

AMIBU

America In Black And White The Magazine

2026

Issue 6

January
2026

Free



Shelia Prosser

pg. 7

AMIBU Community



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TABLE

03

HOST'S LETTER

06

FALL EDITORIAL

07

PERSON OF THE YEAR 2025
SHELIA PROSSER

11

REMEMBERING: WORLD AIDS DAY
AWARENESS DECEMBER 1ST 2025

15

LENACAPAVIR: A BREAKTHROUGH
HIV PREVENTION TOOL HELD
BACK BY GLOBAL FUNDING CUTS

19

NOROVIRUS: AMERICA'S "WINTER
VOMITING DISEASE" ON THE RISE

22

GEORGIA'S TAXPAYERS MAY SOON
BANKROLL TRUMP'S DEFENSE

CONTENTS

<https://AmericanInBlackAndWhite.us>

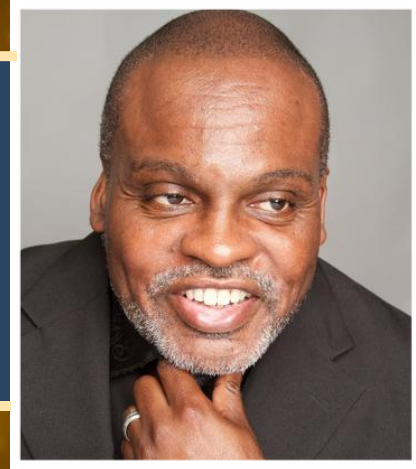


Anthem



HAPPY HOST LETTER

| BY CHARLES ZACKARY KING |
FOUNDER / HOST OF AMIBW



Dear Readers,

As we step boldly into a brand-new year, I am thrilled to welcome you to the January edition of AMIBW The Magazine. The turning of the calendar is always a moment of reflection and anticipation, and this year, it carries even greater significance as we prepare to launch Season 4 of America in Black and White on January 12, 2026.

Before we look ahead, we must pause to celebrate a remarkable achievement. Our Person of the Year for 2025 is none other than Shelia Prosser. Her dedication, leadership, and unwavering commitment to excellence have left an indelible mark on our community and beyond. Shelia embodies the spirit of resilience and vision that America in Black and White seeks to highlight, and we are honored to recognize her as a shining example of what it means to lead with purpose.

Now, as we turn the page to Season 4, expect fresh energy, bold conversations, and inspiring stories that continue to amplify voices and celebrate legacies. This season, we're introducing an exciting new segment: Final Word Friday. Each week, we'll close with a powerful reflection, a final word to challenge, uplift, and inspire as we head into the weekend. It's our way of ensuring that every Friday leaves you with something meaningful to carry forward.

2026 promises to be a year of growth, impact, and transformation. Thank you for being part of this journey with us. Together, we will continue to celebrate excellence, honor history, and inspire the future.

With gratitude and excitement,
Charles Zackary King

Charles Zackary King
Host of America in Black and White



CZK Enterprise is where legacy meets strategy

“Empowerment isn’t a moment. It’s a movement.”

“From struggle to strategy—from pain to power.”

“Stories shape legacies. Legacies shape futures.”



CZK ENTERPRISE

COME AND RECEIVE YOUR LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCE

“We don’t inherit legacy—we build it.”

We create systems, stories, and symbols that elevate Black excellence, preserve cultural heritage, and empower future generations. Through bold media, empowering merchandise, and transformational community initiatives, we don’t just inspire—we build. CZK is more than a brand—it’s a blueprint for impact.

Introducing Final Word Friday: Where Our Community Speaks Its Mind | Article By Blake Andrews |

On Friday, January 16th, 2025, AMIBW proudly launches a bold new conversation space Final Word Friday. Inspired by the spirit of open dialogue and unapologetic truth-telling seen on shows like MSNBC's Fall Back Friday, this new series invites our community to speak directly to the issues shaping our lives right now.

Final Word Friday is not about résumés, titles, or professional spotlights. It's about perspective. Voice. Impact. It's about meeting at the intersection of culture, politics, and lived experience. Giving our viewers and listeners a place to say what needs to be said.

JANUARY 2026

Every week, we'll host a dynamic roundtable of guests and bring in the voices of our viewers. Real people navigating real challenges as social and political events unfold. From national debates to neighborhood concerns, from cultural wins to systemic frustrations, Final Word Friday opens the floor to the opinions, arguments, insights, and unapologetic honesty that rarely make it past the headlines.

This is your space to lean in. To push back. To challenge norms.
To speak your truth and hear the truths of others.

And as always, we invite our AMIBW family to Sip with Purpose.

Subscribers and guests are encouraged to bring their official AMIBW Mug to every episode because these conversations aren't just something to watch or listen to... They are something to experience.

Unfiltered. Unscripted. Unapologetic.

Final Word Friday will deliver the depth, edge, and community-centered commentary you've come to expect from AMIBW. Now with an added dose of open-mic candor and cultural reflection.

Host: Charles Z. King

So mark your calendar. Set your reminders. Gather your thoughts. And bring your AMIBW Mug.

[Click Here](#)



Sip To Every Episode

The conversation begins Friday, January 16th, 2025.

Watch. Listen. Engage.

[Click Here](#)



Sip To Every Episode

January 16th 2026

Because on Friday your voices will help deliver the Final Word.

HOLIDAY EDITORIAL

THE PUBLISHERS DESK
CREATIVE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
BLAKE M. ANDREWS



A New Year, A Shared Vision

As we step into 2026, we do so together. Grounded in legacy, fueled by possibility and committed to the power of shared truth. AMIBW The Magazine was never meant to simply document moments; it was built to shape conversations, elevate voices, and remind us that our stories... All of them, matter.

The new year calls us not just to move forward, but to move with intention. It asks us to imagine a future where inclusion is not an afterthought, where dialogue replaces division, and where our differences become sources of wisdom rather than walls. At AMIBW, we believe progress is born when people are seen, heard, and valued. When storytelling becomes a bridge instead of a barrier.

In 2026, we recommit ourselves to amplifying voices that challenge, inspire, and heal. From community leaders and creatives to everyday individuals whose lived experiences shape our collective narrative. AMIBW will continue to honor stories rooted in truth, resilience, and hope. These stories don't just reflect where we've been; they light the way forward.

This year, we invite you to lean in with us. To engage boldly. To listen deeply. To dream collectively. Let us build a future where creativity uplifts, truth empowers, and unity is an active choice we make every day. AMIBW will remain a space where thoughtful conversation thrives and where every reader belongs.

As the pages of 2026 unfold, may this be a year of clarity, courage, and connection. Thank you for being part of this journey. For believing in the work, the mission, and the movement. Together, we continue to write a story that matters.

With vision and gratitude,
Blake M. Andrews

Blake M. Andrews

Chief Marketing Officer, IMTv360
Exec. Publisher & Creative Editor-in-Chief AMIBW





Shelia Prosser: Financial Literacy Specialist



"I am committed to destroy financial illiteracy, banish financial ignorance, and break generational curses one person, one family, and one community at a time."

07 AMIBIU

Shelia Prosser



Shelia Prosser is a driving force in the movement to eliminate financial illiteracy across America. As a Representative at Primerica Financial Services, she has built her career on empowering families, elevating communities, and transforming the way people understand money. Her mission is unapologetically ambitious: destroy financial illiteracy, banish financial ignorance, and break generational curses, one person, one family, and one community at a time.

As a single mom to a young adult son, Shelia's journey from Philadelphia, PA to Atlanta, GA reflects the resilience and determination she now pours into her work. Her personal story fuels her commitment to helping others rise, and a major part of her purpose is to inspire young people to understand how money truly works so they can start making stronger, smarter financial decisions early in life.

With over a decade of entrepreneurial experience, Shelia mentors individuals to make healthier financial choices, create multiple income streams, and step into business ownership with confidence. She is licensed in multiple states as a life insurance agent, investment agent, and financial coach. These credentials have established her as a trusted leader in the financial services industry.

Her influence stretches nationwide. Shelia has trained, supported, and developed hundreds of agents, contributing to the growth of thriving teams across the country. She continues to reach thousands through education on investing, retirement planning, debt elimination, income protection, college planning, and essential legal services.

Beyond Primerica, Shelia has owned several businesses and remains committed to encouraging others to pursue entrepreneurship as a path to freedom and stability. Her message is bold and consistent: "The time is NOW! We have to create generational wealth and massive passive income for generations to come."

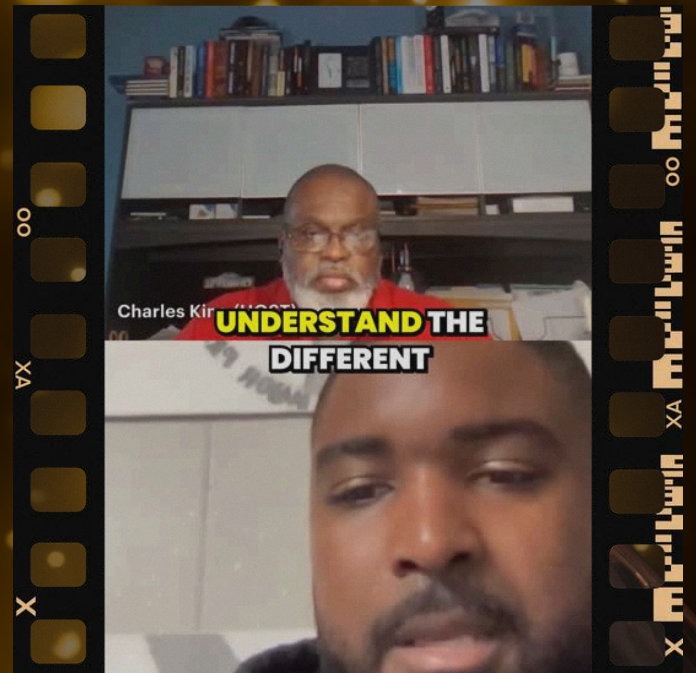
A visionary, mentor, and champion of financial independence, Shelia Prosser is reshaping the financial landscape, one empowered family, and one empowered young person, at a time.

Where to connect & find their work:
https://therealhowmoneyworks.com/us/sprosser_tm
<http://www.primerica.com/sheliajprosser>



Leadership in His DNA: A Journey From Quarterback to Community Builder

Elgin Hilliard Jr.: US Postal Courier



“Patience saved me. Sitting, learning, and waiting my turn taught me more than any easy starting job ever could.”

Elgin Hilliard Jr.

09 AMIBH



Leadership in His DNA: A Journey From Quarterback to Community Builder

From Liberty City's Pork and Bean projects to record-setting nights under stadium lights, Elgin "EJ" Hillyard's story reads like a playbook on how talent, faith, and service can rewrite what's possible for a young Black man in America. Football may have been his first language, a gift passed down from his father and grandfather, but the game quickly became something larger: a vehicle for strategy, patience, and purpose. Chess boards in the living room and Madden battles with his father trained his mind long before college scouts knew his name, teaching him to think three moves ahead—on the field and in life.

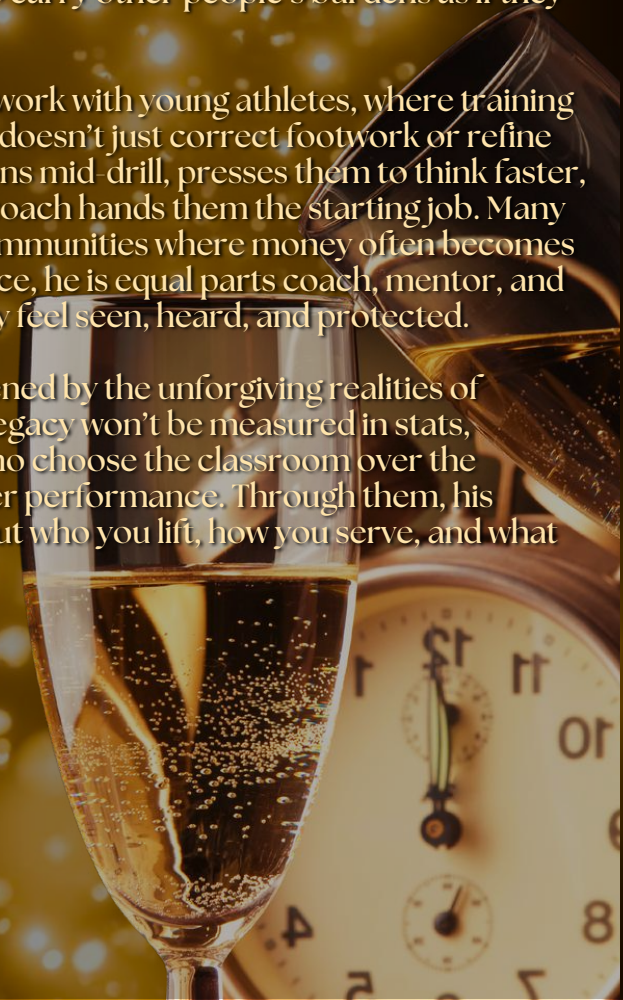
As a quarterback at Miami Northwestern, Florida International University, and Valdosta State, Hillyard learned that leadership was less about spotlight and more about stewardship. Sitting behind NFL-bound Teddy Bridgewater taught him the discipline of waiting his turn, absorbing everything he could from the sideline instead of running from competition. That patience paid off when injuries and opportunities collided, pushing him into defining moments where preparation met pressure—whether it was a near-perfect first start in high school or stepping in unexpectedly against his former teammate on a college Saturday. Each chapter reinforced the same lesson: real leaders serve even when they're not the ones on the marquee.

His time in the Indoor Football League, where he twice earned Offensive Player of the Year honors, stamped what his journey had already suggested—that he was a late bloomer whose excellence showed up when the game sped up and the field shrank. Yet even as the accolades piled up, Hillyard refused to let his career become a monument to individual achievement. The game had taken him across states, into locker rooms full of egos and expectations, and through the highs and lows of being "the guy" and the one holding the clipboard. Those experiences hardened his resolve that football, at its best, is a classroom for character: humility, resilience, accountability, and the courage to carry other people's burdens as if they were your own.

Today, that philosophy lives through his academy and nonprofit work with young athletes, where training sessions are as mental and spiritual as they are physical. Hillyard doesn't just correct footwork or refine throwing mechanics; he bombards his quarterbacks with questions mid-drill, presses them to think faster, and challenges them to see themselves as leaders long before a coach hands them the starting job. Many of his sessions are free by design, a deliberate act of service in communities where money often becomes a barrier between raw potential and real opportunity. In that space, he is equal parts coach, mentor, and big brother—pushing kids past their limits while making sure they feel seen, heard, and protected.

Grounded in his faith, shaped by his father's example, and sharpened by the unforgiving realities of growing up Black in America, Hillyard understands that his true legacy won't be measured in stats, trophies, or headlines. It will be measured in the boys and girls who choose the classroom over the corner, the weight room over the wrong crowd, and purpose over performance. Through them, his message is clear: greatness is not just about touchdowns; it's about who you lift, how you serve, and what you leave behind when the stadium lights go dark.

Where to connect & find their work:



World AIDS Day Awareness

|Article By Charles Zackary King|



World AIDS Day is more than a commemoration, it is a call to action, reflection, and hope. Observed every year on December 1, it reminds us of the lives lost, the progress made, and the work still ahead in ending HIV/AIDS.

The Meaning of World AIDS Day

World AIDS Day was first established in 1988 by the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNAIDS, making it the first-ever global health day Wikipedia Britannica. Its purpose is to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS, show solidarity with people living with HIV, and honor the millions who have died from AIDS-related illnesses. The red ribbon, adopted in 1991, remains the universal symbol of support and remembrance Britannica.

Each year, the day carries a theme. In 2025, the theme is “Overcoming disruption, transforming the AIDS response” — a reminder that funding cuts, stigma, and inequality threaten decades of progress Moneycontrol.

Historical Context and Data

- In the 1980s and 1990s, HIV/AIDS was a rapidly escalating crisis. By 1997, new infections peaked at 3.3 million annually, and AIDS-related deaths peaked in 2004 at 2.1 million per year Britannica.
- Since then, antiretroviral therapy (ART) transformed HIV from a fatal disease into a manageable chronic condition, reducing deaths by more than 64% since 2004 Wikipedia.
- As of 2024, an estimated 40.8 million people worldwide were living with HIV, with 1.3 million new infections and 630,000 AIDS-related deaths that year Business Standard Moneycontrol.
- In the U.S., about 1.2 million people live with HIV, with ongoing disparities in testing and treatment Las Vegas Sun.

Continued pg. 27

True Detergent: A Clean Revolution Rooted in Community

FEATURE ARTICLE | BY BLAKE M. ANDREWS

In a market crowded with flashy labels and chemical-heavy formulas, True Detergent stands out by keeping things simple: powerful cleaning, eco-friendly ingredients, and a mission bigger than laundry.

Founded in 2012, True Detergent was built to challenge the notion that effective cleaning requires harsh additives. Its 4× concentrated formula delivers a deep clean while remaining phosphate-free, biodegradable, and hypoallergenic. That means it's safe for sensitive skin, children's clothing, and even delicate fabrics, all without sacrificing stain-fighting power. A single bottle handles more loads than many leading brands, making it cost-effective as well as eco-conscious.

But True is more than soap in a bottle—it's a movement. As one of the first widely available Black-owned household brands, it gained momentum not only for performance but also for what it represents: economic empowerment and community pride. For many consumers, choosing True is about circulating dollars where they can make a difference.

The company has also evolved with the times, expanding into laundry sheets that are plant-powered, biodegradable, and perfect for travel. These lightweight sheets dissolve completely in water, reducing plastic waste and appealing to eco-conscious households looking for greener alternatives.

True's packaging reflects its practical philosophy: sleek, no-nonsense, and designed to make measuring easy. Whether purchased as a 50-load bottle, a 101-load pouch, or a box of dissolvable sheets, every option delivers the same promise—clean clothes without compromise.

Retailers like Amazon, We Buy Black, and BlackOwned365 have helped expand access nationwide, while the brand's own site, TheTrueProducts.com, offers direct-to-consumer bundles, subscriptions, and multi-packs. Customers consistently praise its ability to tackle odors, sweat, and stubborn stains while remaining gentle enough for the most sensitive users.

At a time when shoppers are seeking products that align with both their values and lifestyles, True Detergent checks every box: affordable, effective, environmentally responsible, and community-driven. For households looking to switch from conventional brands, it's more than a detergent—it's a vote for cleaner clothes, cleaner living, and cleaner business practices.

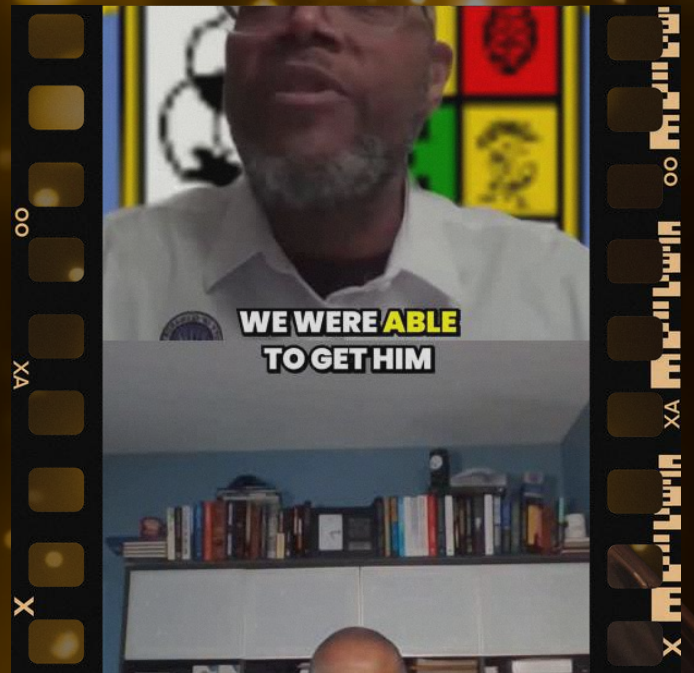
In short: True Detergent isn't just doing laundry. It's doing good.

[Click Here](#)

👉 [Try TRUE Detergent Today And See The Difference For Yourself](#)

Guarding the Charter & Serving the People: Councilman's Fight for Fiscal Justice and Community Dignity

James Herring: City Councilman



“If Jesus could be nailed to a cross for us, the least I can do is risk some comfort to serve my fellow man.”

James Herring

Guarding the Charter & Serving the People: Councilman's Fight for Fiscal Justice and Community Dignity

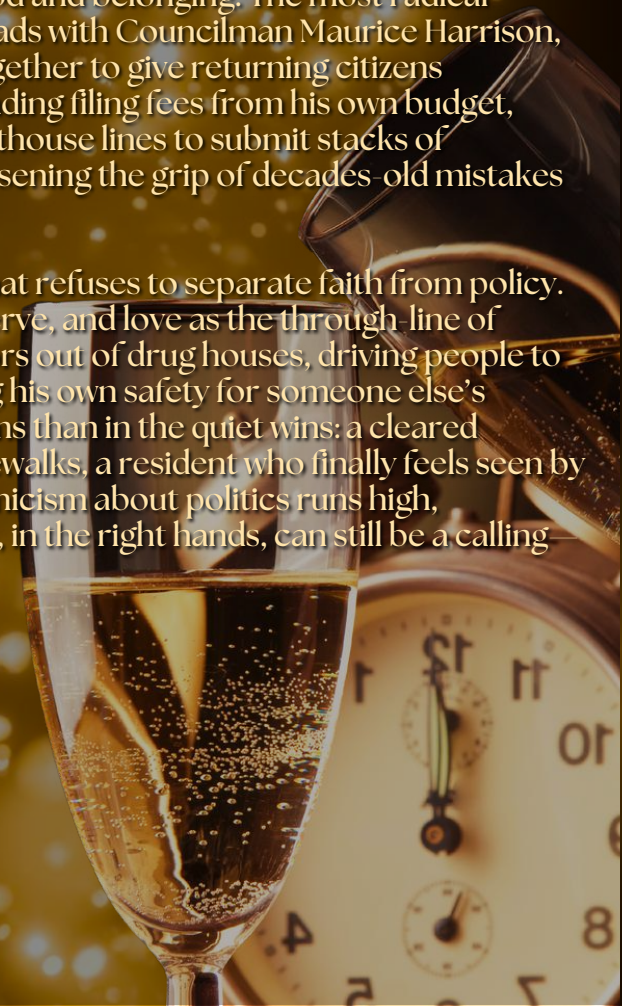
In a small Maryland city built on the grounds of a former plantation, City Councilman James Herring has spent more than two decades proving that local government can still be an act of love. His story begins with a snowstorm and unplowed streets, but the real blizzard was fiscal chaos: unpaid payroll taxes, threats to revoke the city charter, and a culture of “we’ve always done it this way” that normalized borrowing just to keep the lights on. Herring, a career accountant schooled in nonprofit, corporate, and government ledgers, stepped into office with a simple conviction: public money is sacred because public money is the people’s money. Tight internal controls and tough votes were not about austerity for its own sake; they were about protecting seniors’ prescriptions, keeping roofs over heads, and refusing to mortgage the future of Black homeowners already carrying more than their share of the tax burden.

Herring’s insistence on running government “for people, not profit” shows up most clearly where budgets and lives intersect. He pushed back against expensive programs the city could not sustain, even when they were politically popular, arguing that every new position and perk ultimately landed on the backs of residents in higher property taxes. In a majority-Black municipality with a limited commercial tax base, he understood that a nine-cent rate increase was not an abstraction; it was food, medicine, and stability for elders on fixed incomes. For Herring, accountability is not a slogan but a practice: reading the charter line by line, challenging colleagues who want to bend rules in the shadows, and insisting that citizens see exactly how—and why—decisions get made in their name.

Yet his service stretches far beyond council chambers and line-item debates. Herring is as likely to be found at a community luncheon, Glenarden Day celebration, or a Thanksgiving meal as he is behind a dais, using events as vehicles to rebuild a fraying sense of neighborhood and belonging. The most radical expression of that commitment is the expungement fair he co-leads with Councilman Maurice Harrison, where volunteer attorneys, hot grills, and folding tables come together to give returning citizens something the system has long denied them: a fair chance. By funding filing fees from his own budget, partnering with the state’s attorney’s office, and standing in courthouse lines to submit stacks of applications, Herring has helped clear hundreds of records—loosening the grip of decades-old mistakes that once blocked jobs, housing, and dignity.

At the heart of Herring’s journey is a theology of public service that refuses to separate faith from policy. He talks openly about Jesus’ sacrifice, the biblical command to serve, and love as the through-line of scripture and community life, then backs it up by pulling neighbors out of drug houses, driving people to rehab, and accepting that real ministry sometimes means risking his own safety for someone else’s second chance. For him, success is measured less in titles or terms than in the quiet wins: a cleared record, a repaired roof, a senior who can walk safely on level sidewalks, a resident who finally feels seen by a government that often feels distant and cold. In an era when cynicism about politics runs high, Councilman James Herring stands as a reminder that local office, in the right hands, can still be a calling—and that love, practiced as policy, can literally change lives.

Where to connect & find their work:



Lenacapavir: A Breakthrough HIV Prevention Tool Held Back by Global Funding Cuts

| Article By Charles Zackary King |

The closest thing we have to an HIV vaccine has finally arrived. Lenacapavir, a long-acting injectable medication that can prevent nearly 100% of HIV infections when administered twice yearly, is being hailed as revolutionary. Yet despite its promise, only a fraction of the people who need it will gain access.

https://youtu.be/xhjDDZLSx_o?si=XOs3m3elaj-nelwl

The Numbers Behind the Breakthrough

- Current plans by Gilead and international funders will provide lenacapavir to 2 million people over three years, about 666,000 annually.
- Research by Dr. Andrew Hill (University of Liverpool) shows this rollout could avert 165,000 infections, but scaling up to 10 million people annually could prevent half a million infections and put us on track to ending HIV transmission.
- The challenge: funding cuts, particularly from the U.S. under President Donald Trump, have left prevention efforts severely under-resourced.

The Cost and Access Challenge

- In the U.S., a course of lenacapavir costs \$28,000.
- Thanks to advocacy and licensing agreements, the drug will be sold at no profit in low-income countries, with costs reduced to around \$40 per person per year.
- Gilead's plan to reach 2 million people by 2028 is described as an "initial step," with hopes that generic manufacturers will expand access further.

Why This Matters Globally

Anne Aslett, CEO of the Elton John AIDS Foundation, called the rollout "unprecedented," noting that doses are arriving in Eswatini at the same time as in the U.S., a sharp contrast to the early AIDS crisis, when African nations waited more than a decade for antiretroviral drugs.

Still, she warns that funding gaps threaten progress. Vulnerable populations, young women, LGBTQ communities, sex workers, and people who use drugs, are often excluded from prevention services. Without reaching these groups, the epidemic cannot be contained.

Continued pg. 33

AMIBW Networking Empowerment Community

Your Invitation to Connect, Collaborate, and Grow

FEATURE ARTICLE | BY BLAKE M. ANDREWS

At **America In Black and White (AMIBW)**, every episode, article, and feature tells a story, stories of resilience, innovation, and empowerment within our community. But we believe the conversation shouldn't end when the page is turned or the show wraps. That's why we created the AMIBW Networking Empowerment Community, a vibrant space where readers, supporters, and past guests can meet, share, and build meaningful connections.

Inside **AMIBW The Community**, you'll find more than just familiar faces. You'll discover a powerful network of entrepreneurs, thought leaders, artists, and change-makers who have walked the same paths, faced similar challenges, and celebrated hard-earned victories. Here, you can connect directly with inspiring individuals you've read about or seen on the show, continue conversations, ask questions, and explore new opportunities for collaboration. You'll be able to share your own journey, whether you're launching a business, promoting a cause, or offering your expertise, all within a supportive space where your voice matters.

Members enjoy access to exclusive resources such as early event invitations, private workshops, and insider updates before they are made public. The community also serves as a place to form partnerships, seek mentorship, and build projects together. Many members find that the right conversation at the right time can open doors to exciting ventures. When you reach milestones, big or small, you'll find people ready to celebrate your wins alongside you.

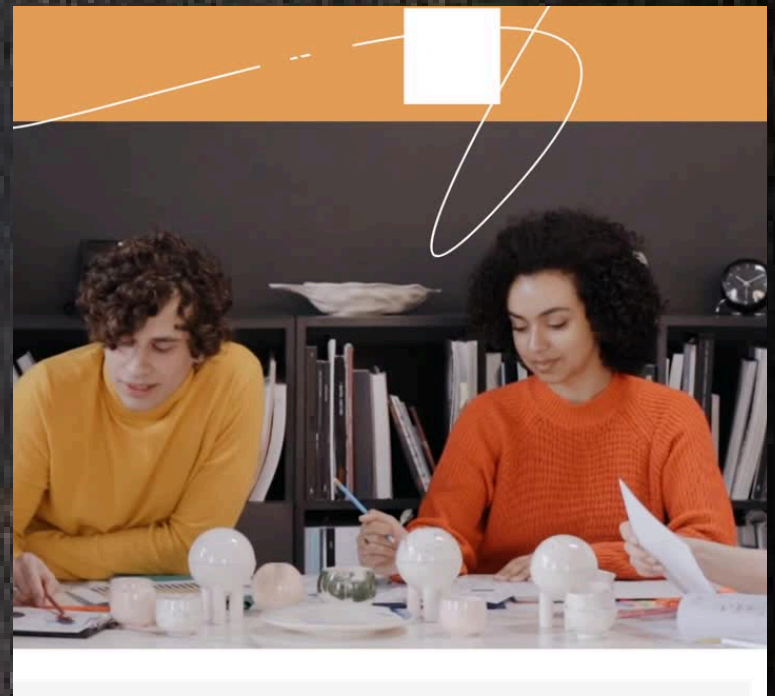
The **AMIBW Networking Empowerment Community** is open to past and future guests, readers, and supporters of America In Black and White.

It's also a welcoming safe space for entrepreneurs, professionals, creatives, and community advocates who value authentic and purpose-driven connections.

Joining is simple. **Visit the AMIBW Networking Empowerment Community below** and create your free profile. Once inside, introduce yourself, explore the member list, and start engaging with others.

This is your invitation to be part of something bigger, not just reading the stories, but living them alongside those who inspire you. Let's grow together, support one another, and build a network as powerful as the voices we amplify.

Click here: [**AMIBW Networking Empowerment Community**](#) where connection becomes opportunity.



- **Interested in having a community of your own to fully customize, contact Blake Andrews in the AMIBW community.**

Songs of Legacy and Liberation: A Journey From Baltimore Roots to Journey to Josiah

David D. Marshall: CEO of Journey to Josiah Inc.



“Your true happiness is tied to your purpose; when you lean into why you were created, you lean into joy on purpose.”

David D. Marshall

Songs of Legacy and Liberation: A Journey From Baltimore Roots to Journey to Josiah

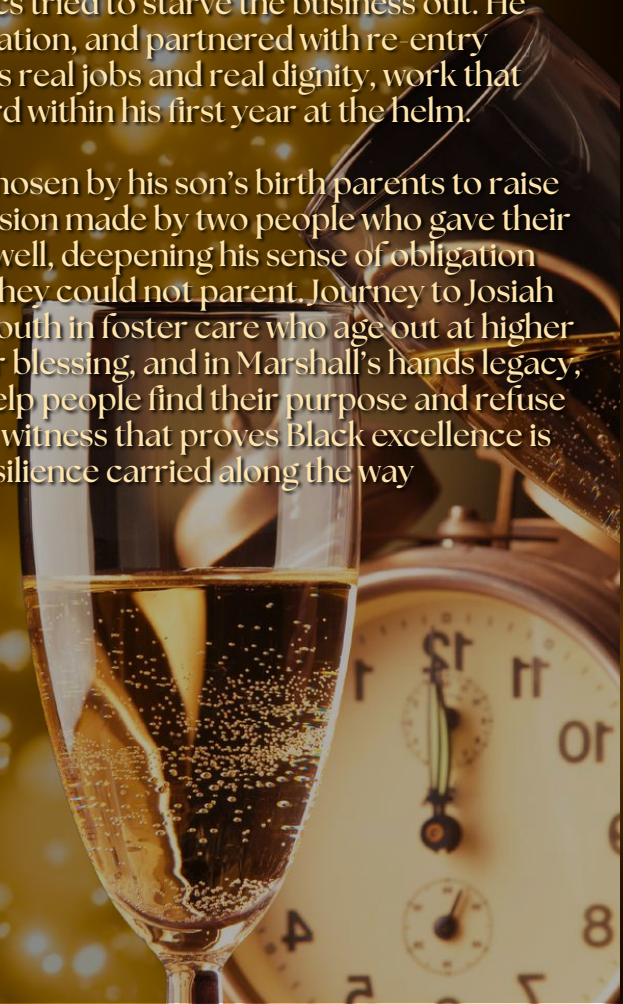
David D. Marshall's story moves like a spiritual through time—rooted in Turner Station, carried by Black church pews, and lifted onto opera stages and boardrooms that were never built with him in mind. Born into a Baltimore County family where business, books, and Black faith lived under the same roof, he learned early that legacy was not theory but daily practice: a grandfather who sang hymns on the stairs after dinner, a father who ran the oldest Black-owned refuse company in the county, and a mother who corrected every verb because education was non-negotiable for three young Black boys growing up in America. Their message was clear: you are blessed to be a blessing, and whatever you build must make room for somebody else.

Marshall carried that creed into every chapter of his life. In the classroom, he called his middle schoolers “my children” and modeled possibility by choosing a path few in his community had seen up close: a Black man pursuing opera at a high level, singing Schubert with the same soul he brought to the spirituals he first learned in Shiloh Baptist Church. On stage with Bronx Opera and Opera Ebony, he discovered that his “operatic” sound—once out of place in a Black Baptist sanctuary—was in fact an instrument of cultural fusion, where European scores could still carry the stories of Turner Station and Jim Crow's shadow, and mentors pushed him to bring the same conviction he poured into spirituals into every aria.

When he stepped into leadership of his family's 70-year-old trash removal business, Marshall found himself in a different kind of theater: one of overt racism, political gamesmanship, and unequal contracts that paid Black haulers a fraction of what their white counterparts earned. Operating routes in communities known for open bigotry—where residents put trash in trees to dehumanize Black workers and slurs were a regular soundtrack—he leaned on his grandfather's mantra that “everyone's got their road to hoe,” refusing to bow, bend, or cut corners even as politics tried to starve the business out. He modernized operations, created new roles, hired from Turner Station, and partnered with re-entry programs and prison work-release units to give returning citizens real jobs and real dignity, work that earned him a Henrietta Lacks-named Employer of the Year award within his first year at the helm.

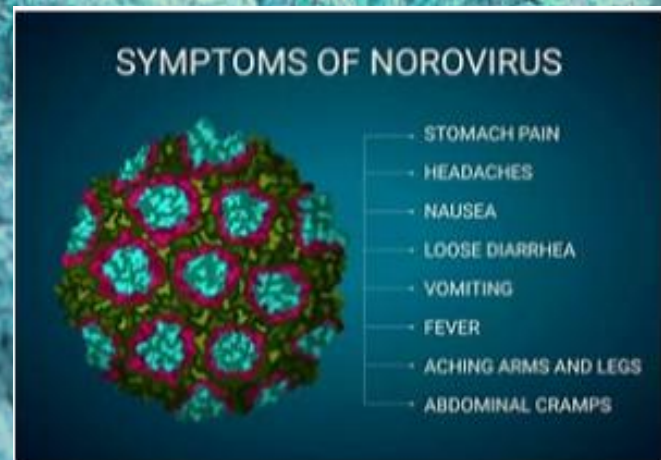
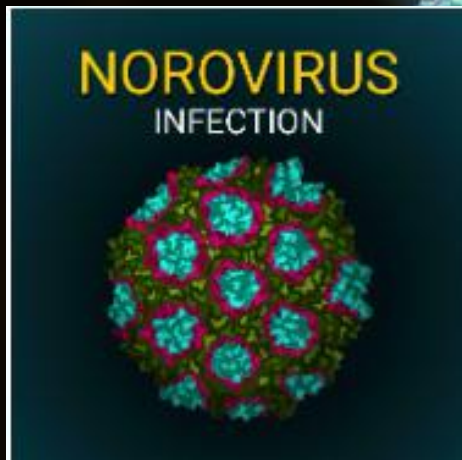
Fatherhood, though, was the turning point that reframed it all. Chosen by his son's birth parents to raise Josiah, Marshall speaks of adoption as a sacred trust—a love decision made by two people who gave their “best of them” to someone they believed would steward that gift well, deepening his sense of obligation not just to his child but to LGBTQIA+ families who had been told they could not parent. Journey to Josiah began there, evolving into a nonprofit focused on 2SLGBTQIA+ youth in foster care who age out at higher rates and too often never hear daily words of love, affirmation, or blessing, and in Marshall's hands legacy, Black history, and queer advocacy braid into a single calling: to help people find their purpose and refuse mediocrity through coaching, “The Purpose Room,” and a public witness that proves Black excellence is defined not by the room but by the road—and by the love and resilience carried along the way

Where to connect & find their work:



Norovirus: America's "Winter Vomiting Disease" on the Rise |

Article By Charles Zackary King |



Norovirus cases are surging across the U.S., with test positivity nearly doubling since late summer. States most impacted include Alabama, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, Wyoming, Louisiana, Michigan, and Indiana. The CDC stresses that prevention hinges on thorough handwashing with soap and water, safe food handling, and disinfecting contaminated surfaces. NBC News CBS News ABC News CDC

Norovirus: America's "Winter Vomiting Disease" on the Rise

Norovirus, often called the "winter vomiting disease", is once again sweeping across the country. Unlike other viruses with a fat-based envelope that alcohol sanitizers can break down, norovirus is encased in a rugged protein shell called a capsid, making it resistant to hand sanitizers. That means soap and water for at least 20 seconds is the most effective defense.

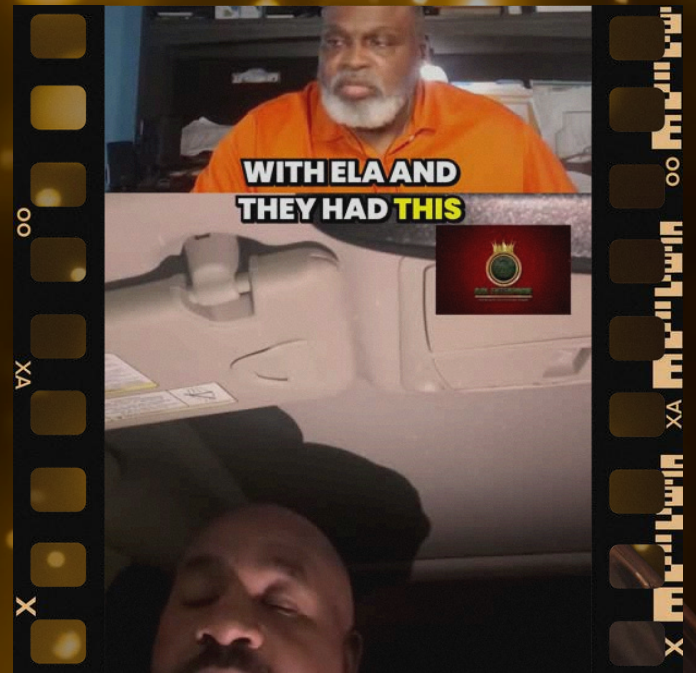
Current Trends and Data

- CDC data shows nearly 14% of tests were positive for norovirus during the week ending Nov. 15, 2025, compared to just 7% three months earlier CBS News ABC News.
- Last December saw a record-breaking 25% positivity rate, and experts warn this winter could bring another harsh season Gizmodo.
- Epic Research and WastewaterSCAN data highlight the hardest-hit states: Alabama, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, Wyoming, Louisiana, Michigan, and Indiana NBC News ABC News Gizmodo.
- Outbreaks are being reported in schools, cruise ships, and communities nationwide, with more than 200 passengers sickened aboard a luxury cruise ship this fall CBS News.

Continued pg. 30

Stories That Heal the Block: The Art of Truth, Trauma, and Transformation

Tyree Hughey: Social Worker (Mental Health).



“Art lets my kids put their pain on the wall instead of in their bodies; every canvas is a story that refuses to stay silent.”

Tyree Hughey

20 AMIBU



Stories That Heal the Block: The Art of Truth, Trauma, and Transformation

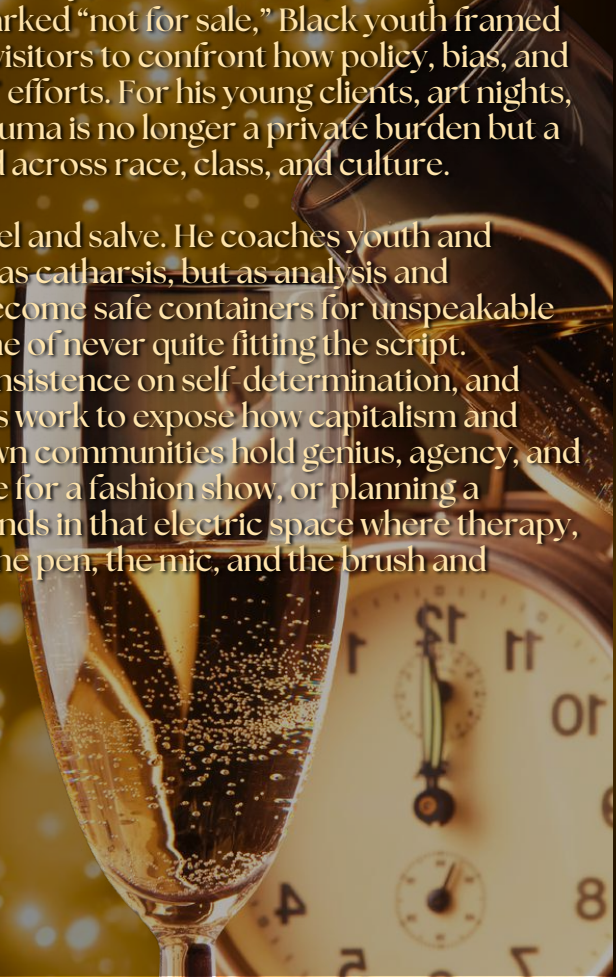
Tyree Hughey, known as Sincere on the mic, walks into a room carrying three things the system never expected him to weaponize for good: his trauma, his art, and his capacity to tell the truth without flinching. Raised in a family that treated community work like a birthright—soup kitchens, toy drives, church-based outreach—he learned early that service was not a side hustle but a way of life. That foundation became his compass as he navigated racism in school, a father incarcerated since he was nine, undiagnosed struggles with reading and anger, and the quiet grief of watching friends and neighbors swallowed by violence and addiction. Instead of numbing those wounds, Hughey carried them into mental health work, determined to be for young people what he often wished he had himself: a consistent, accountable adult who tells you the truth, stays when you act out, and refuses to confuse your pain with your potential.

As a therapist and director of group homes in Connecticut, Hughey specializes in high-risk youth navigating probation, detention, family rupture, and generational trauma that shows up as rage, shutdown, or a desperate need to belong. He leans on cognitive behavioral therapy, motivational interviewing, and dialectical tools to help them unpack triggers, regulate emotions, and see how choices shape outcomes, but his real edge is lived experience—he speaks openly about his own missteps, grief, and the first time he let himself cry as a grown man. In session and in the community, he pushes a simple mantra: failure is not a finish line but data, and perfection is a lie that keeps Black and brown boys locked out of healing. Every relapse, blown-up relationship, or bad decision becomes a chance to build resilience, not another excuse to write a kid off.

Art is where all of that work finds its fullest form. Through writing, digital design, galleries, and fashion collaborations, Hughey turns trauma into visual and narrative language that invites people to feel, question, and connect. In his climate, culture, and consciousness series and the nine-volume Poverty Pimping collection, he chronicles schools and systems that exploit Black and brown communities for data, dollars, and optics while starving them of real resources, accountability, and care. Short, dense pieces pair with piercing images—eyes that look through you, bodies marked “not for sale,” Black youth framed as both targeted and transcendent—forcing readers and gallery visitors to confront how policy, bias, and neglect show up in everyday classrooms, contracts, and “reform” efforts. For his young clients, art nights, galleries, and collaborative storytelling become spaces where trauma is no longer a private burden but a shared human story, one that reveals surprising common ground across race, class, and culture.

At the core of Hughey’s practice is a belief that story is both scalpel and salve. He coaches youth and adults to write, draw, rhyme, and film their experiences—not just as catharsis, but as analysis and blueprint. Characters, fantasy worlds, and comic-book frames become safe containers for unspeakable realities: abuse, abandonment, racism, incarceration, and the ache of never quite fitting the script. Influenced by James Baldwin’s disciplined rage, Marcus Garvey’s insistence on self-determination, and W.E.B. Du Bois’ demand for rigorous truth-telling, Hughey uses his work to expose how capitalism and white supremacy intersect, while still insisting that Black and brown communities hold genius, agency, and the right to joy. Whether he is directing staff on a unit, painting live for a fashion show, or planning a soundtrack to accompany his next book series, Tyree Hughey stands in that electric space where therapy, activism, and art merge—inviting the next generation to pick up the pen, the mic, and the brush and rewrite what survival looks like.

Where to connect & find their work:



Georgia's Taxpayers May Soon Bankroll Trump's Defense

|Article By Charles Zackary King|

Georgia recently passed a law that could force Fulton County taxpayers to reimburse Donald Trump and his co-defendants for millions in legal fees after the election-interference case was dismissed. Estimates suggest claims could reach \$10 million or more, though no payouts have been finalized yet [CBS News](#) [The Hill](#) [san.com](#).

Case Collapse, Costly Consequences

Fulton County's election-interference case against Donald Trump and 18 co-defendants was dismissed after DA Fani Willis was disqualified. That dismissal triggered Georgia's new SB 244 law, which allows defendants to demand reimbursement of "reasonable attorney's fees and costs."

What's Happening

- Case dismissed: The sprawling Georgia election-interference case against Trump and 18 co-defendants was dropped in late November 2025 after Fulton County DA Fani Willis was disqualified due to a conflict of interest [san.com](#).
- New law (SB 244 / GA Code §17-11-6): Passed earlier this year, it allows defendants to seek reimbursement of "reasonable attorney's fees and costs" if a prosecutor is disqualified and charges are dismissed [The Hill](#) [san.com](#).
- Potential claims: Trump's legal team alone spent more than \$5.5 million in Georgia since 2021. Co-defendants collectively spent millions more, with some raising funds through crowdfunding [CBS News](#).
- Taxpayer impact: Fulton County could be liable for millions, possibly tens of millions, depending on how many defendants file claims and what a judge approves [CBS News](#) [The Hill](#).

The Price Tag

- Trump: \$5.5M+ in Georgia legal fees
- GOP "fake electors": \$2.3M
- Harrison Floyd: \$363K (crowdfunded)
- John Eastman: \$937K (crowdfunded)
- Jeff Clark: \$153K (crowdfunded)
- Total exposure: \$10M+ and counting

Continued pg. 36



GOODE®

Foods

A Family's Mission to Put “Good” Back in the Can

Goode Foods began in 2003 with a simple idea: make nutritious, honestly labeled pantry staples accessible to everyday families. **Founder Emile Johnson**, a former Abbott Labs sales director, left corporate life and—with his son Andrew—built a Chicago-rooted, **Black-owned brand** that would grow from trunk-of-the-car deliveries into national grocery aisles. [The TRiBE](#)

Early on, the Johnsons aimed their impact where it mattered most. In 2009, Goode Foods became the sole supplier to Chicago's WIC centers, providing fresh produce, canned fruit and vegetables, beans, frozen vegetables, and even infant formula—an anchor contract that put healthier options directly into the hands of women, infants, and children across the city. The following year they won a cereal contract for Chicago Public Schools, reinforcing their community-first DNA. [Goode Foods](#)

As the brand matured, Goode Foods kept its labels—and its values—clean: non-GMO ingredients, no added sugar, BPA-free recyclable cans, and close work with Upper Midwest farmer co-ops to prioritize soil health and thoughtful crop rotation. It's a canning philosophy built on stewardship as much as shelf life. [Goode Foods](#)

Goode's community footprint extends beyond procurement lists. The company regularly re-engages with WIC centers and works alongside Catholic Charities to bring high-quality staples to families who need them—an on-the-ground commitment that mirrors how the brand started. Their own store locator still highlights WIC touchpoints, a quiet reminder of where the mission took root. [Instagram+1](#)

Leadership passed to Andrew E. Johnson, who helped drive a 700% distribution expansion, landing Goode Foods in major retailers such as Kroger, Meijer, Walmart, Food Lion, Shaw's, Associated Wholesale Grocers, Target, and more. That scale has enabled new categories—like Pic Select Fresh, the first Black-owned baby-food brand available in major retailers—while keeping ownership 100% family-held, without outside investors. [FIREBELLY+2The TRiBE+2](#)

Through all the growth, Goode Foods has stayed close to its starting line: serving families with dignity. From WIC clinics and school breakfast lines to everyday carts in national chains, the brand proves a canned vegetable can carry a lot—nutrition, trust, and opportunity—when a company treats community as its bottom line. [Goode Foods](#)

In short: Goode Foods isn't just stocking shelves; it's circulating good—in households, in supply chains, and in the communities that raised it. [Goode Foods](#)



FOODS

GOODE FOODS

A person with short blonde hair, wearing a green zip-up jacket over a light blue collared shirt, is shown from the chest up. They appear to be speaking. The background is a blurred interior of a vehicle, with a steering wheel visible on the right. A large, solid black rectangular box covers the middle portion of the image, obscuring the person's face and the text "Every brand raised their prices... except us." which is overlaid on the bottom section.

**Every brand raised their
prices... except us.**

Innovation With a Soul: How To Turn Military Grit Into Human-Centered Transformation

Lee Cage Jr.: Director of Technology



“You didn’t resist self-checkout at Kroger; you saw it made life easier and stepped in. AI is the same invitation.”

Lee Cage Jr.

Innovative Soul: How To Turn Military Grit Into Human-Centered Transformation

Lee Cage Jr. stands at the crossroads of service, technology, and transformation, carrying a soldier's discipline into boardrooms that are often desperate for clarity and courage. A veteran of the U.S. Army and longtime member of the reserves, he learned early that taxpayers invest heavily in training service members to be disciplined, accountable problem solvers—and he refused to let that investment die at discharge. That conviction shaped a career spent guiding nonprofits, healthcare systems, and government agencies through complex change, first as a Workday and ERP specialist and now as director of technology and transformation at BDO USA, where he designs the workflows, guardrails, and governance that make digital tools actually usable for real people. For Cage, every implementation is a living anthropology project: a chance to study how humans work, fear, resist, and grow when new systems collide with old habits.

Curated Automation, the veteran-owned consultancy he co-founded, was born from a gap he saw in the collaborative work management space and a corporate employer that said “no” to the idea for themselves but “yes” to him pursuing it on his own. Cage read the HR policy, asked permission, and built the Smartsheet-focused firm outside his full-time role—only to have that former employer become one of his first clients once he left, proof that integrity and transparency can turn boundaries into bridges. As a Gold Smartsheet and Bronze Invigate partner, Curated Automation delivers what he calls “Lexus-level” consulting at a price point more like Toyota, pairing enterprise-grade thinking with tools flexible enough to fill real operational gaps in asset management, service management, and project execution. The work, recognized with a Bronze Stevie Award in 2025, sits on the same foundation that carried him through grad school, a full-time job, and entrepreneurship at once: grit, a clear mission, and a support system that understands some nights must be spent inside building rather than “outside” being seen.

Underneath the technology, Cage is obsessed with people, especially the ones leaders often treat as obstacles: change resisters, nonprofit staff stretched thin, government workers buried under legacy systems. He rejects the myth of a single “best practice,” arguing instead that true transformation starts with knowing an organization's actual capacity, culture, and pain points, then designing solutions that honor both mission and human limits. In nonprofits and public agencies—where mission has historically outpaced infrastructure—he sees the greatest potential, helping teams consolidate scattered tools, reduce dependence on “Bob-only” knowledge, and build systems that can outlive any one employee. His favorite conversions happen with the “Lauras” of the world, 25-year veterans who swear, “This is how we've always done it,” until someone finally explains how new tools can save jobs, protect budgets, and let them leave at 4:30 instead of 8:00.

Cage's philosophy of leadership is deceptively simple: transformational leaders must be as passionate about what's in it for others as they are about what's in it for themselves. He trains his replacements, not out of fear but freedom, believing the faster someone can take his current role, the faster he can move into work that stretches him next. Success, for him, rarely shows up first in revenue; it shows up in clear consciences, enduring client friendships, and the quiet satisfaction of treating difficult people with more grace than they extend. Whether he is architecting Workday for a hospital, mapping Smartsheet workflows for a Texas nonprofit, or urging skeptical leaders to finally learn what AI really does, Lee Cage Jr. shows that the future of digital transformation belongs to those who can code systems and read souls—connecting technology, culture, and courage in ways that let people work smarter and live lighter.

Where to connect & find their work:

World AIDS Day Awareness

|Article By Charles Zackary King|

Strides in Treatment and Prevention

The fight against HIV/AIDS has seen remarkable progress:

- ART advancements: From early AZT in 1987 to today's single-pill regimens and long-acting injectables, treatment now allows near-normal lifespans Las Vegas Sun.
- Prevention tools: Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) have proven highly effective in preventing infection Business Standard.
- U=U (Undetectable = Untransmittable): People on effective ART who maintain undetectable viral loads cannot sexually transmit HIV Business Standard.
- Mother-to-child transmission: Once a major concern, it has been drastically reduced through targeted interventions Las Vegas Sun.

The Future Outlook

While progress is undeniable, challenges remain:

- Funding cuts and inequality threaten to reverse gains, especially in vulnerable communities Moneycontrol.
- Late diagnoses continue to hinder progress, with over half of new cases in Europe detected too late for optimal treatment News-Medical.Net.
- Research breakthroughs offer hope: trials with engineered antibodies, CRISPR gene editing, and long-acting injectables like lenacapavir suggest that a functional cure may be within reach Smithsonian Magazine AIDS.ORG.
- The global goal remains clear: end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030, a target set by UNAIDS and the UN Sustainable Development Goals Britannica UNAIDS.

Closing Reflection

World AIDS Day is not just about remembrance, it is about renewed commitment. We have turned HIV from a death sentence into a chronic condition, but stigma, inequity, and funding gaps still stand in the way of ending the epidemic. The future depends on global solidarity, scientific innovation, and community-led action.

Ending AIDS is possible but only if we choose compassion, equity, and sustained investment.

Sources: Wikipedia Britannica Business Standard Las Vegas Sun Smithsonian Magazine AIDS.ORG UNAIDS Moneycontrol

Continued pg. 39

Perseverance Without Borders: How I Turned a Haitian Roller Coaster Into a Global Talent Engine

Julbert Abraham: CEO of Task Maven Services



“Remote talent means one \$150,000 salary can become a five-person team that feeds families across continents.”

Julbert Abraham

Perseverance Without Borders: How I Turned a Haitian Roller Coaster Into a Global Talent Engine

From ducking under beds during a coup in Haiti to navigating JFK airport without a word of English, Julbert Abraham's life began in turbulence—and trained his instinct to treat uncertainty as fuel, not fate. Raised by entrepreneurial parents who taught him to “eat what you kill,” he arrived in the United States with no network and no language, but with a clear belief that if he could make it here, he could make it anywhere. College at Cheyney University became his first laboratory: an 18-year-old photography hustle launched not just to avoid being the “broke kid” on campus, but to force himself out of shyness, learn sales, and turn parties into paid relationship-building.

Corporate America sharpened his skills in customer service, systems, and upselling, and an MBA from Northeastern added global perspective—boardrooms in Shanghai and Beijing, crowded mobile shops where ten people orchestrated a single sale, and markets where negotiation was both art and survival. Laid off, broke, evicted, and carless, he rebuilt by launching a digital marketing agency that eventually served more than 700 clients across the U.S., Canada, Australia, Europe, and Brazil, using hybrid teams in New Jersey and overseas long before remote work was trendy. Along the way he learned hard lessons—business insurance, legal risk, payroll pressure, and the emotional cost of firing people late instead of early—yet kept centering feedback, mentorship, and faith as non-negotiables in his playbook.

Task Maven Services emerged from both success and loss: after exiting his agency and mishandling early capital, a friend's request for help with overseas talent reminded him that his real superpower was building global teams. Today, Task Maven connects more than 200 professionals across the Philippines, Nigeria, South Africa, Mexico, Colombia, India, Turkey, and the Caribbean with entrepreneurs who need everything from executive assistants and data entry to BD reps, grant writers, and fractional leaders. Abraham organizes his talent into three tiers—task-doers, critical thinkers, and leaders—then uses systems, coaching, and end-of-day reporting to protect quality, swap out poor fits quickly, and turn remote staffing into a strategic lever rather than a cheap shortcut.

At the heart of his leadership is a simple ethic: never ask anyone to do what you will not do yourself, and lead with transparency, access, and relentless communication. Weekly huddles, open DMs for staff, and a culture of promoting from within show team members a clear growth path—from individual contributor to business manager—while his own habits of early rising, prayer, workouts, and constant learning keep him grounded in discipline rather than hype. For Abraham, global entrepreneurship means creating opportunities everywhere: making it possible for a Filipino teammate to buy a condo and Mercedes, for a software founder to add 40 restaurant clients through one Task Maven BD rep, and for Black and immigrant entrepreneurs to see AI, remote work, and business acquisitions as doors, not threats.

Asked to define his journey in one word, he chooses “perseverance”—never giving up on the vision, even when specific businesses must pivot or die. His legacy, as he frames it, is less about handing down a company than about transmitting mindset: faith over fear, vision that sees 20–30 steps ahead, and the courage to start with one paying customer instead of waiting for perfect paperwork. Whether mentoring young founders, hosting entrepreneur dinners in Atlanta, or sketching future retreats to bring his global leaders together in one room, Julbert Abraham models a truth critical to AMIBW's audience: you do not need ideal conditions to build a global life—you need clarity, resilience, and a willingness to keep moving when life punches first.

Where to connect & find their work:

Norovirus: America's "Winter Vomiting Disease" on the Rise

|Article By Charles Zackary King |

CDC Recommendations for Prevention

The CDC emphasizes several key steps to stop norovirus from spreading CDC CDC:

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds, especially after using the bathroom, changing diapers, or before preparing food.
- Do not rely on hand sanitizer alone, it does not kill norovirus.
- Avoid preparing food or caring for others while sick, and wait at least 48 hours after symptoms stop before resuming these activities.
- Cook shellfish thoroughly to at least 145°F and wash fruits and vegetables well.
- Clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces using bleach-based solutions or EPA-approved disinfectants effective against norovirus.
- Wash contaminated laundry with hot water and detergent, then machine dry at high heat.

Why This Matters

Norovirus is the leading cause of foodborne illness in the U.S., responsible for 20 million infections annually, over 100,000 hospitalizations, and nearly 900 deaths each year CBS News. It spreads easily through contaminated food, water, surfaces, and person-to-person contact. Symptoms, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach cramps, can appear within 12–48 hours and last 1–3 days. Vulnerable groups include young children, older adults, and those with weakened immune systems.

Community Call to Action

This surge is not just a public health issue, it's a matter of community responsibility. By practicing rigorous hygiene, safe food handling, and responsible caregiving, we can protect ourselves and those most at risk. Norovirus thrives in close-contact environments, but prevention is in our hands, literally.

Sources: NBC News CBS News ABC News Gizmodo CDC CDC

Purpose in Motion: How I Turned Superhero Dreams Into a Life of Service

Rashaad Johnson:
Author



“Prayer changes nothing by
itself; it’s faith and work
together that rearrange
your life.”

Rashaad Johnson



Purpose in Motion: How I Turned Superhero Dreams Into a Life of Service

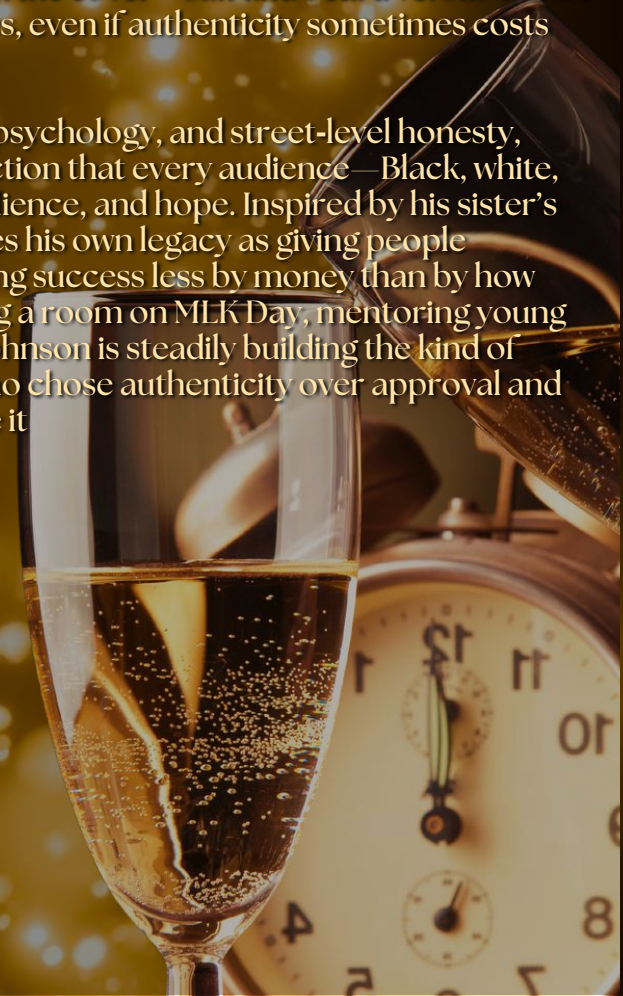
Growing up in North Carolina, Rashaad Johnson imagined himself as a real-life superhero, not to escape his world, but to fix it—feeding the hungry, buying mansions for his family, and lifting the burdens he saw on his single mother's shoulders. That early mix of imagination, empathy, and responsibility shaped a vow to be the one who “breaks the barriers” in his family, even without a clear blueprint for success, and later pushed him through a demanding electronics and computer technology degree at North Carolina A&T, where exposure to diverse cultures and the grind of a 5½-year journey forged his confidence and work ethic.

At a critical crossroads, Johnson shocked his family and mentors by turning down a promising tech job in New Orleans to take an unpaid internship and help build a group home and alternative-school programs for system-involved and “unreachable” youth. The loss of his sister during his final college semester and a mentor's challenge to finish anyway turned grief into urgency, convincing him that life was too short to ignore his calling to help people become their best selves, even if it meant sacrificing money and status in the short term. Years of community work taught him that most kids labeled “bad” really need love and discipline together, that purpose requires planting seeds long before any paycheck, and that leadership sometimes means doing hard things without immediate validation.

As an author, Johnson uses his books to move people from inspiration to action and from performance to authenticity. *Caged Dreams* grew out of a moment in corporate America when he heard himself laughing at an executive's unfunny joke and realized his own dream felt trapped inside a life built around fitting in, so he wrote a guide that urges readers to start working on their dreams now, with reflection questions and space to map a path forward. *Identical Contradiction* goes further and rawer, confronting code-switching, image, and identity through the “two Rashads” on the cover—suit and beard versus T-shirt and emojis—to give readers permission to reclaim their full selves, even if authenticity sometimes costs comfort, approval, or career opportunities.

On stage and in community spaces, Johnson blends philosophy, psychology, and street-level honesty, fueled by faith that requires both belief and work, and by a conviction that every audience—Black, white, or mixed—can connect through shared experiences of pain, resilience, and hope. Inspired by his sister's boldness and Nat Turner's uncompromising resistance, he frames his own legacy as giving people permission to live their dreams and be fully themselves, measuring success less by money than by how many lives are nudged toward courage. Whether he is challenging a room on MLK Day, mentoring young professionals, or posting quick thought pieces online, Rashaad Johnson is steadily building the kind of story he hopes one day appears in Black history books: a man who chose authenticity over approval and used his “superhuman” drive not to escape reality, but to remake it.

Where to connect & find their work:



Lenacapavir: A Breakthrough HIV Prevention Tool Held Back by Global Funding Cuts

| Article By Charles Zackary King |

Innovation in Delivery

- Foundations are experimenting with drone deliveries of drugs and testing kits.
- Digital pilots in London are making PrEP accessible directly to consumers, by passing traditional clinics.
- Sub-Saharan Africa is now pioneering models of care that are more advanced than those in parts of the Global North.



The UK's Role

Mike Podmore, CEO of STOPAIDS, emphasizes that UK contributions are not just charity, they fuel domestic research and innovation. Agencies like Unitaid have invested £250m into UK universities over the past decade, strengthening both global and local HIV responses. The UK has set a goal to end new HIV transmissions by 2030, and expanding access to lenacapavir will be critical to achieving it.

The Call to Action

Ending HIV is within reach, but only if global leaders step up. Dr. Hill and advocates worldwide are urging wealthy nations to contribute to a proposed \$400m fund to expand access without undermining existing HIV programs.

This is a pivotal moment: decades of research and advocacy have brought us closer than ever to a cure. But without adequate funding, only 7% of those who need lenacapavir will receive it.

What you can do:

- Sign petitions demanding governments protect and expand HIV funding.
- Share this story widely to raise awareness.
- Pressure policymakers to prioritize vulnerable populations in prevention programs.

Together, we can ensure that this breakthrough doesn't stall at the starting line. Let's end HIV and make life better for all.

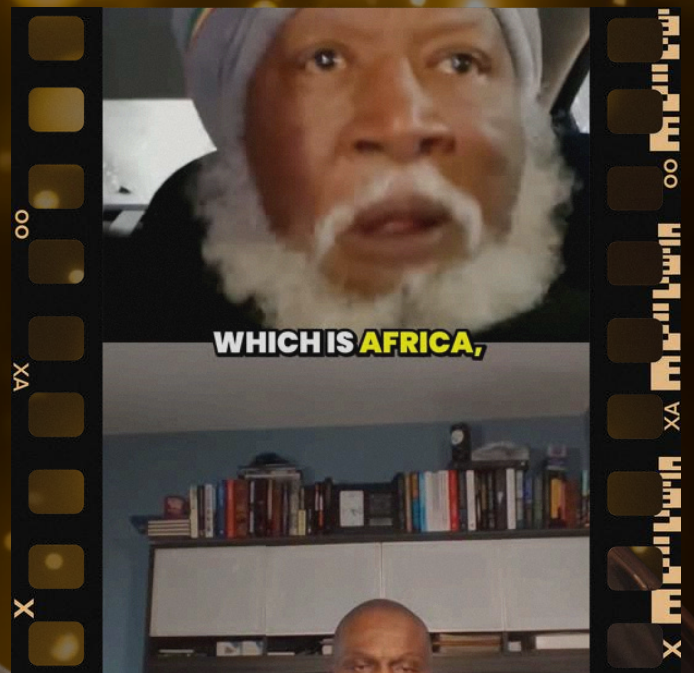
Original reporting by Rachel Schraer, The Independent, as part of the "Rethinking Global Aid" project.

Memory as Resistance

Dr. C. Negus Rudison-Imhotep: African American Historian

“Storytelling is a weapon for
our liberation; it turns
memory into resistance.”

Dr. C. Negus Rudison-Imhotep



Memory as Resistance

Raised in Houston's Fifth Ward in a segregated, tightly knit Black community, Dr. C. Negus Rudison-Imhotep grew up the son of a preacher and an Urban League executive, surrounded by small-business hustle, livestock, and living examples of Black professionalism. Early "ear-hustling" at elders' feet, his parents' decision to buy the Negro Encyclopedia after he questioned why being "Negro" should be a source of pride, and a home library with thousands of volumes seeded his conviction that readers become leaders and that history is a political weapon. A childhood split between segregated Houston schools, a private Black kindergarten, and the cultural shock of integrated classrooms in Iowa taught him firsthand how race, geography, and power shape identity and opportunity.

His path to academia was not linear: a standout running back at New Mexico State, he left college to support his children, spent decades in physically demanding work, and only returned to school in his late 40s after a workplace injury made construction unsustainable. Discovering that his old credits qualified him for a bachelor's degree "in three weeks" reignited a promise to his parents, propelling him through a bachelor's, master's, and ultimately a PhD between about 2010 and 2022. In parallel, his years as an ordained minister and senior pastor at Second Baptist Church in Fort Dodge honed his gifts as a teacher and storyteller, particularly around the African presence in the Bible, where he fused rigorous research with language that everyday congregants—and later college students—could grasp.

As a scholar of African thought, public administrator, and "cultural memory keeper," Rudison-Imhotep refuses to separate Africana consciousness from policy work. His service on civil and human rights commissions, state boards, and equity-focused bodies in Iowa flows from a belief that Black communities must have informed advocates inside institutions who understand both law and lineage, and who see U.S. founding documents as structurally racist rather than neutral. Through his consultancy, teaching at Grand View University, and his podcast "Babylon Makes the Rules," he practices an Afrocentric, decolonial pedagogy that deliberately recenters African and diasporic histories, challenges Eurocentric mythmaking about "discovery" and civilization, and treats storytelling as a tool for liberation and strategy.

Anchored in Pan-African thinkers such as Nkrumah, Walter Rodney, Frantz Fanon, and John Henrik Clarke, he argues that Black people cannot dismantle a slave mentality while believing their story begins in bondage or omitting pre-Columbian African presence in the Americas. For Rudison-Imhotep, historical reclamation means tracing lines from Nile Valley civilizations to Olmec heads, from Moorish Europe to modern anti-Black narratives, and from assassinations of Malcolm and Martin to contemporary struggles against white supremacy and neocolonial extraction. His forthcoming book, "From Sankofa to Strategy," and his work as a "cultural memorial specialist" aim to turn that recovered memory into concrete organizing, teaching younger generations that knowing who they are—and who they have always been—is the first step toward building liberated futures.

Where to connect & find their work:

<https://aclasses.org/negus/>

Babylonnegus2010@gmail.com

[Negus Rudison-Imhotep, Ph. D. | LinkedIn](#)

Georgia's Taxpayers May Soon Bankroll Trump's Defense

|Article By Charles Zackary King|

Taxpayer Impact

Defendants have 45 days to file claims. Judge Scott McAfee will decide payouts. While Trump's attorney insists reimbursements come from the DA's budget, critics argue taxpayers ultimately foot the bill.

Risks & Fallout

- Unprecedented precedent: Rarely are criminal defendants reimbursed.
- Political fallout: Though bipartisan, the law is widely seen as Trump-specific.
- Budget strain: Fulton County faces millions in potential payouts.

Risks & Considerations

- Unprecedented law: Reimbursing criminal defendants is rare in U.S. law, raising questions about fairness and precedent [san.com](#).
- Political fallout: The measure was passed with bipartisan support but is widely seen as tailored to Trump's case [The Hill](#) [san.com](#).
- Uncertain totals: No official accounting yet of Fulton County's own prosecution costs, which could add significantly to taxpayer exposure [CBS News](#).

In short: Georgia's dismissal of the Trump case has opened the door for Trump and co-defendants to demand millions back in legal fees. Whether taxpayers ultimately foot the bill depends on how judges interpret the new law and the claims filed in the coming weeks.

Sources: [CBS News](#) [The Hill](#) [san.com](#)

Advocacy Framing

This is more than a budget issue, it's a democracy issue. Georgia's taxpayers may soon bankroll the defense of those accused of undermining democratic institutions. Communities must mobilize to demand transparency, fiscal responsibility, and ethical leadership.

Call to Action:

Share this story. Demand accountability. Ask why public funds should defend those accused of attacking democracy.

Resilience in Motion: How I Turned Adversity into Instruction

Dr. Lorenzo Carswell:
Author



“Emotional intelligence is knowing yourself well enough not to let one bad moment wreck your whole future.”

Dr. Lorenzo Carswell



Resilience in Motion: How I Turned Adversity into Instruction

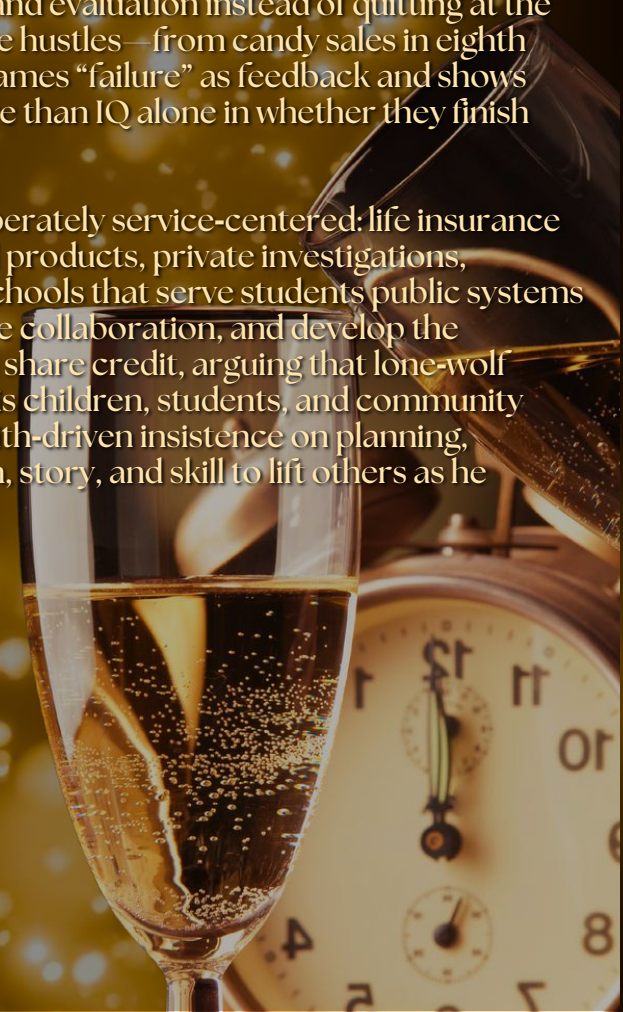
Raised across three family worlds—grandparents' working-class stability, his mother's single-parent struggle in Tampa projects, and summers in a blended household with six step-siblings—Dr. Lorenzo Carswell learned early to adapt, work, and lead. Kitchen-table homework rituals, streetlight curfews, and long walks to youth football shaped discipline and responsibility, while watching his mother hustle through catering, cleaning, and floral design quietly modeled entrepreneurship he would only recognize later. Those layered family dynamics, constant moving in and out of the projects, and being pushed into “man of the house” duty as a teen forged both humility and a deep empathy he now passes to his own five children and grandchildren through storytelling and example.

His path to education and entrepreneurship was marked by both opportunity and loss: early exposure to trades at Tampa Bay Tech, a love of computer programming, and mentors who pulled him into wealthier spaces sat alongside wrongful accusation, a felony plea he took to avoid a likely harsher outcome, three years of probation, and nine months of homelessness living in his car. Rather than break him, those experiences deepened his faith, sharpened his sense of purpose, and anchored a belief that storms are to be driven through, not waited out on the shoulder. Supported by pastors, close friends, and a circle that fed and housed him when he had nothing, Carswell rebuilt his life, completed multiple degrees, survived a stroke in 2025, and recommitted to serving as a professor, life-insurance educator, private investigator, and emotional-intelligence coach.

In the classroom at Hillsborough College and beyond, Carswell treats education—whether academic degrees or trades—as a tool for liberation rather than status. He embeds emotional intelligence and critical thinking into his syllabi, teaching students to know who they are, manage their reactions, and move from knowledge to comprehension, application, analysis, and evaluation instead of quitting at the first bad grade. By sharing his own missteps, legal battles, and side hustles—from candy sales in eighth grade to club promotions and life-insurance consulting—he reframes “failure” as feedback and shows students that self-awareness, structure, and mindset matter more than IQ alone in whether they finish school or build sustainable careers.

As an entrepreneur-educator, Carswell's business activity is deliberately service-centered: life insurance and tax-advantaged retirement for families who distrust financial products, private investigations, bail-bond licensing, film production, and consulting for private schools that serve students public systems have failed. He pushes Black entrepreneurs to drop ego, embrace collaboration, and develop the emotional intelligence to network honestly, keep their word, and share credit, arguing that lone-wolf mindsets and unhealed grudges choke collective progress. For his children, students, and community partners, his legacy is measured less in titles than in mindset: a faith-driven insistence on planning, stepping out despite fear of success, and using every certification, story, and skill to lift others as he continues to climb.

Where to connect & find their work:



World AIDS Day Awareness

|Article By Charles Zackary King |



LinkedIn Post (Short Version)

On World AIDS Day, we pause to honor the millions of lives lost to AIDS-related illnesses and stand in solidarity with the more than 40 million people worldwide living with HIV. First observed in 1988, World AIDS Day was the first global health day, a reminder that awareness, compassion, and action can change the course of history.

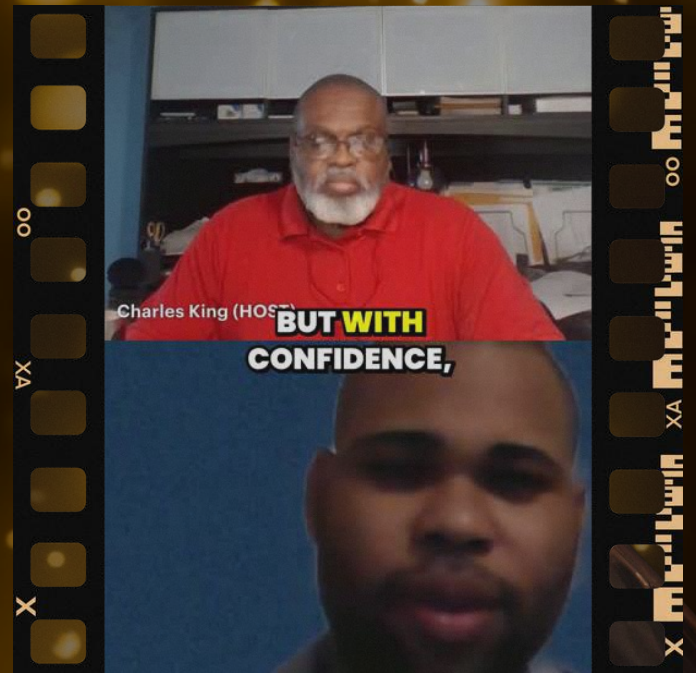
Since the height of the epidemic in the 1990s, we've made extraordinary strides. Antiretroviral therapy (ART) has transformed HIV from a fatal diagnosis into a manageable condition. Prevention tools like PrEP and PEP, alongside the groundbreaking U=U (Undetectable = Untransmittable) principle, have reshaped what's possible. Mother-to-child transmission has been drastically reduced, and life expectancy for those on treatment has dramatically improved.

Yet challenges remain: stigma, late diagnoses, and inequities in access to care continue to hinder progress. The global goal is clear, to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030. Achieving it will require sustained investment, innovation, and community-led action.

World AIDS Day is not just remembrance, it is a call to keep pushing forward. Healing, equity, and resilience must guide the future.

Refusing the Script: How I Rewrote My Future and Help Leaders Do the Same

Leroy Roberts: Executive Leadership/ C Suite Consultant



“You’re not here just to be here;
you’re here to do your life’s
work and leave a contribution
that outlives you.”

Leroy Roberts

Refusing the Script: How I Rewrote My Future and Help Leaders Do the Same

From a small Jamaican farm to global leadership stages, Leroy Roberts has built a life around refusing to accept the limits handed to him. Childhood in the countryside felt, in his words, like stepping back into the 1950s and 60s, where most people moved only between farm and marketplace and rarely as far as high school, but even as a boy he felt an unnamed thirst for “more” that did not sit well with the future being offered. At 13, insisting on sitting the high school exam no one in his family had ever taken became his first act of defiance; bluffing his way into higher education later proved that what others call impossible can become a first domino that changes everything.

Role models like Marcus Garvey, Dr. King, and Nelson Mandela gave Roberts a language and lineage for that inner conviction, especially Garvey’s reminder that “without confidence in self, you are twice defeated in the race of life.” Their stories taught him that visionary leadership demands going against prevailing narratives, enduring isolation, and accepting that ridicule often precedes support, a pattern he saw in his own family’s fearful reaction to his ambitions beyond the farm. Over time he learned to see those push-pull tensions—financial strain, cultural expectations, and limited opportunities—not as signs to stop but as training grounds that built the resilience and clarity needed for a much larger stage.

Service in Jamaican law enforcement and then the British Army took that training global, immersing him in hostile environments, extreme diversity, and cultures where the “trailer was better than the movie.” Leaving home for the first time to join a foreign military, adapting to clashing values, and watching talented people suppressed by toxic leadership convinced him that culture—not just strategy—determines whether people can reach their full potential. Those years also sharpened his sense of duty: that no one else should have the right to cap another person’s growth, and that minorities who have lived on the outside are uniquely equipped to reshape systems from within.

Today, as a strategist, speaker, and “culture reset” consultant based in the UK, Roberts helps executives repair broken trust, re-engage teams, and treat organizational culture as both a risk-control function and a human-dignity issue rather than a “fluffy” HR add-on. His work with credit unions and cooperative finance, especially in a wealthy nation where millions of children live in poverty and many adults remain shut out of the banking system, translates Garvey’s economic self-reliance into modern practice by expanding access to fair financial services for marginalized communities. Grounded in the legacies of Garvey, King, and Mandela, Roberts urges emerging leaders to become “so good they can’t be ignored,” create their own doors when systems will not open one, and get hyper-clear on their life’s work so they can change their world—and, by extension, the world.

Where to connect & find their work:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/leroy-roberts-leadershipconsultant>



ACTIVELY BLACK APPAREAL: REDEFINING OWNERSHIP IN SPORTSWEAR

ARTICLE | By Blake M. Andrews

For decades, global sportswear giants such as Nike and Adidas have built billion-dollar empires on the influence and talent of Black athletes. Their campaigns have celebrated Black excellence, yet the power behind the logos rarely belonged to the culture it portrayed. Former professional basketball player Lanny Smith saw this imbalance firsthand — and decided to change it. “Ownership is very important,” Smith says. “For far too long we’ve only been consumers, not owners.” Out of that conviction came Actively Black, a premium athleisure and sports apparel brand with a mission to empower and reinvest in the Black community.

Launched in November 2020, during a moment of global reflection on racial equity following the murder of George Floyd, Actively Black was created as a direct response to what Smith saw as empty, performative pledges from major corporations. Instead of statements and hashtags, he envisioned a Black-owned brand that could compete on quality, design, and cultural pride — while putting real dollars back into underserved communities. In 2023 alone, Actively Black donated 10% of its profits to organizations such as Black Kids Code, Our Own, and The Liberation Fund. This isn’t just a clothing line; it’s an economic blueprint for change.

<https://activelyblack.com/>

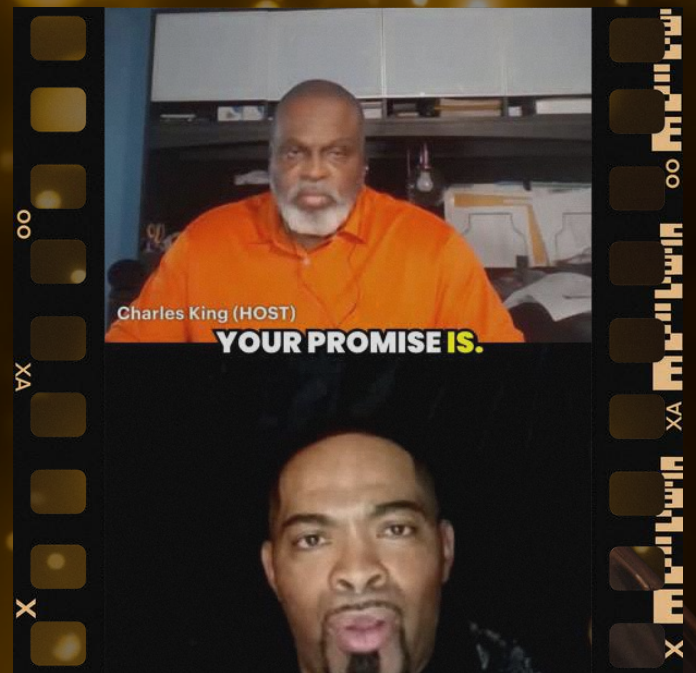
That vision quickly resonated with celebrities and everyday consumers alike. Actively Black has been spotted on stars including Steph Curry, Lupita Nyong’o, Steve Harvey, and even a former U.S. president. The company became the official outfitter of the Nigerian bobsled team during the 2022 Winter Olympics and partnered with Marvel Studios to launch the Wakanda Athletics collection — a powerful nod to the cultural pride inspired by Black Panther. For Smith, these moments bring his mission full circle. “I wanted to create a brand that makes our people feel the same way I felt walking out of Black Panther for the first time,” he reflects.

Now valued at around \$30 million, Actively Black stands as proof that Black entrepreneurship can thrive in industries long dominated by non-Black ownership. It’s more than fashion; it’s movement-building. For Smith, whose mother grew up in the Jim Crow South and integrated schools just a generation ago, the company represents progress that once felt impossible. Each hoodie, jogger, and jacket carries more than a logo — it carries a vision of equity, self-determination, and pride. Actively Black isn’t asking for a seat at the table; it’s building its own.



Impregnated With Purpose: How I Turned Determination Into Destiny

Irving Benjamin Jr.: Prophet



“I don’t want a ministry like anybody else. I want a ministry that’s going to impact the lives of people.”

Irving Benjamin Jr.

Impregnated With Purpose: How I Turned Determination Into Destiny

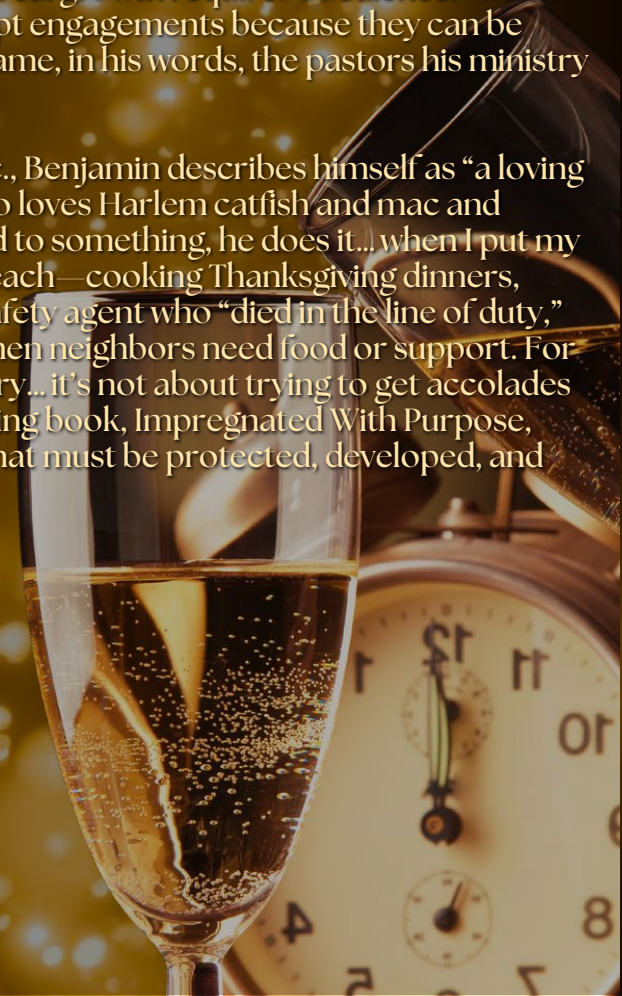
Prophet Irving Benjamin Jr. grew up in 1970s and 80s Brooklyn in what he calls a “pretty decent” and “very simplistic” life, surrounded by two parents, siblings, and a community that loved and looked out for him. Drugs, fighting, and street danger were prevalent in his neighborhood, but he testifies, “For some reason I never got caught up in that... God sustained me. So I give God praise for that.” Those early years, anchored by “good training and morals and values,” shaped a young man who believed his mind, more than his environment, would determine his future. As he puts it, “Determination is the greatest nation... when you put your mind to something you can do it if you put your mind to it.”

Benjamin’s personal walk with God began around age twelve, when he asked his brother’s babysitter how to be saved and then tried to claim salvation for his whole family, only to be told, “This is a personal thing.” That conversation pushed him to accept Christ for himself and then help lead his mother and brother into church, a shift he now sees as “causing an impact or a change or a shift... in my family.” School reinforced that upward push: teachers moved him from a micro-satellite track into “academy” based on his grades, he earned a business-careers diploma from Murray Bertram High School, interned at Chase Bank, and later switched his major at Shaw University from accounting to sociology because he realized, “You’re a people person... this was my niche.”

Ministry called him early. At Wayside Baptist he started as an usher and youth leader, watching Pastor Joel Parker preach and seeing himself in the pulpit even as a teenager. In college, he joined Pastor Shirley Caesar’s Mount Calvary Word of Faith Church, where he preached his trial sermon on November 15, 1996, titled “I’m going to rise above it all,” before a packed house that, he says, proved “the life you live will speak volumes for you.” Under Caesar’s mentorship, and later under Apostle Mary Baxter in Raleigh, he discovered a prophetic dimension to his calling and learned that real growth requires obedience: “When you have an assignment, you got to do it regardless... I don’t accept engagements because they can be broken.” Those three leaders—Parker, Caesar, and Baxter—became, in his words, the pastors his ministry “stems from” and carries within it.

Today, as founder and CEO of Empowered to Excel Ministries Inc., Benjamin describes himself as “a loving person,” “very determined,” sometimes a comedian, a foodie who loves Harlem catfish and mac and cheese, and a man who believes, “When my brother puts his mind to something, he does it... when I put my mind to something, I do it.” He pours that same energy into outreach—cooking Thanksgiving dinners, giving away toys and pizza in honor of his late mother, a school safety agent who “died in the line of duty,” and reminding people that “we are the answers to each other” when neighbors need food or support. For him, ministry is about impact more than accolades: “I love ministry... it’s not about trying to get accolades and money... it’s all about making a difference,” and his forthcoming book, *Impregnated With Purpose*, flows from that conviction that every person carries a purpose that must be protected, developed, and delivered.

Where to connect & find their work:

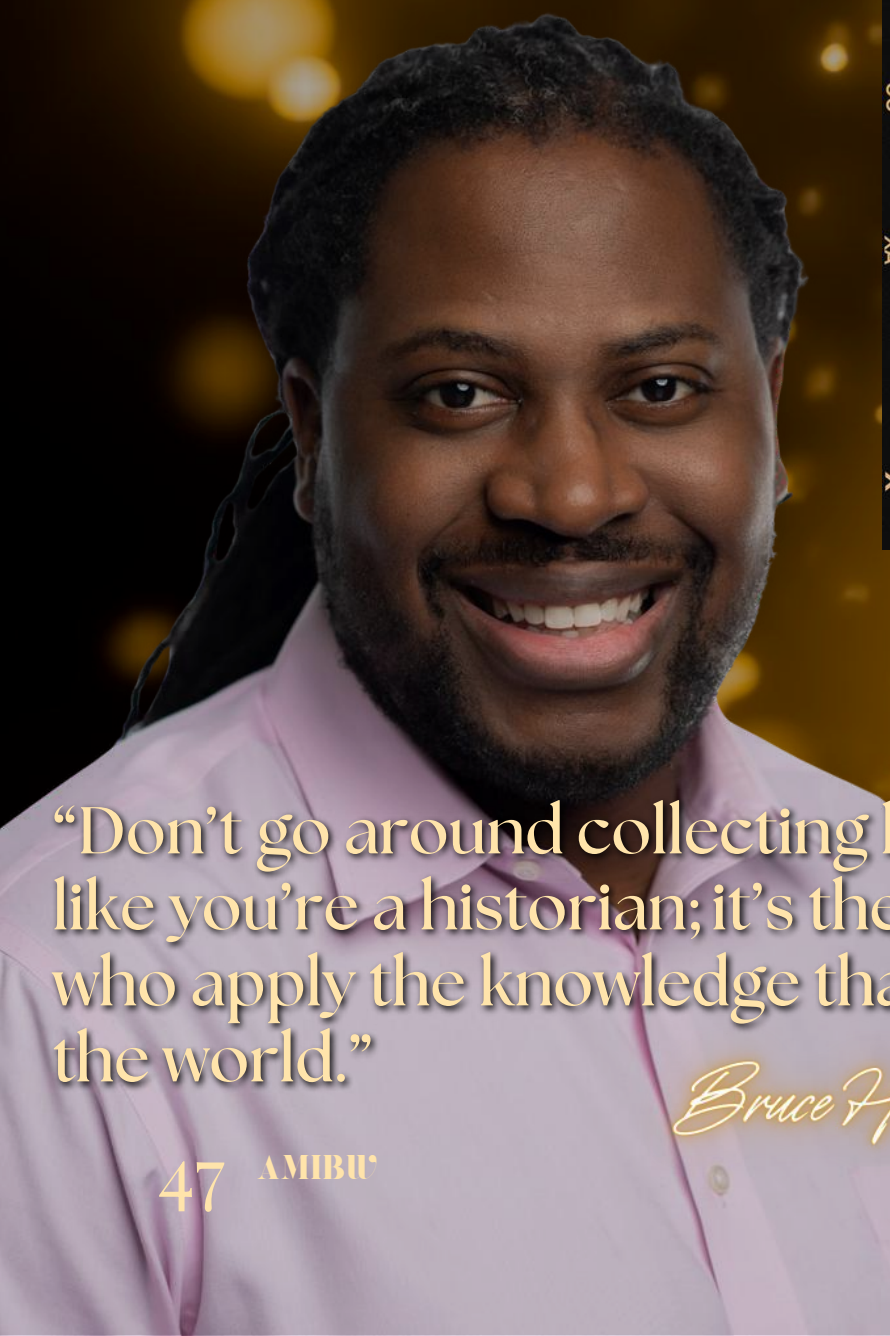




YouTube Podcast
Mon. Tues. Weds. Thurs.
6pm EST.

New Skills, New You: How I Turned Curiosity into a Blueprint for Success

Bruce Hill: Educator



“Don’t go around collecting knowledge like you’re a historian; it’s the people who apply the knowledge that change the world.”

Bruce Hill



New Skills, New You: How I Turned Curiosity into a Blueprint for Success

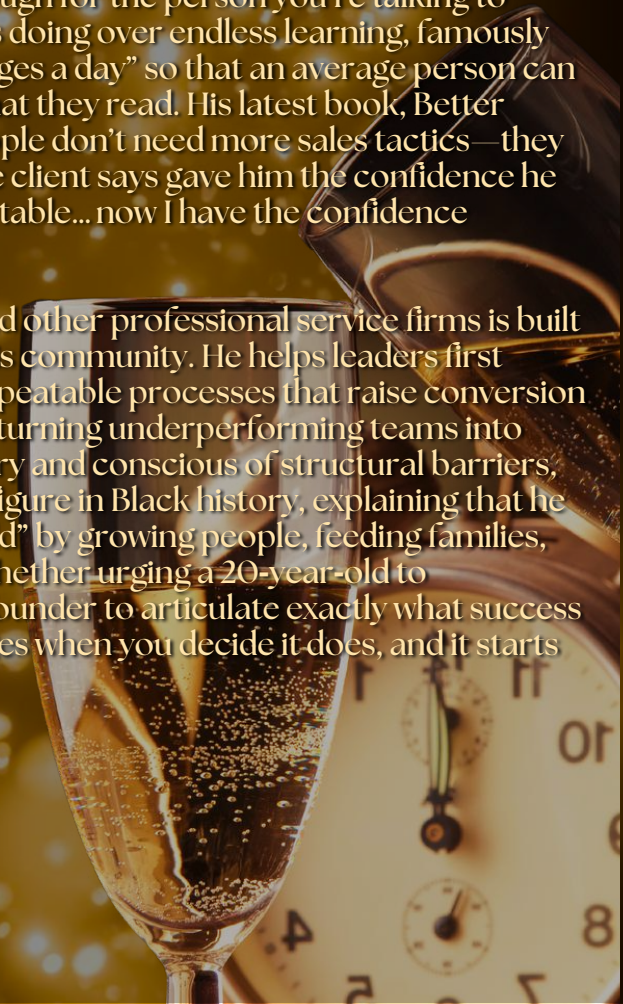
Bruce Hill is a four-time author, international speaker, educator, and consultant whose mission is simple but profound: “one new skill will change your life.” Raised by parents who answered his childhood questions with, “That’s a really good question, Bruce—why don’t you go find out?”, he grew up flipping through encyclopedia sets, experimenting with piano, bass, swimming, and more, and being given “permission and freedom to explore.” That early curiosity, combined with influences like a brother who was “unapologetically himself” and a father who modeled compassion as strength, planted the seeds for a life built on growth, experimentation, and the audacity to evolve. Hill now channels that same philosophy into his work, insisting that curiosity is a skill and that “whoever I am today is just a smaller version” of who he is becoming.

Although he studied Spanish literature, mathematics, and even pursued an engineering track, Hill readily admits he is not successful because of a perfect academic fit, but because of soft skills honed along the way: goal setting, organization, networking, and interpersonal communication. Fired after a corporate sale forced him from lending into car sales, he discovered that sales puts you face-to-face with humanity’s three least favorite experiences—uncertainty, judgment, and rejection—and that you “cannot accidentally be good at sales.” By observing a colleague who had better conversion stats but fewer total customers, he reverse engineered his own process, proving that “clarity creates confidence, and confidence closes deals,” and eventually designed his proprietary 4P framework—People, Promise, Process, Pricing—to help professional service businesses grow revenue and retain clients.

As an educator and trainer, Hill is obsessed with simplicity and application over theory. He traces his teaching roots back to childhood 4-H leadership programs and Sunday school, where he learned that “it doesn’t matter how smart you are if you can’t make it simple enough for the person you’re talking to understand.” In his workshops and college classes he emphasizes doing over endless learning, famously breaking down professional development into reading “seven pages a day” so that an average person can finish 12 books a year and transform their life when they apply what they read. His latest book, *Better Questions, Better Clients*, emerges from the belief that most people don’t need more sales tactics—they need clarity—and offers a “better questions” framework that one client says gave him the confidence he lacked: “Before attending his workshop, I left a lot of deals on the table...now I have the confidence needed.”

Hill’s consulting work with tech startups, life-insurance teams, and other professional service firms is built on measurable outcomes and a deep sense of responsibility to his community. He helps leaders first define “who we can serve with excellence,” then design simple, repeatable processes that raise conversion rates, shorten call times, and increase client lifetime value, often turning underperforming teams into President’s Club regulars within 18 months. Rooted in Black history and conscious of structural barriers, he still names himself—without apology—as his most influential figure in Black history, explaining that he carries both “the responsibility and the ability to change the world” by growing people, feeding families, and building wealth through better questions and better skills. Whether urging a 20-year-old to experiment with stand-up comedy or challenging a 50-year-old founder to articulate exactly what success looks like, Hill’s core message remains the same: “Your life changes when you decide it does, and it starts with one new skill and one better question.”

Where to connect & find their work:



AI Concierge: A Game Changer for Small Business Owners

FEATURE ARTICLE & OVERVIEW VIDEO | BY BLAKE M. ANDREWS

In today's competitive marketplace, the way businesses handle customer interactions can be the difference between growth and stagnation. That's exactly what came through in a recent discussion between **Blake Andrews** and **Charles King** on The Basement Crew podcast, where they explored the transformative potential of an AI Concierge powered by Prime AI and offered by IMTv360.

From the start, Charles didn't mince words calling the AI Concierge a game changer. His enthusiasm wasn't just hype; it was rooted in firsthand experience. What stood out most was how humanlike the AI sounded. Gone were the robotic tones and awkward pauses we've all endured with automated systems. Instead, conversations flowed smoothly, creating an interaction that felt natural and engaging.

But sounding human is only half the equation. The AI's real strength lies in its deep customization of its services. Whether the inquiry was about marketing, social media management, CRM tools, or reputation management, the AI delivered accurate, context-aware answers in seconds. Even nuanced topics like customer engagement were handled with ease demonstrating a level of sophistication well beyond basic scripts.

The business implications are profound. This AI isn't just answering calls; it's generating leads, scheduling appointments, and maintaining customer relationships all while working 24/7. That means no missed calls, no lost opportunities, and no employee fatigue. For small and medium-sized businesses, it's like having the perfect receptionist who never takes a break.

Cost is another factor in its appeal. Compared to hiring a full-time receptionist or outsourcing customer service, the AI Concierge offers top-tier performance at a fraction of the price. Even startups can access the same high-quality customer interaction tools once reserved for large companies.

With IMTv360's live AI Concierge available right on the website, you can experience firsthand what it's like to have a natural, humanlike conversation with your own 24/7 virtual assistant. Simply call **(253) 316-8526** or visit: (<https://app.imtv360.io/4bots>), ask questions about IMTv360's services, book an appointment, and watch as **Olivia** the Ai Concierge responds instantly, just like it would for your customers.

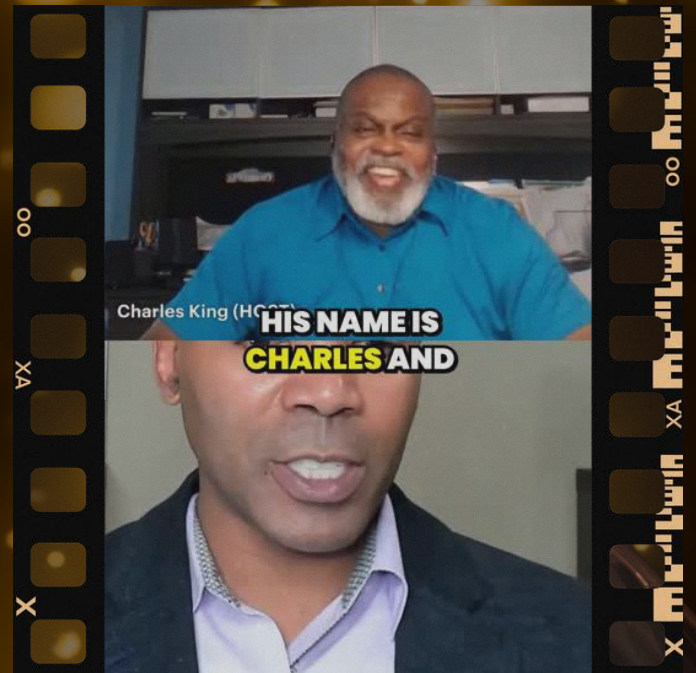
Ultimately, Blake and Charles's conversation underscored a powerful reality: in an era where every customer interaction matters, having an AI Concierge ensures consistent, professional communication without fail. For business owners, that translates into more time, more efficiency, and more growth.

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From Excuses to Bold Action:
How I Help High Achievers Stop
Hesitating To Win the Day

Michael J. Pope Jr.:
Exec. Dir. Maxwell Leadership



“If you don’t get rid of the
fear of self-promotion, you’ll
be the best-kept secret.”

Michael J. Pope Jr.

From Excuses to Bold Action: How I Help High Achievers Stop Hesitating To Win the Day

Michael J. Pope Jr. is an international speaker, leadership trainer, and tech-savvy marketing coach whose mission is to help high achievers “stop hesitating and take bold action.” A self-described natural introvert with a low self-image, he traces his turning point back to 1994, when fear kept him in his seat during an open-mic invitation at his grandfather Joe’s funeral—a moment of regret that pushed him into personal development. Guided by a mentor who handed him *The Magic of Thinking Big* and challenged his “excusitis, the failure disease,” Pope realized that nearly every missed opportunity in his life had been tied to excuses and hesitation rather than lack of ability. That realization turned him into a lifelong student of growth, devouring books, seminars, and mentorship and eventually stepping onto global stages from Montego Bay to Sydney and Rome to teach others what he had to learn the hard way.

Rooted in a family legacy of integrity and service, Pope’s leadership style is unapologetically servant-first. His great-grandfather, a janitor and yardsman, drilled honesty into him—“If it’s not in the trash can, you leave it alone”—while his double-amputee grandfather Joe, a Thomas Jefferson Servant Leadership Award recipient, continued driving neighbors to appointments and serving others even without legs, insisting, “You have to make serving others part of who you are.” Those examples, later reframed by John Maxwell’s definition of leadership as “influence, nothing more, nothing less,” showed Pope that titles are optional but character is not. Today he keeps his grandfather’s award on his desk as a daily reminder that adding value comes before asking for anything in return—a principle that led him to volunteer tech help for fellow Maxwell team members during COVID and, in time, to become faculty for Maxwell Leadership and a certified neuroencoding specialist with Joseph McClendon III’s institute.

Professionally, Pope blends his background in software development with communication and mindset work to help coaches, entrepreneurs, and corporate leaders market themselves without getting stuck in perfectionism, tech overwhelm, or fear of self-promotion. He teaches clients to “assassinate complexity,” celebrate activity instead of waiting only for big outcomes, and win one day at a time using his DOER framework, which underpins his book *Doers Win the Day*. Whether he is guiding a retired executive through her first webinar funnel, coaching a 70-year-old coach into becoming “tech-savvy,” or getting a conference room full of high-level professionals to film video affirmations saying “I love you” to themselves, his goal is always to dismantle hesitation and build micro-wins that compound into unshakeable confidence. For Pope, communication is the essential 21st-century skill—more important than ever in an age where AI can generate flawless text but only humans can truly connect.

As a coach and mentor, Pope measures success not only by client results but by their ability to pour into others. He works with military veterans transitioning to civilian life, helps Black men and other underrepresented achievers see themselves as worthy of elite rooms, and lights up when former clients report that they are now teaching Canva, tech, or mindset tools to someone else. Sharing stages with legends like Les Brown and Dr. Joseph McClendon III could have triggered crippling impostor syndrome, but Pope leans on the same neuroencoding tools he teaches—such as McClendon’s STOP technique—to silence self-doubt and show up prepared, relaxed, and fully present. Whether speaking in Jamaica, Australia, Italy, or Atlanta, he carries the same message inherited from his grandfather and refined by decades of development: serving others, adding value, and taking imperfect action today are non-negotiables for anyone who wants to win the day, win the year, and build a life they are proud to step onto any stage and represent.

Where to connect & find their work:

Unlocking Your Business Potential With CRM & AI TECH

FEATURE ARTICLE | BY BLAKE M. ANDREWS

Let's talk business, your business. Whether you're juggling a side hustle, taking client calls from your car, or stuck in the "I-have-an-idea-but-where-do-I-start" phase, one thing's clear: technology isn't a luxury anymore it's the playing field. And right now, CRM and AI tools are the MVPs.

If CRM sounds too corporate, don't worry it simply means Customer Relationship Management. Think of it as your digital brain and personal assistant in one. Add AI automation, and suddenly you've got a 24/7 system that tracks leads, sends texts, books appointments, follows up, and even responds to missed calls while you focus on what you do best.

Here's how it works in real life:

1. The Solo Entrepreneur:

La Shawnda, a fitness coach, used to spend hours texting clients and missing leads. Now, her system handles FAQs, sends reminders, and even upsells sessions automatically giving her more time to train and grow.

2. The Side Hustler with a Dream:

Marcus works a 9-to-5 but wanted to launch a mobile detailing service. With just a booking calendar, a simple form, and a few automations, he built weekend business that soon became full-time.

3. The Not-So-Tech-Savvy Beginner

Catrena runs a small cleaning service and isn't very techy. But with a basic CRM setup, she tracks clients, confirms appointments, and follows up for reviews making her service look pro and grow faster.

If tech feels overwhelming, you're not alone. Plenty of successful business owners started not even knowing what a CRM was. Today's tools are made for people just like you no coding, no tech skills, just smart systems that help you start strong and scale fast.

Best of all, you don't need a big budget. You can start investing in yourself and your business for less than \$100/month and get a Free 14-Day Trial to explore, test, and see the difference for yourself.

So whether you're building something new, upgrading what you've got, or just exploring ideas it's your time. Don't wait for "someday." Get in. Look around. You might just surprise yourself.

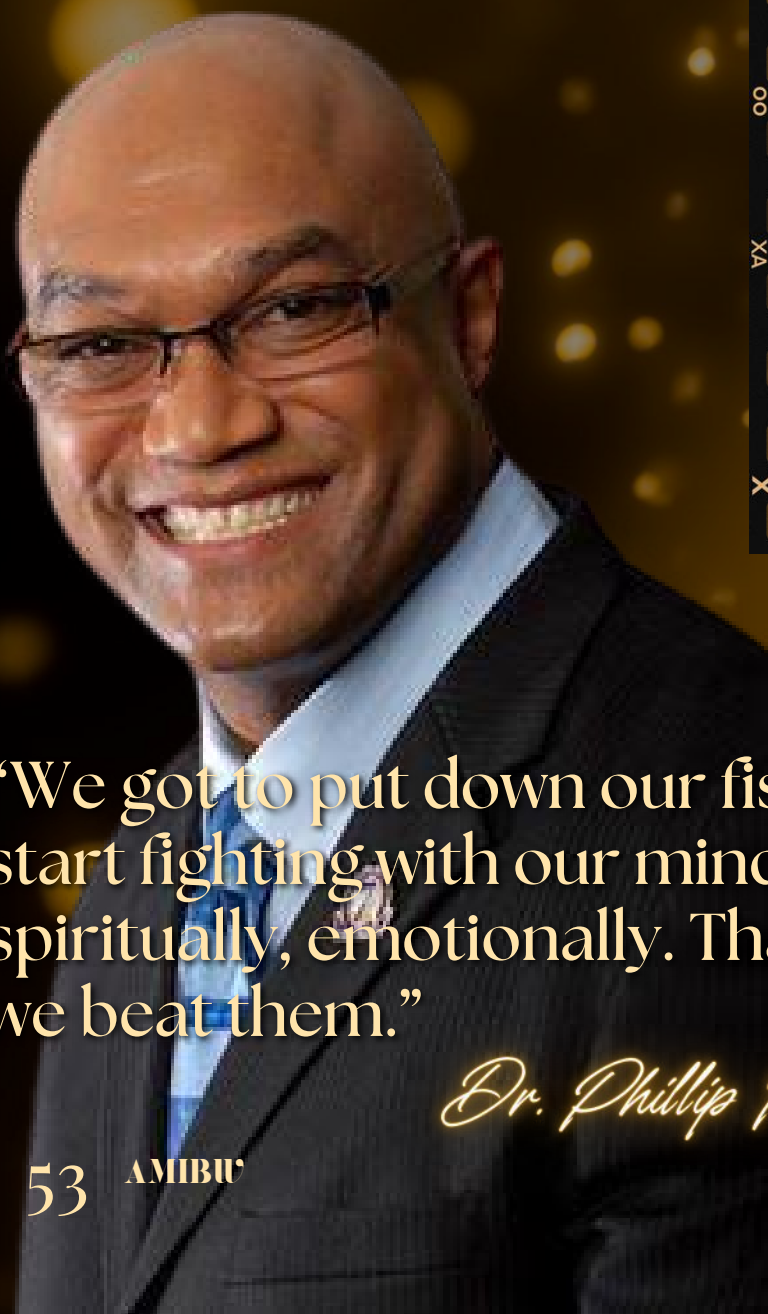


[Click Here](#)

 [Business doesn't have to be complicated. Take a look at what's possible.](#)

“Policy Whiplash and the Cost of Silence: Leadership, Loss, and the Fight for Our Communities in 2025”

Dr. Phillip R Neely Jr.:
Educator



“We got to put down our fist and
start fighting with our mind mentally,
spiritually, emotionally. That's how
we beat them.”

Dr. Phillip R Neely Jr.



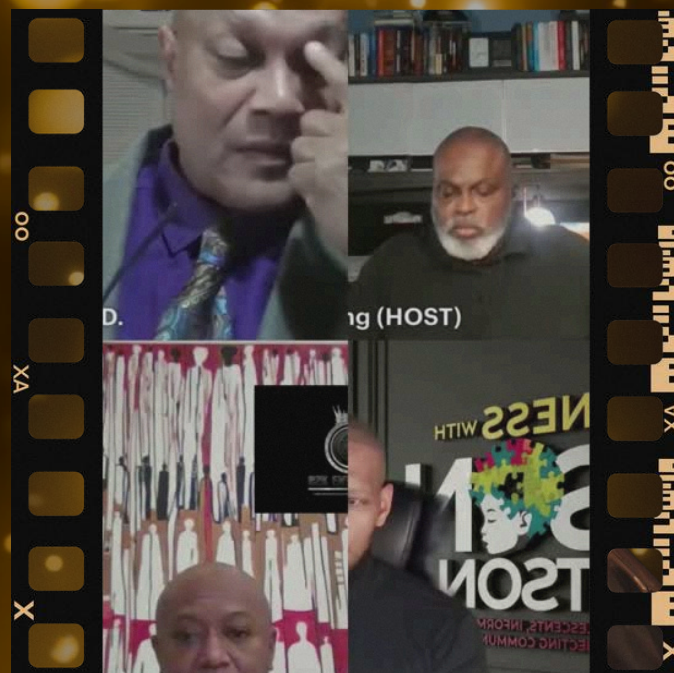
Dr. Keyimani L. Alford: CEO/ Keywords Unlocked LLC



“AI is definitely the number one trending technology aspect that's impacting us across the board.”

Dr. Keyimani L. Alford

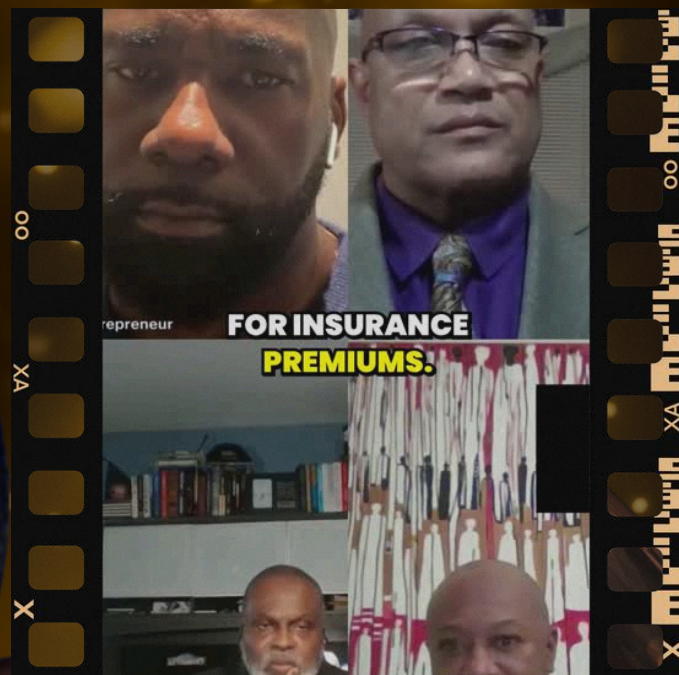
Jason Dotson: Mental Health Professional



“If we sit still because they're not attacking you, eventually they will start coming after you. Stand up. Speak up.”

Jason Dotson

Brodderick Roary: Public Health Professional /LGBTQ Advocate



“The proposed budget right now for 2026 is going to cut 1.5 billion dollars away from HIV funding... Public health is on the chopping block.”

“Policy Whiplash and the Cost of Silence: Leadership, Loss, and the Fight for Our Communities in 2025”

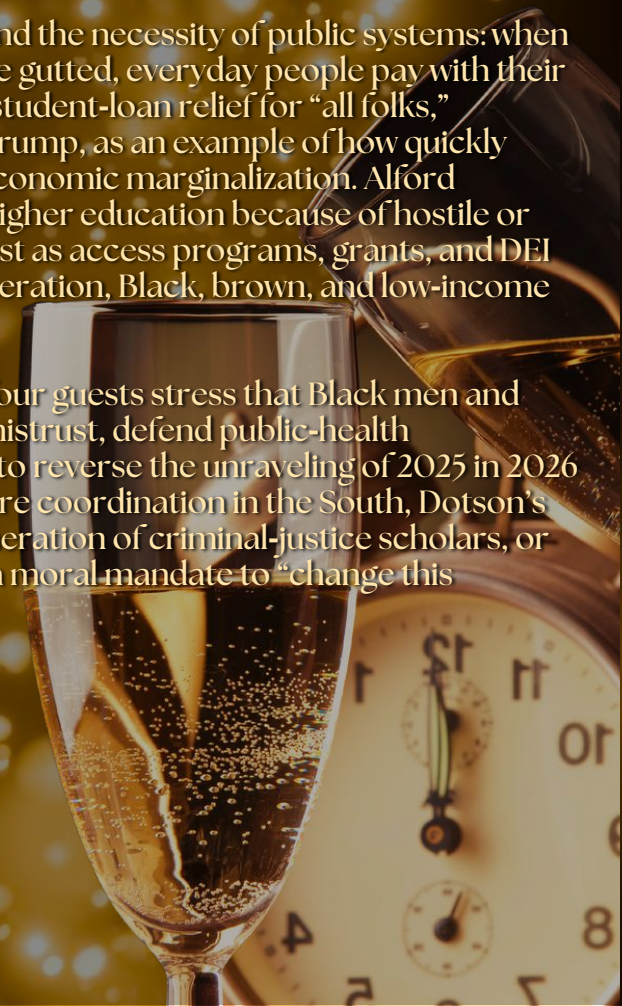
This season finale brings together four voices whose expertise stretches across criminal justice, higher education, public health, and mental health, creating a 360-degree look at what it means to lead in an era of political whiplash and policy whiplash. Dr. Keyimani L. Alford, associate vice president for student access and success at Madison Area Technical College, details how executive orders and leadership changes in the Department of Education destabilized TRIO, veterans' programs, and federal grants, pushing talented practitioners out of higher ed and unraveling decades of fragile progress for marginalized students. Dr. Phillip R. Neely Jr., a retired Atlanta-area law enforcement officer and director of the Doctor of Criminal Justice program at Saint Leo University, warns that politicized appointments at DOJ and the FBI, attacks on DEI, and the erosion of trust have left public service “infested” by race, religion, and politics, insisting that Black men must re-educate their communities on why voting and midterms now literally shape who gets educated, policed, or protected.

From the front lines of health equity, public health professional and LGBTQ advocate Brodderick Roary describes 2025 as a “dark day” for public health, citing proposed 2026 cuts of roughly 1.5 billion dollars in HIV funding and reductions at CDC that are already forcing clinics that serve marginalized communities to close their doors. He explains that slashed subsidies and skyrocketing premiums are pushing life-saving care out of reach for people living with HIV, many of whom have co-morbidities like heart or kidney disease, leaving organizations like his scrambling to cover \$18,000-a-month insurance costs with fewer resources. Mental-health consultant and wellness CEO Jason Dotson adds that re-classifying counselors, social workers, and nurses as “non-professionals” in education policy directly contradicts what research shows about the urgent need for mental-health and substance-use services in marginalized communities, turning Trump’s reelection into what he calls “a very dark day” in his office.

Together, the panel argues that 2025 exposed both the fragility and the necessity of public systems: when law enforcement, higher ed, and public-health infrastructures are gutted, everyday people pay with their futures and their lives. Neely points to Biden’s historic moves on student-loan relief for “all folks,” contrasted with renewed enforcement and garnishment under Trump, as an example of how quickly policy can shift people from mobility back into depression and economic marginalization. Alford underscores that when seasoned practitioners walk away from higher education because of hostile or unstable policy climates, students lose mentors and advocates just as access programs, grants, and DEI initiatives are being dismantled, compounding harm for first-generation, Black, brown, and low-income learners.

Yet the conversation is not just diagnosis; it is a call to action. All four guests stress that Black men and other community leaders must “stay awake,” confront medical mistrust, defend public-health infrastructure, and refuse to treat voting as optional if they want to reverse the unraveling of 2025 in 2026 and beyond. They frame their work—whether it is Roary’s HIV-care coordination in the South, Dotson’s effort to reduce medical mistrust, Neely’s training of the next generation of criminal-justice scholars, or Alford’s fight for student access—as both professional duty and a moral mandate to “change this narrative and get it to a positive from a negative.”

Where to connect & find their work:





AMIBW
America In Black And White

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America In Black And White

AMIBW is more than a magazine—it's a movement. Founded by visionary advocate Charles Zackary King, AMIBW stands at the intersection of storytelling, justice, and cultural legacy.

Through powerful narratives, dynamic interviews, and unapologetic commentary, the magazine illuminates the lived experiences, triumphs, and challenges faced by Black communities across America.

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AMIBW champions the athletes, leaders, educators, and everyday heroes whose voices have too often been marginalized in mainstream media. With each edition, the magazine not only challenges bias—it rewrites the playbook on how media can empower, educate, and inspire.

From historical legacies to contemporary advocacy, AMIBW bridges generations with content that's intellectually rich, emotionally resonant, and rooted in truth.

Whether amplifying the talent of Justin Fields, spotlighting changemakers like Dr. Patrick Graham and Dr. Lila Elliott, or celebrating community impact through initiatives like Integrated Community Education Consultants, AMIBW is the platform where culture meets purpose.



AMIBU

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