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Johnny Depp hailed for standing up for men

It's the \$50 million defamation trial for Johnny Depp, who is suing his ex-wife Amber Heard over her claims that she was repeatedly assaulted and abused over the course of their relationship.

This is an ugly case with evidence of toxic, violent behavior from both parties, who met on the set of The Rum Diaries in 2009 and tied the knot in 2015. It took just over a year for the relationship to fracture from constant conflict. Depp claims Heard was a violent, possessive instigator who got him blacklisted from Hollywood when she wrote a Washington Post op-ed in 2018 detailing her accusations. Heard, meanwhile, claims she feared for her life because of Depp's alleged behavior, especially while the star was drunk and high.

But for large swaths of the manosphere, the Depp trial isn't merely a fascinating look into the complicated nature of domestic violence and volatile relationships. Instead, many observers who are obsessed with the loss of "men's rights" and blame feminism for worsening their lives are portraying Depp's fight as an existential moment for men as a whole. In their eyes, Depp isn't merely a target of assumptions and false narratives — he is the vanguard in the war against women who hate men and pretend to be victims.

In that way, Depp is being weaponized by the manosphere, most notably by "men's rights activists," in order to paint a picture of how American society chooses to "believe women" even when they're liars. His trial fits neatly into a tapestry of claims that men are under attack, woven alongside clumsy narratives about false rape accusations and mothers lying to block children from their fathers. No wonder there's an energized web of rightwing YouTubers, influencers and social



Johnny Depp's fight is an existential moment for men as a whole

media posters who are following the trial live, leveraging the drama for clout while proselytizing on the injustice of mass misandry in the post-#MeToo age.

It's perfect for anyone who creates content around conservative talking points like Hollywood elitism, "cancel culture" or the harms of feminism and "wokeness." That includes content creators like Minnesota lawyer Nick Rekieta, who is streaming the trial to his nearly 350k subscribers on YouTube while providing live commentary and insights on Twitter.

He's joined by such like-minded thinkers as "ThatUmbrellaGuy" (whose YouTube account, for perspective, highlights a video of how Jordan Peterson "WRECKS MARVEL" with his intellectual might) and "YellowFlash," who recently posted commentary on how the Depp trial will "DESTROY the Hollywood Agenda." Umbrella, for one, has been making repeated claims that Heard and "her simps" targeted their content with takedown notices, and championing how he and other men's rights allies are willing to be unbiased in the face of social pressure.

Need love, business, life advice? 'Ask Di' is here!

Disclaimer: The content of the Ask Di column is for information only, and the author is not responsible for any actions performed by the reader. Information is gathered and shared from reputable sources and Di is not responsible for errors or omissions in reporting or explanation. No individuals, including those under their medical care, should use any of the information to self-diagnosis or self-treat any health-related condition. No assurance or warranty regarding the accuracy, timeliness or applicability or the content is given.

Question: Why do I always have to pay when a friend says let's go and hang out? Should I ditch the friend? I don't print money. I work hard for my money. - A. J.

Answer: Dear AJ, thank you for your question. This is tough yet simple at the same time. You should not be expected to have to pay the bill every time you walk out the door or get in your car and I am 100% sure that you have to also pick up your friend. Does your friend have a job or not? If yes or no it actually does not matter for what you really need to do is have a big man conversation with him and a bigger one with yourself. You know what they say and as it is quoted many times; the 5 people you hang out with, put them all together and their average for their personality, mindset for example is what you become. Do you really want to go

Make space for other things for you and not only save but invest your hardearned money in yourself! STOP allowing people to take advantage of you and by the way, it is not their fault they see you that way you actually wave the flag and say sure no problem I am here every time.



Take ownership once and for all. Trust me when I say that we can go deeper. All the best!

Question: I sometimes feel like I am running after my business and it is running after me. I am exhausted! - B. P.

Answer: Whew! I am exhausted as well just reading this with all the running around. Time out! Ok, let us look at this in a more professional way.

Many small self-employed business owners are the ones who feel the pain and pressure of wanting to be successful and be their own boss. Congratulations on taking that huge jump for mankind and in this case you and your family.

I will not kid you by saying that it is not hard-core work however, there are systems in place to help you.

Stop being the only employee in the office and do everything yourself. Listen BP I have been there and I am telling you that it is no FUN however I love to explore all departments if I can, even if I do not understand and I am not qualified but I

tell you what, I am sure I can have a conversation about it and relay what I am looking for.

On a deeper level, I will leave this conversation open and ask this question; what is holding you back, and what are the obstacles you face daily? What are you not doing, that if you were will take you to the next level in your life for you are your business and your business is a reflection of you? I look forward to hearing more about your business ventures and the changes.





Paul Dwarika: Breaking the stigma against male pageantry

PAUL Andrew Dwarka, a 24year-old past Mr India Guyana semi-finalist, wants to break the barrier of stigma and discrimination faced by men in pageantry in Guyana.

Also a dancer, Paul has been in the entertainment industry since 2019 when he was shortlisted in the Mr India Guyana Pageant.

"My interest in pageantry initiated a few years back, but I field was part of his personal mustered up the courage to apply for the Mr India Guyana 2020, under the organisation headed by Mr and Mrs Hashim

ordinator in the oil and gas field, Paul feels that his participation in pageantry helps him be truer to himself.

"I took up training for this competition and realised that it was more hard work than people believed it to be. I learned a lot about myself, especially in areas of resilience and discipline," he expressed.

For Paul, venturing into this goal to try new things. "And it certainly pushed me beyond my limits. I was able to overcome the jitters of public speaking





Paul feels that his participation in pageantry helps him be truer to himself

Most importantly, Paul said he was able to use the opportunity to develop his platform which focused on eradicating poverty one community at a said time.

"I've teamed up with We Care Foundation and Elite Pageant Company to execute some stationery drive and also donation of toys for the less fortunate," he shared.

Continuing his work in the pageant arena, he someday hopes to walk the international stage.

"I'll work towards that long term goal with hopes to inspire more young men to voice their

interests and platform; to use the pageant medium to set standards for themselves and also to lead by example," Paul

As a young talent and persistent worker for self-growth, Paul encourages young people to try new things and gain experience in areas that will push them to be a better version of themselves.

"You can never know until you try," Paul advised, adding: "Make mistakes and just try again. You don't need to be perfect you only need to be consis-

Bollywood stars Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor marry

BOLLYWOOD stars, Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor married each other in a lowkey ceremony in Mumbai on Thursday.

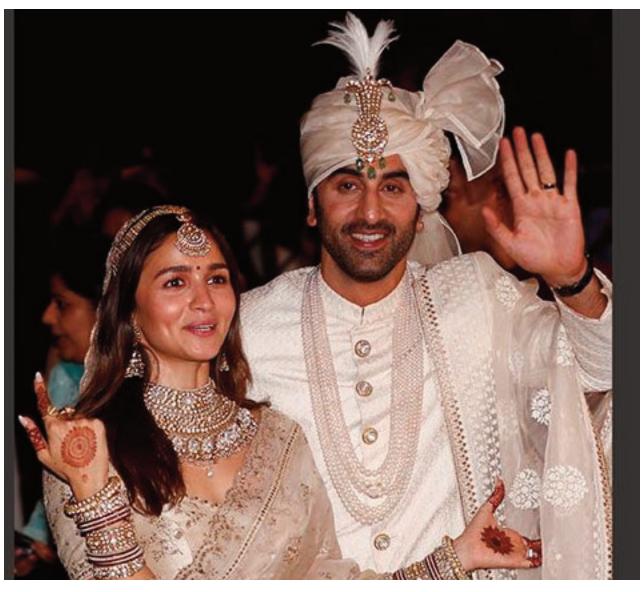
Bhatt, 29 and, Kapoor, 39, have been dating for five years but have maintained a low-profile relationship, apart from occasional pictures on social media and rare appearances together.

The ceremony was held at Kapoor's house in the upmarket Mumbai suburb of Bandra. Guests were given strict instructions not to share pictures or videos from the ceremony.

"Today, surrounded by our family and friends, at home ... in our favourite spot – the balcony we've spent the last five years of our relationship – we got married," Bhatt said in a social media post.

Bhatt's last Bollywood release in theatres, "Gangubai Kathaiwadi", made more than 2 billion rupees (US\$26 million) at the box office after its release in February.

Both she and Kapoor come from film families and several Bollywood actors, including Kareena Kapoor, attended the ceremony



Bollywood actors, Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoorhave tied the knot

Megan Thee Stallion sued by her record label

Megan Thee Stallion's record label is countersuing the rapper, weeks after she filed a lawsuit against them.

It's over a row about what constitutes an album, with 1501 Certified Entertainment saying her 'Something For Thee Hotties' record does not qualify.

Megan has already claimed it does meet the conditions for an album.

In a document, 1501 wants an order in its favour, and damages awarded for claims Megan has "repeatedly breached her contracts".

The 2021 release debuted at number three on the US Billboard's Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart in its first week of re-

In the original case filed by Megan's lawyers, it says the record "clearly meets the definition" of an album – stating a length of 45 minutes or more is the only requirement in Megan's contract to define what an album is.

But in its countersuit against Megan, 1501 say the record was not "original material" as it "included freestyles available on YouTube and archival material" – and only amounts to 29 minutes of new recordings featuring her.

The label claims Megan's agreement dictates that "she must include at least 12 new master recordings of her studio performances of previously unreleased musical compositions" to get credit for an

album under contract.

Megan has responded on Twitter to the countersuit against her. Her legal team claims the label wants to keep her locked in her contract for longer, so they can profit from her sales.

Record deals are usually signed with an agreement of how many albums the artist will release before they can renegotiate or leave the label.

In a statement, Megan's lawyer Brad Hancock said the countersuit was "yet another absurd attempt by 1501 to disregard Megan's album and squeeze more money and more free work out of her for as long as possible".

Trini model makes waves on Milan catwalk

Trinidadian Jean-Luc Joseph did not have a blueprint for getting into the international modelling scene.

He simply felt a creative fire in his soul that he had to get out.

Discovered from some online photos he posted of himself, he recently realised his biggest dream when he walked the runway of premier luxury Italian fashion house Bottega Veneta in the fashion capital of Milan.

"It was amazing!" he said of his experience as part of the Bottega Veneta Fall/Winter 2022 collection showing at Milan Fashion Week on February 26.

"It was a very surreal experience being backstage because I've always been interested in the world of fashion the photographers, the imagery that would come out of fashion, the designers' styles. I would always watch all these shows and these collections and see models walking and say: I can do that; that could be me.

"Just being in a position where I am making my debut for one of the biggest houses in Milan is just a surreal experience; be it backstage and seeing the entire process of how everything is done for a high-level show like that; everything from production, teams that were there; hairstylists, make-up artists, to being in the presence of the designer...just being part of the brand's history because this was (fashion director) Matthieu Blazy's first collection for the brand."

Joseph was also grateful to casting directors, Anita Bitton and Finlay MacAulay and praised 28Model's Trinidadian founder, Showin Bishop for believing in his potential.

Regarded for its luxury ready-to-wear apparel and signature intrecciato weave (intertwined woven texture of its leather), the elite Bottega Veneta fashion house was established in 1966 in Vicenza, Italy, as an artisanal leather goods brand. Bot-



tega's memorable showings during Fashion Week-the industry's most celebrated series of runway shows featuring the latest collections of top designers-have launched the careers of such famous models as Lauren Hutton and Gigi Hadid.

Twenty-two-year-old Joseph had always envisioned himself on a fashion runway. But with little knowledge of where to begin, he placed his dream on hold, taking up photography instead around 2018. Initially, he used his

brother, Raúl and other friends as subjects. While trying to expand his portfolio, he turned the camera to himself. He started a self-portrait series, becoming a content creator posting photos of himself on Instagram.

Observing his passion, a friend suggested that he audition for a model search advertised locally by New Yorkbased model management agency, 28Models. It was Bishop of 28Models who discovered the aspiring model in 2019.

Calypso Rose teams up with Carlos Santana for new song

She's 82 and Linda McCartha Sandy-Lewis, Calypso Rose, string of firsts in calypso continues.

The calypso legend turned 82 on April 27 and is set to release a new album called Forever.

The album's first single, Watina, will feature famed, Grammy-award winning musician Carlos Santana and will be released on May 20. The Mexican-born, American musician has many awards to his name and was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1998.

Posting to her Facebook page on April 27, Rose said she was feeling good and she thanked God for having kept her all these years.

"I miss you my fans all over the world and I think a lot about you, all the time. But don't worry next month you'll get a taste of me with Watina my first song of my new album Forever."

The calypso icon's manager Jean Michel Gibert said Rose was enjoying the day resting comfortably in her Queens, New York home.

"She is having a little gathering with people around her. All morning she has been receiving phone calls from all over the world and she has received five bouquets of flowers coming from all over the world like France etc.

"She is really, really happy. She is joking and is really in very good spirits," he added.

She also spent the day surrounded by some of her family, Gibert said.

The consistent musician and entertainer continues to produce hits and albums. In 2016 she was given the Womex Artist of the Year Award and in 2017 she was awarded TT's highest honour: the Order of the Republic of TT (ORTT). Her recent hits such as Leave Me Alone featuring Manu Chao, and a remixed version featuring Machel Montano, have endeared her to a new generation of listeners.



Calypso Rose announced a collaboration with world-renowned Carlos Santana, inset

Although Rose has been constantly touring she had not been doing so because of the pandemic.

On February 23, she then posted that she had to cancel her summer tour dates. She said the covid19 virus and her health situation did not allow her to come to France. She said she'd be back this spring with new songs.

Gibert said she was not touring for different reasons with the risk of covid19 being one of them.

"We don't want Rose to get covid. Also, it would have been quite difficult to organise because of her condition. She is an older woman."

Gibert said Rose then said if she could

not be with her fans physically she'd do so through music and that was how the album release came about. He said she had been working on the album for the past four to five years.

"It was recorded in different countries, in New York, in Paris, in Belize, in TT...."

Gibert said that single was done in honour of the Garifuna people, who are a mixed African and indigenous people and Garifuna people reside in St Vincent, Belize, and other parts of the region.

"Watina which was a big anthem song for the Garifuna. Rose did a rendition with her own talent. On this song it will be Rose and also with Carlos Santana."

Las Vegas pays tribute to soca singer Blaxx

The growing Latin, Caribbean/West Indian community in the city of Las Vegas, Nevada, joined with local elected leaders and their representatives to honour and pay tribute to the late soca artist Dexter "Blaxx" Stewart.

The event took place at the Taste of Latin America and The Caribbean in the Arts District Downtown on April 23.

Stewart, who died on March 28, was one of the influences to promote, celebrate and preserve Caribbean/West Indian in Las Vegas, a media release said.

The posthumous recognitions were issued by Las Vegas mayor Carolyn Goodman, US House of Representatives member Susan Lee and the state's governor, Steve Sisolak.

The Taste of Latin America and the Caribbean is a local regional passport to explore the taste, cuisine, arts and culture from Latin America and Caribbean/West Indies. The release said AT&T was as an official sponsor for this year's event.

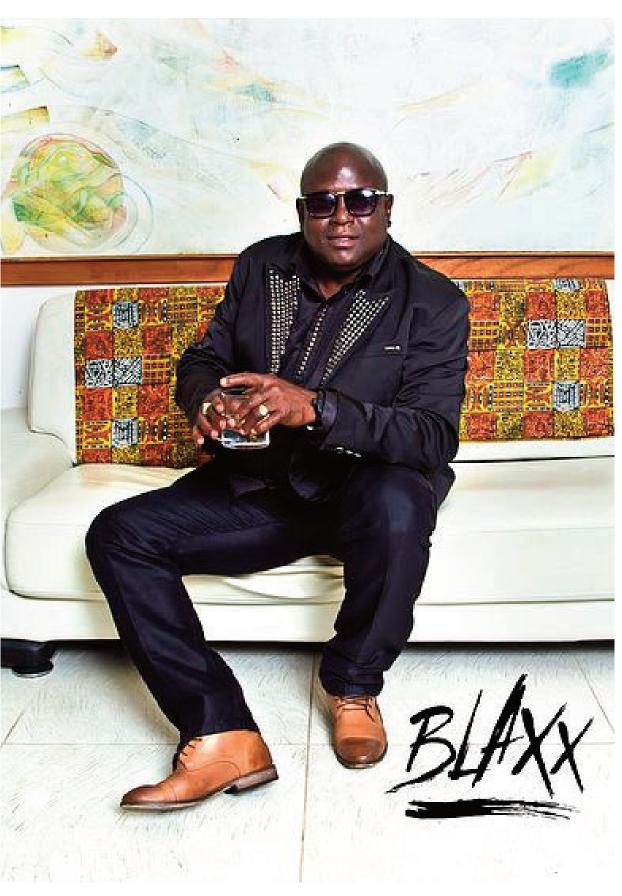
Nevada has a growing Latin Caribbean/West Indian population from countries including Jamaica, TT, the Dominican Republic, Belize, St Lucia, Guyana, Puerto Rico, Grenada, Cuba, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Venezuela, Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Mexico and El Salvador, among others, the release said.

It said according to the Guinn Center, 4.2 per cent of Nevada's foreign-born population are from the Caribbean.

In 2021, Sisolak issued a proclamation designating June as Nevada Caribbean Heritage Month.

Meanwhile, the soca artist was laid to rest after a funeral service at Queen's Park Savannah in Trinidad on April 6.

Snippets of his funeral were shared online with his friends, family, and fans, all joining in his funeral procession, which



Beloved soca singer Blaxx: tributes continue to pour in

closely resembled a soca street party. The artist, 61, passed away from Covid-19 on shared a final tribute to him. March 28, 2022.

At his funeral, Blaxx had musical tributes from Destra, Super Blue, Xavier Strings, and many others who performed his songs.

On Instagram, his friend Destra Garcia

"We love you Blaxx! Thank you for the mark you made in all of her lives she said," as she posed with more than a dozen of young artists, including Juby, Patrice Roberts, Drue, Jesse, Terri Lyons, and others.

Bringing home the boys

Michelle Obama talks about Sasha, Malia's dating lives

It feels like just yesterday that Malia and Sasha Obama were a pair of preteens running around The White House while their mom and dad, the beloved Michelle & Barack Obama, ran the country as First Lady and President of the United States.

Now that Malia and Sasha have both grown into young women, with the summer-born sisters soon turning 24 and 21, respectively, momma Michelle took a minute to speak on the reality of her forever baby girls having adult dating lives and bringing "grown men" home.

During a recent stop by The Ellen De-Generes Show, Mrs. O spoke candidly on what it's like to view her daughters as adults, reminiscing with the titular host about the time back in 2008 when the girls came to the show solely to see The Jonas Brothers. "They loved the Jonas Brothers. Now they are bringing grown men home," the former First Lady said jokingly, also adding, "Before it was just, like, pop bands. Now they have boyfriends and real lives."

Here's more on Michelle Obama's take on raising Sasha & Malia below, via Ellen:

"I listened to what my mother said when she was raising us. She said, 'I'm not raising babies, I'm raising real people to be out in the world.' And I kept that in mind with the girls.

"I mean, they wouldn't always be in that bubble of the White House, so they had to learn to make their beds. They had to learn how to drive. They had to learn how to be compassionate, independent, responsible people so that they entered the world as responsible, compassionate, capable people. And I think they are amazing young women because of that."



Sasha and Malia Obama pictured hiking recently in Los Angeles



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D&S Group CEO Sasha Singh, left, shows off the artist's rendering of the new home while, at right, is Ontario Finance Minister Peter Bethlenfalvy

Taking care of our seniors

New long-term care home for Afro-Canadaians announced

D&S Group & Atlantic Mas Foundation, joined by MPP for Pickering-Uxbridge, Peter Bethlenfalvy, Dr. Alvin Curling, and other guests, on April 22 announced the approval of a non-profit Long-Term Care home in Durham that will have designated spaces for the Afro-Caribbean cultural community - the first of its kind in Ontario.

"I am truly proud to be a part of this important initiative for the Afro-Caribbean community," said Sacha Singh, President and CEO of D&S group. "We have surrounded ourselves with champions of the community to ensure we create the absolute best facility for our seniors. Our objective is to provide a beautiful living environment that anyone would be proud to call home."

Atlantic Mas Foundation is the Licence Holder is the license holder for the project and is a well-established Caribbean cultural organization in the GTA.

"The Atlantic Mas family has supported the community for many years in various areas," said family spokesperson Aisha Heywood. "We are excited that we now have a new and meaningful road to travel, which will benefit the elders we respect and care munity champion and Special Advisor is Dr. for so much."

While other culturally appropriate LTC leader who served as Ontario's first Black

homes exist across Ontario, up until now, there has not been one for the Afro-Caribbean community. The 128-bed home will be located in Durham Region, which has among the highest percentage of residents of Afro-Caribbean heritage in Canada.

"Our government has a plan to fix longterm care and a key part of that plan is building modern, safe, and comfortable homes for our seniors," said Paul Calandra, Minister of Long-Term Care.

Today's announcement is part of the Government of Ontario's 6.4-billion-dollar commitment to creating more than 30,000 net new beds by 2028 and upgrading 28,000 long-term care beds across Ontario.

"I'm proud to support this project, as it will provide much needed long-term care beds to Durham residents, while supporting our region's vibrant Afro-Caribbean population as they age," said Peter Bethlenfalvy, MPP for Pickering-Uxbridge. "Today's announcement speaks to our government's commitment to ensure that seniors receive the best culturally appropriate care in their own communities."

Also supporting the project as a com-Alvin Curling, a distinguished community Speaker of the House and first Black cabinet minister in addition to numerous other diplomatic and philanthropic roles.

"This significant announcement is welcomed by the Afro-Caribbean Black Community," said Curling. "The contribution of the community to the health care sector is well documented. This project will certainly help to address the desperate long-term care need in our community."

This project is being celebrated by many high-profile members of the community.

"A sense of community is imperative throughout our lives, but especially so in our latter years. It is wonderful to see something like this coming to fruition for our Afro-Caribbean Community," said Jamaal Magloire, retired Canadian basketball legend, President of the Jamaal Magloire Foundation and current Raptors Assistant Head Coach and Community Ambassador. "I am proud to be part of that demographic and even prouder to see a place dedicated to ensuring the older generation feels at

The licensee will be working with the Ministry of Long-term Care to build in a suitable final location, in order to meet ministry development guidelines.



Live like a local

New Nevis resort offers taste of home for \$17K/night

Travelers who purchase either of the Four Seasons Resort Nevis' two top "Private Retreats" estate homes "Live Like a Local" packages of exclusive amenities including daily deliveries of fresh Nevisian produce, chef-prepared brunches and dinners, signature Nevisian massages and even private concerts.

The offer applies to the luxury resort's four-bedroom Hill Estate and four-bedroom Villa Le Mangabey. Larger families may also reserve the Hill Estate's spacious seven-bedroom compound, which offers views of the sea and Nevis landscape, four pools, two gyms, and a couple's massage room. Villa Le Mangabey offers modern indoor and outdoor spaces, playful artwork and sliding glass doors that open to a pool and barbecue pavilion.

Other package activities include traditional Nevisian kite-making classes and a combined resort botanical tour and cooking class.

Guests will also be the exclusive audience for a private, in-home concert by Greenhouse Band, a top Nevis rock and reggae band. The unit will perform live from the private estate lawn, combining its Caribbean repertoire with Top-40 pop songs.

Each villa also offers services and amenities including dedicated ambassadors who fulfill special requests, provide

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The Four Seasons resort offers panaromic views of Nevis Peak and a golf course

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The Four Seasons' residences, villas and estate homes feature panoramic

views of Nevis Peak, the property's Robert Trent Jones II-designed golf course, landscaped gardens and the Caribbean Sea. "Live Like a Local" package rates start at \$17,000 per night for travel through June 30, 2022.

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Jazzy Jeff: Will should have slapped someone sooner

Will Smith's Oscars slap fiasco is finally starting to slow down and everyone has almost run out of ways to make it about themselves. Recently the Oscars slap saga saw the Academy reveal that the actor has been banned for 10 years. Chris Rock has been tight-lipped about the whole ordeal but offered a small bit of information which is that he won't talk until he is paid. This is fair game and makes sense but in this day and age not striking why the iron is hot can cost you.

DJ Jazzy Jeff is forever linked to the Will Smith brand because of The Fresh Prince and the NY Post is noting that he broke his silence.

"Don't get it twisted that it was something he was proud of. It was a lapse in judgment, you know?" the songwriter began." he continued, "I think the thing that I've realized is I don't know too many people that has had the least amount of lapse of judgment than him."

"I can name 50 times that [Will] should've smacked the sh*t out of somebody and he didn't," Jeff explained. "So for him to have a lapse in judgment, he's human. And I think a lot of the criticism comes from the people who don't think



Will Smith and DJ Jazzy Jeff: Lapse in judgement when coming to the slap

people like that are human."

To be honest that is the fairest take anyone has given, from Will's acceptance not at the Oscars would have taken a speech you can clearly tell things have built weight off his shoulders.

up inside of him.

Maybe slapping someone earlier and

MJ's 'Bad' outfit worth hundreds of thou\$ands

Michael Jackson's estate has revealed that the outfit the late singer wore in the "Bad" music video is worth hundreds of thousands of dollars.

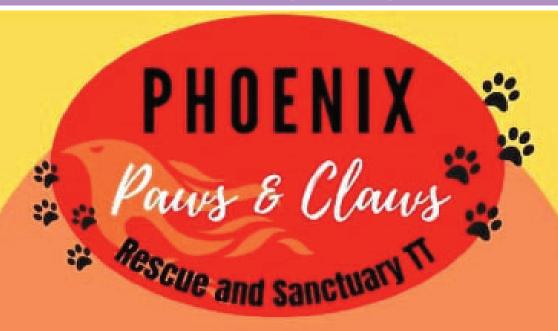
According to new legal documents, the King of Pop's estate lists the one-of-a-kind piece of memorabilia as being worth \$271,875. The information was shared with a Los Angeles County judge as part of an accounting given to the courts for the pop star's massive estate.

The MJ Estate and its executors spent years following his death cleaning up the financiers and eventually got it to a place where it earns hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue each year. Interestingly, the tax-related documents are a few years old, so it's unclear if the estate is holding on to the memorabilia or if it is displayed in some location.

Meanwhile, MJ's outfit in his "Thriller" music video was sold for \$1.8 million at Julien's Auctions, per the report.

In a recent accounting document, the estate noted that Jackson continues to bring in "in excess" of two billion, money that provides for his three children, and his mother.

"Michael Jackson provided the sole financial support for his children and was Mrs. Jackson's primary source of support. The Executors have endeavored to continue to meet the financial needs of Mrs. Jackson and the children. The Executors have done so through a family allowance for Mrs. Jackson and the children as well as various other means," the document states, according to the report.



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Jazz n' Creole

Eastern Caribbean's top music festival is back in Dominica

One of the Eastern Caribbean's top music festivals is making a comeback!

Dominica will see the return of the popular Jazz n' Creole Festival on Sunday, May 1, 2022, after a two years hiatus due to the pandemic.

This will be the 11th edition of the festival, which will feature a number of notable names from the region, from St Lucia's Teddyson John and the JSJ Trio from Guadeloupe.

Acting Festivals and Events Manager, Samanatha Letang made the announcement recently.

"Born in Castries, St Lucia to a deeply

spiritual home, Teddyson John started his musical journey at a young age, nurtured in the church. In 2007 he made a move to Gospel and R&B to Soca, taking his career to another dimension. The move earned him the Groovy Soca Monarch title in 2015 putting him on an international map that made him become a household name, locally, regionally and internationally," she stated. According to Destination Marketing Manager, Kimberly King the return of the festival is a responsible decision following the successful implementation of pilot events held during the carnival season.

"This year, we successfully piloted spe-

cial events during what is traditionally called the carnival period and have now made the responsible decision to open up for more events. We anticipate that hosting events will attract more visitors to the island whether friends and family or leisure visitors."

Joining the regional acts will be several local artistes that are expected to be announced in the coming weeks. The first of those is a group of four local talented female Dominican group, Femme 4.

Femme 4 includes Marsha Laurent, Shalina Samuel, Marsha Augustine and Tasha Peltier.



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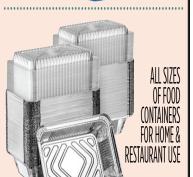
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EVERYTHING AS THE DOLLAR STORES BUT

Riri rocks her baby bump in Barbados; A\$AP arrested

Rihanna and A\$AP Rocky are taking in the Caribbean sun as they gear up to welcome their first child together! In the photo, the adorable (okay, beautiful) and very pregnant singer was seen wearing a black bikini enjoying her time on vacation with A\$AP Rocky in RiRi's island hometown of Barbados.

The Barbadian vacation comes after the couple was plagued by cheating rumors from Fenty shoe designer Amina Muaddi. The designer later took to Instagram to deny rumors that A\$AP cheated, apologizing for her "reckless" behavior.

RiRi and her baby daddy seem to not be bothered by it all. They were later spotted meeting up at the airport for their trip together in Barbados, as Rihanna wore a multi-colored mini dress that perfectly hugged her baby bump as she met up with the rapper and his family. She also had her long hair up into a high bun as she walked beside her beau.

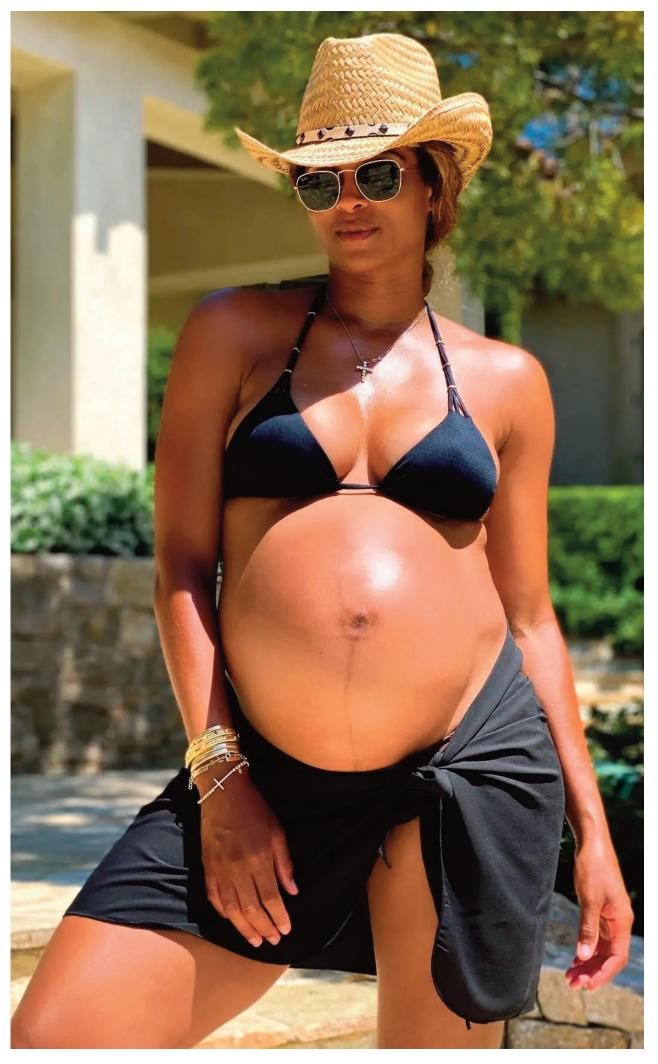
Meanwhile, A\$AP was arrested after flying to LAX on his way back from meeting Riri in Barbados.

The rapper flew from Barbados, where he was with Rihanna, to Los Angeles on a private jet, but at the airport police were already waiting for him at the terminal, where the musician was detained and handcuffed, information confirmed by eyewitnesses present.

This arrest is related to an incident that happened on November 6, 2021, in which an alleged victim assured that Rocky shot them 3 or 4 times, grazing his left hand.

Although it is unknown where exactly the events happened, a day later A\$AP Rocky performed at Complex Con in Long Beach, being accompanied by Rihanna.

In addition, Los Angeles police have served a search warrant at Rocky's Los Angeles home. Officials claim that A\$AP did know the alleged victim and that after an argument between the two is that the shooting would have happened, information corroborated by LAPD, according to TMZ.



The very pregnant Rihanna rocks a black bikini in her homeland of Barbados



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Trini movie 'She Paradise' celebrates sisterhood

Following its world premiere at the AFI Festival and successful screenings at Tribeca Film Festival and BAM (Brooklyn Academy of Music) among others, She Paradise had its homecoming premiere at MovieTowne, Port of Spain and San Fernando, on April 25.

Directed by Trinidad and Tobago filmmaker Maya Cozier, She Paradise is a coming-of-age story that follows Sparkle as she joins a soca dance group and finds an opportunity for friendship and escape, said a media release.

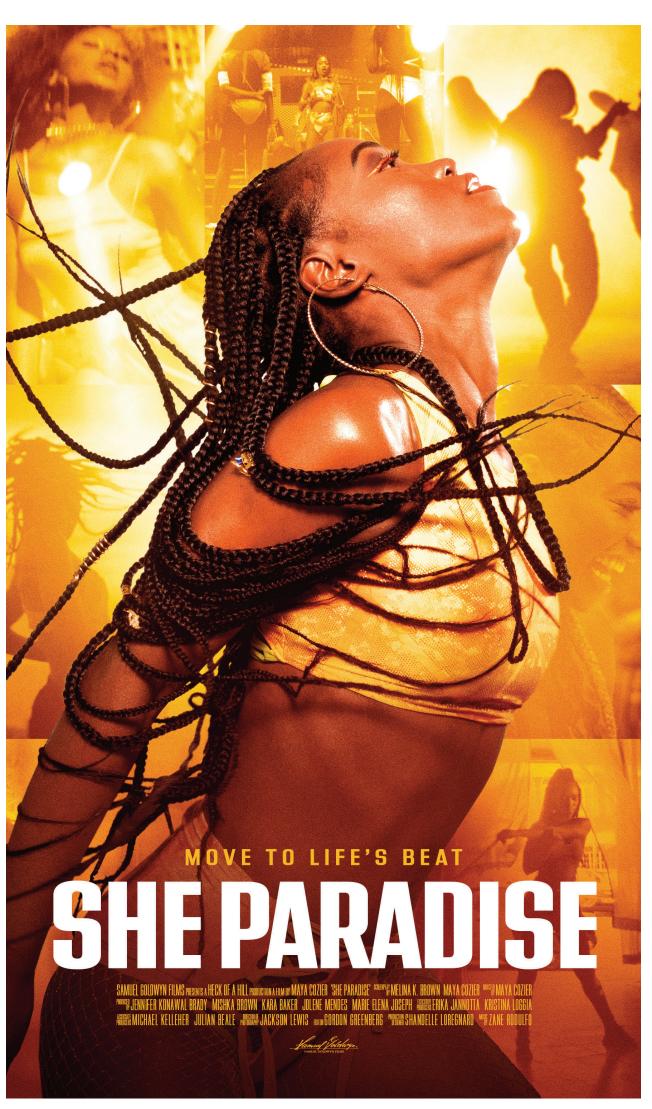
Cozier said in the release that festival audiences fell in love and empathised with the main character. "(They) fell in love with the sisterhood. What really struck the most was that everyone that I spoke to said that they were rooting for the lead character and that they empathised with Sparkle and connected with her story and really wanted to follow her throughout," the release quotes her as saying in a recent interview.

She Paradise received crucial seed funding in Trinidad from the Take One Feature Film Grant, a programme of then Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts.

Reviewed on the film industry website, The Playlist, writer Robert Daniels noted She Paradise is a love letter not only to the autonomy of a young, black woman but the culture of a proud island nation, too."

The film will run at MovieTowne venues until May 5. This is Filmco's third theatrical release, which forms a core element of the organisation's distribution offering, the release said.

For more info: contact Mikayla at distribution@filmco.org



Meet the Guyanese who is a Canadian soccer star

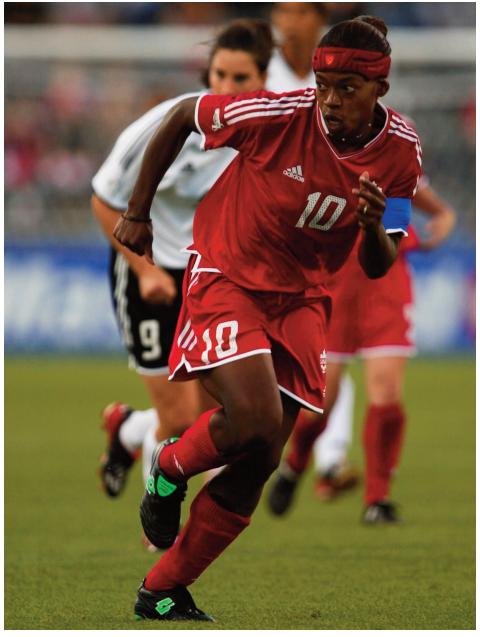
THE name Charmaine Elizabeth Hooper is synonymous with 'Canadian soccer' [known as football in Guyana], and she will be remembered as one of the country's best-ever women players.

Hooper enjoyed an illustrious career spanning just over two decades and left an indelible mark on Canadian soccer with her scintillating performances. Today, the now-54-yearold Hooper lives in Waco, Texas, USA. These days, her attention is centred principally on her 17year-old daughter Charlie, who's following closely in her footsteps but whom she feels is even a better player than she was at the same age. "I would like to tell her that if I had the opportunity that she has, I would be in heaven. When I was growing up in Canada, at 14. I was playing in the Under-18 age group."

Charlie is eligible to represent USA, Canada and Guyana and was invited earlier this year for a tryout in Canada, but opted out for personal reasons. Despite not being Charlie's coach, both Charmaine and her father Chuck, formerly a coach at Baylor University, play valuable roles in her progression and are present at all of her practice sessions and games. This entails hours of travelling between Waco and Dallas, where Charlie plays club soccer.

That apart, Charmaine manages four Vacation Rentals and also owns a Child Care Centre.

As she reflected on her own career in Canada, Hooper shared that she feels somewhat slighted with the treatment meted out to her after her glit-



Chairmaine Hooper: inducted into Canadian Soccer Hall of Fame

tering career ended in 2006. She admitted that currently, the Canadian Football Federation is making efforts to have the "right" persons on board but felt this wasn't the case previously.

According to the outspoken Hooper, who is a close relative of former Guyana and West didn't even expect to be invited to be part of the federation since "I spent a lot of time battling with the authorities for the improvement of the women's game."

Hooper referred to other countries who are using their past players, especially in their

youth programmes, to assist in their development of the game, but this wasn't the case in Canada, where she claimed there were persons in the federation who knew nothing about soccer but were all "yes people; people they can control and agree with everything they say."

On a more positive note, Indies player Carl Hooper, she Hooper said, "things seemed to have changed somewhat since I noticed they have been hiring a few ex-players in the federation, and that's a good start."

> Touching on women's soccer in Guyana, Charmaine feels there's a need for a more structured programme with the game being played more at the club

and school levels. She also thinks that the Guyana Football Federation needs to invest financially. more. in the women's game since it doesn't seem to be the case.

Charmaine is also urging the young players in Guyana not to be distracted by the number of overseas-based players in the national team, but to use that as a motivation to show off their undoubted skills.

Hooper was inducted into the Canadian Soccer Hall of Fame in June 2012 and in October of that year, into Canada's Sports Hall of Fame in Calgary. And as if that weren't enough. she was inducted into the North Carolina State Athletic Hall of Fame in 2014.

Significantly, Hooper was inducted into the United Soccer League's Hall of Fame in 2002 after being named Atlanta Beat's Most Valuable Player (MVP), and became the only Canadian player in Women's United Soccer Association (WUSA) history to score in the Founders Cup III.

Strong, powerful and determined, the powerhouse played 131 times for the Canadian team, scoring no fewer than 71 goals.

Hooper made her debut for Team Canada as an 18-year-old against Team USA in July, 1986. She went on to represent Canada at three FIFA Women's World Cups (Sweden 1995, USA 1999, USA 2003). At the 1995 and 1999 World Cups, Hooper was recognized by the FIFA Women's World Cup Technical Study Group as one of Canada's outstanding players.

The Queen bows to Darren

Ace Canadian-Trini pannist hailed as a Point of Light

Queen Elizabeth II, as head of the Commonwealth, has recognised Darren Sheppard, representing TT, as the 220th Commonwealth Point of Light in honour of his exceptional voluntary service running pan music education programmes for young people and seniors, said a release from the British High Commission.

Sheppard, 49, leads Fonclaire Steel Orchestra, which has helped teach music and run education programmes for over 1,000 children in schools in south Trinidad. He has been a member for over 40 years, and has since founded numerous steel orchestras, both in TT and in Canada, where he has worked as a musician.

Through Fonclaire, Sheppard and his network of volunteers aim to support under-resourced communities and use music to provide opportunities for new generations of young people. The band also recently set up a seniors programme teaching music to older people who turned to music as a form of therapy during the pandemic.

As part of the legacy of the Commonwealth heads of government meeting in London in 2018, the Queen, as head of the Commonwealth, is thanking inspirational volunteers across the 54 Commonwealth nations for the difference they are making in their communities and beyond, by recognising one volunteer from each Commonwealth country every

The Commonwealth Points of Light awards celebrate inspirational acts of volunteering across the Commonwealth and help inspire others to make their own contribution to tackling some of the greatest social challenges of today.

Sheppard said: "This award



Darren Sheppard, recognised by Queen Elizabeth II for his volunteerism

shines a light, not only on me, but on the magnificent power of TT's steelpan music and the amazing community that gave birth to our steelband. I thank God for being the centre of my work and I thank Her Majesty the Queen for honouring me with this recognition. I finally thank sons Daniel and Dade for sharing me all their lives with so many others.

Harriet Cross, British High Commissioner to TT, said: "Darren is an admirable example of someone who works continuously to empower his community through his work with young people. Through his stewardship of the steelband

Fonclaire, he has used TT's steelpan music to inspire people, young and old, to improve themselves and excel beyond expectations.

"I am delighted that I will soon present Darren Sheppard with this honour on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen.

"In addition to highlighting Darren's work which drives positive change in San Fernando, I hope this award inspires people to dedicate themselves to improving their own communities and their country. I know many people are proud of Darren's achievement and I wish him continued strength and success."

The Commonwealth was decribed in the release as a diverse community of 54 nations that work together to promote prosperity, democracy and peace. The heads of government meeting brought together leaders from all the member countries to reaffirm common values, address shared global challenges and agree how to work to create a better future for all citizens, especially young people. Voluntary service is a vital part of this agenda, which is why the queen has chosen to recognise outstanding volunteers across the Commonwealth in this spe-

Mas, Atlanta style

Caribbean Carnival scheduled for May 27-30

Atlanta Caribbean Carnival will host its 35th celebration from May 27-30. The event is promising "lively fetes, J'Ouvert, a wide array of cross-cultural food vendors, display of costumes (inclusive of carnival queens) and the region's top performers on stage at the Atlanta Carnival festival village," a media release said.

The live entertainment cast includes St Vincent's Skinny Fabulous, Trinidad and Tobago's Nadia Batson, Barbados' Lil Rick and Edwin Yearwood, St Lucia's Motto and Grenada's Tallpree.

During the carnival, Skinny Fabulous will also be honoured with a proclamation by the city of Atlanta and will serve as Grand Marshall at the parade, the release said.

Atlanta Caribbean Carnival Bandleaders Association (ACCBA) president Patricia Henry said the event can be a platform for boosting regional tourism.

"It is very important to showcase the culture in mainstream settings where persons from various backgrounds can observe and embrace it. We want folks to come out and see what the Caribbean has to offer so the festival can be a platform for encouraging tourism for the entire region," Henry said in the release.

The annual downtown Atlanta tradition has previously attracted celebrities from Love & Hip Hop and Real Housewives TV show, and will this year feature the participation of Jamaican reggae singer, actress, model, and brand ambassador, D'Angel.

The festival has attracted sponsors such as The Atlanta Falcons, Coca Cola, S&A Laparkan, Juneteenth, Total Wine, Soca Wine, Golden Krust, C3 Designs Biz, CFX Graphica, So Blast Marketing & Exposure, Mr Wayne Creative Designs, Clarke TV Network, Carib Life Media, T2A Films, Asinto Music Network, Streetz 94.5, La-Vonda Gilchrest Realtor and Tina Chin Pop Up Cake Shop.

The festival will support the efforts of charitable organisation Blessed Hands



St Vincent's Skinny Fabulous will serve as Grand Marshall at the 2022 Atlanta Carnival parade

Generous Hearts, the release said.

For more info:

www.atlantacarnival.org/ or Facebook:

www.facebook.com/AtlantaCarnival and Instagram: www.instagram.com/officialat-lantacarnival/

King of Soca

New Machel Montano biography set for June release

Elizabeth "Lady" Montano shares insights in the 40-year long career of her son Machel Montano in the biography she has written, King of Soca.

It is set for release in June.
The biography is the signature achievement for the businesswoman, who describes herself as "the ultimate insider" to Machel's stardom in the music industry.

King of Soca is the debut publication of the first-time author's very own EESM Publishers imprint. It covers the evolution of Machel – the man and artist - over four decades. From her extraordinary vantage point, Montano details the characteristics of and stories associated with the various eras of Machel's artistry. She shares the highs and lows of her son's journey against the backdrop of his "ever-evolving interior world shaping his outer expression," states a release on the biography.

The book is based on Montano's 2018 MPhil dissertation – The making of Monk Monte: Creativity and Commodification in Trinidad and Tobago Popular Culture. At first, Montano was tempted to build on it for a PhD, but decided against the academic route when she understood that her intention was to make it accessible to everyone.

An educator by training, Montano has viewed storytelling as a vital part of knowledge sharing, which she deems essential to growth and development. King of Soca therefore



Montano performs at the Maha Shiv Raatri show in India in March

embodies a comprehensive record of the music history of 47-year-old Machel which, according to the former "momager", is not well known, and much less so among the nation's youth.

Even with the solid foundation of her 2018 thesis, it has taken Montano two years to bring the work to fruition. Commenting on the process, she says, "I started writing the book itself in 2020, at the start of the pandemic when everything was shut down and I was in Toco. I thought I would finish it quickly because it was all in my head and I simply had to adapt my master's dissertation. However, once it ceased to be an academic project, the possibilities for what I could include were now suddenly endless."

Montano's enduring desire

to document her son's story is manifest in her compulsive collection of Machel memorabilia, which in 2015, constituted a full exhibition at the historic Boissiere House in Port of Spain. She admits to her relentless pursuit to preserve evidence of all aspects of his life since what she describes as "his miracle birth" in 1974, and more so from 1982 when he officially entered the entertainment arena.

Her vision for the project was clear: "I was always able to see what the book would be like. I was disappointed when I could not include all the pictures, anecdotes, imagery and other special things I wanted in my dissertation. So seeing the book actually taking shape really created a renewed vision of what it would be like. I'm really thankful to the various teams working with me to bring my words to life."

Montano believes the biography will resonate with anyone interested in knowing more about Machel. "I am very conscious of Machel's continuous transformation and the extent to which he has opened my mind about inclusion," she says. "So while it is said that you must work with a set target audience, or a specific niche or population in mind for your product, I am satisfied that this work will deliver an authentic, revelatory, impactful account of my son's life in music to anyone open to receiving it," she adds.

Boudoir Beauty

Photographer helps keep it sexy in the bedroom

BEAUTY beyond boundaries. This is the motto motivating Jaime Rampersad to inspire, transform and empower women from behind the lens.

The 41-year-old has weaponised her two passions – photography and make-up artistry – to fight what she refers to as society's biased beauty status quo with her novel, nonconformist take on boudoir photography.

"I am challenging the status quo by creating an opportunity for women – regardless of their size, shape or age, to see themselves as beautiful," Rampersad said.

So what is boudoir photography? Boudoir is a French word which means a woman's private salon. Typically, boudoir photography is an intimate shoot that usually involves a certain level of undress. However the degree of nudity depends on the photographer and their subject.

Rampersad dispelled some common misconceptions about boudoir photoshoots, saying, "The misconception that boudoir photography is only for a specific size of person...that it's only for a specific age of woman. Also, a lot of people think that boudoir has to be this overtly sexual, raunchy kind of pictures. It is art, this is an artform."

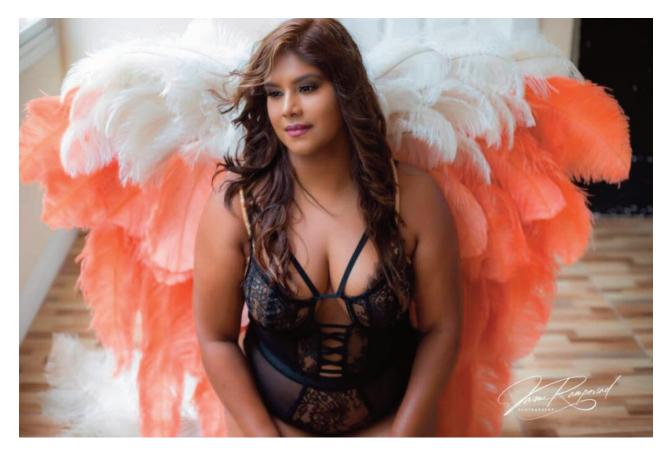
She said her core message is about changing people's definition of what beauty is and empowering women to embrace their beauty and who they are.

Rampersad said that her journey into boudoir photography started as a personal one. In 2020, she made the decision to consciously discover herself as she was fast approaching her milestone 40th birthday.

To accomplish this, the wife and mother of one felt inclined to do a boudoir photoshoot to mark the occasion.

"I wanted to do a boudoir photoshoot with one of my favourite photographers but she at the time was based in Austin, Texas. Covid came and I was not able to go and do my shoot with her."

So, Rampersad decided to do her own boudoir shoot since she had 18 years of



experience under her belt as a makeup artist pioneering airbrush makeup locally and had worked as a professional photographer since 2013.

"I was able to see myself in such a different light and it gave me such a deep level of appreciation for myself which I think is so important. You do lose yourself when you step into different roles in your life, being a wife, being a mother. This really helped me to rediscover who I was and in doing that and seeing how powerful that was, I said this is something other women need to experience."

"My whole awakening has been because of boudoir. Even though I was doing the other genres of photography before, it wasn't until I found boudoir that I found my purpose."

Rampersad said like her, most of her clients are on a journey of self-discovery and self-acceptance.

"What I hold to be important in my life is connection with others. Doing boudoir photography allowed me to get that deeper connection with women and also empower and uplift them and help them. And it allows them to get a deeper level of appreciation for themselves and for some of them, it is discovering a whole new side

to who they are."

"I have made it into an experience where they get to connect with their mind, body and soul. It's not just to come and take some pictures – it is a whole experience."

And quite the experience it is since clients can expect an almost therapeutic service that supersedes what one would anticipate from a typical, run-of-the-mill photoshoot.

Upon booking with Jaime Rampersad Photography, clients receive a guided journal that asks deeply personal and introspective questions that help them gain deeper insight into who they are.

Rampersad also engages her clients with her bubbly personality via Zoom where she reassures and dispels common boudoir misconceptions and asks pointed mentally and emotionally stimulating questions to gauge their comfort level and boudoir goals so they could have a more fulfilling experience with photos they love.

In addition, she offers stylist services guiding clients on possible outfits for their shoot. Most clients wear lingerie but some may opt for implied nude or fully nude shots if they desire.



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