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A-CHOICES

The African Lifestyle Magazine

A close-up portrait of Simone Moore, a Black woman with long, wavy dark hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a black sleeveless top and has her hand resting against her neck. The background is a dark, neutral color.

SIMONE MOORE

**EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW:
IT'S TIME FOR BLACK WOMEN TO TAKE
RIGHTFUL PLACE IN HOLLYWOOD**



www.a-choicesmagazine.com

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ABOUT US

A-CHOICES -The African Lifestyle Magazine

A -CHOICES magazine is an online African lifestyle magazine for ordinary-ed-ucated reader in English. It is not entirely about entertainment but covers other broad topics including business and economy(market) arts & culture fashions, personality stories, sports, etc. It is a channel through which we celebrate African achievers at home and in the diaspora. A-CHOICES hopes to entertain, empower and inspire Africans around the world.

Write for Us

We're accepting submissions from writers, thinkers, makers, scholars, and readers of online publishing and editorial work. We re currently accepting submissions for our next Issues . We accept submissions on a rolling basis, and generally don't close sub-missions until halfway through a given issue, so there are no set closing dates.

We do not accept work that has been previously published o blogged.

Please send submissions to achoices@a-choicesmagazine.com

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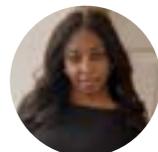
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EDITOR'S LETTER



Welcome to the February issue of A-CHOICES Magazine where we celebrate all that we love about Africa and Africans.

On the cover of our February edition is beautiful Hollywood Actress Simone Vicari Moore. Moore is a bi-coastal artist,writer, and actress in film,TV, and stage. She is currently playing Lady Macbeth,in Macbeth at the Shakespeare Center, Los Angeles, directed by Ben Donenberg. She has played a rich and complex queen Gertrude in Hamlet, Tish James,

In the Footprint with The Civilians Theater Company in New York (critical acclaim New York Times), Helena in A Midsummer Nights Dream, and she received critical acclaim for her turn as Sylvia in the Two Gentlemen of Verona by the Los Angeles Times. She wrote and performed her one woman show "The Divorce Comedy: A spiritual study" which premiered at REDCAT in 2020 during their N.O.W. festival.

Simone is a soulful singer and designer. Her interests include travel, Afro Cuban Dance, rammed earth and other forms of sustainable architecture. She speaks Jamaican Patois, English and French. Simone can currently be seen on the HBO series Random Acts of Flyness as Coretta Scott King. Here,Simone talks about her Hollywood experience and lots more...

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Gbenga TJ Okunlola
Publisher/Editor in Chief
A-CHOICES
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It's Time for Black Women to Take Rightful Place in Hollywood. An Exclusive interview with Actress Simone Moore

Interview



By:Gbenga Teejay
Okunlola
London, UK

From Blockbusters to the prime time small screen, Simone Moore has made her impact in the world of entertainment and has worked alongside many industry greats. Simone Moore is someone who absolutely knows what she wants. Moore is a Brooklyn-raised, British-Jamaican Hollywood actress. Born in Montego Bay, Jamaica, She spent most of her teenage years in Brooklyn, New York City with her extended family, and started singing and dancing by age 5. In high school, she studied Sarah Vaughan and Billie Holiday's complete catalogue of songs. She would take off to Manhattan to perform in talent shows and modelling events.

In her almost 20 year career, Moore has been busy carving a niche for herself in the entertainment industry. She's been an actress, writer, singer, and solo performer, in theatre, film, and TV, in commercials, and voice-over. She holds a Master's degree in theater from the University of California at San Diego.

Classically trained Simone has garnered critical acclaim in The New York and Los Angeles Times for her Shakespeare roles and her work with the Civilians Theatre Company in New York and The Shakespeare Center LA where she recently played Lady Macbeth. Her move to Los Angeles has been very fortunate as she has quickly booked leading roles in independent films, heavy guest-starring, and recurring roles on television including Boston Legal, Cold Case, and Without a Trace. Her solo play "The Divorce Comedy" premiered at the REDCAT in Los Angeles, during their 2020 New Original Works Festival. Simone is a soulful singer and designer. Her interests include travel, Afro Cuban Dance, rammed earth and other forms of sustainable architecture. She speaks Jamaican Patois, English and French.

A-CHOICES: Tell us a bit about yourself, educational and family background?

Simone: Hi, thank you for having me, I'm Simone Vicari Moore, I am a classically trained

actress, born in Montego Bay, Jamaica and I grew up in Brooklyn New York. I started out in New York as a model and voice-over artist. I went to school abroad at the Sorbonne Nouvelle, upon returning to the states I did a Masters's degree in Theatre at the University of California at San Diego. I signed with Endeavor Talent Agency out of school, I went on to act Off Broadway in New York and then moved to Los Angeles where I work in film, television, voiceovers, theatre, and solo performance. My mother and father are Jamaican-born, most of my family live in Jamaica, New York, and London. I'm the only one out here in Los Angeles.

A-CHOICES: Can you describe what influenced you to pursue a career as an actress?

Simone: I've always sung and danced, even when my audience was my dolly, a coconut, or my Seventh Day Adventist neighbours doing their Saturday morning matins. I would sing Tina Turner at the top of my lungs and dance on the veranda. However, I made the decision to act, while living in Paris as a student at the Sorbonne Nouvelle, I would spend time travelling around Europe. I sat in a lot of parks, squares, and spent time thinking quite a bit about what I wanted to do. I had this image in my mind of a very posh

black woman, that I wanted to see myself become and I wanted to be an example to young girls coming after me of a very dignified black woman. I suppose it was a response to feeling undignified in the environment I was in, my 18-year-old brain said, "I am going to show these people that a black woman can be dignified and I'm going to do that by being an actress".

A-CHOICES: You were a distance runner for 4 years, tell me more about it?

Simone: Hahaha! Yes, I ran high school track, my specialty was the 400 and 800-meter races because I am skinny with long legs. They called me Gumby because I am double jointed and was really flexible. Anyway, I had a long stride, so distance was perfect for me. The girls that ran 100 and 200 meters had much bigger thigh muscles than I had, I wasn't built for those races. I enjoyed distance running and still do it to this day, most days I run 3 miles a day. So high school track set me up in life to have a very high metabolism and a fitness practice.

A-CHOICES: What's like playing Corretta Scott King on the HBO series Random Acts of Flyness?

Simone: Playing Coretta Scott King was a very life-changing experience.

She is such a brilliant, grand, compassionate person. I say "is" because she is a person I live with in my home, I have her pictures on my walls. Well, let's take it back... working with Terence Nance and Mariama Diallo was a dream.

The set was very improvisational, creative, and alive. They had very talented people on set during my shoot day, including actress Tonya Pinkins, solo performer Okwui Okpokwasili, actor Anthony Chisholm. I don't recall getting a script ever, it was all improvised, and I really needed to find my hook into the role, so I channeled her spirit.

I had many questions, but my main question was why did she give up her career as an opera singer? I meditated and asked and finally, I received an answer, so I ran with that. I had never done that before at the start of a role, usually, it comes later, but I had to work quickly and wanted to bring an authentic meeting of my artist self and the spirit of the character.

A-CHOICES: In brief tell us the process you go through to try out and then get a part for a movie/television show/commercial?

Simone: It's always very different, sometimes it's a phone call with an offer (those are the best), and other times it's

3 or 4 auditions (a meeting where you perform the role).

The studio, network, director all have to give their approval, so sometimes it takes a while to get everyone's OK. Every audition is a goldmine, a chance for a wonderful opportunity... that's me being positive... really, it's kind of nerve-wracking, you never think you have enough time to prepare, etc ... OK, you said briefly.

You get the script or just sides (the pages you will read when you act the part), you prepare the work, then you go in and read for casting or the director. When I get the part, my manager calls me and we negotiate the pay and other terms. These days most meetings are on zoom.

I have to go do one as I'm writing this so I'm going to stop here, be back in a moment....

A-CHOICES: You appeared in Boston Legal. Tell us about your experience being on an Emmy awarding winning show with some of the best actors/actresses?

Simone: It was wonderful, I was playing a Haitian Restavek which is a child who has come to the house of her "owners" as the house help, usually because their family can't afford to take care of them.



They are basically treated like house slaves which opens them up to many indignities. In this case, the character was impregnated by her master, and she was on trial for his murder. I went to the audition, looked around the room, and decided that no one was going to get that role but me, I was resolute. I knew I could bring the complexity, humour, and depth of emotion this character required.

I didn't want this girl's life to be glazed over, I wanted her to be complicated and authentic. At the call-back (which is the follow-up auditions) I was very ill, I crawled out of bed, went to the call-back, and crawled back into bed when I returned home.

On the set most of my scenes were with Gary Anthony Williams who was wonderful and very protective of my character, Rene Auberjonois was so generous, the director Steve Robin just opened the space for me to fill it up, he guided us, but gave us a wide playing space at the same time. I enjoy working with people who are dedicated to their craft and working at a high level.

One of the writers, Janet Leahy, gave me one of the best compliments I've ever received, she said, "You know, you write these things and sometimes you wonder if anyone will be able to play it, ...you did it." After the Boston Legal experience, I realized that I am courageous and can take on the most challenging roles.

A-CHOICES: Did your experience living in France help you land the role as a Haitian girl in Boston Legal?

Simone: Yes! Hahaha! I had to adlib (improvise) some lines, so I called my French friend Boris, who I met the second day I arrived in Paris. For the Haitian Kreole accent, I called my friend Joanna who is Haitian and who I also met in Paris and she gave me the number for her auntie in Miami and that is whose voice I referenced for the role.

I had her say all the lines of my script back to me then I practiced with the tape. It's a family affair, no actor is an island. Every actor should use all the resources they have at hand to hook into that role. Research, research, research!

A-CHOICES: What do you enjoy doing the most television, commercial, live theatre, or films?

Simone: I love working, it is where I feel most at home and most alive. I'm fearless when I'm acting, in real life I'm kind of reclusive. I like doing television because it pays well and you get to work with remarkable people.

I love film because I really get to play and create a character from the ground up, film feels more intimate to me as well, and film is forever. My favourite, my most alive, most creative is when I am playing Shakespeare.

A-CHOICES: What is your typical day like?

Simone: Hahaha!! Boring!! No, I'm kidding! My typical day... Every day is different. I wake up, do my prayers and meditations, exercise, usually I have a script I'm reading or an audition to tape, set up in my studio, tape, clean up. Grabbing bites in between.

I teach and coach actors young and old so sometimes I have classes. I zoom a lot. Lots of meetings. Lots of screens. The work stops, when it stops, I try to be in bed by 10:50 pm.

A-CHOICES: How would you describe yourself?

Simone: I describe myself as an artist.

A-CHOICES: Do you have a mentor or role model who is helping you along the way in your acting career?

Simone: I would consider Diane Venora an acting mentor. Ben Donenberg of the Shakespeare Center Los Angeles has also been like a mentor to me. My colleagues Desean Terry, and J Kyle Manzey have also been like mentors to me.

A-CHOICES: What challenges have you encountered while pursuing your dream?

Simone: The main challenge was just accepting who I am as an artist and a person. I was raised in abject poverty in my childhood, I don't come from an acting background, acting never seemed like a viable career choice to certain members of my family. I couldn't see the value in what I was doing, what God has blessed me with, but my spirit knew, so I kept at it. I encourage young people to learn who they are first and foremost, learning who you are is freeing. Just notice your emotional responses and what your body is telling you. Other challenges have

been cultural differences, I had a heavy Jamaican phrasing style, I grew up on an island, so my rhythm is slower, I'm regal and so I come off very formal in a town where most people seek to appear casual and accessible.

One year, around 2015, I was pretty burnt out, I went to the doctor and described my symptoms, I asked him if I needed medication, he looked at me nonchalantly, swayed in his chair and said, "no, you are just a black actress in America." Hahaha!! He said, "go to all of your auditions, and focus on doing the things you love to do." I didn't even recognize the challenges I was having in life, were connected to living the life of a black actress in America, I hadn't thought of it that way before that moment.

A-CHOICES: Who or what inspired you to keep pushing regardless of the challenges you've encountered?

Simone: I don't know. I have a strong sense of duty to life. I came from dirt roads and outhouses, I will not let anything stop me. When I was born my mother put me in God's hands and there I reside.

A-CHOICES: How would you describe acting? What is the most memorable screen character you have played?

Simone: That requires a very long answer. Acting, in performance, for me is like surfing, an athletic sport that is also a balancing act. Boleslavsky says, "Acting is the life of the human soul receiving its birth through art." My most memorable character on screen... I remember all of them, they are real to me, I respect them and I'm very protective of their lives.

A-CHOICES: What do you want from a director during a production?

Simone: I love directors who know how to talk to actors, or will just say what they want, who choose really good actors and give us room to play. I recently worked with a director who wanted my character to be more of a villain but didn't express that to me. The script didn't convey that they wanted my character to be mean, so on set there was a lot of me doing it over and over again, beyond the usual amount of repetition.

They asked me to be angrier, or sassier, which didn't make sense to what I saw on the page or what was happening in the scene. Once I saw the finished product, I thought gosh, why didn't they just say they wanted her to be a bitch, I love playing complicated women! Instead, they tried to change the tone of the character in the moment, it was manipulative and weird. It didn't feel good.

A-CHOICES: What do you like most about working on a television show?

Simone: The thing I like most about working on television is the writing. A well-written TV script can take over your whole body if you give in to it, and you will be doing work that you never could have imagined. I think TV writing has to really understand psychology, like what triggers those responses in us that are below the surface. TV is all rhythm and hair! Hahaha! So, if an actor's instrument is open and available, really magical things can happen.

A-CHOICES: Do you get recognised much in public and what sort of reaction do you normally get from people ?

Simone: I am a bit of a chameleon, so I'm completely unrecognizable if I change my hair, which I do often. Usually, people in the business know me more than people on the street. On the street, people will stare and smile when they recognize me. Sometimes they mistake me for other actresses, in which case, I just say thank you, and smile!

A-CHOICES: Viola Davis has said that Black actors are treated like "leftovers" in Hollywood. Would you say that it's time for black women to take rightful place in Hollywood?

Simone: Personally, I'm interested in what Mo Abudu is doing in Nollywood currently. Hi, Ms. Abudu! Hmm, Leftovers? As in an afterthought? Well, the story is that black actors are not a big box office draw, so I guess the powers that be put their money behind who they believe to be more bankable. Ms. Davis' film *The Help* cost 25 million to make but made \$213 million in gross revenue. So obviously she has star power. You know, I think there are these old stories out there, narratives that people love to repeat, and honestly, in the next few years we will watch them disintegrate, they just need to go, because they have been proven wrong. I've heard some producers in Hollywood say that movies with black leads don't sell internationally.

Yet, around the time they were saying this, Sam Jackson was the highest-grossing star at the international box office. Black culture is so pervasive and copied. The international market is thirsty for content featuring black artists. Thirsty. We have to look at the narratives themselves, it's just a story that somebody made up, it's been proven wrong, it can be dismantled, and it will. My thing is: tell the truth. If you set a TV show in New York City and it doesn't have any Black, Latino, or Asian people represented on your show, that's just not the truth.

I commend Ms. Viola Davis for speaking out for all of us. She is at a level in her career where she gets to see who they tap first for projects and perhaps she is speaking to the fact that historically in Hollywood black actors are often the side characters in major motion pictures or on television.

In 1968 Ms. Diahann Carroll was the first black woman to lead a TV show in a non-stereotypical role in the United States. It can seem to go back and forth, between progress and the same old narratives. Everyone says black women are hot right now. There have been recent changes, there are black women leads in TV shows and major motion pictures and I hope it stays consistent and isn't just a trend.

As long as we are alive it is our time, there is no business outside of us, the people living and creating during this time, are the entertainment industry. We just have to keep creating, speaking up, and dismantling old narratives.

A-CHOICES: The actor who broke down Hollywood's racial barriers. He made history as the first Black man to win an Academy Award for best actor. How did Sidney Poitier changed the world?

Simone: Sidney Poitier portrayed dignified black male characters for United States audiences. Historically, black men were allowed to portray stereotypical roles, sing, and dance but rarely did we see a dignified, complex person on the screen.

Mr. Poitier however, we watched him talk back to white people on screen, demand respect, go to dinner in their homes, and even return a slap to a white man on screen. He was a man, a real person. In an interview, he said he knew he was representing millions of black people with every move he made. I admire that he didn't let the responsibility be a burden to him, but rather a reason to be greater. I am very saddened by his passing, I never met him, he was grand.

A-CHOICES: Your perspective on the effect race has had on your career options?

Simone: That's a facet of my career that I have to deal with, a system looking at my race, I'm aware, but I'm still going to continue to act and create and I am focused on my career moving forward.

Hollywood's focus on proximity to whiteness limits the amount of work that I get seen for. My agents and managers work hard to push me out there.

It's not only black people it impacts but all actors of color. It makes me very sad, sometimes I think of all the degrees, the hours spent studying, my solo play premiering at REDCAT plus all of the success I've had, and my white friends have to vouch for me to get a job. They tell me you are so talented, it's a tragedy that you are not working more than you do.

Sometimes I'll watch a movie with great actors and see parts that I know I would be amazing in, but wouldn't be considered for because of my race. Racism is so insidious, sometimes its effect doesn't show up in which roles I did or didn't get, it goes deeper than that, it affects what I think I even deserve to strive toward.

I was trained to give years to the theater and be prepared for it to give me nothing in return. Hollywood is a business machine, it hurts, and I get disappointed, but I just keep going.

On an interpersonal level, the majority of the people I've worked with in Hollywood have been fair and treated me with nothing but dignity and respect, but racism is systemic, it affects all areas of our lives. It took me years to realize that what I think I can achieve, do, be, has been diseased by racism. I know that, flush its residue from my system daily and push on.

I mean, not to toot my own horn, but I am exceptionally beautiful and talented! So, where's all my stuff!?

It also saddens me when I see my colleagues, other black actresses, who have done all the things and still aren't getting the benefits from all the work they have put in. They've done the solo play, the series regular, and the blockbuster movie and do not garner the pay or recognition that our white counterparts receive.

A-CHOICES: Tell me about your character "Denise" in *Bea at Rehab*

Simone: Denise is dedicated to her job, but she is in a difficult situation. She is a reasonable person surrounded by unreasonable people.

A-CHOICES: How do you motivate your fellow cast mates?

Simone: I motivate actors by being very available, actors will call me at 11pm at night to come read with them and I will get into my car and go meet them. I coach actors through scene work, some actors have booked major roles from my coaching. I love acting and make myself very available to have the craft live. I act my butt off when the camera is turned on the other actor, I do not check out or let my stand in do the scene.



I let my dedication to acting sing, give them juicy challenges in our scenes together, I respect acting and I just try to make it fun.

A-CHOICES: Who are your favourite fashion designers?

Simone: Growing up my clothes were sewn by a tailor so I tend to love a good fit. I still have my clothes sewn by a dressmaker sometimes. I love clothes, love couture. Grass fields, Andrea Iyamah, Oscar De La Renta, Zimmerman, Valentino, YSL, Imad Eduso, William Okpo. CHANEL.

A-CHOICES: What are your favourite beauty products / what is always carried in your purse?

Simone: Channel lip gloss in Insouciance. I also wear Juvia's Place and Mented.

A-CHOICES: Do you have a beauty and exercise regime?

Simone: I use beauty products, I've been trying clean beauty products a lot lately since I discovered the toxins that are in many of our most trusted brands. I use The Ordinary a lot. I try to keep it simple, aloe vera juice to soften my hair, I sometimes wash my hair with clay, which draws out toxins, argan oil to moisturize my hair.

I also follow natural hair youtubers like FusionofCultures or The Chic Natural. On my face, I use oils to remove makeup, vitamin E, witch hazel as a toner. Ceramides and Hyaluronic Acid have become my go-to. I do believe that all beauty stems from proper nutrition and exercise. I eat whole foods, no wheat gluten. I eat like what my grandmother would have eaten in Jamaica, boil yam, greens, etc. I practice Iyengar yoga 3 days per week for 2 hours and I run 3 miles per day 3 days a week.

A-CHOICES: How did you handle the lockdown due to the Covid 19?

Simone: I've sort of been working all throughout the lockdown.

My solo play *The Divorce Comedy: A Spiritual Study*, premiered at the REDCAT downtown Los Angeles in October 2020 and so I spent most of 2020 working on my play. It was all very up in the air and we were reimagining the process as we went along, the theatre was very good about safety and there were many Covid protocols in place.

I rehearsed at the theatre by myself at first, my director and stage manager could not be in the same space with me. Then we moved to my director's backyard, very masked and socially distanced. It took a village. I was sheltering in place alone for the entire year, so it was great to be in a warm place and have my writing to get me through. The hard part was being away from my family and not being able to travel to see loved ones.

A-CHOICES: Words of advice/encouragement for the people during the pandemic to keep going.

Simone: Focus on the things you love, stay away from negative energy, keep your spirit buoyant however you can. Pick flowers, read, do things that take you out of thinking, paint, draw, play with water. Refresh your spirit.

A-CHOICES: Have you travelled to Africa before?

Simone: No, I have never been to Africa, I would love to go! I did my ancestry and I am 87% West African and apparently 38% Nigerian. Aye! Naija no dey carry last!

A-CHOICES: Wow! Welcome to Naija.

Simone: Yeah!

A-CHOICES: What would you say are your major achievements?

Simone: Whatever role I played in getting my mother out of the hospital alive when she contracted Covid. Choosing myself. A deep spiritual practice. The person I have become. My master, and bachelor's degrees, creating an interior design business, being a successful working actress in L.A and New York. Having the play I wrote, performed, and co-directed premiere at the prestigious Cal Arts REDCAT. Buying properties in Brooklyn, NYC, playing Lady Macbeth, working steadily throughout the pandemic. Stuff like that.

A-CHOICES: For what in your life do you feel most grateful?

Simone: I'm grateful to be alive. My auntie says it's important to be alive because you can realize your dreams. I'm grateful that I get to live the life of my dreams. Small things bring me delight, the sun, flowers, birds, trees. I love my plants, my home is a sanctuary, I love my bed.

A-CHOICES: What's next for Simone?

Simone: Next, I'll be appearing on Law and Order: Criminal Intent, I am writing a lot and I have a very delightful project coming out that I can't talk about as yet. You catch reach me on social media Facebook, IG @iamsimonemoore, follow me come say hello, I will write back. My website is www.simonemoore.com. Thank you for having me! Love you guys!

A-CHOICES: Thank you Simone







DATING SITE CONMAN JAILED FOR 'ROMANCE FRAUD' AFTER SCAMMING THOUSANDS FROM VULNERABLE WOMEN

Crime

By:Linda R.Jones
London,UK

A romance scammer targeting vulnerable elderly victims, including a woman with terminal cancer, has been imprisoned for more than two years.

Osagie Aigbonohan, 40, originally from Lagos, Nigeria, posed as Tony Eden on dating sites, using a picture of a gray-haired, middle-aged white man to fool his targets.

The scammer claimed he worked for a mining company and said he needed money to rent equipment after paying for the funerals of his workers after a tragic accident. Between June 2019 and July last year, Aigbonohan contacted more than 670 people on sites such as Tinder, Bumble, Christian Connection, and Plenty of Fish, scamming nine of them.

One of his victims said he had been diagnosed with cancer, but continued to ask for money and even send messages after he died.

Aigbonohan was sentenced to a total of two years and four months in prison at Southwark Crown Court after pleading guilty previously to fraud, fraud, money laundering and possession of an iPhone for possession of a fake driver's license.

'A heinous crime'

Recorder Edward Jenkins said: "This crime by you can only be described as a bad crime.

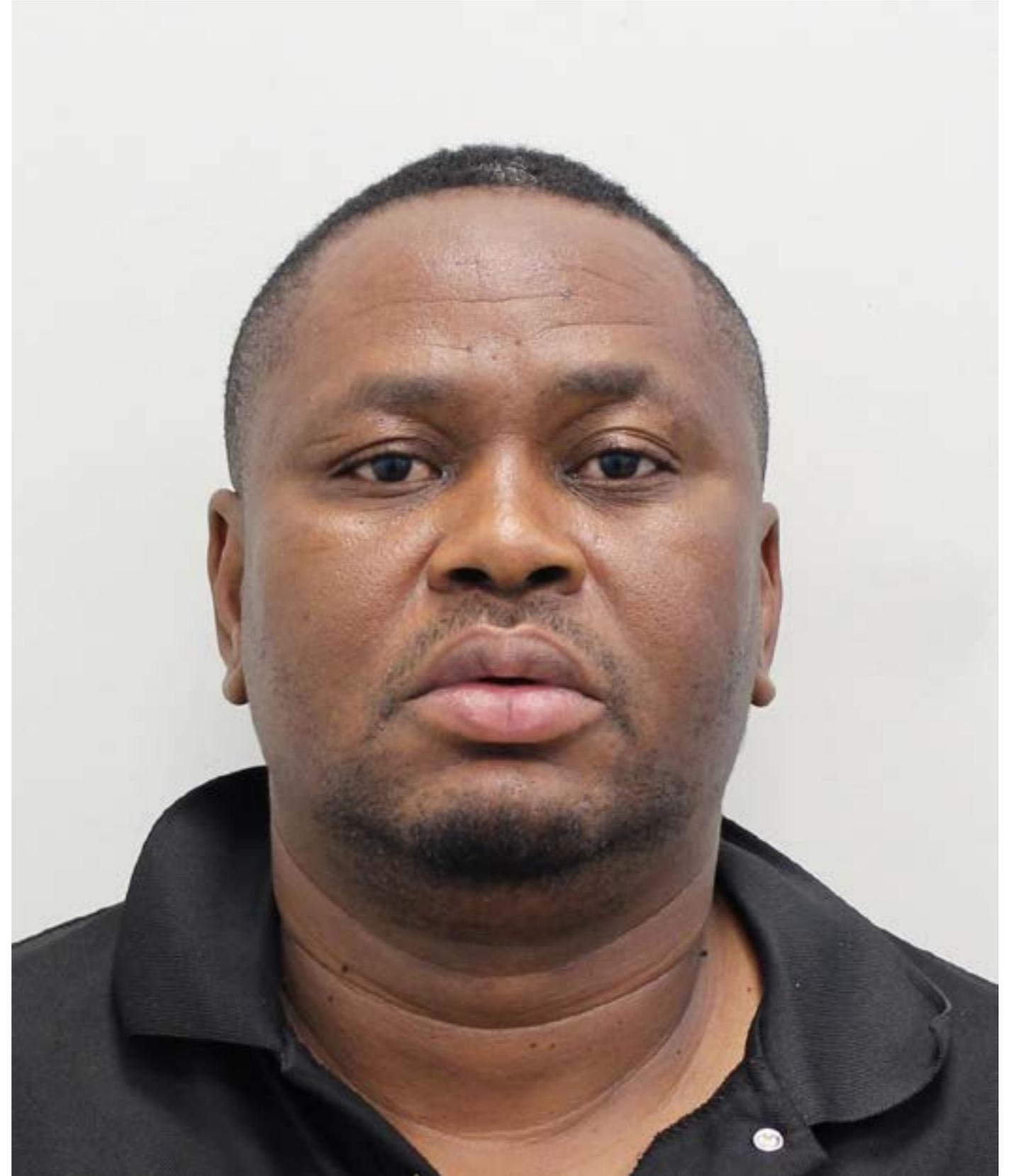
You have been involved in a nasty crime where you participated in what is popularly known as love fraud.

"But what you actually did was participate in a scam aimed at vulnerable older women, in emotionally difficult circumstances, some in financially difficult circumstances."

The court heard that Aigbonohan cheated on a widow of about £10,000 and a woman who was terminally ill for more than £4,000.

"You continued to harass her for months after she was diagnosed with terminal cancer, which frankly erodes our faith."

Aigbonohan, whose visa has expired, can be deported from the UK after serving his sentence.



IBB: I KNEW ABACHA WOULDN'T HAND OVER POWER.

By: Kayode Okunlola F.

Senior Writer

Lagos, Nigeria

Politics



Former military president, Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, says he knew ex-military dictator, Sani Abacha would not relinquish power. The 80-year-old during a recent interview revealed that the government of late Abacha was very smart.

In the widely known June 12, 1993 election, Moshood Kashimawo Olalekan (MKO) Abiola was in the lead to become president but the election was annulled by Babangida.

Following the annulment, a national protest ensued, which forced Babangida to step aside and hand over power to Ernest Shonekan on August 27, 1993, as the head of an interim national government. Babangida speaking further explained that though he was outside the service, he knew what was going on. Abacha staged a coup against the interim civilian government headed by late President Ernest Shonekan back in 1993 returning Nigeria to military rule.

Babangida, in 2021, had said he annulled the election because a bloody coup would have occurred if he did not. When asked in an interview with Daily Trust TV, if his reason for annulling the election was because he was still in government, Babangida said, "No, I wasn't there let me get that right." "When we came up with the idea of an interim government, Nigerians said they were tired of anything or the media phrase was "that contraption called interim government," he said.

"What we did, the interim government, we gave it life, we gave it tenure, we had a date for another election but we were told "forget it, no election; Nigerians are weary of election, just pack and go".

"We managed to set it up, we gave it six months so that by February of 1994...I can't remember now, we could have held another election, so that we can hand over to a democratically elected government.

"Now one of the fears is that we couldn't come openly and tell you people that this is what we fear or this is what we are going to do, somebody is going to do A,B,C,D,E,F. The life of that interim government was cut short by coup d'état, change of government.

“And the Abacha’s government was very smart. They knew who were the most vociferous discussants about election, about coup, about June 12 and so on, they started talking to them and sold a dummy to them, they encourage them to get rid of the interim government; “when we get rid of the interim government we will bring you back to come and take over your democracy so that a civilian government would be installed”.

“They sold that dummy to the public and to some prominent persons within the society and when Abacha stepped in, there were drumming and sighs; “Good thing! Next thing is going to be a democratically elected government”. “I knew, we knew, that it wouldn’t be because the argument was: “Why should I risk my life only to come and hand over power to you?”, that was what happened.”



MUMMY G O: HELL'S GATE KEEPER.

By:Kangmwa Gofwen
Lagos Bureau Chief.



The bible in Mathew talks about false prophets that will spring up in the last days. It says "for many will come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many ... and many false prophets will appear and will deceive many people." Mathew 24:5&11.

For Christians, we believed that the last days are here already because we see the different signs the bible said would happen in the last days happening now. Nations rising against nations, parents against children, corruption has taken over the hearts of men; these are some of the signs of the end time the bible talks about.

For the sake of this write up, focus is on the founder of Rapture Proclaimer Evangelical Church God (RAPEC), the controversial pastor, Evangelist Funmilayo Adebayo, popularly known as Mummy G.O.

Pastor Funmi became popular for her controversial and unorthodox teachings, in what usually seem like a comedy show, she illustrates some of the things that the "children of God" shouldn't indulge in or they'd end in hell fire. Her teachings are outright condemnation rather than the righteousness the bible offers sinners.

In one of her teachings she said any person that dies as a football star shall go to hell. "Anybody that dies as a football star shall go to hell. Write it down, I'm not forcing you to believe it; if your child or brother becomes a star in football, it's an automatic certificate to hell.

Especially you boys, when we tell you that football is not good, you hate it." "If you know it's a sin raise your hand" she tells her congregation "football is a sin, it is a game of antichrist that is why many general overseers and big churches are fighting me." What Mummy G.O did not clarify for her followers is whether just watching the game is a sin also.

Lifestyle

I'm sure a lot of soccer fans are relieved because they are not "football stars" hence they are not going to hell. She speaks with certainty as though she has the list of those who belong to hell or she has the keys to hell.

In another video of her sermon, she said comedians are going to hell. You'd wonder how she gets these revelations or how and why she came to such tentative conclusions. "My dear, if you are here and your dream is to become a comedian, I want you to renounce Jesus and reject him. You must renounce Jesus and reject him. To become a comedian means you're destined for hell."

A closer investigation by Saturday Tribune revealed that the church has rules that members must abide by, according to the report, Mummy G.O. forbids the use of fashion accessories such as jewelries, fixing nails and facial makeup for ladies, and she also forbids her male members from any funky way of life.

The use of the traditional talking drum is prohibited in her church, certain beverages, sea foods are also not allowed for her members. It was also gathered by Tribune that her members are not allowed to say "hello" to begin a phone conversation, "Mama RAPEC not only regulates what members' wear, she also forbids them from saying hello to begin a telephone conversation, as believers, members are expected to say 'shalom.'" Shalom means peace.

In other videos, Mummy G.O. shared some of her life stories before she gave her life to Christ. "I wasn't a fool before I met Christ" she said, "I was a cocaine pusher, I sold guns and rented ammunitions to robbers. I was a hired killer; I had boys at my disposal, whenever I want to give information to politicians, they pay me millions.

Obasanjo knows me very well, we are close pals. Even Babangida knows me. The police had no guts to arrest me, Sijuade, Ooni of Ife; it was when I met him that his business started booming." She revealed that she never used the conventional means of transportation to smuggle her cocaine, "the kind of cocaine I smuggled, I used flying carpet straight to Germany and America, I don't use airplanes. The reason why I have this knowledge is due to my long journey in the kingdom of darkness."

I remember growing up, the only time we used attachments on our hair was during Christmas and it was Amigo, I can imagine how much money she must have amassed from inception of attachment on earth to the early 90s, that's by the way though. "The first attachment on earth I produced it. The name is 'Amigo' and we're the ones that have the company." She revealed.

It is unfortunate that our society is very gullible that prophets like Mummy G.O. are having followers that abide by their teachings. What on earth does going to heaven or hell have to do with eating Titus fish? I'll let you be the judge.

Just as comedy shows, Mummy G.O. has become a sensation with several memes about her flying around the internet.

I always wonder what the fate of men would be if God were to be human, Mummy G.O. without mercy or second chance condemns the sinner straight to hell; thankfully, God is not human.

Having come under so much criticism, in a recent interview with BBC Mummy G.O. said the videos making rounds on social media are fake, she also feigned ignorance of her sermons going viral. She said people threatened her because of her end-time preaching.

IN THE END, KNOW GOD FOR YOURSELF.



PRINCE HARRY SEEKS JUDICIAL REVIEW AFTER HOME OFFICE STOPS HIM FROM PAYING FOR POLICE PROTECTION IN UK.

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The Duke of Sussex's legal representatives say he wants to bring son Archie and baby daughter Lilibet to the UK. Prince Harry has filed a claim for a judicial review over a Home Office decision to prevent him from paying for police protection for himself and his family during a visit to the UK.

A legal representative for Harry said he wants to bring his son Archie and seven-month-old baby daughter Lilibetto visit from the US, but fears they will be "unable to return to his home" because it is too dangerous. The duke wants to fund the security himself, rather than ask taxpayers to foot the bill after he stepped down as a senior member of the Royal Family.

Harry is now arguing his private protection team in the US does not have access to UK intelligence information which is needed to keep his wife and children safe.

The duke's legal representative said in a statement: "The UK will always be Prince Harry's home and a country he wants his wife and children to be safe in. "With the lack of police protection comes too great a personal risk." The representative added: "The Duke and Duchess of Sussex personally fund a private security team for their family, yet that security cannot replicate the necessary police protection needed whilst in the UK.

"In the absence of such protection, Prince Harry and his family are unable to return to his home."

Harry briefly returned from the US last July for the unveiling of a statue of his late mother Princess Diana. The day before, he met seriously ill children and young people at a WellChild garden party and afternoon tea in Kew Gardens, west London.

Politics

However, it is understood the duke's car was chased by photographers as he left. Harry has shared his concerns in the past about his family's safety. Diana died in a car crash after she was chased by the paparazzi in Paris in 1997. The legal representative added: "Prince Harry inherited a security risk at birth, for life. He remains sixth in line to the throne, served two tours of combat duty in Afghanistan, and in recent years his family has been subjected to well-documented neo-Nazi and extremist threats. "While his role within the institution has changed, his profile as a member of the Royal Family has not. Nor has the threat to him and his family."



Rihanna and A\$AP Rocky 'set to marry this year' amid baby rumours.



By: Seyi Awoleye
Los Angeles, CA
USA

A\$AP Rocky has already declared girlfriend Rihanna is 'the one' – and there have even been rumours the pair are expecting a baby together.

So do we also hear wedding bells for this music power couple in 2022?

The pair, both 33, only went public with their relationship in September last year when they walked the red carpet together at the prestigious Met Gala.

But US rapper A\$AP, whose real name is Rakim Mayers, says he is in it for the long haul with his Bajan beauty.

Describing her as the "love of his life", he said RiRi amounts to "like a million of other ones".

Pals say a baby and a wedding are on the couple's to-do list for 2022.

A source close to the pair told Heat magazine the duo had a "blissful" time celebrating Christmas in Barbados.

Now Rihanna's friends and family are said to be taking bets on when they will announce their engagement and baby news.

"They're both ready to do this and have been for some time," the pal shared. "It's just a case of logistics and figuring out how to break the news." While A\$AP doesn't much care for formality or putting labels on their relationship, it's said RiRi is more traditional than people think.

The source revealed: "Ri is quite old fashioned at heart and she's earmarked 2022 as the year for her to marry Rocky and make their dream a reality."

And it seems Riri's family approve of her new man, as even the Umbrella singer's mum has apparently been urging him to propose.

Although the couple don't seem to have been together that long, they have actually known each other for over a decade.

They first met in 2011 when they collaborated on the track Cockiness (Love It) which they performed at the MTV Video Music Awards a year later.

A\$AP was also RiRi's opening act on the North American leg of her Diamonds world tour in 2013. But the duo were not seen together in public again until 2018 when they attend a Louis Vuitton show at Paris Fashion Week.

The pair begin hanging out at several events but seem to just be friends – as Rihanna dated Saudi businessman Hassan Jameel from 2016 to 2020.

Single again in January 2020, Rihanna is said to have shared a New York hotelsuite with A\$AP, but a pal said at the time they were "hanging out, not dating".

In the summer of that year Rihanna and A\$AP worked together again for a Fenty Skin campaign. By December 2020 things turned romantic between them as the new couple are said to be "inseparable".



POLITICAL RECYCLING

Politics



By:Kangmwa Gofwen
Lagos Bureau Chief

Ahead of the 2023 general elections, the atmosphere is heating up and several persons are indicating interest to run for the number one position of the country. Typical of our dearly beloved country, the very persons that got the country to its present state are creeping out again to contest the position of the President. The political system in Nigeria is in many ways not favorable for fresh hands to come in. Since the inception of this country from independence till date, the same crop of people are still in the hem of affairs and that is why we have the likes of Bola Ahmed Tinubu indicating interest to run for Presidency.

We have been, and are still recycling leaders like empty bottles; sadly, they're indeed bottles without content; same old, same old.

Tinubu, the former Lagos state governor and a strong supporter of President Buhari finally declared his intentions to the President of becoming his successor; a kingmaker who wants to become king.

One would wonder what Tinubu has to offer at his feeble. Recall that last year he was in London for treatment of an unknown sickness, many fears that if he eventually becomes President, history will repeat itself just as Yar'Aduas' time.

Because Nigeria is just like the 'Fuji house of commotion', rumors have been making rounds of former President Goodluck Jonathans' intentions of wanting to return to the Aso villa for another term. Just recently, posters of the former President was seen in some parts of Lagos state and Abuja the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

The posters read "PLS RUN, NIGERIANS ARE CALLING AGAIN." The posters were courtesy of a group Greater Nigeria Ambassadors (GRENA). The posters claimed to be a call on Goodluck Jonathan to run for the seat of the President again in 2023.

The group has now joined some number of persons and groups calling on the former President to run again in the 2023 general elections.

Another ambition brewing is that of the current Vice President Yemi Osinbanjo, funny, but true. The Vice President who has been in office for the past seven years has just suddenly realized that he is better of President than just assisting (but well, he could succeed his principal).

According to a report by Peoples Gazette, Osinbanjo informed the President, his principal, of his intention to run for President in 2023 and sought his blessings.

According to Gazette, Osinbanjo met the President on New Years' Day.

"The Vice President did not want to go into the election year by hiding a plan which the President had probably already known about", the report read in parts. "He knew that an immediate endorsement of the President, on the other hand, may not be so easy to come by."

One question that comes to mind is, if Osinbanjo has what it takes to lead this country, why did the country deteriorate so bad during his time as Vice President? What would he do differently from his principal? So many questions begging for answers but just as Omawumi sang, "If you ask me, na who I go ask?"

With these crops of leaders still in politics today, the assertion that "children are the leaders of tomorrow" is non-existent. Some of them have been in leadership positions before I was born; sadly, they are not ready to let go off power yet.

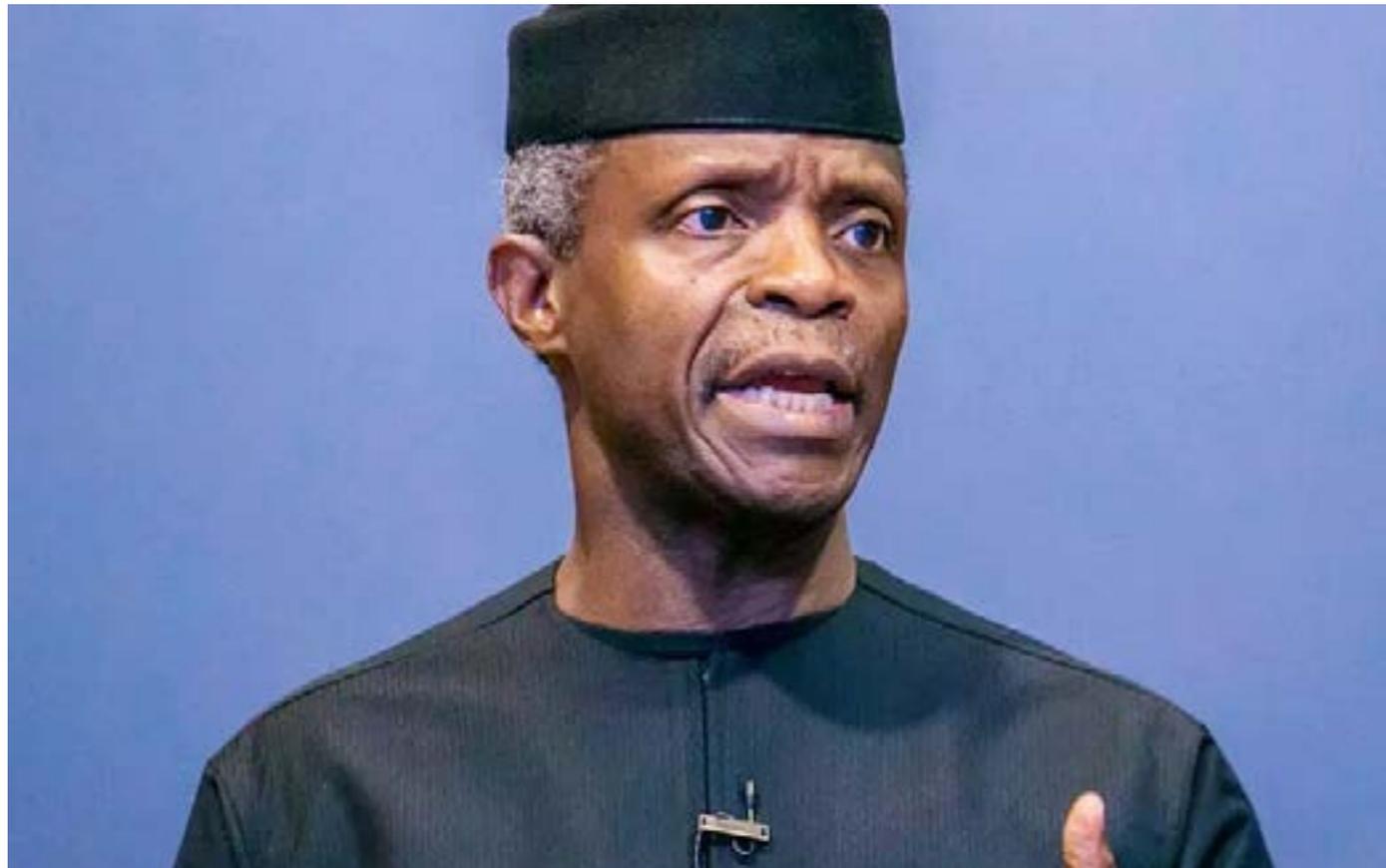
One of the things the Nigerian politics, maybe Africa in general fail to address is 'mentorship'. If the youths were carried along, mentored and prepared we wouldn't have the likes of Tinubu, Goodluck, and even Osinbanjo contesting for presidency.

Fortunately or unfortunately, the constitution of the Federal republic of Nigeria allows for any person to contest for the seat of the president provided you are educated to at least school certificate. The 1999 constitution (as amended) in section 131 (d) provides that "a person shall be qualified for election to the office of President if he has been educated up to at least school certificate level or its equivalent."

Judging by this section of the constitution, almost everyone has the rights to contest the seat of the President and that is why all manner of persons creep out to indicate interest. What is baffling though is why is the same set of people going round the circle again?

During the last general elections, the likes of Kingsley Mogalu, Omoyele Sowore, Fela Durotoye and many young bloods contested the seat of the President but their ambitions did not scale through; now I wonder is it a system problem or a people problem?

We have had these same leaders from inception till now; it is high time we had fresh minds with sound ideas run the affairs of the country. The recycling idea has got to end. As electorates, we have to take the future of our dear country into our hands; it is everybody's responsibility to get involved in processes to bring in good governance. The time to lurk around is over; it is our collective responsibility to bring in the change that we desire in every sector.



Samuel Eto'o earned absurd salary at Russian side Anzhi Makhachkala.

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Sports

Legendary AFCON star Samuel Eto'o made his name as a goal-scoring phenomenon for Barcelona and Cameroon, but earned his most eye-catching pay-cheque with Russian side Anzhi Makhachkala Africa Cup of Nations legend Samuel Eto'o was a global megastar considered by many as one of the greatest forwards of his generation.

The former striker, 40, is now the president of the Cameroonian Football Federation and in charge of delivering the latest AFCON tournament in his home country. His own glittering career included guiding Cameroon to two AFCON victories and scoring an outstanding 56 international goals, as well three Champions League winners' medals for Barcelona and Inter Milan at club level.

But despite all his achievements, perhaps the most jaw-dropping moment of his career arrived when he signed for little-known club Anzhi Makhachkala. The Russian side secured the forward's services by paying Inter £18.4million for him in 2011. Anzhi were taken over by billionaire tycoon Suleyman Kerimov in January that year, who decided to pump money into the club and even secured former World Cup winner Roberto Carlos as his first major signing.

In an attempt to get Eto'o to sign, the ambitious club offered him a staggering €10million (£8.7million) per season contract on a three-year-deal, averaging out to around £170,000-a-week. The figure was astronomical at the time for a player aged 30, but was somewhat justified considering the Cameroonian netted 37 goals the previous season.



Zimbabwean teacher, 51, 'called on his Facebook followers to bomb HQ of his country's ruling regime and attack leader's motorcade'.



By: Clara Mpheza Manda
Lusaka, Zambia



Politics

A Zimbabwean activist called on his followers to carry out terrorist attacks to overthrow his country's regime in a series of speeches, a court heard. William Chinyanga, 51, is accused of encouraging bombings in the south-east African country in four speeches to 7,000 followers on social media over two days in December 2019.

It is claimed the supply teacher, who lives in north London, told Facebook followers to 'open gunfire on a gathering of people' and use 'gorilla warfare'.

Chinyanga is understood to be a campaigner for MDC-alliance, a multi-party political bloc that opposes Emmerson Mnangagwa's ruling Zanu-PF government in Zimbabwe. The Old Bailey was told he has been charged with four counts of encouraging terrorism, which he denies. Prosecutor Sean Larkin QC said Chinyanga, who was born in Zimbabwe, sought asylum in 2009 and was granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK.

'There is no dispute he is an opponent of the Zimbabwean government,' he continued. 'He had a Facebook account and over a two-day period, the 1st and 2nd December 2019 he livestreamed four speeches to his Facebook followers, over 7,000 followers. 'He speaks in a mixture of English and Shona and he speaks against the Zimbabwean government.

The prosecution case is that he went far beyond legitimate complaint or protest against the government and committed the offences with which he is charged.' Jurors were told that Chinyanga was a 'long-standing opponent of the Zimbabwean regime' although only four of the speeches he posted were the subject of charges.

'In the course of these speeches he encouraged his followers to bomb the headquarters of Zanu-PF, bomb the motorcade of the leader of the Zanu-PF, bomb petrol stations, it seems with a view to disrupt the economy and bring revolution, attack police officers in their cars, attack soldiers.

'He encouraged his followers to share the speeches with others,' said Mr Larkin. After police became aware of a speech he posted titled 'The strategy to remove zanu.pf. Announcement', Chinyanga was interviewed on February 2020. He admitted posting the speech and wanting to overthrow his country's government and released under investigation, in the course of which officers found his other speeches.



The court heard that in the speech titled 'Anyone in his right mind to open gunfire on a gathering of people its terrorism' he called what happened in Zimbabwe 'a disgrace'. 'What appears to have happened is that he would describe seeing some footage of police in Zimbabwe shooting a protesters, apparently in a tree planting matter. 'That is what triggered his speeches,' said the prosecutor. Jurors were told that the Zanu-PF party had been ruling the Southeast African country since its independence in 1980, for most of that time under Robert Mugabe.

In 2017 he was ousted in a coup by his own party and replaced by Emmerson Mnangagwa. The teacher said in the dock wearing a suit, assisted by a Shona interpreter, as the prosecutor opened the case.

Chinyanga, of St Johns Way, Archway, denies with four counts of encouraging terrorism. The trial continues.



BURNA BOY HAS A COMPLICATED RELATIONSHIP WITH AFRICA.

Entertainment



By: Ibukun Babatunde
Port-Harcourt
Nigeria



Nigerian Afro-fusion recording artist Burna Boy is celebrated in his home country and internationally -- but he's never been shy about criticizing Africa's leaders.

In march last year, at an event center in Nigeria, Burna Boy stood on stage with a mic in hand, in front of a captivated audience. But the world-famous Afro-fusion recording artist wasn't there to perform.

Rather, he was addressing the crowd after receiving an official proclamation from the governor of his home state to honor his win at the 2021 Grammys for best global music album: "I thank the best governor I've ever experienced because you know say me na [you know I don't] even like politics or politicians."

That sort of love/hate sentiment often sums up how the self-proclaimed "African Giant" feels about his country and to a larger extent, his continent. Recently, CNN interviewed Burna Boy twice in a four-week period for an episode of African Voices Changemakers.

From the beginning, he makes it clear he doesn't like doing much talking, at least in English. Most of his answers are short and sometimes evasive -- but one of the areas he expands on is his dream that someday there would be one Africa.

"It's just a wish, maybe a farfetched wish," Burna Boy says as he sits with his arms crossed in a room adjacent to a soundstage in Los Angeles, where he and his band are rehearsing for a concert happening the following day.

"I wish we had one passport," he continues, which would make it easier for Africans to travel outside the continent. "I wish we could be considered like a United States, like the way America is ... (Let's say) me and you [referring to the American producer] want to go to Spain or wherever on a commercial flight -- let's see who gets in first.

Anyone familiar with Burna Boy's music (and can understand the mixture of Nigerian dialects he often uses in his lyrics) will know his standing on his continent. Many of his songs include Afro-centric messages, such as the song "Another Story," which tells the story of Nigeria's colonization by the British.

Other tracks criticize government leaders, like "Collateral Damage," where he sings about how politicians get rich by watching others suffer. In "20:10:20", he calls out government officials -- including the Nigerian president -- for the Lekki toll killings during the October 2020 protests. "United Africa"

The 30-year-old believes that the only way for African countries to get the respect he seeks is to unite. According to him, "it can't be achieved by the way it's going...we've been falling for a long time so why not try something new?"

When asked lightheartedly who should be on the currency of this "united Africa", Burna Boy gives a profound answer. "On the currency should be people who had these ideas for generations, who died with these ideas and were killed for these ideas," he says.

“People like Muammar Gaddafi [former leader of Libya who was overthrown and assassinated in 2011] whose whole thing was to unite Africa and have a single currency, backed by gold.”

It also names Burkina Faso’s first president, Thomas Sankara, and the Democratic Republic of Congo’s first prime minister, Patrice Lumumba, two leaders who were also eventually overthrown and assassinated. When it is mentioned that Gaddafi has been charged with crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Court, Burna Boy remains unwavering in his respect for leaders like him.

“Where do we get this information that these people are bullies or whatever?” he asks. “They may very well be. I do not know. I was not there. But what I do know is that these people had these ideas, these people tried to do something at least, which would benefit all of Africa, unlike all the leaders we have today.”

An unexpected invitation Burna Boy has never shied away from criticizing along these lines. This is why he was caught off guard when he received an invitation from the Governor of Rivers State, Nigeria to be honored in Port Harcourt, his home town. “Of course I was surprised – most of my songs are against the government,” Burna Boy said during our second interview, sitting in a house in the hills of Los Angeles and looking a little more at comfortable. “Do you know how they say that a prophet is never celebrated in his own house? I kind of broke that curse right there, didn’t I? he adds, laughing.

It ended up being a huge homecoming. The streets of Port Harcourt were flooded with people as his motorcade made its way from the airport to a government building, where Burna Boy addressed the governor and other state officials.

Perhaps surprisingly for the artist, always outspoken and proudly anti-establishment, the official recognition marked a high point in his career.

“Actually, I’m not going to follow any of this,” Burna Boy said, setting aside a prepared statement given to him.

“It’s the first time I’ve been in a situation like this, or in a government house, so please excuse me for not understanding this,” he told them. “I really enjoy being here and it’s probably the greatest honor I’ve been given since I was born, because it’s one thing to win the Grammy and be applauded around the world, and then it’s another thing to be loved in your own home.”



Hushpuppi: US Court go sentence Ramon Abass on Valentine's day.

Crime

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The United States Attorney's Office at the Central District of California says that Ramon Abbas, aka, Hushpuppi, will be sentenced on February 14, 2022. According to Thom Mrozek, the court's Director of Media Relations, Hushpuppi, a Nigerian Instagram sensation, was scheduled for sentencing after pleading guilty to various offences bordering on internet scam and money laundering. The document was signed by Hushpuppi; his lawyer, Loius Shapiro; Acting United States Attorney, Tracy Wilkison, amongst others.

Following a plea agreement he signed last year, 37-year-old Hushpuppi risks 20 years in jail, a fine of \$500,000, or twice the gross gain or gross loss resulting from his offence. Valentine's Day is not one Abass will love to spend in a court awaiting a judge's verdict on criminal charges. In the past, it was one day Hushpuppi would blow his horn and flaunt his wealth.

Also, the court had ordered the Federal Bureau of Investigation to arrest the suspended Head of the Intelligence Response Team, DCP Abba Kyari, for his alleged role in a \$1m scam allegedly perpetrated by Hushpuppi and five others.

However, in December 2021, Mrozek declined comments on the warrant of arrest the court issued months earlier that the FBI should apprehend Kyari and other defendants in the case.

The Dubai Police in the United Arab Emirates had in June 2020 arrested Hushpuppi and his gang. They were later extradited to the US for prosecution by the FBI. The FBI Special Agent, Andrew Innocenti, had alleged that Hushpuppi contracted the services of Kyari after a "co-conspirator," Chibuzo Vincent, allegedly threatened to expose the alleged \$1.1m fraud committed against a Qatari businessman.

Innocenti, who said he obtained voice calls and WhatsApp conversations between Kyari and Hushpuppi, had also alleged that the latter paid the police officer N8m or \$20,600 for the arrest and detention of Vincent.



Woman horrified as colleagues recorded saying 'black people have a smell' in racist rant.

By: Linda R. Jones
London,UK



Racism

Janika Frimpong, 25, says she unintentionally left her phone recording as she left her desk at work - only to later hear awful comments such as "you know black girls, they don't wash their hair"

A black woman has shared a recording in which colleagues are heard making appalling racist remarks like "black people have a smell about them".

Janika Frimpong, 25, says she unintentionally left her phone recording as she left her desk at work - only to later find it had recorded a racist exchange between two fellow workers.

In a voice recording, multiple racist comments can be heard such as "you know black girls, they don't wash their hair."

Janika was working as a receptionist at services company Mitie who provided outsourced reception and concierge services to Legal & General.

Janika claims she became so distressed by the comments it affected her mental health and she left her job on January 10.

She told The Mirror: "I felt drained and unhappy working there and at times I would have panic attacks from the sheer hurt."

Janika bravely shared the horrific voice recording taken in December in which two women can be heard having a racist exchange.

"Do you feel like, I don't want to be rude, but she has a smell about her, like a fried oil smell, is it just me," the first woman says.

"I don't know, it is a strong smell, I don't know if it's oil," the second woman replies.

"Or if it's like a lotion," the first voice adds.

"It could be cocoa butter," the second replies.

"Black people have a smell about them," the first woman says.

The second woman then says: "We were talking about cocoa butter, maybe it's that, mixed with -

"Something else, hair gel or something," the first adds.

"Oh yeah maybe yeah," the second woman says.

"You know some people smell clean and fresh, that's one thing, this is something else. She's not here though, she went toilet or something," the first woman says.

One of the women then laughs in the recording.

Referring to the shocking recording she shared online, Janika, from Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire told The Mirror: "I usually take notes on my phone for work purposes and on this occasion, I had been doing that but needed to pop to the toilet; forgetting I had the recording still running.

“To my surprise when [later] I went over my voice notes I heard two employees saying racist remarks such as; ‘black people have a smell about them,’ ‘black people don’t wash their hair’ amongst other things about myself.

“I instantly went into a state of distress and discomfort - I even tried to brush it off for a few days but I just couldn’t do it anymore as my mental health was being severely affected as I couldn’t stand to go into that work environment.

“I felt drained and unhappy working there and at times I would have panic attacks from the sheer hurt that two people of colour could say these things about me for no apparent reason.

“This is also the first time I have ever experienced racism and discrimination such as this in the workplace.”

She added: “Outside of work, I constantly felt sad, as the incident would keep replaying in my mind.

“I had never experienced anything like this so it was a lot to take in. It was a struggle going back into the office every day.”

Janika said she was training at work, and wanted to record the notes to listen to later at home.

She says: “I went to the bathroom and I left it on by accident.”

“Then when I went home to listen to the notes I overheard the people speak,” she told The Mirror.

Within a few weeks she left her job because of the distress and shared her story to raise awareness of what happened.

Janika recently graduated from an IT degree with a 2.1 from the University of West London.

She said she was issued a temporary contract of employment with Mitie and started at Legal & General and enjoyed the job at first, thinking it would be great work experience for her.

“Little did I know that a few months in, things would turn out like this,” she said.

In a tweet on Monday January 10, she wrote: “I didn’t want to have to bring this to Twitter.

“However I felt there was no other way to show everyone the racists and bullies @ landg_group employ to represent them.”

Janika’s tweets prompted an outpouring of support for her, with utter shock at the recording and many sorry to hear what she had been through.



Anthony Joshua shows off incredible body transformation from skinny kid in Nigeria to two-time heavyweight champ.



Although it's hard to believe now, the former unified heavyweight champion was once your regular skinny kid.

Snapshots of a 12-year-old AJ during his time at a Nigerian boarding school show just how skinny he was before he began his sporting journey.

After years of athletics training, Joshua eventually took up boxing in 2007 thanks to his cousin and fellow pro Ben Ileyemi.

And the rigorous strength and condition training he supplemented his boxing with had a profound effect on his physique.

Sports

By: Edward Collins
London, UK

Joshua looked unrecognisable from the bean pole kid that spent time at the Mayflower Boarding School in Ikenne when he made his pro debut aged 18.

In an interview with Vogue, he said of his time at boarding school: "I spent about nine months in a boarding school.

"Really tough. No nonsense. Education is, 'I want you to be a doctor or a lawyer.' There's no YouTube, no boxing.

"None of that, it's either doctor or lawyer, simple. So education is important in Nigerian schools and especially in a boarding school."

He later added: "Discipline; so tomorrow through your mistake, you're not going to make the same mistake again, so that's why I believe mistakes are good."

His transformations have continued throughout his much-talked-about career.

AJ weighed a career-heavy 18 stone for his October 2017 victory over Carlos Takam but trimmed considerably two years later for his do-or-die rematch with Andy Ruiz Jr, tipping the scales at 16 stone and 13lbs.

He did, however, put some size back on for his ill-fated defence against Oleksandr Usyk last September, weighing in at a smidgen over 17 stone.

The Watford warrior is currently preparing for a crunch rematch with the Ukrainian southpaw, who put on a masterclass in their Tottenham tussle.

The bout was initially slated for late March but is now in the works for April.

Promoter Eddie Hearn recently said: "I think April is realistic for that fight.

"Before you know it, it's going to be February and these fights take a lot of organising.

For us, the preferred date and venue for that fight will be the UK, in which case we would have to do the fight outside, so we're not really interested in doing that fight in March.

"AJ has been training relatively solidly since the fight.

"Realistically if you start your training camp in February, even April becomes quite tight but that is the preferred date for the fight and I think that's realistic."





Gangland killer wins £15,000 compensation for being locked up with dangerous inmates.

By: Sonia Dire Yobo

Jemmikai Orlebar-Forbes, 28, claimed he was segregated with terrorists after becoming a Muslim in jail. The move left him confined to his cell for up to 23 hours a day alongside inmates including Taliban recruiter Munir Farooqi, 63, and jihadist thug Jewel Uddin, 35.

Orlebar-Forbes, of Balham, South London, was jailed for a minimum 31 years in 2013 for his part in the murder of a rival drug dealer. He now calls himself Abdullah.

He claimed he was wrongly kept with danger men in the high-security unit at HMP Frankland, Durham in 2019.

A source said: "He moaned of being isolated in his cell all day and he said he'd been assaulted by a prison guard.

"Officials dismissed his story as untrue but he managed to win the payout for being wrongly placed in the unit."

Ministry of Justice chiefs said it was settled out of court to save the taxpayer from potentially higher legal costs.

David Spencer of the Centre for Crime Prevention, said: "It's absurd the MoJ failed to even contest his claims."

Uddin – jailed for 19½ years for plotting to blow up a far-right English Defence League rally – smashed out six of a prison officer's teeth in 2019.



Francis Ngannou unifies UFC heavyweight title with unanimous decision over Ciryl Gane.

Sports



Okunlola Kayode F.
Senior writer
Lagos, Nigeria



I don't know if you're MMA or UFC fans but if you like movies where the human spirit overcomes all obstacles and the good guy wins at the end, then a former homeless man from Cameroon Africa who beat all odds to become and retain the UFC Heavyweight Championship of the world is better than any movie I'd ever wish to watch! Arguably the baddest man on the planet, he has become a hero to his country and a world icon while remaining humble. He is the epitome of class and dignity in a time that the world rewards and encourages the very opposite. Sometimes becoming a champion reveals the greatness we have in all of us but sometimes the greatness is already there. Francis was a winner and champion long before he stepped in the ring.

Francis Ngannou is perhaps the most frightening power-puncher in UFC history. But he reminded everyone on Saturday night of January 22 that he is not only that. Ngannou showed off a well-rounded game and immeasurable heart -- befitting the champion he is.

Ngannou's UFC 270 main event in Anaheim, California, ended with challenger Ciryl Gane horizontal on the canvas too. But Ngannou employed a whole different way of putting him there, using four takedowns to seize control in a fight he was losing and earn a unanimous decision in his first title defense. For Ngannou, it was his first career victory by decision.

This was not the Ngannou we've come to expect. Trading the fast and furious for patient and persistent, the champ unveiled an evolved fighter who'll be fascinating to watch in UFC title defenses to come. Ngannou is now in position to try to deliver one of his old-fashioned thumpings. This one, however, would occur outside the Octagon. If he follows through with his insistence that he will sit out a year to free himself from his contractual obligation to the UFC, Ngannou would be delivering a knock-the-wind-out-of-you gut punch to MMA's leading promotion.

Francis in a recent interview said "I don't feel like I have a promoter anymore." With Dana White not putting the belt around Ngannou following his title defense, and then not showing up for the post-UFC 270 news conference, it could be an indicator of the UFC president's current thoughts on the matter.

Hearing Ngannou's sentiments on the state of his relationship with the UFC has to make hearts beat a little faster in the chests of other MMA promoters. If Ngannou cannot work things out with the UFC, he would be the most sought-after free agent the sport has ever seen in one year's time.

SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO SIDNEY POITIER.



By: Bunmi Johnson
New York Bureau Chief
USA

The first Black person to win a best actor Oscar gave a string of groundbreaking performances on screen that helped combat social prejudice.

Sidney Poitier, whose groundbreaking acting work in the 1950s and 60s paved the way for generations of Black film stars, has died aged 94. His death was announced by the minister of foreign affairs of the Bahamas, Fred Mitchell.

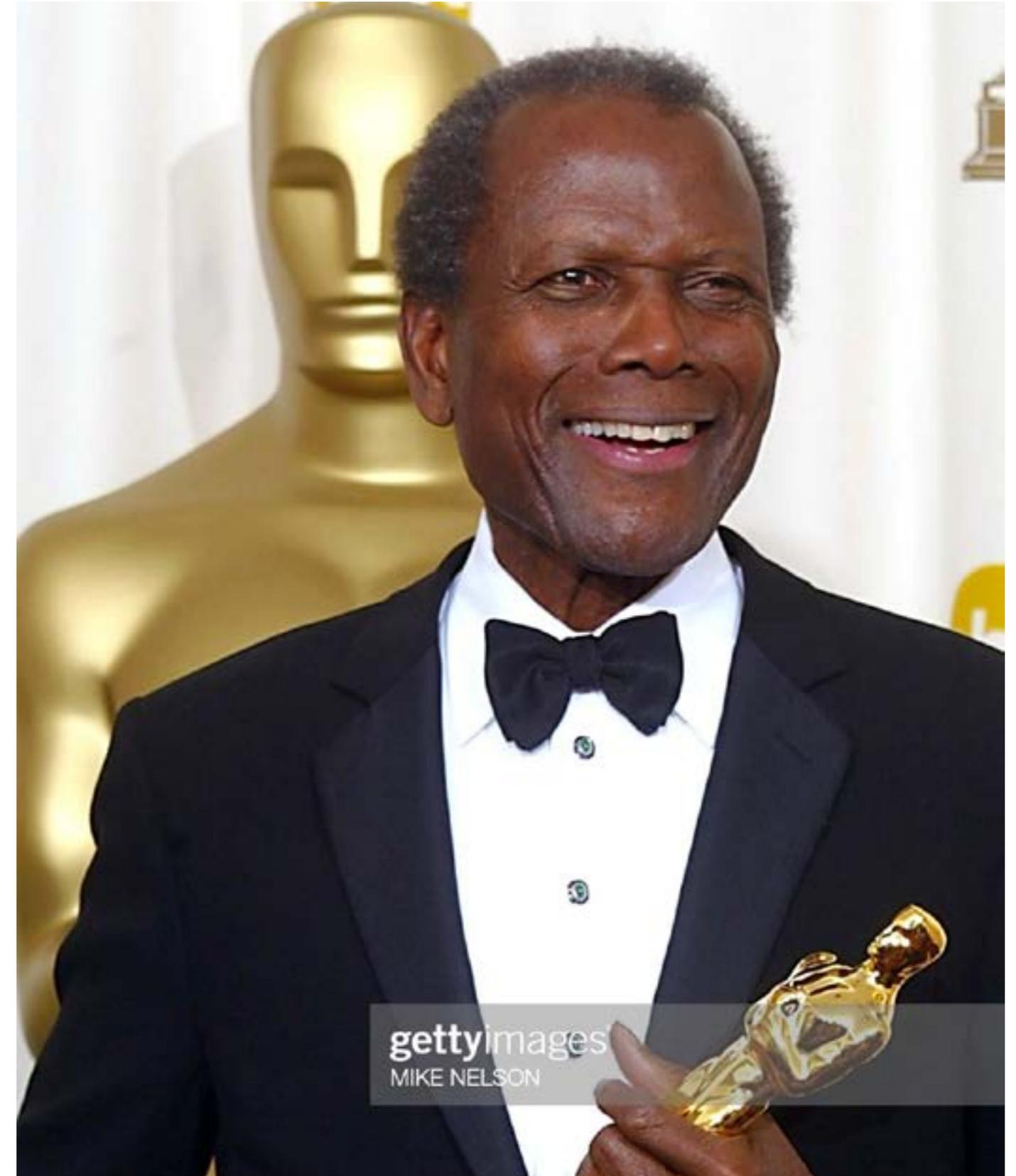
The Bahamas deputy prime minister, Chester Cooper, said he was “conflicted with great sadness and a sense of celebration when I learned of the passing of Sir Sidney Poitier”. He added: “Sadness that he would no longer be here to tell him how much he means to us, but celebration that he did so much to show the world that those from the humblest beginnings can change the world and that we gave him his flowers while he was with us. “We have lost an icon. A hero, a mentor, a fighter, a national treasure.”

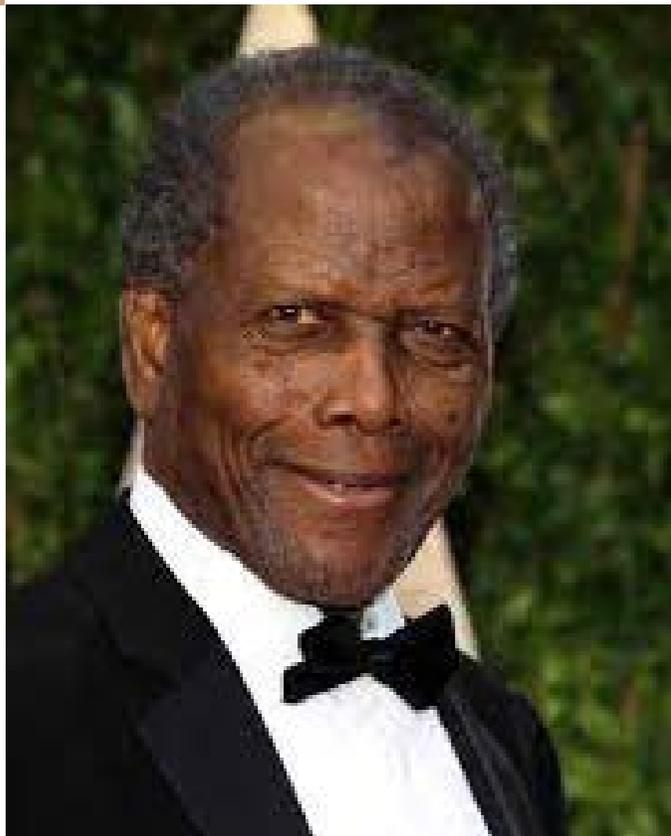
Poitier’s family released a statement, saying: “To us Sidney Poitier was not only a brilliant actor, activist, and a man of incredible grace and moral fortitude, he was also a devoted and loving husband, a supportive and adoring father, and a man who always put family first... So many have been touched by our dad’s extraordinary life, his unwavering sense of decency and respect for his fellow man.”

Poitier, who was born in Miami and raised in the Bahamas, was the first Black winner of the best actor Oscar for *Lilies of the Field* and, along with Harry Belafonte, was a pioneering Black presence in mainstream Hollywood cinema. Bahamian American star Poitier was automatically granted US citizenship after being unexpectedly born in Miami while his parents were visiting in February 1927.

He grew up in the Bahamas but moved to America when he was 15, and served in the Second World War as a teenager after lying about his age.

Lifestyle





"I'll always be following in your footsteps. There's nothing I would rather do, sir."

At the same ceremony, Poitier received an Honorary Academy Award for his contribution to American cinema. As of 2012, following the death of Ernest Borgnine, Poitier became the oldest living Best Actor winner in history.

In the 1980s, he directed numerous films, but had the most success with the Richard Pryor and Gene Wilder comedy *Stir Crazy* (1980). His other film credits include *Porgy and Bess* (1959), *Paris Blues* (1961), *A Patch of Blue* (1965), *Sneakers* (1992) and *The Jackal* (1997). The actor also served as a diplomat.

In 1997, he was named the ambassador of the Bahamas to Japan. He remained in the position until 2007.

Poitier married twice, the first time to Juanita Hardy, from 1960 to 1965. After a nine-year affair with actor and singer Diahann Carroll, Poitier married Canadian actor Joanna Shimkus in 1976. They stayed together for the remainder of his life. Poitier is survived by six children, eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

After leaving the army, he worked as a dishwasher until he landed a place at the American Negro Theatre School of Drama. Poitier scored his first lead film role in 1955's *Blackboard Jungle* and his first experience of awards recognition came with *The Defiant Ones* (1958), which saw him nominated for Best Actor alongside co-star Tony Curtis years later, he historically won the Best Actor Oscar for his performance in *Lilies of the Field*.

Denzel Washington praised Poitier when he became the second Black man to win Best Actor for 2001 film *Training Day*, saying: "I'll always be chasing you, Sidney."



Wife's tearful plea for 'proof of life' after she was 'not allowed to see' London rapper arrested in Kenya.

Credit: mylondon.news



In a televised statement a family lawyer said there are fears for his safety. The family of a British rapper arrested in Kenya has made a tearful plea to be allowed to see him as concerns for their safety mount. Londoner Tariq Kennedy Mangal, 21, who raps under stage name Suspect, was arrested in Nairobi on January 26 along with fellow Londoner Mohamud Siyad Abdihakim, 24.

Lifestyle

Concerns about the two men's safety has been raised by family members and their lawyers.

In a joint televised statement on January 27, lawyers and family members said they've not been able to meet their clients and one of the suspect's sister tearfully pleaded for 'proof of life'.

Tariq Kennedy Mangal, 21, who raps under stage name Suspect, was arrested in Nairobi on Wednesday.

One of the families' lawyers said: "My greatest concern is the police have completely refused to give us access from yesterday."

MyLondon has contacted the Kenyan High Commission and await a response.

The two were arrested in separate parts of the Kenyan capital in connection to the 2019 killing of 16-year-old Alex Smith in Camden.

Mangal's wife Halima and Abdihakim's sister appeared along with a lawyer.

Struggling through tears, Abdihakim's sister said: "It's been 35 hours, we've had no proof of life. We don't know if he's alive. We have been refused to see him.

"He has been refused lawyers. He has been refused for us to see him. They have denied having him. We just want to know if he's alive. "We just need proof of life."

Abdihakim's sister has said she has gone from police station to police station across the city looking for her brother. Unable to contact them they have been desperately trying to find the two men arrested. The sister continued: "We have searched every police station. We even went to DCI headquarters."

Halima, also breaking up in tears, said: "It's been a rough moment for us, we really need to see them. We want to see them because we are really concerned."

London's Met Police have acknowledged the arrests were made in connection to the murder of Alex Smith, Wembley, who was killed by members of a rival gang in Munster Square, Camden.

The Met Police told MyLondon: "We are aware two men have been detained in Kenya by the Kenyan authorities following an international arrest warrant issued by the National Crime Agency."

“The men, [A] 23-years-old and [B] 21-years-old were arrested in connection with the murder of Alex Smith in Camden, 2019.

“We will continue to liaise with partner agencies.”

Mohamud Siyad Abdihakim’s sister has begged to be allowed to see him after the arrest Mangal raps under the name Suspect, part of the Active Gxng record label.

His tracks have racked up millions of views on Youtube including collaborations with more main stream artists Loski and Fredo.

Abdihakim raps under the name SWavey, also part of the same label, which MyLondon has reached out to about the arrests.

In a now deleted statement on social media from Kenyan Directorate of Criminal Investigations, the arrests were announced naming the two suspects.

It read: “Two murder suspects wanted in the United Kingdom have this morning been arrested in Nairobi’s upmarket Kilimani area. The two identified as Mohamud Siyad Abdihakim, 24 and Tariq Kennedy Mangal, 21, were arrested by Transnational and Organized Crimes detectives following intelligence leads.

“British officials have been looking for the fugitives to answer to murder charges, after the brutal murder of a young man who was stabbed and left for dead in the U.K.

“The suspects are currently being processed at DCI headquarters before being extradited to the U.K to answer to their crimes.”

Three men have so far been convicted in connection to Alex Smith’s murder.

Two men, Yusuf Yusuf from West Hampstead, and Arif Biomy from Plumstead, have previously been jailed for their part in the murder.

Ibrahim, of Pratt Street, was found guilty of murder and assisting an offender.



Michael McIntyre's The Wheel: David Haye's life from 8 year marriage to new girlfriend 11 years younger than him.

By:Linda R.Jones
London,UK

Sports

'The Hayemaker' will be on Michael McIntyre's The Wheel For those of you who don't know what The Wheel is, seven celebrities, each designated as an expert in a different subject, sit in chairs on the outer edge of a wheel on the main stage.

They face in toward the centre, below which is a secondary stage where three contestants sit in chairs on a smaller wheel.

This wheel is spun to choose a contestant at random, who is lifted up in their chair to the main stage.

The seven famous faces that starred on tonight's show were actor Richard E Grant, Youtuber Saffron Barker, presenter Anneka Rice, musician Danny Jones, comedian Jo Brand, comedian Melvin Odoom, and boxer David Haye.

Off-screen and out the ring, David Haye's had quite the life.

For eight years he was married to make-up artist Natasha Haye, and together they have a son, Cassius.

At the time of the divorce, an insider said "Of course Natasha and David have children together, so they will always be connected through them."But she no longer wants to be his wife."

Some people put the split down to the two growing apart.A source at the time told the Sunday Mirror: "During their marriage David and Natasha have had to spend long periods away from each other while he has training and fighting.

"It means they have grown distant."At the moment the relationship is not looking good but both David and Natasha's priority is the welfare of their son. It's obviously been tough on both of them."

But now the Bermondsey-born boxer is dating someone significantly younger than him. Model Sian Osborne is 11 years his junior.

It's not clear how the two met, but Sian modelled for David's Black Mask Company, which he launched in 2020.

The two have been seen publicly on many occasions since then, such as during the Wimbledon finals.

On the same day they were seen with David's son, Cassius.



Burkina Faso to return to the normal constitutional order “when the conditions are right”-says The new military leader.

By: Dr. Funmi Awoleye-Beckley

Politics



Lieutenant Colonel Paul-Henri Damiba led a mutiny that ousted President Roch Kaboré last month. He blamed the president for failing to contain violence by Islamist militants. He made his first national speech since taking power on the eve of an emergency summit of West African leaders, called in response to the coup.

The regional bloc, Ecowas, has already suspended Burkina Faso because of the military takeover.

The 15-member bloc also called for the immediate release from house arrest of the ousted president and other detained officials. Ecowas agreed to send a delegation to meet the coup leaders in the capital, Ouagadougou.

At the start of the virtual summit, Ghana’s President Nana Akufo-Addo said: “The resurgence of coup d’états in our region is in direct violation of our democratic tenets. It represents a threat to peace, security and stability in West-Africa.”

Burkina Faso is the third West African country to witness a military takeover in the past year. Guinea and Mali have both had sanctions imposed on them by Ecowas to press them to return to constitutional order.

Wearing a red beret and army fatigues in his national address, Lt-Col Damiba, 41, said: “When the conditions are right, according to the deadline that our people will define in all sovereignty, I commit to a return to a normal constitutional order.”

He said he will meet representatives of various sections of society to agree on a roadmap for reform. He added that Burkina Faso needed international partners “more than ever”, following condemnation of the coup. “I call on the international community to support our country so it can exit this crisis as soon as possible.”

He did not specify which part of the international community he wanted support from - the coup comes at a time when Russia is competing with France to help West African countries tackle a growing Islamist insurgency. France has thousands of troops in West Africa helping its former colonies Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger tackle jihadist forces.

But the French presence is proving increasingly unpopular in the region and President Emmanuel Macron has started to reduce French troop numbers. Mali has already turned to Russia to fill the vacuum, sparking a bitter row with France, and a group of Russian mercenaries has offered their services to Burkina Faso’s new leaders.

In his speech, Lt-Col Damiba said the fight against jihadists would be his priority and promised to recapture rural areas, allowing the 1.5 million people who have fled their homes to return.

Before seizing power, he had been at the forefront of the fight against Islamist militants and wrote a book on the topic last year.

Similar troubles in neighbouring Mali led to a military coup in May 2021 - one that was broadly welcomed by the public.







Feeling suicidal, walking through the valley of the shadow of death.



By: Akosua Darko
Senior writer
London, UK

The Broken winged still fly. Walking through the valley of the shadow of death. This was tough to write.

These days, there are some people's calls I do not answer. Especially with my all-time favourite stupid question "How are you? Haven't heard from you in a while"
Me "None of your business, you were busy, stay busy, what's good with me, absolutely nothing!"

My response may seem blunt and harsh but I think honestly the conversation has to be had about suicide and depression. Most people are not supported and most people hardly have anyone to talk to.

Depression is a lonely disease, especially when people think you've brought it on yourself, your sadness is seen as you being a victim, and your anger at real situations are seen as toxicity. Your feelings are invalidated and either you force yourself to be happy or you choose to stay away unless your negative mental health catches up with them.

Fair enough, but the laments and stupid sing songs of woe from people who do not care at all, who make your disease about them and the hamper it has on their life, as they have their own issues and tell you to snap out of it, so you can be fun again or easier to deal with is not helpful.

Then they decide to walk away if you can't get it together and shout it out from the rooftops like them not having your back is some kind of a trophy you should hang onto. Most feel like a burden because let's be honest that is what has been said to them. For those stuck in the pain of the past, or trauma, worthless and deep pain without a feeling of hope, I can't even describe the depths of nothingness you can get into, and when you try to speak of your mental health and pain.

Lifestyle

It's dismissed with a simple solution of just get over it. I understand why some people don't see the light. After so much hurt, pain, betrayal and abandonment and the feeling of worthlessness why survive. It will be those same people when people die posting useless comments of if only, if only. I knew if I left they would be the ones shedding tears, making unnecessary noise.

I survive by love. I had light. I had protection. I had people, though few, who cared, who showed me they loved me, even when I didn't think so, they should me I mattered, I was worthy of life, that I could have hope. They carried me on that debilitating journey. I almost left in 2020, the love from a few loved ones and some strangers saved me. I still have dark days, but I know who to lean on, I have a job where I'm loved, I have people who love me, and slowly I'm learning to love myself and live. Throw away the unnecessary baggage and learn to be where love is. Where my feelings are valid. I will live.

For those in that dark space. You will live, I know you're hurting, but find the light no matter how small it is, find people who care. Cut out the people who don't care and the situations that are bringing you down. Find light no matter how small. Start with small steps, with little things that make you smile. I don't care what anyone says you are worthy of all good things. Stop answering the phone of those who think you snap out of it, stop letting them blow up your phone like they know you, leaving stupid messages like you owe them something. Then won't be there during your tough time.

I heard this song when I was younger by Martina McBride it was for a different situation, but I felt the lyrics through all my turmoil in my childhood years and the pain of the adult ones. I have paraphrased it and added my own words.

She loved as a child like she was the last lover on Earth.
Gave all the love she had.
They broke her spirit down
It was hard to think anyone could love her.

Give a little then take it back.
She was loud about her dreams.
The kids just shot them down.
Lord many love to make her cry.

They said, you, crazy, for believing you will ever leave the ground.
As she got older she heard the same words,
Only angels know how to fly.

But with a broken wing
"She still sings
She keeps an eye on the sky
With a broken wing,
She carries her dream,
Men you ought to see her fly



“I Love You” - 24-year-old Kano Man Writes As He Celebrates His American Wife On Her 48th Birthday.

Suleiman Isah, a 24-year-old Kano man, recently celebrated the 48th birthday of his American wife, Janine Sanchez Reimann.

Suleiman, who turned 24 last October, described Janine as a “phenomenal wife” on his Facebook page on Saturday, January 15.

“Happy birthday to my phenomenal wife whose love brings me everlasting happiness. Sweetheart, I cherish every moment I get to spend with you. I Love You” he wrote.



How South Africa is learning to live with mixed-race couples.



By: Clara Mpheza Manda
Lusaka, Zambia

Lifestyle



Under apartheid inter-racial relationships were banned in South Africa. Journalist Mpho Lakaje, who is married to a white woman, reflects on how the country has changed in the 20 years since the end of white minority rule.

When I started dating the woman I was to marry many of my friends and some of her family - black and white - were united in opposition. Some members of Daniela's family were not at all keen. One even refused to let me into their home. They told her that I was "not good enough for her". My peers from Soweto were equally opposed.

One of my childhood friends, Muzi, repeatedly told me he would never date someone who was not Zulu, let alone a person who was not black. So when he first saw my white girlfriend, the reality of living in a non-racial country finally hit him.

The Mandela effect

Thankfully, most of my family members, including my grandparents who experienced the brutality of apartheid and racism first hand, surprised me by warmly welcoming my wife-to-be.

I was born in Soweto, the famous Johannesburg township that used to be home to Nelson Mandela.

I come from a family of freedom fighters and learned about prominent anti-apartheid leaders like Oliver Tambo, Solomon Mahlangu and Anton Lembede at an early age.

My whole life I was indoctrinated and made to believe that I would grow up, go into exile in Southern Africa and come back to my country to fight white people.

When I first saw an AK47 in my uncle's room, my political beliefs intensified.

The same month that Mr Mandela left prison in February 1990, I celebrated my 10th birthday. I remember vividly how some in my community thought that this was the moment for exiled freedom fighters to return home and drive white people out of South Africa.

But the tone in my family gradually changed as we approached South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994. Elders at home began to help the young ones understand the concept of forgiveness and reconciliation as advocated by Mr Mandela. These were profound lessons that gradually and drastically changed my views too.

When I went to college to study journalism, I was exposed to students from different parts of the world.

I was now living in a cosmopolitan environment.

As a young man in my 20s, I was in experimental relationships with girls who were not from my background. In later years, it did not matter to me whether a person was a white South African, Portuguese or Angolan.

However, many of my black friends couldn't understand the logic behind hanging out with people whose languages we did not understand. Personally, I was fascinated by learning about a world different to mine. As a result, I had a burning desire to travel.

Fortunately for me, many of my dreams came true. I became a journalist and joined the BBC World Service, getting an opportunity to see the globe.

Changing attitudes

In 2007 I met Daniela Casetti-Bowen, who had come from Chile to study tourism in South Africa. We became friends and later started dating. Two years later, against her family's will, we moved in together.

Daniela's uncle, who arrived in South Africa in the early 1980s, was extremely sceptical about our relationship. He refused to let me inside their house. Daniela's white South African friends also warned her about dating a black boy from Soweto.

Daniela and I had to take a conscious decision to disregard those opposed to our relationship. Most of my relatives told me it did not matter to them whether my partner was black or white, South African or not.

While I was a bit shocked by their open-mindedness, I also saw their actions as a demonstration of their authentic commitment to Mr Mandela's dream of a Rainbow Nation. But post-honeymoon, reality hit and we started experiencing challenges that come with inter-racial relationships. Some of Daniela's relatives discouraged us from starting a family. They said mixed-race children always had a tough upbringing because they do not have an identity.

Again, we ignored this advice and went on to have a baby, Mpho Jr.

Interestingly, relations between myself and Daniela's family have improved tremendously in recent years. However, problems started to arise from my side of the family. Questions were being raised about Daniela's "lack of commitment" to our traditions.

Daniela and I both agreed that culture evolves and therefore we would only follow what is practical.



IDAF / REX FEATURES

But some members of my family remain totally opposed to our views. They feel that Daniela needs to follow or perform most of our traditions.

For example, shortly after our son was born, Daniela was supposed to spend 10 days at my mother's house with the baby. But for us, this was not practical.

However, there are many things that Daniela has agreed to do. For example, my family insisted on shaving our son's head at three months as opposed to my wife's belief that this should be done immediately after birth. But my feeling is that Daniela and I have it easy compared to some of our friends in mixed-race relationships.

Bevin van Rooyen is a coloured (mixed-race) man who was born in Johannesburg. He met his girlfriend Jacqueline Louw, a white South African, while studying at an arts college in Johannesburg.

Born in 1984, Bevin, like me, did not experience much racism while growing up because South Africa was beginning to change. "I only started experiencing racism when I met Jacqueline's family," Bevin tells me. "I was completely shocked. I did not know what was happening." While Bevin's parents welcomed his partner into their family, Jacqueline's did not. "From the beginning, it was a problem with me not being white. I was not welcome in the house. Her dad had issues," Bevin tells me. When they started dating, the pair kept their relationship a secret from her family. When they found out, they kicked her out of the house and she had to move in with me and my folks," Bevin remembers.

'Engraved racial classification'

Another friend, Jake Scott, arrived in South Africa in 2009 and is now a citizen. He was born and raised in West Virginia in the United States. His mother is white and his father is an African-American

Jake's wife Mandi is a black woman from Soweto. Most days, Jake is in the shanty town of Diepsloot where he runs an organisation that introduces young people to theatre, sports and music.

"At times somebody would refer me as a white person. There are times I would say: 'Wait a second, I'm black,'" Jake says.

He says they get "the looks" when walking through the shopping centre with his wife but he is not too worried about it.

"This racial classification is very engraved," he says. "It's like in the psyche of South Africans."

As South Africans we still have a long way to go before we can fully embrace each other. I consider myself fortunate to be educated and liberal.

But the reality is, I have many friends, black and white, who are not ready to live in a non-racial society. I remain optimistic though.

My country is definitely not where it was 20 years ago. We have made progress.



Cheslie Kryst, former Miss USA and correspondent for 'Extra,' dead at 30.

Lifestyle



By: Bunmi Johnson
New York Bureau Chief
USA

Cheslie Kryst, the 2019 winner of the Miss USA pageant and a correspondent for the entertainment news program Extra, has died at age 30. Police said Kryst was found dead in Manhattan, New York, on Sunday morning. Her family confirmed her death in a statement. Kryst died after jumping from a building in Manhattan, police said. She was an attorney who sought to help reform America's justice system, as well as a fashion blogger and entertainment news correspondent, and was crowned Miss USA in 2019.

The NYPD will look into the circumstances surrounding Kryst's death, Detective Martin Brown confirmed Monday. He declined to give more details. It is standard for police to investigate deaths by suicide. CNN has reached out to the New York Office of the Chief Medical Examiner about whether an autopsy will be conducted.

"In devastation and great sorrow, we share the passing of our beloved Cheslie," Kryst's family said in a statement. "Her great light was one that inspired others around the world with her beauty and strength. She cared, she loved, she laughed and she shined." The former Miss USA winner posted an Instagram photo before her death. "May this day bring you rest and peace," she wrote alongside a photo of herself.

Kryst also worked as a correspondent for entertainment news program "Extra." "Our hearts are broken," the company said in a statement. "Cheslie was not just a vital part of our show. She was a beloved part of our Extra family and touched the entire staff. Our deepest condolences to all her family and friends."

Added her family's statement: "Cheslie embodied love and served others, whether through her work as an attorney fighting for social justice, as Miss USA and as a host on EXTRA. But most importantly, as a daughter, sister, friend, mentor and colleague -- we know her impact will live on."





Olori Theresa Omotoyinbo.
July 22,1934 to Jan 09,2022

Mom you were like no other.You nurtured us,taught us,dressed us, fought for us, held us, shouted at us,kissed us, but most importantly you loved us unconditionally...Your presence we Miss.Your memory we treasure.Loving you always Forgetting you never.

We are lucky to be your children. We will always remember you, Mom. Rest in Perfect Peace.

Hon.Princess Teju Okuyiga

For the children.

Miss You Mom Goodnight 🕯️🕯️🕯️🕯️

It hasn't sunk in, not yet

Nope, I can't believe you're gone

In a complete state of denial, I am

I wish I'd never, woken up to see this dawn

But I know, I'll have to move on

I know, I'll have to let go of the pain

And rightly so, your life deserves to be

Celebrated, again and again

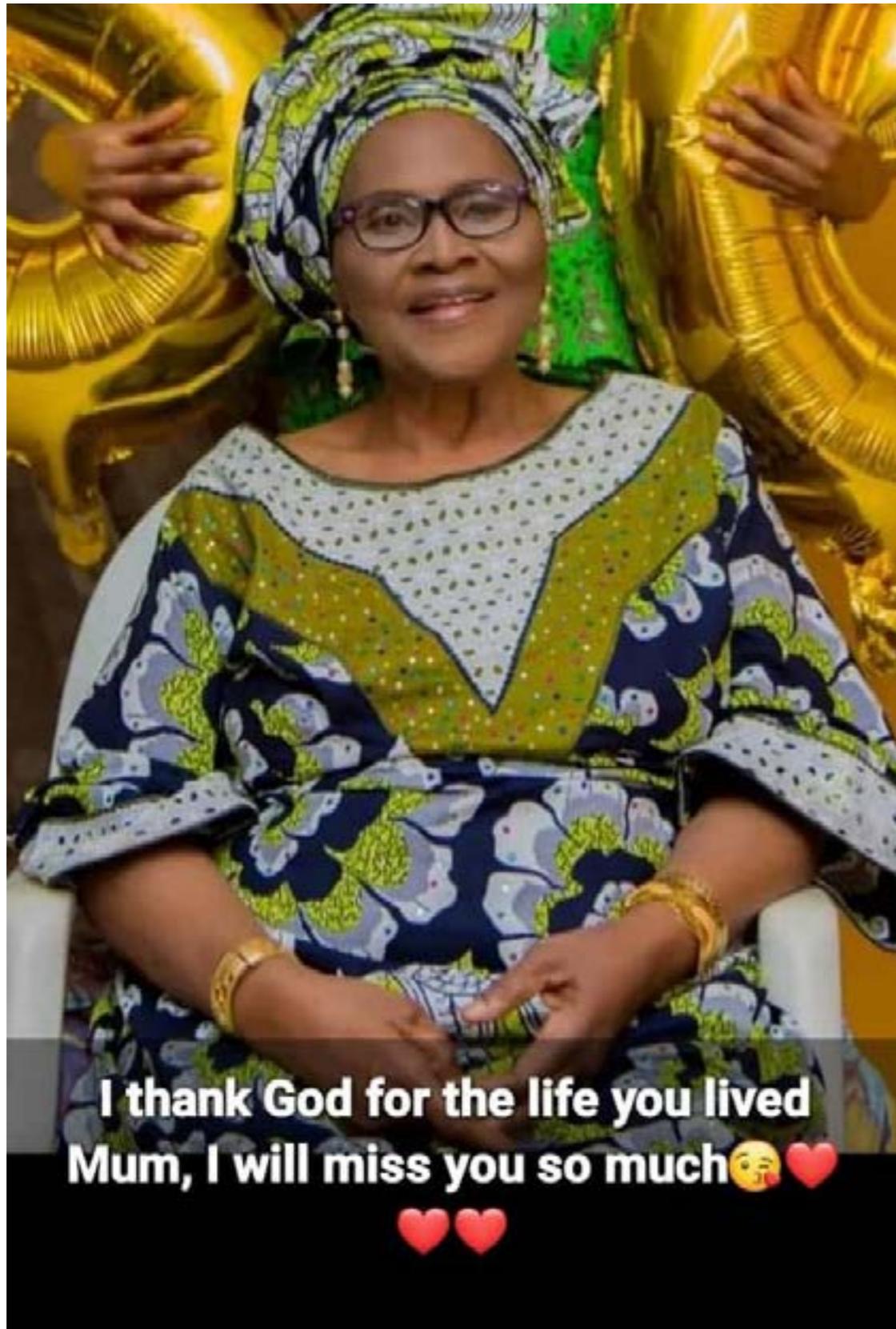
RIP Mom

Evelyn Adebola Omotoyinbo-Olotu

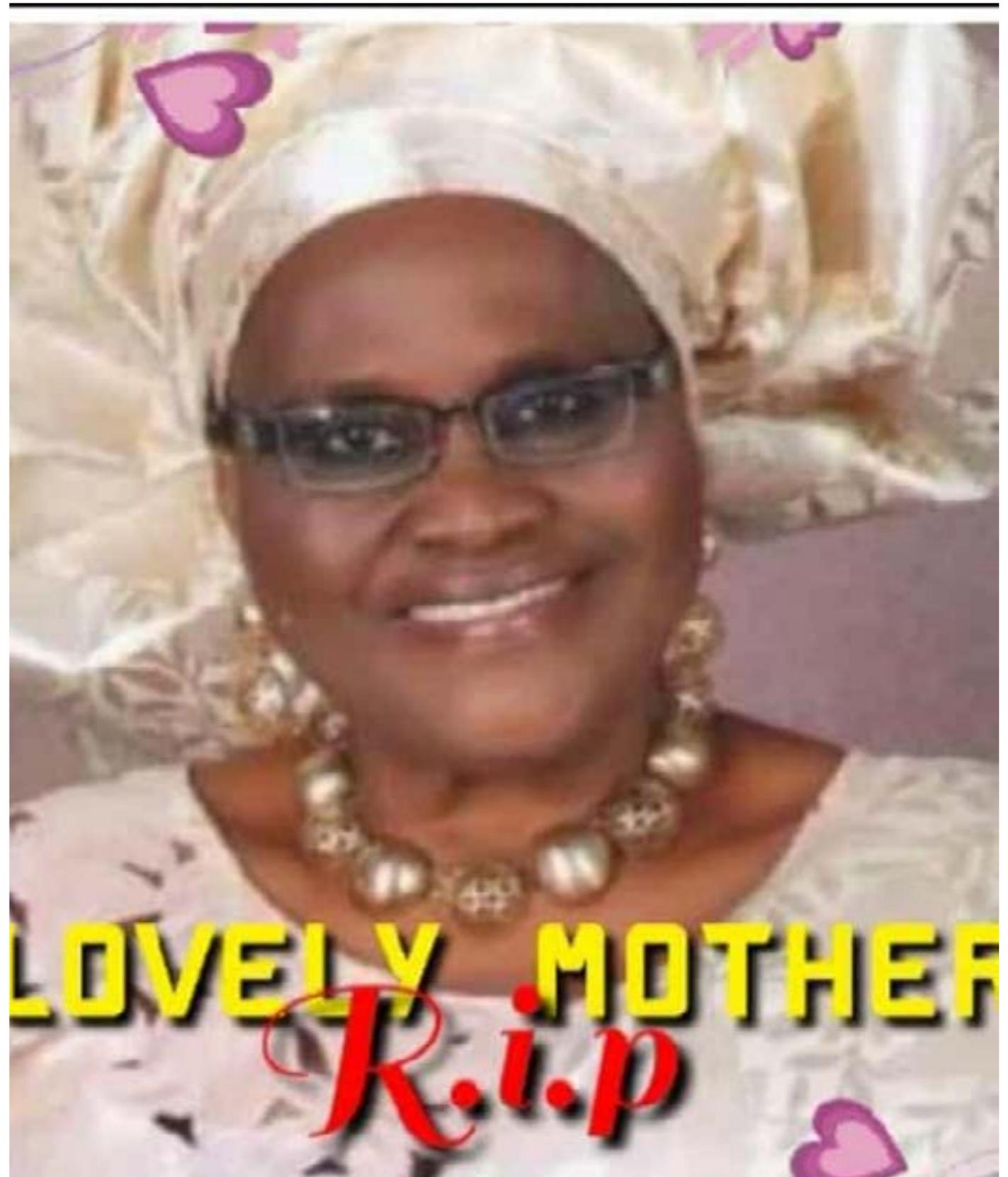








I thank God for the life you lived
Mum, I will miss you so much 🥺❤️



LOVELY MOTHER
R.i.p



Temmy Omolayo Popoola Ladipo clocks 60! Hooray!!!

Happy 60th Birthday to the most amazing woman! May your 60th birthday be loud, funny and bright. You are still young and beautiful. I want to wish you to remain the same young, beautiful and interesting lady. Let the inexhaustible sense of humour and good health provide you with the life you have always dreamed about! Congratulations, Ma!

Lots of Love...

Gbenga Teejay Okunlola

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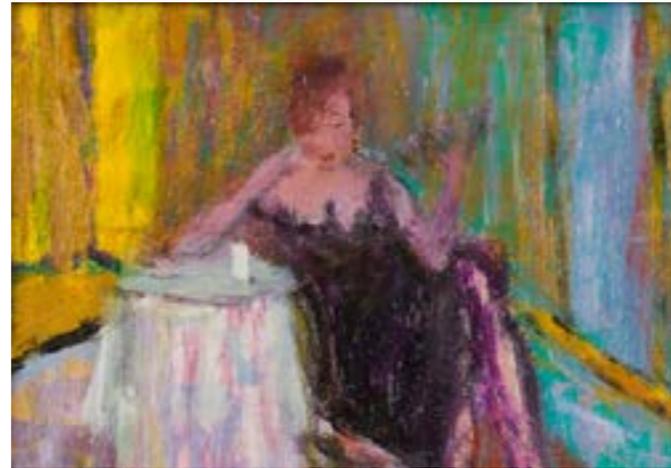
IRussev-Turquoise



IRussev-Turquoise



LDimanov_The_Butterfly



LKyuchukova_Rendez_vous



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el ensayo



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1. Digital art space for exhibitions. The service comprises rent of a virtual exhibition art space. It can be used by artists, collectors, and galleries who can exhibit and sell the artworks through the Platform.
2. Representation of an Artist, Gallery, or Collector. The service comprises a full scale of artist/gallery representation including the creation of editorial content, advertising, legal representation, and logistics.
3. Art and design consulting of the ArtWizard platform. The service comprises personalized advice on what artworks to buy for an office or home interior. The ArtWizard team helps to find the specific artworks that will be affordable and suitable for any interior.
4. Live price index.* The service is designed to show how different art categories that a collector possesses are willing to buy sell globally. It can be used for management decisions related to art, investment decisions, or for the creation of art collection portfolios.
5. Art Investment Consulting. The service comprises the valuation of specific artworks as an investment asset and providing auction estimates.
6. Legal advice. ArtWizard offers legal services related to the protection of artworks, copyright issues, authenticity claims, review of contracts for management, and representation of artists within the EU.



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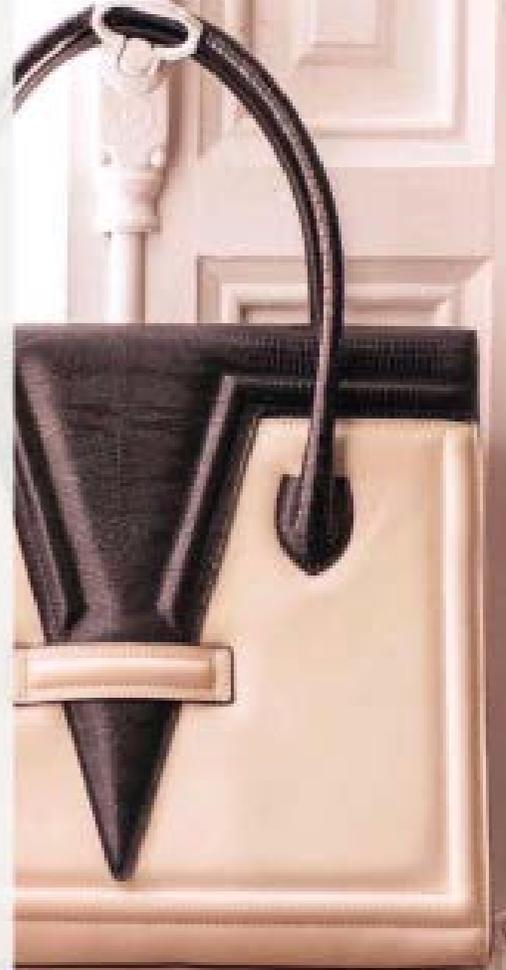
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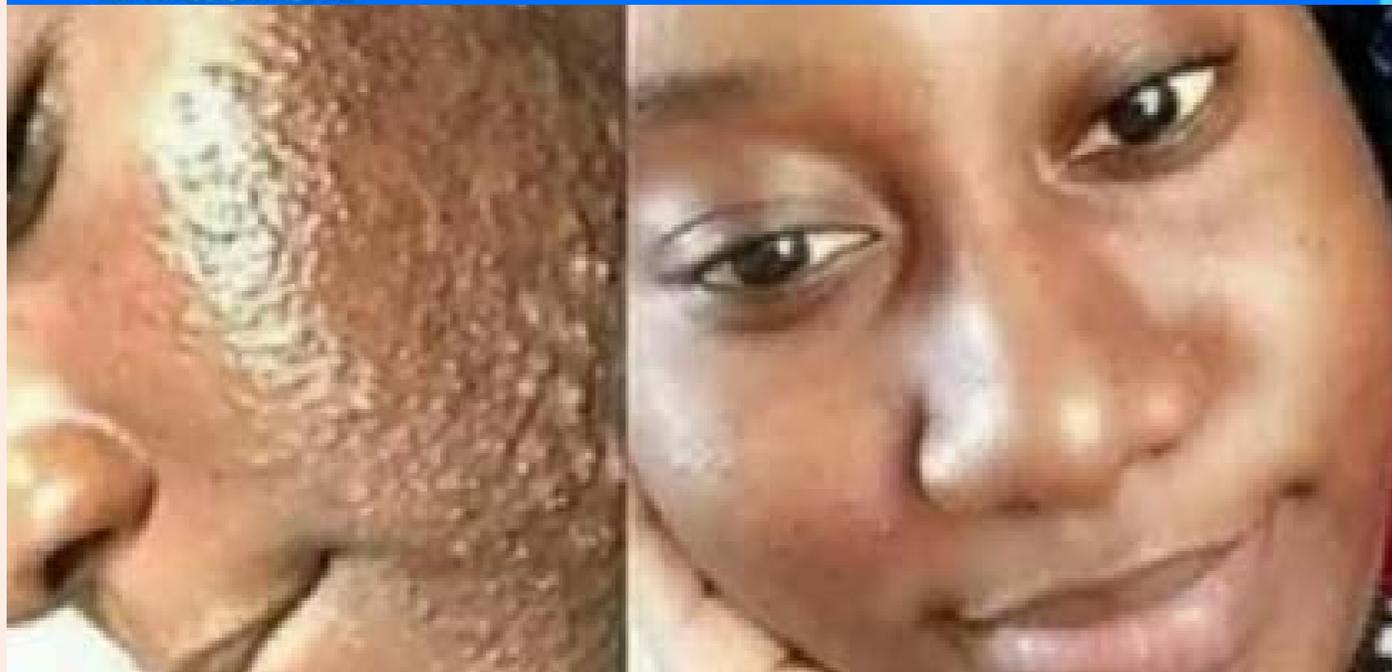


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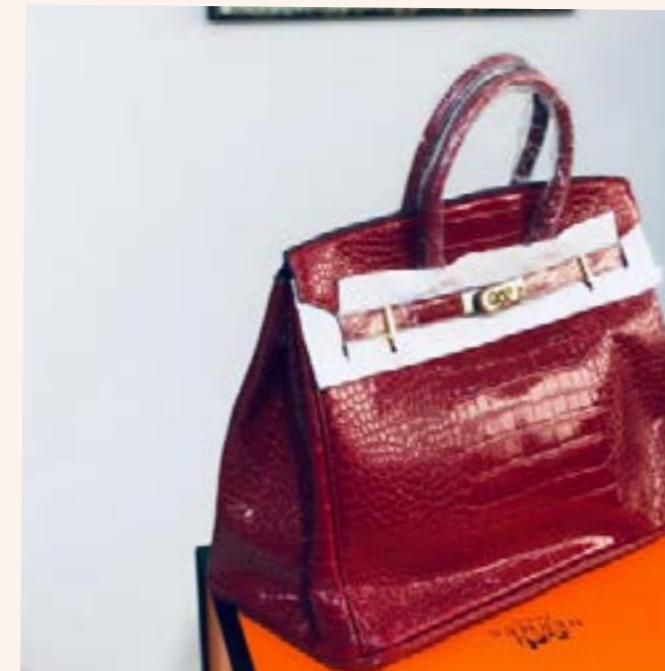
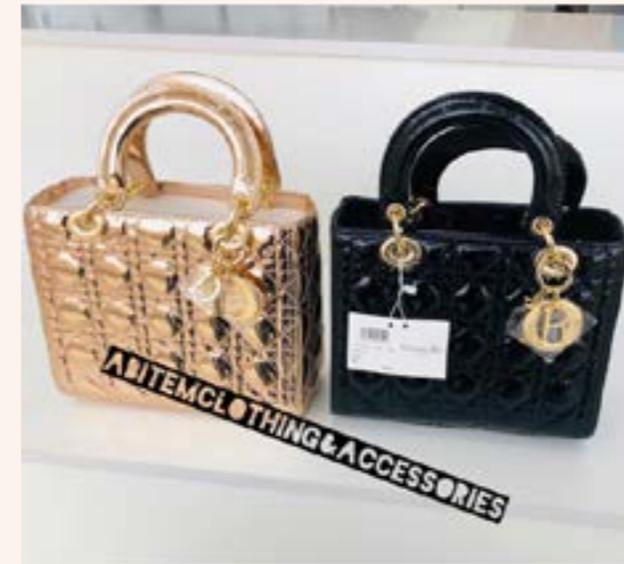
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HOW TO BECOME A BULGARIAN PERMANENT RESIDENT OR CITIZEN BY WAY OF PURCHASING PROPERTY

By: Gbenga Teejay Okunlola & Albena Jones

Although EU citizens can travel and work freely throughout the EU member states, there are still some restrictions in place for those who wish to relocate permanently and for those who are from "third countries", meaning non-EEA countries and people who are not Swiss citizens. Did you know that if you bought a Bulgarian property or business you can obtain permanent citizenship? The recommended way, is to hire a specialist law firm to arrange for immigration and deal with work permit requirements before you arrive. In addition to dealing with your permanent residency needs and work permit issues, a law firm based near your future home can also deal with arranging family permits for non-EU national family members who wish to join you. In this issue we would like to introduce you to such an opportunity. A law firm in Sofia that offer full planning services from buying or renting property, both residential and commercial all the way to assisting you with child care and education if needed.

CITIZENSHIP BY INVESTMENT

Since 2013, Bulgaria's government has offered a immigration program that can lead to long- term residency and, where applicable, to full citizenship. Since that year, foreign investors have been spending more than 500,000 Euros or 1,000,000 BGN on amazing residential properties that represent excellent value for money and in due time they have been enjoying the benefits of being EU citizens without limitations.

Recently many have discovered the beneficial ways to obtain residency by investment is to either start or buy a company that is registered in Bulgaria. There are certain advantages doing this, as Bulgaria has one of the lowest flat tax rates in the EU (10% at the time of writing). Once the legal period of actually living in the country has been met, it is possible for

non-EU residents to apply for full citizenship. If you happen to be from a third country, investing in a Bulgarian business or investing in Bulgarian real estate can provide you with EU nationality and visa free travel throughout the whole territory of the EU. One advantage of choosing Bulgaria is that the investment is 100% refundable, if you purchase, for example, Bulgarian shares on the stock exchange or buy government bonds or similar investment vehicles. Doing so means you gain unlimited living and working rights throughout the EU territory.

It is also possible to acquire permanent residency status by investing more than 1,000,000 BGN in a Bulgarian licensed credit institution for a time of no less than 5 years or by investing at least 6,000,000 BGN in the capital of a Bulgarian company, where shares are not traded on a regulated market. Investors who get involved with large-scale development projects, such as infrastructure for example, are also able to obtain long-term residency rights. If you are planning to invest in Bulgaria, be it in a company formation, a trade representative office, a second residency opportunity for you and family or simply to retire, live and work in Bulgaria, one must consult a specialist law firm about residency, inheritance and taxation issues.

A-CHOICES recommend our legal partners DP Law Firm, who are one of the most reputable and leading multilingual law firms in Bulgaria. To familiarize yourselves review the published company profile in this issue. When contacting them quote ref: a-choices magazine.

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