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Texas storm erupts over GOP efforts to redraw district lines

Texas politics is once again in the national spotlight as Democrat lawmakers have left the state to break a quorum necessary to conduct business.

At stake is a Republican effort to respond to a call from President Donald J. Trump to redraw congressional district lines. The motive is an effort to pick up as many as five new Republican seats in the U.S. House of Representatives ahead of the 2026 midterm elections.

More than 50 Democratic state officeholders have vacated the Lone Star State, preventing the legislative process from moving forward.

Governor Greg Abbott has called for the arrest of the absent lawmakers in response to the political move.

"Texas House Democrats abandoned their duty to Texans," said Governor Abbott. "By fleeing the state, Texas House Democrats are holding hostage critical legislation to aid flood victims and advance property tax relief. There are consequences for dereliction of duty.



A political firestorm is brewing over Texas Democrats' decision to break quorum and leave the state in an effort to thwart GOP efforts to redraw congressional lines at the request of President Donald J. Trump. (DWG Studio)

"Speaker Dustin Burrows just issued a call of the Texas House and issued warrants to compel members to return to the chamber. To ensure compliance, I ordered the Texas Department of Public Safety to locate, arrest, and return to the House chamber any member who has abandoned

their duty to Texans. This order will remain in effect until all missing Democrat House members are accounted for and brought to the Texas Capitol."

The Texas governor went one step

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Complicated pregnancy and strokes

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Trump DOJ is targeting Obama

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People In The News ...



Charlamagne tha God



Rep. Hakeem Jeffries

NDG Quote of the Week:

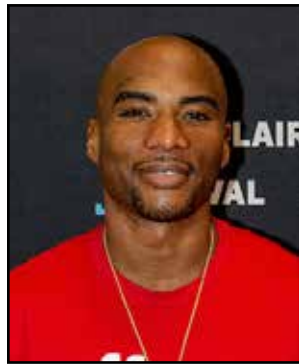
"In recognizing the humanity of our fellow beings, we pay ourselves the highest tribute."
- Thurgood Marshall

Charlamagne tha God

Donald Trump's latest tirade against a prominent Black media figure is drawing fresh scrutiny of his long-documented history of racist behavior.

In a Truth Social post, the former president called Charlamagne tha God a "racist sleazebag" and "low-IQ individual" after the popular radio host criticized Trump's return to the White House during an interview with Lara Trump on Fox News.

"I don't want to say that I think he did a terrible job, but if he's doing a terrible job, I gotta call it like it is," said Charlamagne, whose



Wikimedia via NNPA

real name is Lenard McKelvey. "All we want is somebody in those positions that's going to do a good job. I'm not a party person, in no way, shape or form."

Trump, clearly enraged, blasted Charlamagne's moniker: "Why is he allowed to

use the word 'GOD' when describing himself? Can anyone imagine the uproar there would be if I used that nickname?"

He added that the host "has no idea what words are coming out of his mouth and knows nothing about me or what I have done".

While Trump claims he rebuilt the economy and closed the southern border, data shows core inflation is rising, and Black unemployment has reached its highest level since the pandemic.

A Decades-Long Pattern

Trump's reaction to Charlamagne follows a pattern of racist attacks stretching back decades.

According to PBS News,

Trump has repeatedly used dehumanizing language to describe Black prosecutors, calling Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg a "Soros-backed animal" and referring to New York Attorney General Letitia James as "Racist A.G. Letitia 'Peekaboo' James" — a term experts say echoes racist slurs.

He also accused Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis of being "racist" and a "rabid partisan," running a campaign ad falsely suggesting she had a romantic relationship with a gang member — an ad she called "derogatory and false."

"He's taking that historical racialized language that was offensive and insulting,

and the subordinating of Black persons, applying it in a contemporary space," said Dr. Bev-Freda Jackson of American University.

Research Confirms

Trump's Rhetoric Has Real Impact

Trump's language has had measurable consequences.

A 2023 peer-reviewed study in Current Research in Ecological and Social Psychology found that Trump's 2016 election increased dehumanizing views among white Americans who supported him. Trump voters were more likely to rate Black people as less "evolved" after the election than before. The study confirmed what many already

suspected: Trump didn't just reflect racism—he amplified it.

"Trickle-down racism" became a reality, validating fears expressed by figures like Mitt Romney, who warned Trump's rhetoric would legitimize hate.

Systemic Efforts to Erase Black History

Beyond rhetoric, Trump has taken deliberate action to erase and distort Black history. In 2025, the National Park Service attempted to scrub references to Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad from exhibits, a move the Trump administration reversed

See CHARLAMAGNE, Page 12

Rep. Hakeem Jeffries

By Lauren Burke

Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries flew to Austin, Texas, today to address Texas redistricting. Republicans who control the legislature and the Governor's Mansion in Texas are working to redraw the congressional district lines after President Trump stated that he thought that five more congressional seats could be created. "Donald Trump ordered Governor Greg Abbott and Texas Republicans to race back to Austin for a special legislative session," Leader Jeffries said, standing in front of a group of congressional and Texas elected officials.

"Our message to the people of Texas and to this great country is simple: You deserve better," he added. The Democratic Leader spoke on how the special session called to focus on redrawing congressional maps to make it harder for



Democrats to win should be focused on how people will be impacted by changes to their health care because of the passage of the Trump tax plan. The bill was signed into law on July 4. "This session should be about fixing Texas' broken health care system," Leader Jeffries, in part, stated.

Texas Republicans gerrymandered a map that revealed a new map that made many congressional maps. Before Texas redistricting, the breakdown on the Congressional map was 25 GOP seats and 13 Dem seats. After the proposed maps, the breakdown

would be 30 GOP-leaning seats and 8 Dem-leaning seats. "It is time we all fight hard... If the Republicans say they're going to gain five seats in Texas, I say we gain 30 seats in New York, California, and Virginia... in Colorado," said attorney Marc Elias on MSNBC on July 30. Elias has worked on voting rights law at the pro-democracy organization Democracy Docket.

The fight over the maps in Texas will likely reverberate in other states. California Governor Gavin Newsom is signaling that he is considering a mid-decade round of redistricting. The Texas Tribune reported yesterday that Gov. Newsom "has told aides he will move forward with a plan to redraw his state's congressional lines to install more Democrats if Texas Republicans pass their own updated map."

The redistricting issues could cause other political dominos to fall in other states, such as Illinois.



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Welcome to the Local Newsroom



Dr. John E. Warren
Publisher,
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Voice &
Viewpoint

As the new Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you, the reader, to our "Local Newsrooms" now in our 198 years of service.

The Black Press is our local newsroom. The printed newspaper remains the "trusted messenger" and permanent record of our culture, our communities, and the due process provisions of the Constitution guaranteeing our First Amendment Rights.

Our newspapers have embraced social media as an additional tool, just as mainstream giants like *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and the *Washington Post* continue in print while expanding their presence in the digital world. Our "local newsrooms" continue to be the link between our communities of color and the many public policy issues, legislative and administrative decisions affecting all our lives.

The communities we serve contribute over 4 trillion dollars a year to the American economy. We, the Black Press, continue to provide the leadership that allows our communities to connect the dollars we spend to the issues affecting

our lives and the return on the investments we make in spending our monies with those who do or do not do business with us in return for the dollars they get from us.

Our local newsrooms look forward to strengthening our coverage and relationships with those individuals and organizations, as well as elected officials fighting for us on so many fronts.

The National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) is encouraging our communities to re-examine our spending habits to support those who support our papers and media outlets as physical proof of alliances with our market shares.

We must remember that there can be no leadership

without information, and we, the Black Press, are still the most "trusted" source of information for and about our communities.

We invite you to join us in spreading the word to Corporate America to support our newspapers, even as our newspapers continue to support us.

Subscribe to our newspapers, newsletters, and daily updates that so many of us offer. Support with your dollars those who support us with their dollars in our media outlets. We are not calling for boycotts, but the fair exchange of Corporate America spending dollars with us as we spend our dollars with them.

Let's make a real difference with what we do rather than just what we say.

BOLD PAC: Texas GOP's redistricting push suppresses the Latino Vote

Republicans Would Rather Change Maps Than Face Voters

BOLD PAC, the political arm of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, issued the following statement in response to the newly proposed Texas congressional map that carves up Latino communities in Texas to protect Republicans and silence working families.

"Republicans know the American people don't support their agenda that steals from working families to give tax breaks to the ultra-wealthy and demonizes Latino communities," said Chairwoman

Linda Sánchez. "Their solution? Change the maps so they don't have to face the voters. The Texas GOP's redistricting scheme is about one thing: silencing Latino communities so Republicans can escape accountability. It's cynical, it's cowardly, and it's un-American. Latino voters will not be sidelined. BOLD PAC stands firmly against voter suppression and is doubling down on our commitment to ensure that our communities are seen, heard, and well repre-

sented in Congress."

The proposed map is effectively suppressing Latino voters in Texas, most egregiously suppressing Latino voters by merging Rep. Greg Casar's TX-35 district with TX-37. At a time when the Trump Administration is pushing an anti-American agenda that puts Latinos in the United States at risk, we must stand up for Hispanic communities and their Latino Members of Congress who are being targeted.

In South Texas, the new

lines undercut Latino-majority districts that are central to the Democratic coalition. TX-34 (Rep. Vicente Gonzalez) and TX-28 (Rep. Henry Cuellar) are targeted for being border Democrats who won Trump districts.

The map is a calculated move to protect far-right incumbents who supported tax handouts for billionaires while opposing relief for working families. Rather than earn support, Republicans are redrawing the rules to rig the outcome.

Keep up with the news

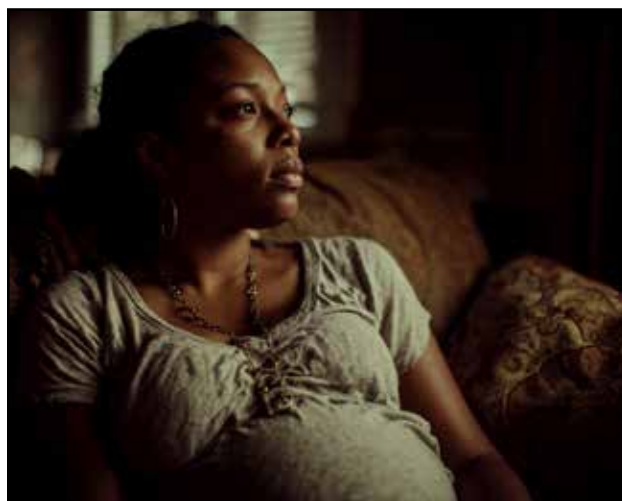
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Complicated pregnancies linked to higher risk of early stroke

(Newswise) — MINNEAPOLIS — Experiencing complications during pregnancy is linked with a higher risk of stroke before age 50, according to a study published August 6, 2025, in *Neurology®*, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology. Researchers found female participants who had certain pregnancy complications were more likely to have an early stroke. These included preeclampsia, preterm birth, gestational diabetes, miscarriage and stillbirth. The study does not prove that pregnancy complications cause stroke. It only shows an association.

“While the overall risk of stroke is still very low, our study found pregnancy complications may be an early warning sign of stroke risk—even before age 50,” said study author Frank-



Erik De Leeuw, MD, PhD, of Radboud University in Nijmegen, the Netherlands. “Knowing this history could help doctors identify those who may benefit from early prevention and cardiovascular care.”

The study included 1,072 female participants who experienced at least one pregnancy, including 358 who had an ischemic stroke,

ages 18 to 49 years old, and 714 without stroke.

Researchers looked at how often certain pregnancy complications occurred in those who had strokes compared to those who did not. They included preeclampsia, which is high blood pressure during pregnancy, preterm birth before 37 weeks, small-for-gestational-age births, gestation-

al diabetes and pregnancy loss, including miscarriage and stillbirth.

The findings indicate that 51% of those who had a stroke experienced at least one pregnancy complication compared to 31% of those without a stroke. Once researchers adjusted for the age of the participants at the time of the first pregnancy, they found that people who had a stroke were more than twice as likely to have at least one pregnancy complication than people without a stroke.

The strongest associations were seen in participants with a history of stillbirth, who were nearly five times more likely to have a stroke, however De Leeuw noted that the number of participants who reported a stillbirth was small.

Those with a history of preeclampsia were about four times more likely, while those with preterm birth or small-for-gestational-age births had nearly three times the risk.

Certain complications — especially preeclampsia and preterm birth — were associated with strokes caused by large artery disease, a type often linked to atherosclerosis, which is a build-up of fatty deposits called plaque in the arteries.

“Doctors should ask about pregnancy history when assessing stroke risk,” De Leeuw said. “Our study suggests we may need to start thinking about cardiovascular prevention earlier in life—not just after menopause. Future studies should investigate the ef-

fects of lifestyle modification aimed at reducing cardiovascular risk in women with complications during pregnancy.”

A limitation of the study is data on some pregnancy complications were reported by the participants themselves and may not be as reliable as medical records. Researchers were also unable to adjust for all stroke risk factors, like high blood pressure or cholesterol.

Discover more about stroke at BrainandLife.org, from the American Academy of Neurology. This resource also offers a magazine, podcast, and books that connect patients, caregivers and anyone interested in brain health with the most trusted infor-

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Women less likely than men to receive MS drugs

(Newswise) — MINNEAPOLIS — Women are less likely than men to receive drugs for multiple sclerosis (MS) between the ages of 18 to 40, during women’s childbearing years, even when those drugs have been shown to be safe for use during pregnancy or to have a prolonged effect against the disease even when stopped before conception, according to a study published on July 30, 2025, in *Neurology®*, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology.

“We found that women were less likely to be treated with a disease-modifying drug than men with the same level of disease

severity, even when we took into account people who stopped taking their drugs during pregnancy or postpartum,” said study author Sandra Vukusic, MD, PhD, of the University of Lyon in France. “When used early, MS drugs can delay the burden of the disease, so women who are not treated could have worse outcomes in the long term and an increased risk of long-term disability. This loss of chance is not acceptable anymore, as there are drugs that are compatible with pregnancy or can continue to fight the disease long after people stop them when they are trying to conceive.”

For the study, researchers looked at more than 27 years of health records for people in France with relapsing-remitting MS that started when they were between 18 and 40 years old. A total of 16,857 women and 5,800 men were included in the study, with an average age of 29, and they were followed for an average of 12 years.

When researchers examined the percentage of person-years that people in the study received a disease-modifying drug, the number was 60.2% for women and 61.3% for men. Person-years represent both

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Trump's DOJ targets Obama while new poll leaves him humiliated

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

Donald Trump's fixation on former President Barack Obama has long bordered on obsessive. Now, it's official government policy. Trump's Justice Department has launched a federal grand jury investigation targeting former Obama administration officials—an apparent political hit job tied to Trump's long-standing false claims that Obama and his team “manufactured” the Russia investigation to sabotage his presidency. Many have opined that Trump ran for president not to save the country, but to save himself.



Douglas Rissing via NNPA

After being convicted on 34 felony counts, found liable for sexual assault, and held civilly responsible for massive business fraud, Trump launched his 2024 campaign under legal siege. And it worked—he's once again in the Oval Office.

Now, he's going after the one man he's despised more than anyone else: Obama.

Backed by a Supreme Court ruling that grants him immunity for “official acts,” Trump has unleashed his Justice Department to investigate Obama-era officials in what critics say is a dangerous political revenge plot. Attorney General Pam Bondi has convened a federal grand jury to examine whether former CIA Di-

rector John Brennan, FBI Director James Comey, and Director of National Intelligence James Clapper conspired to fabricate the Trump-Russia scandal. But Trump hasn't stopped at the officials. He's now publicly named Obama, accusing him of treason and demanding criminal prosecution. “Look, he's guilty. It's not a question,” Trump declared from the Oval Office. “This was treason. It's time to go after people”.

Obama's team responded forcefully: “These bizarre allegations are ridiculous and a weak attempt at distraction”. But the distractions may be a cover for something far more sinister.

Trump has reportedly posted memes depicting Obama behind bars. He's shared edited videos suggesting Obama should be jailed. Even once posting an AI doctored video of Obama on his knees before Trump, who has openly fantasized about imprisoning his predecessor. With a Justice Department under his control and no constitutional guardrails he's willing to respect, the fear is no longer hypothetical: Barack Obama could become the first former U.S. president to be criminally targeted by his successor, not for crimes, but for political vengeance.

And here's what might

hurt Trump the most: a new national poll shows that in a hypothetical 2028 match-up, Obama would beat him handily. A survey by Daily Mail and J.L. Partners found Obama leading Trump 52% to 41%, well beyond the margin of error. Obama dominates across key demographics, winning 73% of Hispanic voters, 68% of Black voters, and 50% of independents. No other Democrat fares as well. Trump narrowly defeats both Joe Biden and Hillary Clinton in similar hypothetical matchups. But when it comes to Obama, Trump loses—and he knows it.

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LEGAL NOTICE

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Game #	Game Name / Odds	\$	Official Close of Game	End Validations Date
2626	7 - Overall Odds are 1 in 3.66	\$10	8/17/25	2/13/26
2640	Sizzling Hot 7s - Overall Odds are 1 in 4.26	\$5	9/1/25	2/28/26
2541	20X Power Blitz - Overall Odds are 1 in 4.83	\$1	9/16/25	3/15/26
2542	30X Power Word Blitz - Overall Odds are 1 in 4.38	\$3	9/16/25	3/15/26
2543	50X Power Blitz - Overall Odds are 1 in 4.07	\$5	9/16/25	3/15/26
2544	100X Power Blitz - Overall Odds are 1 in 3.88	\$10	9/16/25	3/15/26
2598	\$50, \$100 OR \$500! - Overall Odds are 1 in 9.43	\$10	9/16/25	3/15/26
2612	Cash Payout - Overall Odds are 1 in 3.89	\$10	9/16/25	3/15/26
2545	200X Power Blitz - Overall Odds are 1 in 3.72	\$20	9/16/25	3/15/26
2596	\$1,000,000 Lucky 7s - Overall Odds are 1 in 3.40	\$20	9/16/25	3/15/26
2603	Lucky Millions - Overall Odds are 1 in 3.99	\$20	9/16/25	3/15/26
2435	500X Loteria Spectacular - Overall Odds are 1 in 3.20	\$50	9/16/25	3/15/26

Texaslottery.com is the official source for all pertinent game information. Game closing procedures may be initiated for documented business reasons. These games may have prizes unclaimed, including top prizes. In addition, game closing procedures will be initiated when all top prizes have been claimed. During closing, games may be sold even after all top prizes have been claimed. Must be 18 or older to purchase a ticket. For help with a gambling problem, ncpgambling.org. © 2025 Texas Lottery Commission. PLAY RESPONSIBLY.

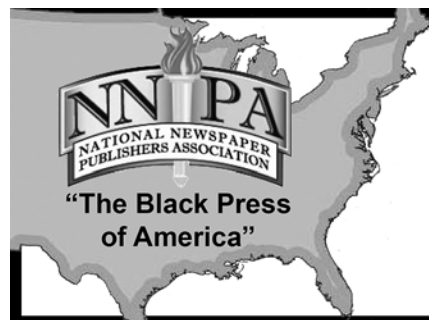
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Solutions to the early childhood substitute teacher dilemma

By Liz Bell
EdNC

This May in North Carolina, New Hanover County's first early childhood substitute teacher from a new centralized substitute pool worked a shift at The Learning Tree, a licensed childcare center in Wilmington. Marquita Williams has since filled in several times in different classrooms at the center, providing coverage for teachers who called out sick or needed time off from the taxing work of early care and education.

The childcare field, with low teacher pay and high stress, has struggled with burnout and teacher shortages, especially since the pandemic. The lack of a reliable, centralized pipeline of substitute teachers makes it harder to keep classrooms open and take care of teachers, said JC Elrod, director of The Learning Tree. "It's just as needed here as it is in schools," Elrod said. "If we don't have teachers, we can't provide care."

A two-year \$600,000 grant from Live Oak Bank is funding the county's first local substitute pool through Wonderschool, a national venture-backed company focused on providing technology and business support services to early care and education providers.



Liz Bell/EducationNC via NNPA

"The idea that a childcare provider shouldn't have an easy way to take a day off, or to take a sick day, or whatever it may be, is crazy," said Jason Moss, director of new government initiatives at Wonderschool. "There needs to be a solution for that."

Williams is one of 10 onboarded substitute teachers in the pool so far, said Jenna Talbot, a spokesperson for the company. Thirty-seven more teachers are going through orientation.

Thirty licensed programs in the county are signed up to participate. Wonderschool has created a statewide substitute pool in Mississippi, but the New Hanover project is its first local version. They hope to spread the model across the state, Moss said. "Our goal is to demonstrate that this is a great local solution so that others can form their own conclusions and say, 'This now needs to be like a great statewide solution,'" Moss said.

The company pro-

vides a digital platform where licensed programs list jobs and where qualified area teachers apply. Wonderschool onboards the teachers, including an interview and orientation process. Candidates answer a screener on their experience and skills and then complete a phone interview, Talbot said. If chosen, candidates then go through an orientation that includes basic information on job expectations, classroom management, child health and safety, and platform usage. Wonderschool employees ensure that the individuals meet state requirements and have appropriate documentation. A provider can then easily access those documents through the platform.

A win-win

During the pandemic, many of the center's more seasoned teachers retired as the job came with higher health risks. There were days when Elrod and Amber Dyson, the program's assistant director, closed the office and filled vacan-

cies in classrooms themselves.

"We're gonna make it work, somehow," Elrod said she remembers thinking. She said she didn't want to close classrooms or turn parents away at the last minute, as some programs had to do. So, it was all hands on deck to ensure sufficient teacher-to-child ratios were met.

"That's how we functioned for many years," Elrod said. Elrod and Dyson said that in the past year, it feels as if they have started to turn a corner in terms of staffing. For now, they are almost fully staffed. "We only have some afternoon part-time positions available," Dyson said. "But even then, we still find ourselves with holes every day." The two have begun tapping into the substitute pool while planning for the upcoming week. When they notice a day when staffing might be tight, they post the jobs a few days in advance.

When the day arrives, even if there are enough staff to make things work, there is always someone who deserves some time off, Elrod said. "That's a win-win, because we're utilizing the system, the substitute is getting their hours, and our regular staff is getting a breath of fresh air," she said. Dyson and Elrod said they occasionally call on some of the center's for-

mer full-time teachers to substitute. But that doesn't fill the program's full need, they said.

The pool also saves them time and administrative costs, they said. Onboarding a new substitute themselves usually takes two to three weeks, they said, and includes coordinating and sometimes paying for background checks, physicals, and medical tests. The pool provides them with quick access and teachers who have already taken care of the required steps. Williams said she has had a smooth orientation process and positive experiences subbing at The Learning Tree. In the mornings, she works with autistic children. She used to work in childcare full-time, but said substitute teaching gives her some variety in her work and flexibility in her schedule.

"I love being able to pick my hours and not being tied down," Williams said.

A deep bench to pull from

Moss said there are "personas" they are looking for in potential substitutes, like retired schoolteachers, mothers, and college students. They've used a mix of marketing strategies to find potential substitutes. Once the teachers are onboarded and start working, they receive bonuses to reward them for certain milestones: \$75 after com-

pleting their first job, \$150 after working their first 40 hours (and an extra \$100 if certain trainings are completed at that time), \$200 after completing 200 hours, \$250 upon completing 150 hours or more in a single month, and \$250 for referring other teachers who are signed up and work at least 40 hours. Wonderschool sets a minimum rate for the programs it provides, depending on the local market. In New Hanover, the minimum pay for participating programs is \$14 per hour. In Mississippi, Moss said, some substitutes have ended up becoming full-time teachers. "A sub pool can be this sort of launch pad for a more permanent role in childcare," he said. Wonderschool is now onboarding 37 teachers, Talbot said. She said 30 to 40 teachers will give the 30 participating programs "a deep bench to pull from, to ensure consistent support for families." The model requires monitoring to make sure there are not too many or too few teachers for the number of participating programs, Moss said. "You're trying to find perfect harmony," he said. "We've got to make sure there's enough substitutes. Otherwise, providers push jobs and nobody responds, and then they get disincen-

See CHILDHOOD, Page 7



V I D E O C H A N N E L

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Dallas student earns Associates Degree along with high school graduation

As the youngest child of 3 siblings in his household, Romeo Jackson finished high school with his 2-year associate's degree precisely as his two sisters, Diamond and Dimarrea Jackson. Romeo Jackson is a graduate in the 2025 Class Hillcrest P-Tech Collegiate Academy from Dallas ISD. His graduation was Sunday, May 25, 2025, at the Alfred J Loos Stadium. While attending Hillcrest high school, Romeo also attended Dallas College School of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics at the Richland Campus. This graduation took place on Saturday, May 17, 2025, at the Curtis Culwell Center. Romeo was able to achieve this outstanding



Romeo Armani Jackson (Courtesy photo)

goal despite the Covid 19 Pandemic.

As a member of the National Honors Society, he maintained high honors with a 4.2 in academics throughout high school.

Although he received numerous scholarship offers, he became a recipient of a scholarship to the University of Texas at Dallas. Earlier this school year, he was recognized and received a certificate at the "Senior Black Young Men Top 10% in Dallas County Schools", an Invitational High Achievers Breakfast from the Alpha-Phi-Alpha Sigma Lambda Chapter Fraternity.

Additionally, he achieved great accolades as a student athlete. As a varsity football

player, Romeo was a 3-year letterman, 10th grade-Newcomer of the Year, 11th grade-Honorable Mentioned All District Safety, and 12th grade-2nd Team All District Linebacker. His nickname on Varsity Football was "Batman". Addition to football he was a two-time District and Area Champ and Regional Qualifier Boys 4x200 Relay in track. Also, he was a member of the Fellowship of Chrisitan Athletes.

Romeo attended the Baccalaureate Sunday at

Friendship West Baptist Church this summer, June 22, 2025.

Romeo has always measured up as a student athlete since primary school. Academically from elementary through middle school, he was on the A-Honor Roll, in the Talented and Gifted Program (TAG), Robotics and Chess Club. Also, he was a drummer in the band. Athletically, he was awarded Most Valuable Player as running back and safety

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CHILDHOOD, from Page 6

tivized. They don't want to push jobs. So, then you get enough substitutes, and you've got to get your providers back up."

Developmentally, age-appropriate ratios

Wonderschool has been lobbying at the legislature this session, Moss said. Since providing some North Carolina child care programs with its digital platform in 2020 through pandemic relief funds, the company has grown in scope and in the services it offers. Providers in such states as New Mexico, Florida, and Indiana use the company's platform to connect with families. The company also creates substitute pools, as in Mississippi, and recruits and helps set up new childcare programs, as in Michigan, Idaho, and Missouri. "It's all based on sort of what

are the greatest needs that states are facing to support childcare," Moss said in an EdNC interview in March. Sen. Jim Burgin, R-Harnett, a co-chair of Gov. Josh Stein's Task Force on Child Care and Early Education, said he has met with Wonderschool representatives multiple times and heard of their success opening family child care programs.

Both the House and Senate budget proposals include pilots to increase in-home childcare capacity and set up substitute pools in localities through outside vendors that meet certain requirements and are chosen by local councils of government. Burgin said those requirements could be met by multiple vendors. "I want to make sure children are safe, number one, and they're being educated, number two," Burgin said.



Dallas Wings bet on youth after trading star guard DiJonai Carrington

By Jamal Baker
NDG Contributing Writer

The Dallas Wings are clearly in rebuild mode after trading guard DiJonai Carrington to the Minnesota Lynx for Diamond Miller, Karlie Samuelson and a 2027 second round draft pick.

Carrington won the WNBA's Most Improved Player award in 2024 and is one of the league's best two-way players, who will certainly help Minnesota achieve their championship aspirations.

"It takes heart to play on both sides of the ball, and I feel like something for me that I can always control is the defensive side of the ball," Carrington said. "You might have games



where your shot's not falling or where just something's not going your way on offense or you're not getting touches. You never know what the scenario is, but you can always impact the game on defense, and that's just making it hard for the other team.

"It doesn't always show up on the stat sheet in steals or in blocks or rebounds or

whatever, but making it difficult for your opponent is something that I can actually control every single night," she continued. "So I like to control the controllables."

Carrington's veteran presence will be missed in a young Wings locker room. She gracefully took rookie guards Paige Bueckers, JJ Quinerly and Aziaha James

under her wing (no pun intended) and Dallas will look to continue laying the foundation for a successful future.

That future starts with Bueckers, who has proven to be the absolute truth and worthy of her No. 1 overall selection. She also tied Caitlin Clark's league record as the fastest player to reach 300 points and 100 assists.

Through just 23 professional games, Bueckers is already one of the league's brightest stars and continues to get better each time she steps out on the court.

Bueckers is averaging 18.5 points, 5.5 assists, 3.9 rebounds, and 1.8 steals per game this season.

The Wings are also seeing significant growth from

rookie guards Quinerly and James. Quinerly has held her own as the team's new starting point guard and James provides instant offense off the bench.

The trio of Bueckers, Quinerly, and James gives the Wings a bright future at the guard position, as all three have the ability to produce at a high-level on both ends of the floor.

"Paige Bueckers, Aziaha James and JJ Quinerly have been the best part of watching the otherwise disappointing Wings. One can assume some of the veterans won't be back in Dallas next season, but this guard trio will. Their energy and hustle can be one of the foundations for a new-look Wings team in 2026. How they play the

rest of this season will help determine that," ESPN's Michael Voepel wrote.

Bueckers and Arike Ogunbowale are continuing to find their rhythm together, as the Wings' dynamic backcourt could be the foundation of something special in Dallas.

The Wings and their two star guards showcased the potential of what could be a special backcourt combo for years to come—defeating the defending WNBA champion New York Liberty 92-82 on July 28 at College Park Center.

With a renewed sense of momentum and a promising young core leading the way, the Wings are laying the foundation for a brighter future—starting with how they finish this season.

JACKSON, from Page 7

for the Duncanville Tigers Youth Organization.

Romeo led his team to Super Bowl Championships 3 times. Also, he was a T.A.A.F State Qualifier at age 6 for 50,100, and 200 meters with the Dallas Blaze Track Club. He was an AAU Regional Medalist and Junior Olympics Qualifier at age 12 for 80-meter hurdles with the Duncanville Tigers Track Team. Summer 2017, he won the "Smokehouse Race" competition finals in age 10 and under category of 300 boys at the Dak Prescott Pro Football Camp.

Romeo was raised in a single parent household with his mother, Demetria Jackson, and two sisters; who's success stories are also mentioned in

past North Dallas Gazette publications. Demetria was also a student athlete who excelled in academics, scholarship recipient, and studied at the University of Texas at Dallas after graduation. As a Southern Methodist University business student, Demetria was adamant about the success of her children's education. She provided balance in their upbringing between school, sports and community. Words from his mother, "I've been on this journey with my son since he was 3 years old and I would do it all over again." She further stated "Senior football season ended at the Bi-District Playoff game being 2nd in the district. It was bittersweet...#9 out."

Academic footprints run

in the family. His paternal and maternal sides of the family contain college graduates.

Romeo's grandmother, Rona Jackson, a graduate of Dallas College and University of North Texas at Dallas, was his second biggest supporter outside of his mother. Rona's remarks "Watching Romeo as a student athlete throughout his youth to the young man he has become today, I have witnessed a person who can and will push through to succeed."

In conclusion, completing his associates degree in high school allowed him to attend a university as a junior. Romeo will attend the University of Texas at Dallas as a Pre-Med Biology Major, Fall 2025. Romeo aspires to become a Sports Medicine Physician.





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Film Review: 'The Naked Gun' doesn't hit the bullseye

By Dwight Brown
NNPA Film Critic

(**) The Naked Gun is shooting blanks. Not all the time. But some of the time.

There was something so fresh and funny about police detective Frank Drebin in 1988's *The Naked Gun: From the Files of Police Squad!* He was an oddball, thickskulled dufus. A character Canadian/American actor Leslie Nielsen played completely deadpan and locked and loaded for comedy. Drebin became a bumbling idiot that audiences loved. They howled at him so much the film became a trilogy. Nielsen was a dramatic actor (*The Poseidon Adventure*) whose career veered towards outrageous comedy when he starred in *Airplane*, arguably the funniest film ever made. But



Liam Neeson stars in *The Naked Gun*. (Image via NNPA)

The Naked Gun... series took him to comedy heaven to live among the greats.

The Oscar-nominated and very serious actor Liam Neeson (Schindler's List) took his career down a different path too. He became an action film star (*Taken*) who was laconic and deadly: "I will look for you, I will find you, and I will kill you." Maybe after

all the dramas, thrillers and action movies, he needed some comic relief, too. Not a bad idea. Not a bad performance. He's comical consistently on screen, even when the rest of the film loses its way.

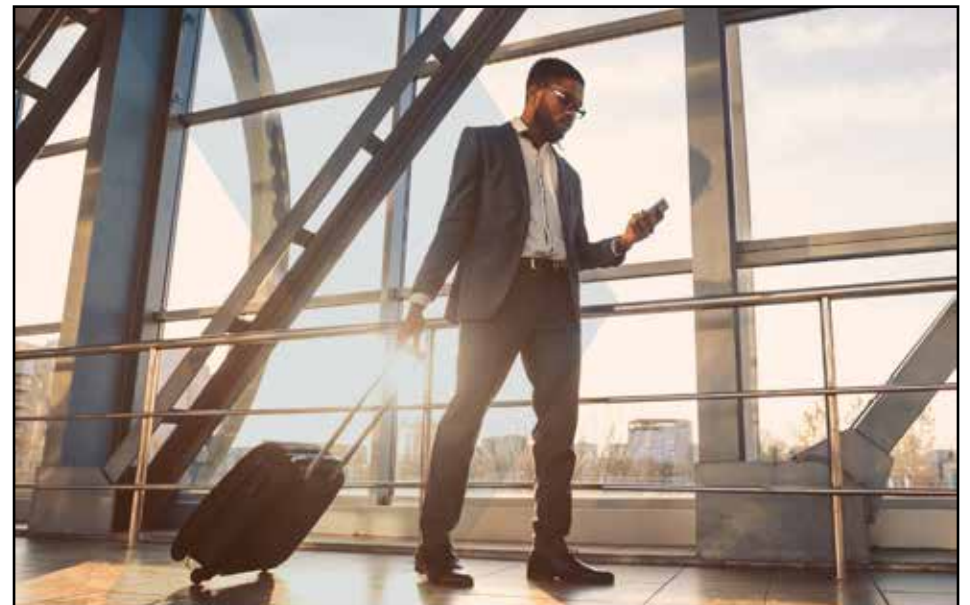
A bank is being robbed in broad daylight. Cops, who've surrounded the building, are trying to create an action plan. Some

little girl, in a plaid skirt with big brown eyes who might be on recess from a local Catholic school, skips along down a sidewalk next to the building. She looks a lot like Jenny Ortega from the Netflix horror series *Wednesday*. She saunters

into the bank, where everyone is affright, except for the robbers. All eyes turn to her. But she isn't who they think she is. Next thing you know, a weird detective named Frank Drebin (Neeson) is fighting the bad guys.

It isn't long before Frank's boss Chief Davis (CCH Pounder) is chewing him out and warning him to stay off a case involving a suicide that might be a murder. But Frank is moved by

See FILM, Page 16



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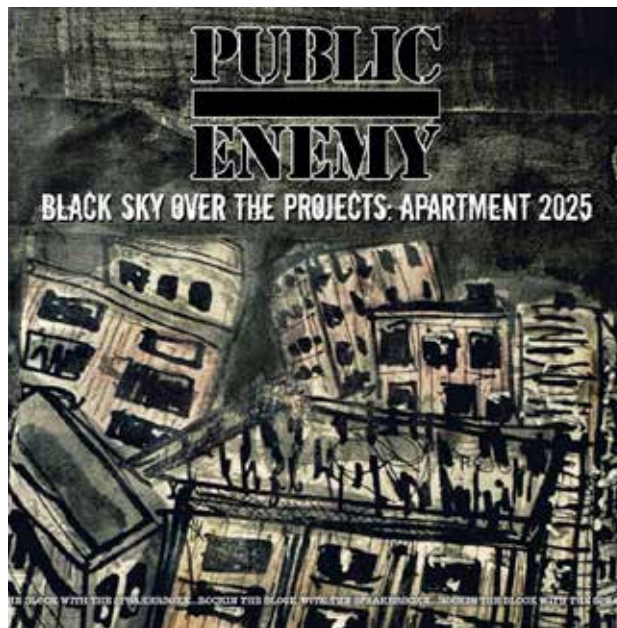
Chuck D to America: 'You're in the Hot Box'

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

Chuck D, the co-founder of Public Enemy, issued a warning during an appearance on the Black Press of America's Let It Be Known morning show, aiming at America's cultural disconnection, political chaos, and the growing impact of artificial intelligence and online manipulation. The legendary artist also spotlighted Public Enemy's surprise new album, *Black Sky Over the Projects: Apartment 2025*, which he called a gift to longtime fans and a continuation of the group's fight-the-power ethos. "The rock guys always seem to take care of theirs," he said. "We created rock and roll in the first damn place, but it gets co-opted. They protect their culture. We don't pass ours down."

Chuck said that while touring last month with Guns N' Roses, he saw firsthand how European audiences celebrate rock and unify around their shared identity. "They all know they're Europeans. They had wars with each other, but they glue up together," he said. "We got factions. And what countries do we have to back our factions?"

He continued, "Everybody on the planet Earth is saying, 'Y'all need to be careful, you are going into that hot box.'" Public Enemy's sixteenth studio album, released June 27 without prior announcement, was described by Chuck and Flavor Flav as "the give back." The album



was made available for free on Bandcamp for the first 72 hours and dropped in conjunction with a live performance at London's Royal Albert Hall. The final track, "March Madness," tackles gun violence and school shootings. It begins with a real 9-1-1 call from a distressed teacher. "Kids supposed to have fun, none of this run for cover for your life," Chuck said in the song. He said the song grew out of collaboration with Flavor Flav's team, his manager Rhiannon Ellis, and Harvard students. "We had Black shootouts in high schools in the 80s that we were trying to address, and they fell on deaf ears," he said. "It metastasized in the 90s, and now people are desensitized."

Chuck pointed to the commercial structure of hip-hop today, saying, "The profitability of us and our drama, that also has diminishing returns... Now we got AI. Why would we be so amazed at your non-

singing ass?"

On the issue of how technology is reshaping perception, he said, "Scrolling ain't reading. Texting ain't writing," he declared. "People are not tuned into listening like they were 25 years ago. Their eyes are searching like Bluetooth." He warned that listening is now a survival skill. "If you're not using this sense of listening and then process it, you're going to get got." Chuck urged Black Americans to reclaim a global mindset. "That passport will save your life and your brain," he said. "The United States has been iso-balled. They told everybody, we're here to protect you, and the rest of the world is bad. Don't go nowhere, don't think nowhere." He said bots have infiltrated social media platforms to sow division. "There were already a million bots that got planted into the mediascape in

See CHUCK D, Page 13


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New poll shows Americans value skilled trades but say they're overlooked

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

A new Harris Poll report reveals that while Americans overwhelmingly view skilled trades as essential to society, they also believe the field is undervalued, overlooked in schools, and facing a generational perception gap that could deepen the labor shortage crisis already gripping the nation.

According to the poll, conducted June 20–22, 2025, among 2,203 adults nationwide, 91% agree that skilled trade jobs are just as important as white-collar jobs, with 63% strongly agreeing. Still, 86% say skilled trade careers are overlooked in today's educational system, and 90% believe most people don't realize how lucrative these careers can be.



Photo via NNPA

"Skilled trades offer real career potential, but they're not being talked about enough in schools or by society at large," said Wendy Salomon, one of the report's authors at Harris Poll's Corporate Strategy & Reputation Practice.

Despite their crucial role in the economy—from electricians and HVAC technicians to mechan-

ics and welders—skilled trades struggle with image and awareness issues. Younger Americans appear less confident in the opportunities that trades provide. Only 38% of Gen Z respondents said skilled trades offer the best job prospects today, compared to 59% of Baby Boomers. Just 36% of Gen Z strongly agree that skilled trades offer a faster

and more affordable path to a good career.

The data shows a steep generational divide. While

older Americans tend to view trade jobs as viable, even preferable career paths, many younger Americans are deterred by factors such as societal prestige, college pressure, and uncertainty about pay. Gen Z respondents also pointed to concerns about automation, job security, and inflexible work structures.

Black Americans were significantly more likely to cite a lack of visible role models as a significant barrier to entering the trades, suggesting that diversity and representation remain challenges in an industry

that is still perceived by some as exclusionary.

Even with these barriers, the report found a sharp contrast between perception and reality. Career paths in technology and healthcare dominated perceptions of opportunity, but skilled trades were still among the top five across all generations. Among Boomers, they ranked second only to tech. And even Gen Z ranked skilled trades above careers in law, teaching, and finance.

One striking finding: a majority of Americans now

See SKILLS, Page 12

MS, from Page 4

the number of people in the study and the amount of time each person spends in the study. For the highly effective drugs, the numbers were 23.5% for women and 25.3% for men.

However, Vukusic said these raw percentages do not take into account differences that might explain a gap in drug exposure between men and women such as disease severity since women tend to have a more active disease, or pregnancy and postpartum periods during which certain therapies may be interrupted.

After adjusting for disease severity, pregnancy and postpartum periods, women had 8% lower odds

of receiving a disease-modifying drug compared to men. In the case of newer drugs that are highly effective at reducing MS relapses, women had 20% lower odds of receiving the drugs.

"Anticipation of pregnancy was probably an important factor in this difference between women and men with MS, but there could also be a reluctance to use these treatments when they may actually be the best way to manage the disease and delay disability," Vukusic said. "Another factor could be that new data continues to be collected on the safety of newer MS drugs, so more work is needed to communicate those findings to people with MS and

their doctors."

A limitation of the study was that information on pregnancies ending in miscarriage or stillbirth as well as unsuccessful attempts at pregnancy was not available, so discontinuations of medications due to these events were accounted for by adjusting the results for sex.

Discover more about MS at BrainandLife.org, from the American Academy of Neurology. This resource also offers a magazine, podcast, and books that connect patients, caregivers and anyone interested in brain health with the most trusted information, straight from the world's leading experts in brain health. Follow Brain & Life® on Facebook, X, and Instagram.



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U.S. job growth stalls in July, Black unemployment remains elevated

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

The U.S. economy added just 73,000 jobs in July, continuing a three-month trend of sluggish growth, according to the latest data released Friday by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The national unemployment rate held steady at 4.2 percent, with little movement across key sectors.

While health care and social assistance industries posted modest gains, federal government employment continued its decline, shedding 12,000 jobs in July and bringing total losses in the sector to 84,000 since January. The overall number of



Portra via NNPA

unemployed individuals stood at 7.2 million in July. Black workers continued to face a disproportionately high unemployment rate at 7.2 percent—nearly double the rate for white workers, which remained at 3.7 percent. Hispanic workers saw a jobless rate of 5.0 percent, while Asian workers had a jobless rate of 3.9 percent.

Teenagers experienced the highest unemployment rate of any group at 15.2 percent, while adult men and women reported 4.0 percent and 3.7 percent unemployment, respectively. The labor force participation rate remained at 62.2 percent, continuing a year-long decline of 0.5 percentage points. The employ-

ment-population ratio also changed little, standing at 59.6 percent, down 0.4 percentage points over the past year.

The number of people unemployed for 27 weeks or longer rose to 1.8 million in July, an increase of 179,000, and now accounts for nearly one-quarter of all unemployed individuals. Meanwhile, the number of new entrants to the labor market—those looking for their first job—rose by 275,000 to 985,000. Wage growth continued modestly. Average hourly earnings for all private-sector non-farm employees increased by 12 cents to \$36.44, marking a 3.9 percent increase over the past

12 months. Production and nonsupervisory workers saw average hourly wages rise by 8 cents to \$31.34.

Job gains were most notable in the health care sector, which added 55,000 positions, including 34,000 in ambulatory services and 16,000 in hospitals. Social assistance added 18,000 jobs, primarily driven by a 21,000 increase in individual and family services. But nearly all other major industries—including manufacturing, construction, retail, professional services, and transportation—saw little to no job growth.

The average workweek for all employees edged up slightly to 34.3 hours. For production and non-

supervisory workers, the workweek increased to 33.7 hours. Revisions to previous reports revealed a much weaker job market than initially reported. The May payroll number was revised down by 125,000 to 19,000 jobs, and June's total was lowered by 133,000 to just 14,000. Combined, these adjustments wiped out 258,000 jobs from prior estimates. The BLS noted that employees on paid leave or receiving ongoing severance are still counted as employed in their surveys.

The following employment report, covering August 2025, is scheduled for release on Friday, September 5.

SKILLS, from Page 11

say they would advise high school graduates to pursue a vocational or trade school path over a traditional four-year college. Only 36% of Gen Z would recommend college over trades. That figure rises steadily with age, with 41% of Boomers backing trade school routes for graduating seniors.

Corporate America is also being called to act. Nine in ten Americans said

they have a more favorable opinion of companies that support skilled trades. That sentiment is strong across age groups, political identities, and racial demographics. Respondents said companies should offer hands-on school programs, paid internships, scholarships, and mentorship opportunities.

“Skilled labor shortages are not theoretical—they’re

disrupting industries today,” the report stated. “Corporate America has a clear mandate. Support the trades not just as a philanthropic gesture, but as a strategic investment.”

The poll suggests that employers who step in to fund scholarships, partner with schools, or provide training and apprenticeships can not only build brand loyalty but also ensure a more stable future workforce.

“There’s a myth that the trades are for people who couldn’t succeed else-

where,” said Salomon. “That myth needs to die. These are skilled, in-de-

mand careers that require intelligence, adaptability, and resilience.”

CHARLAMAGNE, from Page 2

only after public outrage.

Around the same time, Trump issued an executive order targeting the National Museum of African American History and Culture as “divisive,” prompting director Kevin Young’s resignation.

He also created the 1776 Commission, an effort to push “patriotic education” that whitewashed

America’s legacy of slavery and racism. The move was a direct attack on initiatives like The 1619 Project, which Trump called “toxic propaganda.”

Historians say the goal is clear: to rewrite and sanitize history. “It seems like we’re headed in the direction where there’s even an attempt to deny that the institution of slavery even

existed,” one historian told POLITICO regarding Trump’s order targeting the Smithsonian’s African American museum.

Trump’s racially charged behavior isn’t new. In 1973, he was sued by the U.S. Department of Justice for discriminating against Black renters. During the investigation, Trump allegedly told a DOJ attorney, “You know, you don’t want to live with them either.”

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DOJ, from Page 5

That may explain why Trump continues to float extra-constitutional schemes. Despite the 22nd Amendment's two-term limit, Trump told NBC News in March he was "not joking" about seeking a third term. "There are methods which you could do it," he said, pointing to Vice President JD Vance potentially running and handing the presidency back to him. His allies are on board. Rep. Andy Ogles has introduced legislation to remove presiden-

tial term limits. Steve Bannon predicted Trump "will run and win again in 2028." And the White House posted a meme of Trump wearing a crown with the caption "LONG LIVE THE KING."

Trump's obsession with Obama has always been racial and personal. He launched his political career by pushing the false "birther" conspiracy. According to his former fixer, Michael Cohen, Trump's hatred is "purely racial... solely predicated on the

fact that Barack Obama is Black." He once paid an Obama impersonator to mock and fire him on video, Cohen stated earlier. Now, with the power of the presidency behind him and a legal system twisted to serve his ambitions, Trump appears ready to do what dictators do: jail his predecessor.

Obama has never indicated any interest in running again. But with Trump trying to imprison him, and a poll showing the public still firmly in Obama's corner, the former president may

face a future where running isn't about returning to power—it's about protecting himself from a political predator who believes he's above the law. "He's not running to help the country," former Republican Rep. Will Hurd said of Trump in 2024. "He's running for president to stay out of prison". And if Trump can run to avoid prison, Obama may have to run to avoid being put in one. "These claims are outrageous," Obama's spokesperson said. "And a weak attempt at distraction."

TEXAS, from Page 1

further on Monday, initiating a lawsuit to remove Houston Representative Gene Wu, the Democrat Abbott calls the "ringleader" of the defection from his seat in the Texas state legislature.

"I made clear in a formal statement on Sunday, August 3, that if the Texas House Democrats were not in attendance when the House reconvened at 3:00 PM on Monday, August 4, then action would be taken to seek their removal," said Abbott. "They have not returned and have not met the quorum requirements. Representative Wu and the other Texas House Demo-

crats have shown a willful refusal to return, and their absence for an indefinite period of time deprives the House of the quorum needed to meet and conduct business on behalf of Texans. Texas House Democrats abandoned their duty to Texans, and there must be consequences."

The decision moves to the Texas Supreme Court, and it is uncertain whether or not such a move by the governor will be successful. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton has said that it is his office that should be the source of a petition to remove absent Democrats from their seat, and is seek-

ing to widen the target to include others who have left the state.

For his part, Wu is defiant against these moves to remove him from office.

"This office does not belong to Greg Abbott, and it does not belong to me. It belongs to the people of House District 137, who elected me," Wu said in a statement. "I took an oath to the constitution, not a politician's agenda, and I will not be the one to break that oath."

"Let me be unequivocal about my actions and my duty. When a governor conspires with a disgraced president to ram through a racist gerrymandered map, my constitutional duty is to

not be a willing participant. When that governor holds disaster relief for 137 dead Texans and their families hostage, my moral duty is to sound the alarm — by any means necessary."

"Denying the governor a quorum was not an abandonment of my office; it was a fulfillment of my oath. Unable to defend his corrupt agenda on its merits, Greg Abbott now desperately seeks to silence my dissent by removing a duly-elected official from office."

"History will judge this moment. It will show a Governor who used the law as a weapon to silence his people, and it will show those of us who stood for a higher principle."

CHUCK D, from Page 10

2015, 2016, and 2017. They were farmed to cause division," he stated. "You got people following something that might not have even existed as a person."

Chuck added that the new album addresses the need to teach hip-hop's real cultural roots. "Hip hop 2025 is still the term for young Black creativity," he

remarked.

"But it has to be kind of taken back, retaught, because it's part of a 50-year culture." "If hip hop were an Olympics," he said, "I'm not totally sure that we'd come away with the gold in the United States." Black Sky Over the Projects: Apartment 2025 was produced by Chuck, Flavor

Flav, Lorrie "The LBX" Boula, and Rhiannon Rae Ellis. It features a mix of boom bap, protest funk, and political commentary. Chuck also shared his connection to baseball legend Dave Parker, who recently died before his Hall of Fame induction ceremony.

"Dave Parker was one of those figures in the 70s, as me as a teenager, that I flocked to, because he was

just more than playing on the field," Chuck said. "He said from one idol to another," referencing a signed book Parker gave him.

He urged fans not to disengage. "Sense is not common, especially not in the United States. It's common nonsense," he said. "If you're not listening, you're not comprehending. And if you're not comprehending, you're going to get got."



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I Had A Thought But I Can't Remember It

By Dr. James L. Snyder

I just celebrated another birthday. I never imagined I would get this old, but here I am, old and still breathing.

Reflecting on my birthday celebration, I looked back on my life and realized I've been so busy, I've not had much chance to think. I know most people believe thinking is an essential part of life. I guess it is, but it has never been an essential part of my life.

Instead of thinking, I have just responded to life issues spontaneously. I'm a rather spontaneous type of person, just ask The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. Life gets so busy for me that I cannot take a day off to have a thought.

In high school, I wasn't a very good thinker. I cannot remember one test I passed with an A, even though I studied for those tests. While I was taking them, I couldn't turn on my Thinking Machine.

The fact that I graduated from high school is as close to a miracle as I've ever seen. And the truth is, I didn't do so by thinking at all.

I'm sure back then I had some kind of a thought, but I just can't remember any now.

It wasn't until I met The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage that I began to understand what thinking was all about. If I've ever known anybody to think, it certainly was her. She could think about everything.

There are times when to-

gether she would look at me and say, "So, what are you thinking?"

When she first asked me that, I didn't quite understand what the question was; therefore, I did not know how to respond. I eventually figured it out and would respond by saying, "I was just thinking about how nice you look today."

That always got a giggle from her and saved me from trying to figure out what I was really thinking.

I suppose most people would believe that thinking is a major part of their lives. I'm not sure why, because it has never been a major part of my life. Once I got out of high school, thinking was never part of my agenda.

Life has its ups and downs, and looking back, I'm not sure which were up and which were down. The only thing important is that I survived, and here I am today, no thought about it.

I got into a little bit of trouble the other day. We were sitting in the living room, and The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage said, "You know, I've been thinking..."

Being the advanced knucklehead that I am, I responded before she could finish her sentence by saying, "... with what?"

I don't have to explain that I was in trouble. That's just the way my life tumbles down the cowboy trail. Believe me, I try not to respond like that anymore. At least I try.

Now that I'm retired, I do

not have to think. Thinking is just a waste of time because I know what I want to do every day. My pleasure is not based on my ability to think through something. I have discovered that thinking causes a great deal of trouble and pain. So, I leave the thinking to those who aren't too bright.

Years ago, I was informed that I need to think about my retirement. What's there to think? It comes automatically whether you keep track of your age or not. Just let life flow as God intended it to.

I have some family members, who shall remain anonymous, who spend a lot of time thinking. As I watched them over the years, I noticed that their thinking has not produced anything worth thinking about. But still, they think, and think, and think until they are completely worn out.

Maybe that's why I'm not "wore out." I just live every day as it should be lived.

Someone once asked me, "If you could change anything in your past what would it be?"

That's a rather silly question if you ask me. To do that, I would have to spend quality time thinking which I don't have the time to do these days. I don't want to change yesterday; I just want to live today.

Of course, if I could change anything in the past, it might be the year of my birth. I've never forgiven my parents for the year I

was born. They could've waited another 20 years, but they didn't. I guess they weren't thinking.

I suppose if I were to give it any thought, and I'm not going to, I could make a list of all the things I would change. But what good would that do? I don't want to change my past; I just want to live for today.

I remembered what the Apostle Paul said along this line.

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, 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).

Thinking is good, but only if thinking on the right things. That is the challenge set before me. If I think on the wrong things it will effect my life as Christian. The world would have me think on the wrong things which in effect, pulls me

away from God.

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A Young Man and a Brick



Sister Tarpley
NDG Religion Editor

A young and successful executive was traveling down a neighborhood street, going a bit too fast in his new Jaguar.

He was watching for kids darting out from between parked cars and slowed down when he thought he saw something. As his car passed a certain spot, no children appeared. Instead, a brick smashed into the Jag's side door!

The now angry, young and successful executive

then jumped out of his car, grabbed the nearest kid and pushed him up against a parked car shouting, "What was that all about and who are you? Just what in the heck are you doing?"

The young boy was very apologetic. "Please, mister—please, I'm sorry but I didn't know what else to do," He pleaded.

"I threw the brick because no one else would stop!" With tears dripping down his face and off his chin, the youth pointed to a place just around a parked car. "It's my brother," he said. "He rolled off the curb and fell out of his wheelchair and I can't lift him up."

Now sobbing, the young lad asked the stunned ex-

ecutive, "Would you please help me get him back into his wheelchair?"

Moved beyond words, the young and successful executive tried to swallow the rapidly swelling lump in his throat; he hurriedly lifted the handicapped boy back into the wheelchair, then he took out a linen handkerchief and dabbed at the fresh scrapes and cuts on the boy.

A quick look told the young successful executive that everything was going to be okay.

"Thank you mister and may God bless you," the grateful child told the stranger.

Too shook up for words, the young man simply watched the lad push his

wheelchair-bound brother down the sidewalk toward their home.

It was a long, and very slow walk back to the new Jaguar. The damage was very noticeable, but the driver never bothered to repair the dented side door.

He kept the dent there to remind him of this message: Don't go through life so fast that someone has to throw a brick at you to get your attention!"


God uses many ways to get our attention, He whispers in our souls and speaks

to our hearts. Sometimes when we don't have time to listen, God may have to throw a brick at us. It's our choice to listen or not.

(Editor's Note: This column originally ran in August 2014. It has been edited for space.)

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NDG Bookshelf: 'Talk to Me Nice' is good for business

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

Raise? What raise?

Your employees have been hinting for a few weeks now that they'd like a little more in their paycheck and you can surely understand their wishes. You also wish they'd understand that now's not the time for it. And so, you avoid all conversations about money and hope there's no turnover because you can't afford that, either but read "Talk to Me Nice" by Minda Harts, and you'll know what to say and how to say it.

Five years ago, Minda Harts had what was, to



her, a dream job. She was basically autonomous, the only East Coast employee of a West Coast firm, taking care of her job and any clients who might visit the Big Apple. Harts knew she

was trusted; her employers wholeheartedly indicated it, but they didn't tell her much else and when she asked to take her career to the next level with better wages or a promotion, they gave her a big fat sort-of-maybe.

She was only looking for what she felt she was due. They glossed over her concerns.

And she turned in her resignation.

So if you can't pony up more moola or a corner office, what can you offer?

Trust, says Harts. Pure and simple, employees want trust. And the way to gain their trust is to use "the seven workplace trust lan-

guages."

Especially if you've got Black or LGBTQ employees, they want your sensitivity to the unique issues they face at work. In good times and bad, speaking to them with as much transparency as possible goes a long way. Security helps your employees feel safe on the job, both physically and mentally. Act, don't just talk, to demonstrate your words. Be willing to give positive and kindly negative feedback on a regular basis. Offer acknowledgment for a job well-done, a work-iversary, or for a hard task completed. Finally, follow through to make

sure your employees can feel confident that you're on this.

And then, says Harts, "watch trust grow!"

This should feel pretty commonsensical, shouldn't it? Yes, but author Minda Harts suggests in a huge way that it's not, and that businesses from the top down need to relearn how to put trust back into the workplace. In "Talk to Me Nice," she explains how.

Never mind the kerfuffle about DEI, the fact is that today's workplaces can still be quite diverse and that plays big in this book as Harts shows why trust is key for happy employ-

ees and for healthy retention, and how it matters in every kind of workplace. Though her stories are a bit scattershot, they're all-encompassing and she uses real-life examples to show trust-making in action and what happens if it's lacking. That can be helpful and cautionary, both, and the relevance built into those tales is something readers will greatly appreciate.

This is an excellent book for C-Suiters, managers, and supervisors all, but it's also a good book for an up-and-coming company star. Read "Talk to Me Nice" and get ready to raise the roof.

STROKE, from Page 4

mation, straight from the world's leading experts in brain health. Follow Brain & Life® on Facebook, X, and Instagram.

The American Academy of Neurology is the leading voice in brain health. As the world's largest association of neurologists and neuro-

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FILM, from Page 9

the victim's sultry sister Beth (Pamela Anderson), who thinks there's been foul play.

The plotting by Dan Gregor (Chip 'n Dale: Rescue Rangers), Doug Mand (Chip 'n Dale: Rescue Rangers) and writer/director Akiva Shaffer (Chip 'n Dale: Rescue Rangers and TV's Saturday Night Live) is serviceable. As if they were tasked with reviving a famously funny comedy franchise and given only one weekend to write it. Their recipe? String together satiric pop culture sketches and bits, showcase physical pranks, go heavy on sight-gag humor and then stir. For a while what's on view is funny to watch.

But somewhere, sometime, it all runs out of gas. Like there weren't enough comedy bullets in the chamber.

The storyline, thin as it is, involves bad guys doing bad things and Frank trying to unravel a mystery. In some cases, that alone would surely be enough to satisfy audiences who show up at theaters looking for a good laugh. But in this case, a bit more of thought-out script and wittier schtick would have helped this 85-minute film feel like every second had a comic purpose. Which isn't the case.

The dialogue is never as funny as the visuals, it lags. When Frank interrogates one of the bank rob-

bers, as played by Busta Rhymes, whose timing is impeccable, the film gets its funniest lines. Frank brings up the crook's history and his past incarceration: "It says you served 20 years for man's laughter." Without breaking his face, Rhymes corrects him, "You mean manslaughter." It's the film's most hilarious exchange and deftly shows how stupid Frank is. Wish there were more scenes of this caliber.

Many will debate which visual prank is best. But easily the most memorable image is Neeson with his leg up on a chair, manspreading and showing his strawberry print bikini underwear. The crotch shot and short plaid skirt are parody homages to Ortega on the streaming

show Wednesday. Funny in itself. Funnier still if you know the correlation. Long after all the senseless fights, torn limbs and endless passing of coffee cups. Long after the faux heat sensor sequence that looks like folks are having sex, noisy fart scenes and views of OJ Simpson photos, that Neeson vision will linger. It's hard to unsee it. Seek psychological help if you must!

Neeson took a risk playing this loser. Safe to say he's pretty good at it and it looks like he's having fun. Anderson is fine as the woman of mystery, but you almost wish there was more to her character. A dimension that would make the plot a bit deeper. Paul Walter Hauser (Black Bird) as Frank's cherub-looking

sidekick plays him well. Danny Huston sneers well as the bad guy and Liza Koshy is quite helpful as Detective Barns.

The production design (Bill Brzeski) and all sets are more suitable for TV than the cinema. Ditto the costumes (Betsy Heimann and Maria Tortu) and blaring lighting (cinematographer Brandon Trost), which makes everything look fake. The musical score (Lorne Balfe) doesn't enhance much. Perhaps a catchy playlist of today's top music awkwardly placed to make things feel more absurd might have been a better tact. Editor Brian Scott Olds had a tough task. The script, as is, doesn't warrant an 85-minute length. But if the footage was any

shorter, it wouldn't be fit for a theater run. And if it was any longer, it would only make the film's flaws more obvious. He did the best he could with what he had.

Better writing may have helped this OK satire become a really good one. Something closer to the feel of the original film, but likely never in the league of superior parodies, like Airplane.

If filmgoers are looking for laugh-your-guts-out comedy, they will find some of that here. But since the humor is not consistent and sustained, it's like The Naked Gun is shooting blanks. Not all the time. But some of the time.

Visit Film Critic Dwight Brown at DwightBrownInk.com.