

Subtitle

Fall 2025

Content

This newsletter is primarily a reflection. It was published on my 58th birthday. I had intended to provide more content but alas... the best laid plans of mice and men. I began this publication in early October and decided that it would be published on Oct. 29th without fail. So, it is short and sweet.

Embrace the beauty of you.

Au Naturel

Personal and Salon Updates

It's fair to say that I've been a bit incog-negro of late. I haven't been feeling writing. I've been too engrossed in the continuing saga that is "Democracy Lost: Tales of a Dying Empire." As I reflected on what article I would write for this blog, I thought of how crazy the past few months have been. Within UNC, we passed through the months of August-September with bated breath waiting for our grant authorization notice (GAN) to be received. With the cuts in the Department of Education (DOE), NOTHING is a guarantee, even though we technically have two more years on our cooperative agreement. The notification was received on Sept. 22nd with only one week to spare before we would all be sent home. That notice was definitely a welcome sight! But in early October, we received notification that our DOE project officer has been laid off due to the government shutdown and funding authorization NOT being completed in the manner and timeframe that the GOP has demanded. With this added uncertainty, it is clear that staff morale and government efficiency (for those who remain) is not the highest priority. We regularly encourage each other to press on in the face of so much volatility and inconsistency. It's truly hard to process how quickly a society can take a turn into authoritarianism. Growing up, I was always fascinated by how the atrocities of WWII could come about in a modern era. I have looked out for the signs and "kept my ear to the ground" in an effort to understand. Now, I know viscerally. Meantime as the government is still shutdown, the recessed Congressmen are receiving salaries along with the police state, and air traffic controllers and TSA workers press on with no remuneration.

I think I have become a sucker for punishment, because I listen to C-Span Radio daily. I have grown weary of mainstream media sharing the news AFTER placing their characteristic spin on the story. If you listen to the events live while they are happening, the spin is glaringly obvious and rather disturbing. The downside is that I get to listen to events as they unfold in real time! The political gaslighting and one-upmanship is absolute madness! I re-enacted key talking points from a congressional hearing that I recently heard and had my mother cracking up from the sheer madness of it all. And we dare to call ourselves the leaders of the free world. You live here. I won't bore you with all the spaces and places my head has been of late. But, I am sharing that I am coming to realize that the corruption and decay within the world is even deeper and more sinister than I could fathom. The genocide of indigenous peoples and slavery in America were real and evil. We know that. But, how are we in a modern age justifying the murder of civilian women and children to prop up a colonial apartheid state in which the victims are marketed as the aggressors while they are compelled to serve as the captured slaves of the oppressor in perpetuity? Are we not reliving the

past today? As the descendant of formerly enslaved people and victims of genocide, I cannot NOT see this! At the same time, I have descended from indentured servants from Scotland, possibly Ireland, if not other lands. Well, the [KKK was born out of Scottish tradition](#). The complexity of American history is written in the very DNA of so many of us. But within the salon, I see the pause and fear in people when I speak on the madness. I sometimes hear: "Well, those are God's people!" What?! If those actions are the actions of god's people, I reject that God! That is NOT my god! PERIOD!! God's people are the people who practice their faith, honor God and follow His commandments. [Anyone else is an imposter: a truth which a faith leader has helped me to understand](#). When I experienced a spiritual awakening in 2014, I was told that the Bible is written precisely as it is for a reason: The heart of the follower will be revealed by the passages of scripture that most resonate with them and which they in turn act upon. My mother puts it this way: "The holy Bible is the whole truth: bad and good. The alpha and the omega. The beginning and the end." The parable of this biblical paradox is found in the wise counsel to "[judge the tree by the fruit it bears](#)." And what resonates most profoundly is the [greatest commandment given by Jesus](#). All else is fluff and stuff: historical context, application, reference. I'm not saying it's not important! I'm saying, if your sanctity of your soul is what you are most concerned about in times of darkness and confusion, stick with those texts and you will know the way to go. Incidentally, did you know that we wrestled TikTok away from China to sell it to a billionaire who will ensure that we are properly programmed in our processing of events happening in the Middle East and other parts of the world? Well, I lived in Iran. I cannot be re-programmed. PERIOD!! I tell people all the time: God wanted me in the world with my eyes WIDE OPEN. My birth parents were/are extraordinary people with unique perspectives on the American story. My life experiences from Tuskegee to Tehran to Fort Monroe to Charlottesville to Jamaica to Raleigh are uniquely different and have consistently given me a glimpse into the underbelly of the beast. We are living in a carefully constructed pit of darkness and the Golden Calf (e.g. stock market) is our god. We



don't even bother to hide the imagery anymore!! And if money can be made off of murder, then murder there shall be.

I can't fully explain how absolutely disgusted I am with the state of the world. It's why I don't write. Because when I do, I say what I feel. And who is even bothering to hear these days. When you counter the culture and the programming, you are simply cast as an outlier and quickly rejected. It's why The Matrix was and will always be my favorite film. I didn't fully understand why that film resonated so deeply with me when I first saw it. But it is truly a masterpiece.

So, how do we maintain hope in an age of darkness? Be the light. I confess that I am not always good at it. I see people's eyes when they don't want to be pulled from the matrix. And who the hell am I to disturb the enjoyment of their illusion? It's cruel in fact to attempt to do so. My aunt used to always say "ignorance is bliss." I never understood that. It took reaching adulthood to understand this truth. Because honestly, [not everyone can handle the truth](#). So, I respect the people who stay in their lane and do the work before them with a pure heart and open mind. The salon is my refuge. It's where I do God's work—quietly, unseen, unknown. I will never change the world. But I intend to be able to account to the Creator for how I spent every day of my life on this earth.

Alopecia Solutions: Crochet Weave

As one season flows magically into another, it's not hard to have years pass before you even realize how life has changed. I used to reflect on how the years passed in my youth. I counted them by how many more years of high school or college I had. Outside of the counting of years, life changes seemed almost undetectable. It was when I had my eldest son that I started to see the difference a day, a week, a month and a year can really make! The growth of a child is truly a miracle to behold. We see the same type of growth in vegetation, animals, etc. But it holds special meaning when it's in the development of a child. We applaud the advancement of time.

Then one day, we look in the mirror and think, who is that and where did my hair go?! I know I'm guilty of having had these thoughts once or twice, especially around my hairline. Androgenic alopecia is hair thinning caused by aging. Men and women experience it. There are treatments available to curb the tide of time, [one of which I wrote about two years back](#). But treatments are expensive and not everyone is interested in making the investment. So, Black women being the innovators that we are, have found a work around. The crochet weave is pretty well known but most use it simply to switch up their look. But, it's also an excellent solution for thinning hair. The photos below provide before and after photos of a crochet weave style. The hair is purchased with looped ends for latch hooking. So, once the foundation is laid, the rest of pretty straightforward. Happy styling!

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Crochet weave photos: Before and after

All Natural (Poem by Lamont Lilly)

I like the kind of hair
that will stand up for its rights
the kind that kicks
screams and protests.
the kind that resists
and boycotts with every coil
the kind that fights
riots and rebels.
the kind that won't
be quiet for nobody.
the kind that won't
be anything but black.
the kind that refuses
to relax.

Embrace the beauty of you.
