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## Beaver celebrates his Golden Jubilee

Carl "Beaver" Henderson is a living, breathing, walking, talking, musical institution.

For half a century Beaver has been a pivotal figure in the local and regional music industry. His penchant for experimentation and innovation has seen him literally warp the sounds of calypso and soca into what we know today.

You have to look no further than Kitchener's first soca album Soca Jean, King Austin's (Austin Lewis) genre defining "Progress", Francis Escayg and Ajala's "White Horse" and Shadow's timeless "Dingolay" to see Beaver's influence on calypso and soca.

Beaver is also the man behind these islands' biggest international reggae hit Marlon Asher's "Ganja Planter" which topped reggae and world music charts the globe over during the mid 2000s.

The venerable musician/music producer curled his lips into a coy smile when asked by the Kitcharee to define his unique sound and global approach to music making.

"I am calypso. I do everything across the board. But at the core of me I am calypso. So, no matter what genre of music, whether I play pop, rock, funk or reggae calypso comes out," Beaver said after inviting the Kitcharee into his St James music studio on Tuesday.

The realisation that he is among the last of the crop of music men and women to emerge during the advent of soca music in the late 1970s into the 1980s has Beaver thinking of his legacy.

The Fireflight band-founder says a recent conversation with childhood friend and long-time collaborator Robin Imamshah spurred him to start putting his knowledge and thought into video recordings for an upcoming podcast project

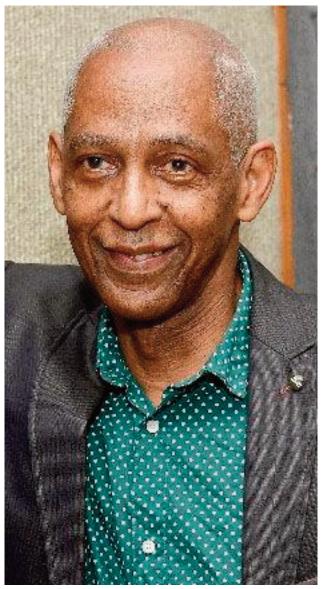
"I am the last man standing. I wasn't really aware until talking with Robin Imamshah,wWe realise, we are the last of the guard from that era. Talking with Robin and a couple other people I started to realise how important it is to accept that role," he added.

Beaver says he included "the five architects of soca" into his documentary project by calling on Pelham Goddard, Arthur Marcial and Michael Boothman to join himself and Imamshah to tell the story of the rise of the genre.

"The only one missing there is Ed Watson because of health reasons, but we are the last of the guard standing. We showed the transition from calypso to soca over a decade. It's going to interest some of the foundation of the industry. The true story that was told. Nobody was prepped. Everybody came and told their story and all the stories lined up," Beaver said.

Beaver will celebrate his Golden Jubliee on the road with Peter Samuel's mas band. The band will have three trucks of live musicians he said including his band, Second Imj and Dil-e-Nadan

"Its fun, fun, fun. Is not even about the business is fun. I can relax myself with no restric-



Carl "Beaver" Henderson

tions, doh have an hour to scramble. We putting on a Vegas-type show with David Rudder, Tony Prescott, Carl and Carol Jacobs and Crazy (Edwin Ayoung)," he revealed about the upcoming project.

Beaver recalled the exact moment when he knew music would be his life mission. He describes it as "a light bulb going off" in his head.

"I was nine years old. Yuh ever hear people say a light bulb go off? I grow up in a house of music and there was almost a ritual when you come from church on a Sunday morning, because the old man was a musician. He was always playing music around us. You come from church and there was a playlist. It started with the Vienna Orchestra and Choir playing 'Handel's Messiah', then it went to a Broadway play like My Fair Lady or Sound of Music or one of them, then went to big band jazz Duke Ellington, Count Bassey, then Ella Fitzgerald and some kind of instrumental jazz.

"I remember someday my old lady telling me, boy go and wash the dishes and I was distracted. I recognised that I was distracted because music fulling my system. I realise at that point in time this is my life, this is what I meant to be and I have to be part of this," he recounted.

His parents weren't initially sold on the idea and initially resisted his requests to learn to play the piano, he recalled.

"In those days for a boy to be asking to go piano lessons yuh parents watching yuh like wha goin on here; something suspect. It used to be kind of you is a mammy's boy if you play piano. If yuh wanna play guitar is one thing and if yuh wanna play pan yuh is a rebel, so they stigmatise you," he revealed.

Owing to his persistence, the Hendersons eventually agreed to send a young Beaver to piano class, but waited a further year before investing in a piano.

"I used to rehearse was on a tabletop, doing my piano exercises. When they realised I was a serious, a year later, they bought the piano and after that there was no turning back," he smiled.

Together with Imanshah he started the band Last Supper while the two were still pupils at St Mary's College, Port of Spain. The musical outfit quickly became the most in-demand band for graduations, school bazaars, weddings and teenaged parties on the island.

"We played everywhere, but we played ten months of the year and took vacation at Carnival time. After a couple years of that I said, but this is Trinidad and we not in Carnival. I wasn't that versed in it although we were playing calypso at the time," he continued.

Determined to master the art of playing calypso music Beaver joined Mano Marcellin's band and became an understudy to the legendary brass man and Frankie Francis.

Less than a year later Beaver found himself at the production helm of the late great Ras Shorty I's (Garfield Blackman) now iconic Om Shanti album. He would go on to break new ground and help to develop a whole new subgenre chutney soca.

There is little to regret over the past 50 years, Beaver maintains. Pausing to digest his own words he added that perhaps if he could change one thing it would be having the music tech toys he now enjoys much sooner in his career saying he feels like "an analogue kid in a digital world".

Beaver says he is genuinely excited to see what the next generation of music producers in T&T can dream up and accomplish. As a man "rebuffed by the generation before" he urges young creatives to ignore the noise and follow the paths the music leads them down.

"When I did Marlon Asher's 'Ganja Farmer' that was one of the biggest walls I bounce up in the music industry. When I was mixing 'Ganja Farmer' I had two of the top programme directors in radio stations in T&T listen to it and the story was 'yeh Beaver it nice yuh know, but...'

"We sent it out internationally and it became a huge hit. By the time Trinidad recognised 'Ganja Farmer' it was a hit on the charts outside there. They didn't even realise it was a local artiste. So with regards to the Trinibad artistes if soca artistes don't wake up they gonna get embarrassed," he concluded.

## Freeloading adult children, tenants and a tough job market

Disclaimer: The content of the Ask Di column is for information purposes only, and the author is not responsible for the actions taken or performed by the reader. No individuals, including those under medical care, should use any of the information provided here to self-diagnose or self-treat any health-related condition. No assurance or warranty regarding the accuracy, timeliness or applicability of the content is given.

Dear Ask Di, thank you for your suggestions and advice. My situation is that I have a son who is 28 who literally does nothing all day but sleep and stay awake like a bat all night. I have tenants renting the basement and he disturbs them when he walks day or night. He will walk heavily and keeps opening the doors, for example, until it truly is disturbing. My problem is that I need that rental income and he just will not listen to anything I say. What should I do? – J.P.

Answer: Dear JP, that you for your kind words. I actually can resonate with you for I was actually a tenant and I can tell you that it was a very tough annoying situation. As a landlord, it is tough, especially in these times and the income does help with the bills. As a tenant, it is even more difficult and disrespectful for they are paying for your mortgage. The question I have is why is he not working at the age of 28? Do you have other children, is he a middle child? My situation was that he was a middle child and he got the attention of his parents and siblings to the point that when he was sleeping during the day they could not make any noise. So what does one do? My suggestion is that he gets up and finds a job. Then let him pay some rent or make a contribution to the household expenses. Let him find a place to live where he is responsible for his own bills and teach him responsibility and have him accountable for his own choice. Put boundaries around your home and let him GROW UP! Babying a child is one thing, however a 28-year-old is housing, spoiling, enabling, and just overall, not good period! You JP, on the other hand, need to let him grow up and do his own thing and he will learn life lessons as would you. There is more I can say here however I will leave it as it is with these first baby steps. If you want grandkids, then get him out now! No one wants a mama's boy!

Question: Dear Di, my question is regarding business. I am self-employed and

I am finding it tougher and more difficult to survive over the past while. I have a small store and my sales have just gone down the drain and I am not sure how much longer I can survive. I have not had a job in over 10 years and I am in my late 50s. What should I do? What can I do? – A.L.

Answer: Dear AL, I hear you and unfortunately, there

are many in your situation. I do agree that things have changed and it was and still is very challenging for small and even medium sizes business owners. There has been a shift towards online and many are crushing it. Everyone is looking for what they refer to as "side hustles" or even a way to replace their income period.

Do you believe that everything is going to be the same as it was 5 years ago? The answer is definitely not at all. What I am observing now and I have heard a few people mention that there is a shortage of people in the trade industry, for example, plumbing and welders. I know that has nothing to do with you and your industry however what my suggestion to you, because I do not know your industry, is to go back to school and do your research and homework about your competitors and watch what they are doing.

Now, on the other hand, as The Gambler said, you have to know when to fold and walk away without incurring any more debt. Here are other options: sell your business, register for a few courses, upgrade your skills and you may just be surprised by the knowledge and skills that you picked up along your entrepreneurship journey. Many have transitioned to other opportunities and of course, the job market is another resort.

Just to add that I too had to make some life changes so I do resonate with you however if you would like to chat more then email me at info@TheExperientialCoach.com so I can have a better understanding of your situation. All the best and life has a funny way of correcting itself.

Question 3: Dear Di, my question is a tough one for I have a tenant who for the past 3 years did not pay any rent due to the downfall of the economy recently. She actually lives upstairs in a 3-bedroom space by herself and I live downstairs and



I am her landlord. I pay for all the utilities and including the air conditioning she runs every day for we live in a hot country in the Caribbean. She started to work however she claims that it is not enough to survive. She has not made any attempts to make it work for both of us and I am on a pension and I need that income for she has been living rent-free. What suggestions do you have for me? - D.P.

Answer: Dear DP, did you say 3 years? You must be the best landlord in town however on a more serious note that is absolutely crazy and if she was living in North America she definitely would not be there. The question I have for you is why did you let it go on for so long? Was it due to the recent issues that the economy was going through? In Canada it was against the law to evict someone however the government was giving some assistance, was that the same there? I am sure that you are not an unreasonable person for if you were we would not have been having this conversation.

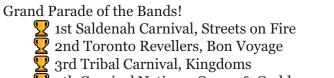
Ok, so what do you do, well my suggestion is to confront her and tell her that you know that she cannot pay you 3 years of owed rent however it is time for her to either pay or move out. I know that sounds easier said than done but do you really want her to stay the answer to that is I am sure no. Now let us look at it from another angle and that angle is you. If you take legal action against her then that is going to cost, you more money and we know that you will not get a penny from her. So that is not an option. The only logical solution is to confront and watch her reaction and get her out as early as possible but keep your cool about it. Drama does not solve anything for it just makes it worse and then you may be stuck with having a non-paying tenant and she may even destroy your property.

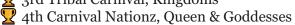
## **Toronto Carnival 2022 Album**

**Photos by Herman Silochan** 









Results of the 2022 Toronto Caribbean Carnival













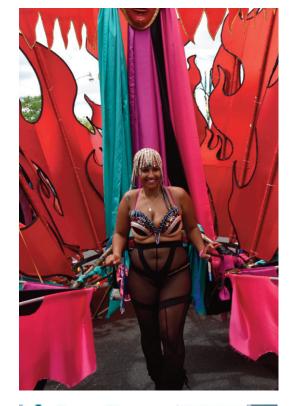


## **Toronto Carnival 2022 Album**























# Historic first for steelpan

It's Steelpan (pan) Month from August 1 to 31, and it's no secret that pan had its share of licks, but it has matured and purified to great extents

History reveals that the developed, sophisticated instrument came from deep struggles yet played its way into Carnegie and Royal Albert Halls; drew British Royalty to local panyards; became a part of Presidents, Prime Ministers and many other distinguished individuals' life.

In 2012 pan was adopted in Israel as a peace-promoting tool via the currently-run Peace Drums Project; some high-profile international universities' Master's music programs embrace pan. Pan creates unity and harmony. For decades, religious bodies have adopted pan.

Two university students from India who were doing their thesis on pan in 2006 at a Renegades Steel Orchestra pan workshop--A Dream Come True, Pan--said, "Pan is a mesmerising gift to the world that either puts you in a trance or in a frenzy, and what better place to complete it than in its birthplace, T&T."

On July 5 of this year (2022), for the very-first time any anthem was played on pan during an Olympic medal ceremony. It was T&T's National Steel Symphony Orchestra (NSSO) that did historic justice at the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) Medal Reallocation Ceremony, at the Olympic Museum in Lausanne, Switzerland, with their recorded version of Forged for the Love of Liberty.

Musical director Akua Leith said he honoured the request of the former president of the TTOC, Brian Lewis, and followed every requirement laid out by the IOC.

The gold medal was reallocated to T&T's 2008 Beijing Olympic men's 4x100 meter relay team that advanced from silver owing to the disqualification of the former gold medallists for an infraction.

History states that pan was invented in 1939; T&T first competed at Olympics under the then-new national colours, red, black and white in 1964, two years after gaining In-



Members of the T&T National Steel Symphony Orchestra

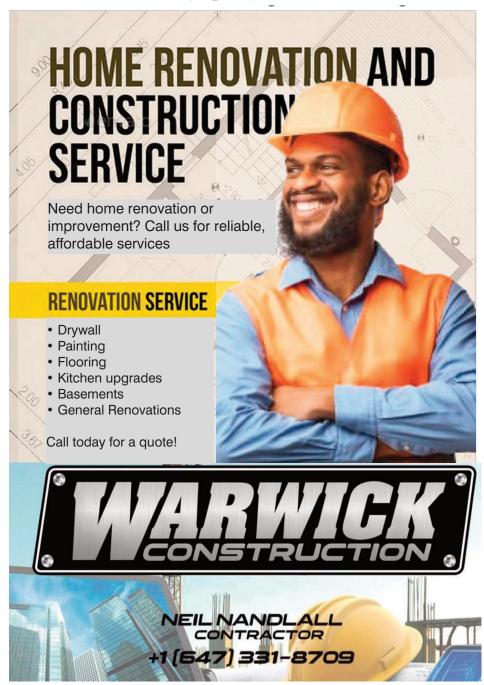
dependence but despite having won gold in 1976 and 2012, anthems were played by the traditional wind and string orchestras.

The novel pan-playing anthem at Olympics was the brainchild, proposal and follow through of Lewis who said it was an uphill battle to the approval which happened January of this year.

Today, T&T's athletes are readying themselves to fulfill the TTOC's medal mandate of 10 golds 24 championed by Lewis from 2015. Once T&T achieves gold, the national anthem will be heard on pure-bred T&T pan — NSSO-recorded — and automatically marketed to over "three billion" listening audience.

Leith has played and conducted tours throughout Europe, Asia, North America, Central America, South America and the Caribbean. He is a Fulbright Fellow and graduated from Northern Illinois University with a Masters of Music in Conducting with emphasis on Steelpan Performance. He is also a teacher of the steelpan and director of the steelpan manufacturing company, MITTCO.

TTOC's president, Diane Henderson, said of her hearing the national anthem played on pan at the ceremony, "It was surreal...to be a part of this historic moment."



# Antigua Calypso competition back with a bang

Vice president of Antigua's Qualadli Kaiso Collaborative (QKC) Edmond Blaize says the calypso competition's new format has injected a fresh vibe into the much-loved Carnival staple.

The QKC is the local body in Antigua responsible for calypso affairs and negotiating for anything calypso with government officials and other parties.

Blaize was speaking at the Calypso Monarch press conference this week when he addressed concerns from some over the alteration.

The change will see two competitions—a social commentary and a bacchanal segment—taking place in one show, a shift from the original format which was a two-song contest.

Blaize said he understands there are some who feel the change is moving away from what calypso truly represents, but he is asking that they give it a chance as already they have seen great traction from the public.

"I believe that this year we have had a lot more vibe from the public because of the format that we are using. There are a lot of people who are purists and naysayers who are saying that we are destroying the format of the competition.

"To me, for years we have been doing the two-song competition and it hasn't been getting as much electricity as we have from this format," Blaize explained.

He continued that the new format has helped to widen the variety of singers for this year's competition, and thus revitalised the event.

"You have Redding who was back in the days of Short Shirt and is up in it now. You have Byke, the 'energiser bunny' who just couldn't seem to make it to the finals because social commentary is not his thing, but jump into the party and he is up in it now. Everybody gets a chance.

"You have Vicious and a lot of new faces that make the competition better and more exciting. You have Zacari making history with two daughters and himself in the competition; that in itself is something to celebrate. You have Ge'Eve who at just 16 is in the show. Calypso is ready and back with a bang," he added.

He went on to say that the new format is not set in stone but is a test run and that a few



Zacari and Tian were the winners in their respective categories

tweaks here or here in the future are possible.

The Smirnoff Calypso Competition took place on July 29 at the Antigua Recreation Grounds (ARG) with 10 contestants in each category.

Two winners will emerge from the pack with each copping a trophy, bragging rights, and \$20,000.

First runner-up in each category earns \$14,000, second runners-up get \$10,000, and

all unplaced finalists will receive \$5,000.

The results are:

SOCIAL COMMENTARY
WINNER. King Zacari
1st RUNNER UP. GE'EVE
2nd RUNNER UP. Peetron
BACCHANAL
WINNER. Tian Winter
1st RUNNER UP. Sammie C

2nd RUNNER UP. Queen Thalia

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# Tobago Comfort (Inn)



Tobago has a new international hotel brand to add to its current repertoire.

The 74-room Comfort Inn and Suites Hotel opened its doors in Scarborough on August 1, bringing its global brand along with its tourists to the island.

Speaking after its grand opening, General Manager Maria Yip John said, "So we're adding some default rooms to the room stock of Tobago, we have a mixture of standard rooms and suites. And, of course, we're bringing the name of Comfort Inn and Suites to Tobago. So, this will now open up Tobago to the international market, it's a little bit more, it will actually help with the airlift because, of course, there's more recognition, the branded hotels always helped to develop a destination."

The hotel is also providing employment for many Tobagonians, asYip John said all employees are from the island.

"So, we're very proud to say that our staff have all been sourced here from Tobago and even those who have been abroad, they chose to come back. So that is something apart from our staff. We're trying to use local suppliers as much as possible because we do genuinely want to give back to the island," she said.

The hotel features a rooftop infinity pool overlooking Scarborough, ocean and city views.

In-room amenities include a mini fridge, microwave oven, coffee percolator, electronic safe and premium movie channels. Outdoor features include a spa open to guests and non-guests, as well as a restaurant which serves breakfast, lunch



The brand new Comfort Inn in Scarborough, Tobago

and dinner, also open to hotel guests and nonguests alike.

The hotel also boasts a shuttle that will meet guests on arrival in the island, whether it's at the ANR Robinson International Airport or at the Scarborough Port. There is also a shuttle that goes to the beach daily. "So, it has been a long road because of COVID," Yip John said. "This project has started and stopped so many times. So, we're very excited to finally be open. We're also very proud to bring Comfort Inn and Suites to Tobago," Yip John said.

## Book by Caribbean author on Obama's reading list

While the focus has been on Koffee and the other Caribbean musicians who have made it on to former President Barack Obama's 2022 summer music play list, little attention has been placed on the fact that his 2022 reading list includes a top Caribbean American author.

'Black Cake,' by Caribbean American author Charmaine Wilkerson has made Obama's 2022 Summer Reading List.

Wilkerson is a Caribbean-American writer who has lived in Jamaica and is based in Italy. A graduate of Barnard College and Stanford University, she is a former journalist whose award-winning short fiction has appeared in various magazines and anthologies. 'Black Cake' is her first novel and has made it on to the New York Times Bestseller list.

'Black Cake,' by Caribbean American author Charmaine Wilkerson has made Obama's 2022 Summer Reading List.

It is s a story of how the inheritance of betrayals, secrets, memories, and even names can

shape relationships and history. Deeply evocative and beautifully written, 'Black Cake,' is an extraordinary journey through the life of a family changed forever by the choices of its matriarch

"I've read a couple of great books this year and wanted to share some of my favorites so far," Obama wrote on social media. "What have you been reading this summer?

Meanwhile, the Caribbean artists making it on to Obama's Summer Playlist are: Rihanna featuring Drake on 'Too Good,' Wyclef Jean, featuring Lauren Hill on 'Guantanamera;' Bad Bunny & Bomba Estéreo with 'Ojitos Lindos,' and Koffee with 'Pull Up.'

"Every year, I get excited to share my summer playlist because I learn about so many new artists from your replies—it's an example of how music really can bring us all together. Here's what I've been listening to this summer. What songs would you add?" Obama tweeted.



**Charmaine Wilkerson** 

## Wakanda Forever!

## Strong Caribbean presence in Black Panther sequel

The Caribbean presence on "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever," the next chapter to Marvel's Black Panther movie, is definitely undeniably even in the small teaser released Saturday night at Comic-Con.

The Caribbean immigrant actors who featured in the original Black Panther — Letitia Wright (Shuri) and Winston Duke (M'Baku) — return in Black Panther "2." But the daughter of Caribbean immigrants also joins the cast as does the music of a Caribbean legend.

According to the Marvel trailer released this weekend, Guyanese born Wright and Trinidad and Tobago's Duke have returned to the cast while Dominique Thorne, the daughter of Trinidadian immigrants, has joined the cast as Riri Williams.

The music of reggae legend Bob Marley is also taking center stage. The trailer released is almost entirely void of dialogue, conveying moments of grief and perseverance alongside a rendition of Bob Marley's "No Woman, No Cry" by Nigerian artist Tems, which then transitions into a sliver of Kendrick Lamar's "Alright."

Director Ryan Coogler and the cast of the highly anticipated Marvel Cinematic Universe movie were there to help show how the franchise is moving forward in the wake of the 2020 death of its titular star, Chadwick Boseman.

The trailer begins with what looks to be a Wakandan funeral procession, with Shuri, (Wright), holding the Black Panther's mask while everyone is dressed in all white.

An official synopsis of "Wakanda Forever" that was sent out once the trailer went live, says Wakanda will be fighting to protect its nation in the wake of the death of its king, T'Challa (played by the late Boseman in "Black Panther"). What has not been revealed, and probably won't be until the movie is in theaters, is how T'Challa dies, a moment that will set the stage for succession on the Wakandan throne.

"Wakanda Forever's" most difficult task will be replacing a legend. The trailer ends with a back view of a suited-up, black-and-gold Black Panther unsheathing their claws. What isn't known and what will probably be the film's biggest secret is, who is the new Black Panther?

The movie hits theaters Nov. 11.



Tobagonian Watson Duke reprises his role as M'Baku in Wakanda Forever

# Rap stars respond to Brittney Griner's Russian prison sentence

Boosie Badazz, 50 Cent, Meek Mill and more have reacted to Brittney Griner's prison sentence in Russia for drug conviction.

Brittney Griner was sentenced to close to 10 years in prison after she was found guilty of drug possession and drug smuggling with criminal intent on Thursday in a Russian court. The WNBA star was also fined 1 million rubles or \$16,300 U.S. dollars along with the sentence in what has been a high-profile pull and tug by the Russian and American governments.

According to Russian prosecutors, Griner had less than a gram of cannabis oil and a vape pen in her luggage when she was arrested by Russian police in February, ABC News reported.

The Biden Administration has called on the Russian government to release Griner, and it has also negotiated a swap of prisoners by offering to release a Russian man accused of plotting to kill Americans and selling arms to Colombia. However, these have not been heeded.

On Thursday, after the sentencing, many Hip Hop community members reacted to Griner's sentence, which they called harsh.

Among those reacting were several celebrities, including Boosie Badazz and 50 Cent. In an Instagram video, Boosie says that the government did not do enough to get Griner home because she is a black woman.

"How the hell that girl get nine years for a weed pen? And the USA ain't doing nothing about it, you tell me that. If that was Taylor Swift it would be a peace treaty right now. They would be drafting to go to war, for a weed pen, nine years," the Louisiana rapper said.

The rapper also called out Vice President Kamala Harris for not speaking up.

"What that shows for black women in the United States, and the Vice President, for a black woman, you supposed to be on the front-line, you supposed to be on the frontline to get that woman out of jail."

50 Cent also reacted as he said the basketball athlete is caught in geopolitics between the

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Boosie Badazz and 50 Cent are among the artistes reacting to the jail term

two countries.

"This is wild, smh you don't ever want to get caught up in the politics," 50 Cent wrote on Instagram. "They are gonna tell her like 10 years for a vape pin watch."

Radio Host Angie Martinez also reacted to the sentence as she called on the U.S government to intervene to help Griner.

"BRING HER HOME," Martinez wrote on Instagram. "9 years for oil in a vape pen?! this poor woman is a political pawn and it's disgusting and f\*\*kin infuriating!"

Meek Mill also tweeted a message, "Free BG ... let's fight for her!!!!!!"



WNBA Star Brittney Griner: sentenced to almost 10 years in a Russian jail

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# Nicki Minaj responds to claims of 'dirty deeds'

Nicki Minaj denies the claims of an anonymous person on Instagram who has been dishing her alleged "dirty deeds" in a series of posts.

The person is under a fake account using the name of an Atlantic label executive and claims that she is Nicki Minaj's former assistant. "I am Onika ex assistant who she fired for absolutely no proof of fraud with her bank account. I'm exposing all the files I have from working with her. Along with the voice messages she sent me regarding many different people not just Cardi B," one of the slides on Instagram stories read.

In a series of posts, the woman seemingly reveals Minaj's son's name as Amadeus Cyril Petty. Minaj gave birth to the baby boy in September 2020 and has never revealed his name, only referring to him as Papa Bear publicly.

The woman also makes several allegations about Minaj's husband, Kenneth Petty, whom she alleges "mentally and physically abuse" Nicki Minaj and sexually harasses her female members of staff. She also alleged that Kenneth pushed Minaj off a lodge and that "Meek isn't the only abuser."

The account has since been deleted on Instagram and Twitter. Still, several others have popped up with more claims on Tuesday, including that Minaj was living in rental properties and that she owed the IRS \$173 million since 2016, and that she had allegedly paid a man by the name of Robert Sammuels 75,000 dollars to promote her upcoming song. The account accused Minaj of Payola.

Even Bia has been implicated in the saga with the account urging the "Whole Lotta Money" artist to "tell them what happened at that mansion."

In the meantime, the account also claimed that the real reason Nicki Minaj has refused to work with Doja Cat is because of "Roger Adams and what he did to your career in 2012."

The account also claimed that the rapper had done hard drugs in the past despite denying that she has never used crack. The account also claimed that Megan Thee Stallion might know something damaging about the Pettys and claimed that Jay-Z and Beyonce allegedly cut off Minaj due to Petty's past rape conviction.

Meanwhile, none of the artists mentioned has spoken out, and Nicki Minaj herself issued a denial claiming that the attempt was a takedown by "another fan base," which she did not name.



Nicki Minaj and her husband Kenneth Petty

"They claimed they worked for me and now they spilling tea, chile. The tea sounds so f\*\*king dumb and for a person to believe it you would have to be dumb," Minaj said on Instagram Live.

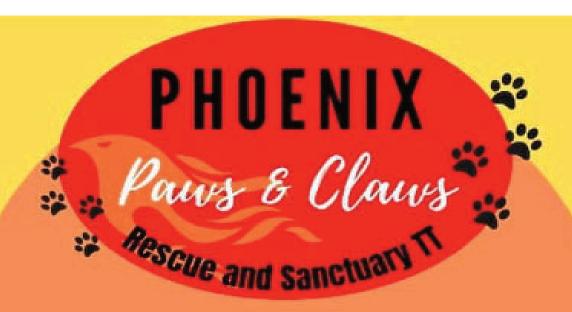
"It's clearly a kid, do you know how much money you would have to make to owe that amount of money to the IRS? I didn't see the other stuff, what else they said?" Minaj asked.

She continued, "why can't y'all get off my sweet Trinidadian p\*\*\*y...I really need y'all to get a job, and invest in yourself and your future, to my fans I love y'all dearly, I know y'all will always rep me and hold me down and to the blogs that didn't put up this nonsense, God Bless you," Minaj also said.

She added that all of the claims are lies calculated to damage her. "Y'all this is another fan base, they are going through with their 'plot to take me down'. Cause they see that all the lies they made thus far has never worked. God don't like ugly. No weapon formed against me will prosper. It's people that's paying entire staffs [sic] to figure out how to end Nicki. Like, I know for a fact, some actual people that work for labels, they have meetings they've concocted every plan they can but FREEAK is coming on August 12," Minaj said.

She also shared a post on her Instagram account, poking fun at the poster.

"Bling Bling btch\$ is mad," she captioned a Nene Leakes meme as she shared a photo of her wearing her pink Richard Mille watch.



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# Usain Bolt Drops '9.58 Riddim' With Vybz Kartel and Chronic Law

Sprint legend turn music producer Usain Bolt has released his fifth studio album with several dancehall artists.

The album was named '9.58 Riddim' after Usain Bolt's iconic 100-meter world record was released on Friday through his own A-Team Lifestyle label. In 2009, Bolt won the 100m race in 9.58 seconds, and his world record is still unbeaten.

The producer says that the six-track project was inspired by that achievement which recently came into the spotlight again after the recent World Championships in Oregon, where it was speculated that an American sprinter was going to break it, but alas, the Americans do not have the mettle to test the Jamaican's strength and stamina.

"It was just the energy the riddim gave me. It has the tempo and vibes, so the idea just came to me to name it after my 100m record," Bolt said about the name.

Usain Bolt is one of, if not the most, decorated sprinter in history, as an eight-time Olympic gold medallist and the only athlete to consecutively win the Olympic 100m and 200m titles at three Olympic events in 2008, 2012, and 2016.

Bolt also holds two 4×100 relay gold medals, but his greatest achievement is his world record times for his double sprint victory at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

He is still the first and only person to hold both records since the fully automatic time was implemented.

In the meantime, the album features Vybz Kartel's "Touch The Sky", Chronic Law's "Money Fast, Iwaata with "Different", Quada with "Levels", Ajji with "Own Don" and Topmann with "Who Wi".

The project is available on all streaming platforms, including Apple Music and Spotify.

Bolt previously released his first album 'Olympe Rosé', his second 'Usain Bolt Presents: Immortal Riddim', his third, 'Usain Bolt Presents: Clockwork Riddim', and his fourth project, Country Yutes, which saw good reception with fans, having debuted at No. 1 on the iTunes Reggae Albums chart in the U.S.

According to the producer, his latest album shows his growth as a producer.

"I just want to continue to grow as a producer in the business... I'm learning each day," he continued.





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## Ne-Yo is a Cheater!

### Wife files for divorce after learning about an outside child

Crystal Smith is not here for the reconciliation as she filed for divorce from R&B singer Ne-Yo alleging that he cheated on her and fathered a child with another woman during their marriage. The couple renewed their vows this year after being separated for two years.

According to TMZ, the divorce petition was filed on August 1, a day after, Smith said that Ne-Yo was in the streets with many women, including prostitutes, and that he paid for unprotected sex during their 6-year marriage.

Crystal Smith says the couple got married on February 20, 2016, but they have been separated on or about July 22, 2022, and "since that date have continuously lived in a bona fide state of separation."

The couple also shares three small children, Shaffer Smith Jr., Roman Smith, and baby Isabella Smith, who was born last year.

Smith says in her petition that she "is entitled to a divorce from [Ne-Yo] upon the ground that the marriage is irretrievably broken with no hope for reconciliation."

She added that the singer has also committed the "act of adultery" and recently fathered a child with another woman. She did not reveal more details about the outside child. Crystal Smith wants temporary and permanent alimony from Ne-Yo. She says that at present, she has joint legal custody of the children with Ne-Yo, but she wants the court to grant her primary physical custody of the children along with child support for the three of them.

In her affidavit, Smith revealed that she has remained unemployed throughout the course of the marriage with Ne-Yo because they had agreed that she will be a housewife and raise the children. She added that the singer also earns a "significant self-employment income" as a singer, songwriter, and producer.

"[Crystal] requests that [Ne-Yo] be solely responsible for any and all debts and obligations independently acquired by [Ne-Yo] and that [Ne-Yo] hold [Crystal] harmless for any such debts or obligations," the petition also reads.

In the meantime, Smith is asking the court for an "equitable division" of their marital home, a mansion in Los Angeles, and for him to cover her legal fees that round off to \$25,000.

"Due to the disparity in income, [Crystal] moves the Court for an award of attorney fees on account in the amount of \$25,000 as temporary attorney's fees and expenses of litigation so that [Crystal] may pursue her claims for divorce with the opportunity to be effectively represented by counsel and properly protect her interests," the



Ne-Yo and Crystal Smith in happier times

petition. The singer was criticized on July 31 by Smith, who accused him of cheating and leading a double life.

"8 years of lies and deception. 8 years of unknowingly sharing my life and husband with numerous of women who sell their bodies to him unprotected," she wrote on Instagram while labeling him a narcissist.

Ne-Yo had also responded later that day with a statement on Twitter asking for privacy.

"For the sake of our children, my family and Ne-Yo has not filed an answer to the divorce I will work through our challenges behind closed

doors. Personal matters are not meant to be addressed and dissected in public forums. I simply ask that you please respect me and my family's privacy at this time," he said.

The couple has been having problems for the past two years when they separated, but during that time, they had a baby and even renewed their vows this year, signaling that their marital problems were over. The divorce is, however, not a shock to many, given Smith's claims last week and some blogs dishing "tea" on the artist that supports his estranged wife's claims.



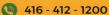
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# Raguel is The Gift

Singer and actor Raguel Gabriel continues to persevere with his dream to excel on stage. This US-based, Trinidad and Tobago artiste, is at ease with both prose and song, which led him to take on classic leading roles across several genres including opera, Shakespeare and musical theatre.

His quest for success and passion to perform have seen him among finalists in a Chicago vocal competition. He was recruited by a composer, who was impressed with his performance, to sing and act the romantic lead in The Gift, scheduled to open in December. He has also been successful at other music competitions this year in the US.

A graduate of the Stella Adler Studio of Acting NYC, Gabriel has been compared to the likes of Lupita Nyong'o – an observation, he explained, was made by playwright and producer Dr Cynthia Stephens (Sacred Ground Productions) for his lead role in the musical, The Princess and the Golden Yam, at the Broadway venue, Green Room 42 in New York City (2018). The story of this musical takes place in Africa and Nyong'o played the character that is the antagonist of the princess, said a media release.

"This was way before (Nyong'o) went to Yale to study and all that, and was still trying to find her way," Gabriel said in an interview with Black Collar Creative.

"Dr Stephens remains one of my greatest mentors who applauds my work ethic. She even told me over dinner that my drive and the way I carried myself during rehearsals reminded her of how Lupita was. She has all the faith in me that I will excel on that level one day," he said in the release from Black collar Creative.

At the beginning of 2020, Gabriel was in pursuit of several theatre auditions that had lined up for him in New York, but the covid19 pandemic brought the need to wait or pivot. This was where mental and spiritual fortitude came to his rescue, along with commitment and ingenuity to keep the practice of his craft going, the release said.

"I have seen many things that seemed impossible, become a reality," Gabriel shared. "It was only with crazy faith, hard work and belief in what I can do that helped me through. I stay on track as I balance both living in the moment and staying obsessively focused on my passions and dreams."

When Broadway's doors reopened in September 2021, Gabriel continued his career with an increased urgency and determination to succeed.



Raguel Gabriel has been enjoying success at music competitions in the US

After Schwanengesang, Stephens invited Gabriel to reprise his role as Amadou for repeat performances of The Princess and The Golden Yam in October 2021 for the city of Hudson, NY, in collaboration with the Hudson Tourist Board.

He went on to do several auditions and vocal competitions in early 2022, including the Sinfonietta Bel Canto based in Downers Grove, Illinois, where he placed second in the orchestra's vocal competition and performed at its final concert in June. He also auditioned for the CS Music Vocal Competition in Chicago in which he was selected as one of six finalists out of 1,300 singers from across the country performing Losing My Mind by Sondheim.

"After the finals, a man sought me out, visibly moved, saying he'd never heard Losing My

Mind sung in that way. He turned out to be composer Paul Herman, who is based in Chicago.

"On the spot, he invited me to sing for him the next day at his studio as my voice was a perfect fit for an operetta he had written. He was waiting for the right person to sing and act the romantic lead. I was then given the score for The Gift. The plan is to stage it this Christmas and next year, starting in Indiana, Chicago and eventually New York."

Gabriel was also awarded the third prize in the world in the category of Tenor Soloists 23 years and up at the Marker and Pioneer (MAP) International Music Competition 2022 in Los Angeles, California. MAP is an organisation focused on promoting and hosting international cultural exchange and educational and musical projects.

The jury panel at the competition included Grammy Award-winning mezzo soprano and Metropolitan opera star Victoria Livengood; Christopher Russell MM, chair of music at Azusa Pacific University in Southern California and conductor of APU Orchestra; and Lin Yousheng, renowned conductor at the Shanghai Opera House/professor at Shanghai Conservatory of Music.

Gabriel advised local performers seeking to transition to any other country that they should take no opportunity for granted and studiously pursue growth at every turn.

"I already had an insane work ethic back home in Trinidad, but I had to multiply that times ten when I got to the US," he cautioned. "You're going to have to be insanely driven and have reasons embedded in your heart that will keep you pushing through the toughness. The performing arts world is brutally competitive. So, embrace hard work."

Over his ten-year career, the journey has been something of a marathon for Gabriel, but his devotion to the stage is absolute. Above all, he values the investment he made into his artistic and performing arts training as well as his day-to-day regimen both physically and vocally to maintain his fitness and performance health. His focus remains on what is to come and the importance of the work ahead, rather than his last accolade.

"My joy is in the doing. I am deeply motivated by the desire to keep growing and being better than I was the last time, as I move toward the goals I have set for myself in the future."

# Kids are so amazing!

## Ro'dey to host new children's show in T&T

Sharon Cumberbatch wants to create a sense of positivity among Trinidad and Tobago's youth. She hopes the soon-to-be-aired will help do that.

Cumberbatch is the mother of comedian, entertainer and actor Rodell "Ro'dey" Cumberbatch.

Kids So Amazing is a production of Ro'dey Entertainment Ltd and Star Global Productions Ltd in Chaguanas. Ro'dey Entertainment Ltd, Woodbrook, was registered in 2019.

The show will feature the talents of children aged three-13. Ro'dey will interview the children before inviting them to perform in the 30-minute-long show.

His "momager" said Kids So Amazing – which airs on CNC3 from this Thursday – was inspired by US comedian Steve Harvey's Little Big Shots. Harvey's show invites some of the world's most talented children to show their abilities. It first aired in 2016.

When Cumberbatch came up with her idea she felt TT had so many talented kids who should be in the spotlight.

This coupled with Ro'dey's skill as an entertainer would make for great content, she said.

She came up with the idea early 2019, but the pandemic pushed it into production.

As they slowly began to climb out of the pandemic pit, there was a lot of negative stories about children. There was one thing after another: child abuse at children's homes, indiscipline in schools and SEA results, she said.

"That was very depressing, and I said, 'Look we have to do this thing. We have to put a positive message out. We have talented children and we need to inspire those that are watching.'"

The idea was pitched to CNC3 and the network was excited about it, Cumberbatch added.

Ro'dey Entertainment Ltd and Star Global Production got together and did a pilot programme.

Sponsors were then approached but there was not an overwhelming response, she said.

Despite this, Cumberbatch took the decision to go ahead.

Like Harvey, she wanted to give the children a grand stage to showcase their talent and so they chose Queen's Hall.

"I did not want a small studio and the children behind a green screen. No! I wanted the real thing because these children deserve it."

The company worked with actress and director Penelope Spencer as its casting director.

"We auditioned over 30 children. We had a short space of time to work with. When the show got the approval to move forward, we had to do



In the TV show, Kids So Amazing, Ro'dey will invite children to perform.

the production in two days."

The pilot was done in May and the station gave the company the green light in early July. Eight episodes were made for its August airing.

Cumberbatch was also certain she did not want a competitive element. Her vision is to display the talent of all children, whether they are young farmers, authors or gymnasts.

"I want to include any child, if you're good at science, math, and spelling. Anything. You could shoot hoops.

"That is why I took the competition element out of it. If you have a competition, you'd have to limit the number of children. I always want the children to be relaxed, just display their talent and inspire those watching."

She hopes the show will reduce negative images and attitudes among young people. Understanding that TT's children – like others around the globe – are heavily influenced by today's digital technologies, the show has a strong social media presence.

YouTube and Tik Tok play heavily into the content being shown by Kids So Amazing, she said. A YouTube channel has been created where the children can watch repeat episodes.

The sponsor, KFC, produced content for Tik Tok.

The show aims to inspire parents as well. In-

terviews were also done with some of the participants' parents.

"With that, parents watching on will say, 'This parent can do it, why can't I do it with my kid?"

It also highlights coaches, such as vocal or dance coaches, whom parents can contact to sharpen the skill of their children.

Requests from parents after the production of the episodes have also opened another door for the Cumberbatches, leading them to consider starting a talent management company.

Cumberbatch thinks more shows like this are needed.

"We do a lot of talking in TT but what we need is action.

"This is our future. So we need to nurture it. Every TV station should have a show like this."

As the show develops, Cumberbatch wants to highlight the talent of children from throughout the region as well.

You can be sure that Ro'dey's character Malakai will make an appearance – not on the show itself, but you can look forward to hearing Malakai telling Apples, in a radio ad, that he wants to be on the show because he is, of course, amazing.

The show will air on Thursdays and Saturdays.

"It is a fun, family show," Cumberbatch said.

## **Blood Money!**

## Tobago Play rocks Toronto audience

The Tobago Drama Guild's hard-hitting play Blood Money was well received by audiences in Canada on July 27 and 28.

Hosted at the Consulate General of Trinidad and Tobago, in Toronto, the play attracted capacity crowds on both nights.

Blood Money is Cherryll Birchwood Uzoruo's latest offering to the theatre world. It is a riveting tale about ill-gotten gains and its karmic impact within a small, inter-connected community. Imaginatively directed by THABITI, the multi-talented cast managed creditably all the dramatic twists and turns in a storyline that was punctuated by instantly infectious music, folk-lore-inspired song and dance and a speech band prologue.

"It was an awesome experience, and that is quite a proverbial understatement," said playwright Cherryll Birchwood Uzoruo. "Most of the cast and crew are making their debut on a Canadian stage. This was always a dream of my husband, THABITI, and I bought into the idea of a cultural exchange between the motherland, Trinidad and Tobago, and the adopted space of many, Canada.

"We appreciate the love, the understanding



Above and left: Scenes from Blood Money as it played at the Trinidad and Tobago Consulate in Toronto

of the multi-layered complexities of the messaging. Moving from text to presentation before an appreciative audience in Canada has renewed my faith in the worth of the work and its claim as a teaching tool and mirror to society. Thanks to all for the collective sharing and community spirit. My gratitude goes out to Acting Consul General Tracey Ramsubagh-Mannette for the Consulate's generous support and of course, the cast and crew of both spaces, without whom the work could not have been brought to life."

Among the actors and actresses in the play were Rochelle Frank, Andell Franklyn, Myrtle George, Simone Gordon, Myranda Murray, Jelani Williams, Antonio Franklyn, Jamal Hamilton, Nixon Rougier and Akquille Simmons.





# Do You Know Your Elephants?

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- Sucidial Feelings
- Anxiety Feelings
- Fustration
- Relationship Issues
- Financial Issues
- Lack of Support
- Illness
- Attachments
- Family Rejection
- The list does not END here...

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