 12 years of experience in Early Childhood Education, Allyson founded and operated four childcare centers in the Detroit area, serving hundreds of children. Allyson has deep consulting experience in start-up operations, business development, finance, and operations for non-profit and for-profit sectors with a specialization in education.*

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## LIBERTY, from Page 5

alist rhetoric.

French leaders have not been shy in their criticism of Trump's foreign policy. Prime Minister François Bayrou condemned the White House's treatment of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and the temporary freeze on

military aid to Ukraine, warning that such actions strengthened Russia's position. Glucksmann's party has gone further, calling Trump's leadership "authoritarian" and accusing him of delivering Ukraine "on a silver platter" to Russia. Glucksmann's speech

directly referenced The New Colossus, the 1883 poem by Emma Lazarus inscribed on the statue's pedestal. He invoked its message of refuge and freedom, only to argue that those ideals no longer reflect today's United States. "Today, this land is ceasing to be what it was," Glucksmann said.



**FILM**, from Page 9

(Regé-Jean Page, Bridgeton). The six eye each other like whodunit and why? They're curt and biting in a Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf way. They'll depart and meet up again. At this home, the sleek offices at work and all around London. Until one of them is caught. Who will it be?

There are enough cloak and dagger elements here to capture the interest of adult viewers who want a smartly drawn spy tale that's as sophisticated as a Dry Martini, with a briny olive. Some action scenes break up the drama and suspense, but not many. The opening segment starts with the camera, as guided by Soderbergh who is also the cinematographer, following Woodhouse around. Angles positioned over his shoulder make you feel like a fly tailing the operative as he glides in and out of a clandestine rendezvous. Woodhouse is given orders, a time frame and the most difficult task he's ever faced.

Most scenes are cut down to their essentials, as per Soderbergh, who is also the editor. Credit the intrigue and dazzling technique to him. He has a vision. Nothing gets in his way. You're likely to stay intrigued throughout. If the plot doesn't hold your attention and the lack of action scenes lets your mind wander, his style brings you back again and again to a production that never loses its allure.

The pawns in his game are an extremely talented cast of actors who maintain Soderbergh's satiny, urbane style. There isn't a natural or casual performance in the entire movie. This is a sophisticated British spy thriller, and that's the framework that binds them. Stilted line deliveries, fake shallow raconteurs, few outward emo-

tions. It all works within the context of Soderbergh's creation. Something like a party game. Not as shamelessly campy and funny as Glass Onion or Knives Out. Closer to solid espionage genre norms. Nothing based in reality. All just for adult fun.

Burke, Abela, Harris and Page fit into the ensemble quite nicely. Their roles are a bit more interesting than that of most supporting characters because of their intermingling in and out of offices, homes and hotel rooms. Add Gustaf Skarsgard and Kae Alexander to the mix in lesser roles and save the bravura scene stealing for the ever-over-acting Pierce Brosnan. The former James Bond lead seems quite comfortable as the agitated, well-clad boss who screams, "Find the leak!"

Considering the setup, some may imagine that this husband and wife might go berserk on each other. Like the couple in Mr. and Mrs. Smith, the movie and not the tepid Amazon series. Or

crease the sheets and leave warm spots like Pitt and Jolie did. Yes, there are erotic moments. But no nudity, sex or anything that would make temperatures rise. It's not that kind of party. Flirtations not fornication. Curiosity not hostility. Cagey not adversarial.

Fassbender, with his stiff face, is a study in restraint as power. Doesn't do much, but you're sure he'll pull the trigger when it's needed. His subtleness works to the character's favor. Blanchett is a bit more grandiose. Like she's on an off-Broadway stage, projecting to the cheap seats. She's over doing it. Over stylized in manner. But that choice works just fine for this concept and is in direct contrast to Fassbender. Oddly she's wearing too much makeup, and the long fake hair is obtrusive. When, with her natural beauty and hair, they didn't need all the paint and extensions.

The two lead characters shine. But the real star of this movie is the filmmaker. This is his toy. Soderbergh sets that Ocean's Eleven

charm and panache, improves on it and adds just the right amount of visual gimmicks. Of note is a lie detector sequence. Suspects are hooked up to a polygraph. Each is asked questions, some fluff, some incriminating. A query is given to one person, the frame is switched and the next in line answers it. It's a nifty gimmick that breaks up the narrative just enough. In between the shots of nervous participants are close-ups of a bright orange-red jagged line that charts the truths and lies on a monitor. It's a crafty passage. Simple but eye-catching. More memorable than some of the explosions. The mark of a gifted filmmaker.

In due time the perpetrator will be confronted. It won't go well. Who will it be? Who will be the executioner? It's enough of a riddle to make film fans sit in their theater seats or keep their hands of the remote. Until it's over. Until that traitor gets what's coming.

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



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# There's No Place Like Home

Dr. James L. Snyder

Finishing my morning work, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage appeared at my office and asked, "Do you know what day it is?"

I didn't know if this was a trick question because she always puts a trick question before me.

"I think," my dear, "that it is Tuesday."

She looked at me, giggled, and said, "Yes, it is Tuesday, but it is also something else."

I had to think about that for a moment. At first, I wasn't sure it really was Tuesday, but I got that right. However, I didn't get her question right. I had to figure out what she was talking about because she would not stop until I got it right.

"Is it somebody's birthday today?"

She shook her head and said, "Keep on guessing."

I knew I was never going to get it right. So, finally, I confessed and said, "I give up. What day is it?"

Looking in my direction, she flashed a smile and said, "Today is the third

anniversary of your retirement." Then she laughed.

Looking at her, not quite understanding, I said, "What retirement are you talking about?"

"You don't remember that three years ago you retired from the church? I know you've been busy with ministry projects but I would think you would remember moving away from the church."

Thinking about that for a moment, it finally came to me. According to The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, I have been retired for three years. I can't believe it's been that long. It just seemed like yesterday that I retired.

I remember a friend of mine years ago saying that his idea of retirement was retiring to bed at night but getting up in the morning. I had that thought in my mind throughout my life.

I have been officially retired for three years now. Where did all those years go? I guess I had so much fun and involved with so many things that they just passed by.

For the rest of the day I was thinking about those

three years in retirement.

One thing I did just before retiring was to add a room to our house. That room was my office, and to tell the truth, it was a little bigger than the office I had at the church. But in the middle of that office, I am surrounded by all kinds of books, about 10,000.

Sitting at my desk is a delightful experience looking at those books.

I didn't think moving out of the church into my home office would be a satisfying move.

Back in the church office, I could do things and hide things that The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage would not know of. She was the church secretary, so her office was right next to mine.

But in my office, I had opportunities to eat Apple fritters. At that time, McDonald's carried Apple fritters, and I would stop there on my way to my office after lunch and get a coffee and an Apple Fritter. That was one of my secrets in the old church office.

After three years in my home office, I have yet to discover how I can sneak

an Apple Fritter into my office. In order to do that, I would have to bypass The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, and no matter where I put that Apple Fritter, she knew I had it. She can smell an Apple Fritter two days before I purchase it. How she does that is beyond my understanding.

I didn't know I would really get used to being in my home office, but after three years, I looked back and discovered that I had gotten used to my new dynamics.

I have discovered working at home is a lot better. I can work for an hour and then take a break, sit in my easy chair, and drink some hot coffee. I can even watch the news on TV. Then, when I'm ready, I can shuffle off into my office and get back to work.

Something struck me as

I thought about this. When I was at my church office, whenever the phone rang, I had to answer it. You never know who's calling, and they might need some help, so I needed to answer the phone.

Now that my office is at home, when the phone rings, I can let it ring and ring and ring. I don't need to answer it if I don't want to. Do you know how refreshing it is to sit there and listen to the phone ring and not answer it? Sometimes, that really makes my day.

At my home office, I don't have to follow a stringent schedule. I can come to and leave my office whenever I want to. However, I still have plenty of work to do because my ministry has not downsized yet.

I never knew how won-

derful it would be to work at home. Some days, don't let this get around, I work in my pajamas all day. Who's going to know?

There is no place like home.

Jesus said something along these lines in John 14:2, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."

I can't imagine how wonderful that home in heaven is going to be, and I'm sure I'm not going to miss my home here on earth.

*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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# Women's History Continues



**Sister Tarpley**  
NDG  
Religion  
Editor

African Americans women have always played a vital role in shaping Americans history; I will continue to honor them in my column this month.

**Sarah E. Goode** was the first Black female patent holder. She was issued a patent on July 14, 1885 for a Folding Cabinet Bed. **Miriam E. Benjamin** was the second Black woman in history to receive a patent, it was for a Gong and Sig-



nal Chair for motels on July 17, 1888. **Patricia Bath** was the first Black female doctor to receive a patent for a medical invention; an apparatus for ablating and removing cataract lenses.

**Ruane Jeter** invented a digital Toaster on April 14, 1987. **Ellen Elgin** invented the Clothes Wringer in the

1880's. **Madeline Turner** in Oakland, California invented a Fruit Press on April 25, 1916. **Henrietta Mahim Bradberry** from Chicago, Illinois invented a bed rack which was an attachment to the bed that permitted air to pass through and refresh worn clothes on May 25, 1943;

and on December 11, 1945, the device operated pneumatically and was adapted to discharge torpedoes under the water surface (the Torpedo Discharger.) **Virgie M. Ammons** invented a Fireplace Damper actu-

ating tool on September 30, 1975. The instrument opens and closes a fireplace damper and is also intended to operate as a securing means to prevent fluttering of the damper due to wind. *Thought for the Week:*

*60 Minutes: Only 60 Minutes, 60 seconds in it, we didn't seek it, we didn't choose it, but it's up to us to use it. We must give an account if we abuse it, just a tiny minute but eternity is in it. -- Author Unknown*

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