

Schatzi's Design Gallery & Day Spa, LLC

Au Naturel

Summer (June-August) 2018

A Summer of Discovery



Personal and Salon Updates

It's been a while since my last newsletter update. I don't usually take so long to write; but, life has been very engaging. One of the four projects that I manage in West Africa has been having some serious challenges so I had to go to Senegal unexpectedly in July. I was there for three weeks. The trip made for some wonderful hair salon banter with clients however. The photo to the right was taken at the Radisson Blu along with some of my work colleagues, all working on different projects. The photo to the left was the view from my hotel room. Image looking out of your window, seeing this view and thinking "Wow, I'm ready to go home!" That's where things were for me after three weeks. It was three weeks of intensity!! But, we *got 'er done*, and that's what they pay me for. So, it's all good. Outside of foreign travels, I've traveled to DC and New Jersey for recreational purposes. It's hard to believe that it's been a whole year since I was in Egypt. It was towards the end of our trip there that the trials of Charlottesville, Virginia took place. So much has happened since then. But then, the more things change, the more they stay the same. Race, justice and evolution are recurring themes in this issue.

Within the salon, LaRhonda, Hadiyah and Mikea have been covering for me. I honestly have been incognito, though I'm as devoted as ever to my regular clients. But on the marketing end, our website has been updated. Because I loved the design of the last website so much, I kept the same theme and flow for the new site. I hope you enjoy navigating it. Likewise, Au Naturel newsletter's 4th edition is live on the site. Please feel free to share it with friends and family. Embrace the beauty of you.

The Cutting Edge and Cutting Edges

From my recent travels to Africa, as well as my experience living in the Caribbean some years ago, I have come to realize that African-Americans set the pace for hair, fashion and image throughout the world. What we do, others copy. The negative effects of that emulation is that in Senegal, women are practically addicted to wigs and hair weaves. When I see some AA television shows, I understand where the strong influence comes from. But, it's honestly disappointing. Senegal is the Paris of West Africa--the women dress EVERYDAY!!! But when I see so many of them wearing three foot long wigs as the crowning glory of their ensemble, I feel a bit sad. I wonder what type of psychological conclusions would be drawn from a visit to Europe wherein 80% of the women were wearing Afro wigs. People would think that there was something absolutely absurd going on within that society. That's how I feel when I visit

Senegal. Yes, many women are Muslim and therefore wear their hair covered. And others wear braids or cornrows, usually with extensions like in the photo. *The artist here has some real skills!* And an even smaller number wear their own hair; but, the standard is a wig for hair worn loosely. And often when the hair is covered, it's a weave that is being covered! I've even wondered if women wear wigs as a proxy for covering their hair consistent with the Muslim faith. But, this is not the case.



In fact, I was so concerned about it that I asked a coworker about it, one day. She said,

"It's so bad that if you line up 10 women in a room, they will all be wearing a wig. These same women look at me with my natural hair and look down on me because they think

I'm not trying. It's gotten to the point that even girls in school are now wearing weaves and wigs. They are starting them as early as 16."

It's cause for concern; because, weaves are known to erase a woman's edges and leave her with serious alopecia problems along her hairline. If women are introducing their young daughters to hair weaves, the scenario does not bode well for their long-term hair health. I feel like the 80s adornment of relaxed hair is repeating itself in West Africa with the same negative psychological effects! While it's true that the weave trend first emerged in the US, in Senegal, it has been perfected. I think it would definitely make an interesting research exercise to analyze the behavioral and psychological dynamics of it all. I wonder how these women engage with their men: Can he touch her hair? Do they just take the wig off before going to bed or do they sleep in it? What about during a night of intimacy? Does he feel proud of his woman because her wig is expensive and looks natural? How does she feel about the hair that she's hiding underneath the wig? It makes me feel like I need to translate my book to French and distribute it WIDELY!! I just really don't have the time for that. But if it's my destiny, I know the Spirit will lead me to it.

I do see natural styles in Senegal, though they are few and far between. But, I have faith in destiny. In the end, I don't worry about it as I know that this trend is temporary and will end. They will re-awaken to the beauty of natural hair in the same way as African-American women have been doing here in the US. In the same way that they have followed African-American women to the wig shop, they will follow us to the naturalista aisle in the supermarket. Truth crushed to the ground will rise again. Change will come. And when it does, I for one will cheer loudly and say "Thank you God!"

An Entertainment Break: Films to Watch

The weekend of August 17th was a film week-end for us. Our new hang-out is the [Alamo Drafthouse](#) on New Bern Ave! If you're a long-time resident of Raleigh, it's located where the old Winn-Dixie used to be on New Bern Ave. between Wake Med hospital and Raleigh Blvd. In the 1980s, my great grandmother Nellie Dobson and my great Aunt Viola Murray used to shop at the grocery store every week. It went out of business well over fifteen years ago and has sat empty ever since. Now, my husband and I go there, order a beer (he does), walk into one of 10+ movie theaters, relax in the recliner seats, review the generous menu which includes vegetarian fare, milk shakes and hard liquor, order our food and have it delivered to us while we enjoy the creative movie previews and our feature presentation. It's like being in your living room with room service and a whole bunch of company! I love it! So on Friday, I suggested [BlacKkKlansman](#). Lloyd was down; so, we went. But, it was sold out for the 7pm show. We DON'T go to 9pm shows. We DO want to see the movie we pay for. And if the movie starts after 9pm, we risk having it seen only by our eyelids. The perils of aging. In fact, my husband got a senior citizens discount for the first time in his life for being at least 55. (Shhhh! He was NOT amused!) I didn't want to tell him we got the discount. The cashier was rather entertained

by it all. I said: "I hope you're as amused when your time comes." So, we bought tickets to "Sorry to bother you." I saw a Black cast and said, "Okay, we can support another Black film." But, we were an hour early to this film. So, Lloyd ordered a beer, and we settled into the lobby to chill and relax.

Then a sister named Rose that works at the Alamo came up to me to see if I was being served. I said I was. And she began talking to me like she'd known me my whole life. She was pleasant and VERY FUNNY!! I then asked her what she thought of "Sorry to bother you." She said, "It's good. [Three Identical Strangers](#) is better." I said "REALLY?!" She said, "Well, let's look at the movie poster. I followed her to the poster and saw: "Winner Chicago Film Critics Award! Winner Sundance Film Festival Award! Winner Berkshire International Film Festival Award!" I was sold. I told her as much and she gave me more tips about the theater, how to use the Alamo Drafthouse app, etc. Then, she hugged me like an old friend, and I made a beeline to the cashier to change my ticket. I felt sure I had made the best choice. I just met this sister; but, I trusted her. And she was right. Lloyd and I watched *BlacKkKlansman* the very next day. And I can honestly say "Three Identical Strangers" is a better story. And it's 100% true!! *BlacKkKlansman* is also a true story that is greatly embellished.

Three Identical Strangers is a story of human intervention and abuse of power at a time when the parameters of judgment were greatly blurred, much like the Henrietta Lacks style of interference. As a researcher, and I honestly have to confess that I think much more like a researcher now than I did 10 years ago, I was riveted!! I could predict where the story was going; and so, it was rather interesting to have my quick suppositions confirmed. But the story was anything BUT funny! I won't ruin it for you. It's better to know as little as possible going in...as I did. Suffice it to say that even at the end of the story, you are left with the full knowledge that the story has only scratched the surface of discovery. I encourage all to watch it. You will be amazed.

BlacKkKlansman, which we watched the next day, was an important commentary on the state of justice, political life and race relations in America. Denzel Washington's son John David was convincing and entertaining. He looks nothing like his Dad but sounds just like him. I learned from a recent NPR interview that while the story is based on true facts, there is a lot of embellishment to make the story entertaining. Spike Lee and Jordan Peele succeeded in creating a powerful, sometimes comical, always provocative social commentary. It ended with very powerful images of Charlottesville, August 2017. The theater was dead silent during these scenes. I've been known to say that UVA has done a wonderful job of recasting the negative light of this event away from the University and onto Charlottesville. But, I spent seven years of my life there. What happened there is no anomaly. My husband believed that race was all but gone in America. And then, he came to Charlottesville. After one year there, he was having some real problems accepting what he was observing. UVA AA students protested racial injustice during the playing of the National Anthem right there in Charlottesville as early as 1984--the year I arrived, though I'm sure the dissent began long before I arrived. The new

African-American mayor of Charlottesville spoke outwardly to the true nature of the city. [Her NPR interview is quite informative](#) for those interested. In all, the two films that we watched spoke more about human nature than perhaps any other films in the theater right now. They are provocative and speak to the realities of the American legacy for the weak and powerless.

Playing the Trump Card

All my life, I've heard that you shouldn't discuss politics and religion to maintain peaceful dialogue among peers. I've mostly known how to navigate the waters of dissent to avoid major fallouts with friends. But, August 4th was the exception. On the weekend of August 3rd, I traveled with my husband to New Jersey to visit his best friend. They've known each other since they started basic school 50 years ago! He was looking forward to the trip. Within 24 hours, we were on the road heading back home. The details of the altercation are so ironic yet serendipitous that a client told me that I should turn the entire encounter into a short story. We'll see...

Suffice it to say that by 11:30pm on Saturday, August 4th, I was text messaging my husband in the front seat on the passenger side of their car to state that our visit was now officially over. I was texting him because I had been most unceremoniously told to shut the f&@# up!! Not in those words exactly; but, in deed. In quick summary, I found the entire affair heartbreaking because I know how much the friendship means to my husband. We had all been enjoying the evening greatly! We ate at a Soul Food restaurant and departed for round 2 of the night's activities. We went to Atlantic City. Our host asked if I had ever been to Vegas. Now, I didn't have the heart to tell him that I have no desire to go to Vegas for one very simple reason: It's called Sin City. In general, I don't like casinos. A large part of the reason that I'm averse to casinos is the energy therein. People lose their fortunes and their lives in casinos. They are storehouses of pain and grief. My brother went to Vegas one time in his life and said he would never go back. He could feel the desperation. Management loads you up on booze while they fleece you of every cent you're willing to give them. Some don't know how to say no. And the casinos could care less. But, I played the slots and focused solely on amusement. It's not that deep, right? Yet as I pulled the handle on one of the slot machines, I couldn't help but wonder what kind of energy is in this place... Almost



immediately after leaving the casino, the friend's wife said the name *Trump*, and pandemonium struck.

Firstly, I must confess that everyone in the car was Jamaican except for myself. Secondly, everyone was opposed to Trump's policies. So, with us all having a similar cultural orientation, what ensued thereafter really did not make sense. But, it happened. My husband and I admitted that we did not vote for Hillary Clinton (we were Bernie Sanders supporters) but likewise did not vote for Donald Trump. Well, you would have thought that we personally were responsible for Trump being in office. It didn't matter that Hillary won the majority of the votes and STILL did not win the White House. It did not matter that we expressed concerns about how Hillary used political influence to subvert Sanders' nomination. It did not matter that we casted a vote for every other political seat up for contention on the ballot. You would have thought that we had 20/20 vision and could have predicted every negative policy that has been instituted since the 18+ months that Trump has been in office and intentionally withheld our vote from Hillary to spite the world. Things got ugly. At one point, all four people in the car were speaking loudly at the same time trying to make their point. I recall looking at the car to my right and thinking, "Wow! It's peaceful in there. What is going on here? This is crazy!" And then, someone posed another question to me, and I was back in the fray with everyone else. Eventually, my friend's wife said unapologetically, "I'm so over this!! I don't want to hear another word she has to say. Baby, turn up the music so that I don't have to hear her voice! I can't stand it!" And he complied. When he turned down the speakers to avoid blowing out his speakers (because he turned the music up THAT LOUDLY), I decided to apologize. I didn't think I had said anything to offend anyone; but, I noted that despite the fact that my husband and I both had the same argument and were saying the exact same thing, all of his wife's venom was squarely directed at me. I found it amusing that she chose the easy target, as she was wise enough NOT to toy with a 50-year relationship. But, it was hurt as we always get along so well. When I attempted to apologize, she said "Oh MY GOD!! She's still talking! Turn up the music! Drown her out, Baby! I can't stand it!" And he complied. So, I started texting my husband in the front seat and silently prayed for the strength to endure the journey from Atlantic City to their home approximately 45 minutes away. It was one of the longest rides of my life. Since reaching adulthood, I have never felt so humiliated. It was crazy!! But, I consciously chose not to put on my crazy hat and match the energy that was coming at me. I endured the disgrace in a silent way. It was one of the hardest things I've done in a long while. When we got to their home and I announced to my husband that I was not staying the night, he said, "Really? It's not the serious, and I'm not going anywhere tonight. It's too late." Suddenly, something rose up inside of me that demanded immediate release. I now was in a battle with myself to suppress this energy, as I was determined to avoid an argument in their home. I don't know what I looked like; but, when my husband saw my face, he said, "I'm going to get (his friend)." And he quickly left the room. The friend came and apologized for the entire affair and asked me to stay. I acknowledged my willingness to forget the whole affair; but, I said, "Your wife does not feel the way you do. She wants me gone and I will never make a woman

uncomfortable in her own home.” He said, “Okay, let’s see.” And he left to talk with her. When he reappeared, his words to me were, “I know why you’re leaving, and I don’t blame you.” We stayed the night at a hotel.

The next day as we were driving home, my mother called. Mothers have a sixth sense. She asked how things were and I filled her in. She then said, “I have a friend who stopped talking to me for four months over a discussion about *Trump*.” She couldn’t believe that her friend was so angry. I wondered how widespread this phenomenon is. Then on August 19th, I watched a women’s focus group discussion on a news program in which some of the interviewees were Trump supporters and others were Democratic. When one of the Black women realized that the White woman that she has been speaking with prior to the formal interview was a Trump supporter, she almost started to cry. She appeared deeply wounded. At that moment, I realized that Americans have a lot of healing to do. Many of us are broken people. And broken people can have a hard time facing truth. What do I mean? I mean I know America’s history, and I know the views of White supremacists. I know what they think, and I know why. And I know that their reasoning is irrational. But, it is their view and they are entitled to it. I don’t agree, and I won’t condemn them for voting their interests. If they see me as a threat, they choose to see the world from a deficit vantage point. They are on the [wrong side of history](#) and the inevitable demise of their viewpoint must be a bitter pill to swallow. I can do nothing about their denial of the inevitable. Yet when Black youth are shot in the street, I disengage from social media to suppress Ma Barker whose nature lives inside of me as well as many of us. Did I ever say that the black panther is my animal spirit? There’s a reason. When overt injustice reigns, I have to work to maintain inner peace and ensure that negative energy does not reign over my true nature. It’s why I generally don’t watch the news. Spirit advised me long ago to disengage from negative energy, and the evening news is often that. What I appreciate about Trump being president however is that the veil which has covered the mask of tolerance for so long has been lifted. And the face that shows is a horrible grimace. Obviously, God thought it was time to have some of the hard conversations. But know that because someone differs in their opinions, it does not necessarily mean that they hate you. Most likely, it means that they are afraid. Afraid people are broken people. And White people in America are as broken as Black people. It is ultimately Spirit who has chosen to play the Trump card. And when the *Trump* card is played, the game changes drastically and old rules no longer apply. That is the world we live in, like it or not. But, I don’t think Spirit intends to lose. So as time unfolds, let us pray for a pathway forward that can bridge the divide that has held this nation back from **true greatness** since its inception.