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US concert in 15 years
after visa restored

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Branding Herself

Luxury accessory designer creates her own line of products

CARIBBEAN luxury accessory designer and brand consultant, Kedella Thea Jhenella Isaac has always had a taste for the finer things in life.

She used to pore through fashion magazines, including Vogue, and memorise all the latest trends to hit the runways at Paris, London, New York and Milan Fashion Week. By the time she was a teen, Isaac was her family's stylist, the one who put together outfits for everyone whenever special occasions rolled by.

The only thing she loved more than fashion was travel; each trip she made to the US as a teen was a reconnaissance mission. Isaac walked the streets, observing what people were wearing and how they were accessorising their outfits. Whatever was trending on the fashion scene was within reach - that is, if you could afford it.

Once the plane landed at Piarco International Airport, Isaac was faced with the reality that hot fashion trends took a lot longer to hit stores and the streets here at home. What was the young fashionista to do?

"I wasn't seeing what I wanted so I decided to start my own brand," said Isaac.

Starting her own business was a bold move but prior to doing so, Isaac already had two years of experience making her own handbags with the support of two talented seamstresses — her mother and her aunt — who both studied needlework and dressmaking professionally.

In 2017 Isaac officially launched "Jhenella Isaac Luxury Handbags" along with her first collection of all white luxury handbags, made with materials like snake skin and fur, at an all-white cocktail party. She followed that up with her mermaid collection which was equally successful.

Her love for travel inspired her to produce trendy passport holders which quickly sold out. In less than three years after the official launch of her brand, Isaac had more than 10,000 clients locally and regionally.

"I was so proud that I had cultivated a brand that made women feel special," she said.

It wasn't enough to be a fashion disciple; Isaac went on to study Luxury Brand Management and did an MBA in Leadership, Entrepreneurship and Innovation. She also earned a



Caribbean luxury accessory designer and brand consultant, Kedella Isaac

fashion certificate from the Parsons' School of Design in New York. In 2019, the entrepreneur was a Forbes Under-30 Global Fellow.

While Trinbagonians do have an affinity for beautiful things, luxury items come with a higher price tag, especially since Isaac's personalised handbags are one-of-a-kind and are hand-crafted using expensive materials.

It's Isaac's dream to see her handbags in a luxury retail window display abroad. At a UN summit on Free Trade in Abu Dhabi last year, Isaac made connections with people from all over the world who expressed an interest in her strong and luxurious handbags. Positioning her brand on the international market involves changing her approach to doing business and producing outside T&T. While she wants to scale her brand, it's more important to Isaac that she maintain her standards.

The 30-something recently returned from London and Paris where she looked into expen-

sive but doable options.

"I'm optimistic that I can do all things through Christ. I've been on this journey since 2017, there hasn't been a time when God hasn't taken my hand and brought me over on the other side," she said.

While she works hard to turn her vision for her brand into a reality, Isaac, who is a business consultant for premium and luxury brands, continues to travel not just for pleasure but for inspiration.

She advises all up-and-coming entrepreneurs out there not to be afraid to take the road less travelled.

"Go after what your heart desires," said Isaac. "If you have an idea, find a mentor who will guide you. Your idea doesn't have to be new or grand, it just needs to be something you are passionate about. Whatever it may be - just give it your all."

THE GENTLE JOURNEY Through Grief

There are moments in life when time seems to pause. The world around you continues to move, but inside, something is quiet. Something aches. It might be a soft ache or a deep one. It might be loud or silent. This is grief. And it is not here to break you. It is here to open you.

Grief is not only about losing a person. It is about change. It is about endings. It is about the parts of yourself you had to leave behind in order to grow. It is about the hopes that never became reality. It is about relationships that shifted or disappeared. It is about the dreams you had to release in order to stay true to who you are now. Grief shows up in many forms, often unannounced, and it never looks the same for two people.

When it arrives, you may want to run from it. You may want to pretend it is not there. You may want to fill the silence with distractions or turn away from the tears. But grief does not leave because it is ignored. It waits. Not to punish you, but to be witnessed. To be felt. To be held with care.

There is power in allowing grief to move through you. There is sacredness in the tears, in the stillness, in the moments when your heart feels like it might burst. That is where healing begins. That is where strength is born. Not the kind of strength that pushes through, but the kind that softens and surrenders. The kind of

strength that whispers, "I will keep going," even when it feels like everything is falling apart.

This kind of strength is quiet. It is not loud or forceful. It does not need to prove anything. It simply holds space. It lets you breathe. It lets you cry. It lets you be exactly where you are without judgment. That is what grief is asking for. Your presence. Your honesty. Your willingness to feel.

You may be holding grief you did not even know was still there. Old wounds. Childhood pain. Ancestral memories. Patterns that repeat themselves over and over again. You may feel like you should be "over it" by now. But healing is not about timelines. Healing is about truth. If it still hurts, it still matters. And if it still matters, it is still part of your path.

You do not have to move quickly. You do not have to explain your emotions. You do not have to be strong in the way the world sometimes expects. You only need to be real with yourself. You need to honour what is true in this moment. And the truth is, grief is a natural part of transformation. Every time something ends, something new begins. But before that new beginning can fully arrive, space must be made. And that space is often created through grieving.

There is wisdom in grief. It teaches you about love. It teaches you about what matters most. It

slows you down enough to hear your own heart. It invites you to connect with your soul. When you listen closely, grief is not just pain. It is a guide. It is a doorway. It is the voice of your deeper self asking you to return home.

During this time, give yourself permission to feel it all. Feel the waves. Let the emotions rise. Let them fall. Some days you may feel clear and open. Other days may feel heavy. That is part of the process. Nothing is wrong with you. You are not broken. You are unfolding. You are releasing. You are remembering.

Be gentle with yourself. Speak to yourself the way you would speak to someone you love deeply. Wrap yourself in the kind of kindness you have been waiting to receive. You deserve that. You always have.

This is also a powerful time to call upon support. Not to fix you, but to witness you. Whether it is a trusted friend, a mentor, a spiritual guide, or your own inner wisdom, allow yourself to be seen in your healing. Sometimes the simple act of saying, "This hurts," is the first step to letting go.

There is also healing in silence. In breath. In prayer. In the sacred stillness where your soul can stretch out and rest. Grief does not need to be rushed. There is no finish line. There is only the next step. And that next step may be a whisper. A sigh. A single moment of clarity. That is enough.

As you move through this chapter, remember that healing does not always feel like light. Sometimes it feels like darkness. Like softness. Like not knowing. Like sitting in the unknown with your hand on your heart. This, too, is sacred. This, too, is progress.

You are not alone in this. Even in the quiet, even in the moments



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when it feels like no one understands, you are being held. Whether you believe in God, Source, the Divine Mother, your ancestors, or simply the wisdom of life itself, you are not walking this path without support. There are forces surrounding you, loving you, guiding you, and waiting patiently for you to remember who you are.

You are someone who can feel deeply and still rise. You are someone who can carry pain and still move with grace. You are someone who can honour the past while still choosing the future.

Let grief show you what still needs your love. Let it soften what has become too hard. Let it open the doors that have been closed for too long. Let it cleanse you, not through force, but through tenderness. Let it be the beginning of a new kind of freedom.

Because underneath the sorrow, there is still life. There is still beauty. There is still joy waiting to be rediscovered. And as you heal, you will begin to feel it again. Slowly. Gently. Truly. You will begin to come alive in ways you never expected.

This is the journey of the heart. It is not easy, but it is sacred. And you are already doing it, one breath at a time.

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THE BUTTERFLY PROJECT

After a hard life growing up with disabilities, brothers give back to Guyana

MARK and Robindra Ramnauth, brothers who lived in the neighbourhood of South Georgetown but had the opportunity to live and work abroad, are ready to give back to their community and society via their non-profit organisation, The Butterfly Project.

They never forgot where they came from, and, as a result, after establishing themselves in education and status overseas, they are contributing to youths and others in the very neighbourhoods they once lived in.

Mark founded The Butterfly Project three years ago; however, his brother Robindra is here in Guyana to see the project through, and they will be constructing their own office in the near future.

According to Robindra, they grew up in depressed communities in the city. He remembered clearly, as if it were yesterday, that on September 1, 1979, they were living in Laing Avenue when their house was completely destroyed in a fire.

He came from a single-parent home with nine other siblings. He and his brother Mark, from birth, suffered from a condition—Stargardt's disease (juvenile macular degeneration)—in which they do not have sight in both eyes.

Robindra added that they relocated to Albouystown, another rough neighbourhood, renting a small one-bedroom apartment and sharing washroom facilities with others in the yard under dire conditions.

He related that the yard had a standpipe, and the situation was unavoidable. To support 10 children was not easy; his mother was a seamstress and also made cakes to sell since their father died when he was just one year old.

Robindra disclosed that they moved to Guyhoc Park, another city ward, and their life improved a bit when his brother had the opportunity to migrate, changing their lives for the better.

Today, his mother lives in Florida, United States of America, and she is 82 years old.

Robindra returned to Guyana three years ago, renting an office in Diamond to facilitate the establishment of The Butterfly Project.

"We don't give fish to people. We believe in equipping them with the tools to go and catch the fish for themselves. That is our aim with the project—to make people marketable to earn," he said.

Although The Butterfly Project is 100% funded by his brother Mark, they have a board of directors—five persons—for transparency and accountability, and projects are approved by this body before they are implemented.



Mark Ramnauth

Robindra said that he is in Guyana to run the affairs of The Butterfly Project as the on-the-ground person, while his brother Mark is based overseas.

Mark Ramnauth is the driving force behind The Butterfly Project, whose story is nothing short of inspirational as well as humbling.

Mark's early years were marked by resilience and determination. He attended St. Pius Primary School. As a child, he faced additional challenges due to his blindness from Stargardt's disease (juvenile macular degeneration).

But he never let that physical disability hinder him—nor did his brother, Robindra. Mark later migrated to the USA and pursued higher education with an unyielding spirit. He was fortunate to earn a Master's Degree from New York University, an achievement he attributes to the collective support of his family and community.

Mark's career has since been dedicated to helping others, especially those with disabilities, succeed in their endeavours. Being blind has figuratively opened his eyes to the disadvantages faced by people living with disabilities.

Mark pursued professionalism and has ventured into various entrepreneurial pursuits, including building a successful real estate business and owning two hotels in his journey to success.

However, his heart has always been set on giving back to his roots. In 2024, he launched The Butterfly Project—a not-for-profit organisation focused on poverty alleviation, community

development, and independent living for people with disabilities in Guyana.

Mark's commitment to The Butterfly Project is deeply personal. He has invested his own resources to ensure its growth and sustainability. This project is 100% funded by Mark alone.

The project's launch has been a family affair, with tremendous support from his loved ones. His brother Robindra, now retired, has volunteered to help administer the project's initiatives in Guyana.

With strong backing from the local community and plans to collaborate with private and public partners, Mark is dedicated to scaling the impact of The Butterfly Project.

His story is a testament to the power of perseverance, the importance of family support, and the belief that everyone—regardless of their beginnings—can make a difference.

The Butterfly Project is a family-funded, not-for-profit charity in Guyana dedicated to three core goals:

Poverty alleviation

Community development

Promoting independent living for people with disabilities

Through collaboration with organisations, leveraging existing initiatives, and innovating new programmes, we forge a brighter future for underprivileged individuals and communities. Together, we make a significant impact on their lives, paving the way for a more inclusive society.

MACHEL SAYS THANKS

Singer returns to triumph after two year hiatus

The 2025 Chutney Soca Monarch and Road March winner, Machel Montano, thanked the people in the entertainment industry, sponsors and all who contributed to his success in a media release.

Following his two-year hiatus from Trinidad Carnival – during which he completed his masters in Carnival studies and won the Calypso Monarch title in 2024 – Montano returned to the Carnival scene and lent his experience and dynamic stage presence to selected events. He also made surprise guest appearances at many of the major Carnival events.

Montano said in the release, "To my incredible fans, my dedicated team, and the people of TT – thank you!"

"This Carnival season was nothing short of magical, and it's all because of you. The energy, the love, the passion – everything we built together made 2025 a season to remember. My song, Pardy was more than just music; it was a celebration of the hard work, sacrifice, and joy that defines our culture. And after all that effort, we all deserved a magical Pardy on the road Monday and Tuesday! Big love to my people."

Montano also acknowledged "some key players who helped make this season legendary," including his wife, children, parents and extended family. His management team and the creative team behind his 11th Road March win for Pardy also came in for kudos including, Mevon "XplicitMevon" Soodeen, Andre Jeffers, and Badjohn Republic, 1st Klase, Kyle Peters, Karyce Phillips, Kendel Hayes, Terri Lyons and Precision Productions, as well as all producers who did road mixes – Madness MUV, D Ninja, DJ Marcus Williams, DJ Optimus, DJ Kai, Dada & Marfan, the release said.

Elated over his Chutney Soca Monarch collaboration and victory, Montano saluted "the brilliant minds behind the song, Pepper Vine, namely Drupatee Ramgoonai and Krishna Persad-Maharaj, Lady Lava, Private Ryan, Jus Now, M1 and Mela Caribe.



Machel got a Masters Degree in Carnival studies during the hiatus

"Thank you for making history with me! And huge shout-outs to everyone who helped produce, build and perform with us at Skinner Park! Much love and sincerest thanks goes out to all fans and supporters who showed up, sang your hearts out, and brought the energy to every single event. None of this is possible without you!"

Making special note of the importance of TT's national instrument, Montano thanked the steel orchestras who believed in and played his Bet Meh single in their efforts to claim the Panorama title:

"To the Siparia Deltones, bp Renegades and Massy Trinidad All Stars – thank you for trusting Bet Meh with your Panorama title aspirations; it was an honour to be there on stage

at semis with you. Big up to De Red Boyz and Jason "Shaft" Bishop, for a masterful composition, which was also represented in my performance for the Calypso Monarch finals! Thank you to everyone who contributed to the presentation at Dimanche Gras – the team, the set designers, the producers, and the performers!"

Following his performance at Monday Madness, Montano released his latest album on February 25 titled One Degree Hotter which features his many recent hit singles.

For this accomplishment, Montano thanked all his collaborators, writers, producers, engineers and DJs, including Pumpa, Skinny Fabulous, Full Blown, Davido, Ayetian and DJ Mac.

Calypso Queen celebrates milestone

ROSE AT 80

Linda McCartha Monica Sandy-Lewis celebrates another turn around the sun as she turned 85 on April 27.

Although she is not actively performing, the iconic calypsonian will forever echo through the calypso annals.

Rose said she woke up with good strength on her birthday.

Her nephew Lance Pierre said in a phone interview on April 27 that the singer/songwriter was doing well and had some special surprises planned for the day.

"She is doing well and pretty excited about turning 85 years old," he said.

Pierre said although she was not performing at this time, "Back in October of last year, she was supposed to perform with Machel (Montano) at the Apollo and, two weeks before or a week before the scheduled performance, the battery in her pacemaker

had to be changed.

"She decided to not perform and to cancel any future performances because she just wants to relax now."

In a phone interview later that day, Calypso Rose said she was celebrating the day in God's name.

"I woke up very good this morning, with good strength and everything. My son, Derek (Parsons) brought me all my music, calypsoes. Right now, my aide is dressing me to be ready for the big party later," she said.

She advised young calypsonians and performers to trust in their belief and that would take them to where they want to go.

The acclaimed calypsonian said she intends to continue writing her calypsoes. She has a yet-to-be-released album done in 2019 and last wrote a calypso for a young, Tobagonian performer Nataki Thompson.



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The Warlord is back

Bounty Killer plans first US concert in 15 years

After a 15-year absence from U.S. stages, Grammy Award-winning dancehall icon Bounty Killer is officially poised to make his long-anticipated return to performing in America.

The veteran entertainer, born Rodney Price and widely known as “The Warlord,” has successfully regained his U.S. visa and has already traveled to the United States. While fans across the diaspora are buzzing with excitement, eager to see him live for the first time since the mid-2000s, no official concert has been scheduled—yet.

Bounty Killer’s visa was revoked in 2010 during a time when several high-profile Jamaican dancehall artists were facing increased scrutiny from U.S. immigration authorities. Despite the travel restrictions, his global influence remained strong through acclaimed collaborations and steady musical output. Among his international highlights are his contributions to Damian “Jr. Gong” Marley’s Grammy-winning album *Welcome to Jamrock* and his feature on No Doubt’s “Hey Baby,” which won a Grammy Award for Best Pop Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocals in 2004.

Now, with the travel hurdle cleared, speculation about his first U.S. performance has begun to swirl online. But Bounty Killer and his team have stepped in to set the record straight.

In a statement released this week, the artist clarified that while he is excited to return to the U.S. performance circuit, no official show date has been booked. “There are unauthorized claims being made online regarding shows that I am not booked for,” the statement read. “While discussions are underway with my management and booking team, nothing has been finalized.”

The dancehall legend also extended his gratitude to his longtime supporters, including his fans, friends, and manager Paul ‘Bankey’ Giscombe. “I’m forever grateful for the unwavering support. The love has been real,” he said.

With a legacy that includes helping launch the careers of Vybz Kartel, Mavado, and Busy Signal, Bounty Killer remains a towering figure in dancehall. His return to performing in the U.S.—when it does happen—is expected to be a monumental moment for fans and the genre alike.



Bounty Killer — got US visa issue resolved



Munair Zacca was a fixture on many Caribbean cinema and television productions

ZACCA EXITS

Renowned Royal Palm actor passes after ailing for some time

Jamaican actor Munair Zacca, renowned for his significant contributions to Caribbean cinema and television, has passed away at the age of 79.

Zacca was diabetic and had a lung disorder, according to his wife, Adelina Pedroda Zacca. The actor, who would've turned 80 in June, had been ailing for some time.

Zacca was best known for his portrayal of Sonny Tavares in the popular TV drama "Royal Palm Estate" and as Mister Anderson in the cult classic film "Shottas."

Zacca's acting career spanned several decades, during which he became a staple in Jamaican theater and film. In "Royal Palm Estate," he brought to life the character of Sonny Tavares, affectionately known as Sonny T, captivating audiences with his compelling performances. His role as Mister Anderson in "Shottas" further cemented his status as a versatile and talented actor.

Beyond these notable roles, Zacca appeared in other significant productions, including "Better Mus' Come" (2011), where he played Mr. Secretary, and "Destiny" (2014), portraying Mr. Baxter. His con-

tributions extended to the stage as well; he directed plays such as "The Quickie" in 1977 at The Barn theater, showcasing his multifaceted talents in the performing arts.

Zacca's dedication to his craft and his influence on Jamaican theater were profound. He was instrumental in founding The Barn theater, a venue that became a hub for innovative Jamaican theater. His commitment to nurturing local talent and promoting Jamaican culture through the arts has left an indelible mark on the industry.

The Jamaican entertainment community and fans worldwide mourn the loss of Munair Zacca, remembering him not only for his memorable performances but also for his significant contributions to the cultural landscape of Jamaica.





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A star for Sheryl

Jamaican actress gets her tribute on Hollywood Walk of Fame

After decades of trailblazing in television, film, and theater, Jamaican-American actress Sheryl Lee Ralph has officially received her star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Ralph, the daughter of Jamaican fashion designer Ivy Ralph and college professor Stanley Ralph, had postponed the ceremony that was scheduled for earlier this year due to the Los Angeles wildfires.

On Wednesday, Ralph was honored with the 2,808th star on the Walk of Fame, in the television category, cementing her legacy as one of the entertainment industry's most enduring talents. The ceremony took place in Hollywood, Los Angeles, and brought out a bevy of stars, family, and supporters to celebrate her storied career.

From her Emmy Award-winning role as "Barbara" on Abbott Elementary, to her memorable portrayal of stepmother Dee in Moesha, and her iconic Broadway run as Deena in Dreamgirls, Ralph's career has spanned genres and generations. Known for her commanding presence and versatility, she has long been considered a multi-hyphenate force in the industry.

The Walk of Fame, which honors outstanding contributions to the entertainment world, is administered by the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce. Honorees are chosen by a select committee of their peers, and each star is funded by sponsors who also support the ceremony and upkeep of the landmark.

The event was officiated by entertainment host Nischelle Turner and featured heartfelt speeches from Abbott Elementary creator and star Quinta Brunson, as well as Ralph's longtime friend and fellow actress Loretta Devine. Actress Jennifer Lewis, the cast of Abbott Elementary, and Ralph's children—daughter Ivy Coco Mau-



Sheryl Lee Ralph at the unveiling of her star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame

rice and son Etienne Maurice—joined her husband and numerous Delta Sigma Theta sorors in attendance.

Jerry Neuman, the 2025/2026 Hollywood Chamber of Commerce Board Chair, kicked off the celebration by recognizing Ralph's impact and charisma. "As a point of privilege, you are more stunning in person than on screen. She's a triple threat: you are an amazing entertainer, and thank you for what you do for our industry," he said.

Ralph, moved by the occasion, delivered a powerful and emotional speech. "There are so many people in the audience that means so much

to me," she said. "I can still feel the determined spirit of that little girl who dared to dream big. Growing up, I felt my big dreams had to be whispered, because that kind of ambition could be mistaken for arrogance. I have been counted out, I have been passed over, I have been told I was too Black, too strong, and too much, and yet, here, I stand."

"This star isn't just mine, it belongs to every performer who made space for me, when there seemed to be no space. Ruby Dee, Rosalind Cash, Cicely Tyson, Virginia Capers, and many more women whose brilliance lit the path for me during my darkest professional moments," she said.

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Sean Kingston: facing trial in July on fraud charges

BACK IN JAIL

Sean Kingston in custody ater failing to post \$100K bond

Jamaican-American singer Sean Kingston is once again behind bars, this time at the Federal Detention Center in Miami, after failing to pay a \$100,000 cash bond following his conviction on multiple federal charges, according to a report by Local10.

Kingston, whose real name is Kisean Anderson, was found guilty last month on all five counts in a wire fraud and conspiracy case. The 35-year-old entertainer, known for hits like “Beautiful Girls,” had been placed on home detention pending sentencing, but was taken into custody after he was unable to satisfy the court’s bond requirement, according to federal records.

Kingston’s mother, Janice Turner, 62, was also convicted in the same case and was immediately remanded to federal custody after the verdict was delivered in a Fort Lauderdale courtroom on March 28. As Turner was escorted out by U.S. Marshals, Kingston was visibly emotional, clasping his hands and crying as he pleaded, “Protect my mother.”

Prosecutors accused the pair of orchestrating a \$1 million fraud scheme involving high-end luxury goods. Among the items allegedly obtained through fraudulent means were an enormous television, a bulletproof Cadillac Escalade, and hundreds of thousands of dollars in watches.

Authorities seized the items during a raid on Kingston’s Southwest Ranches home.

During the trial, the prosecution presented several alleged victims who claimed they were duped by the pair. The judge overseeing the case described Turner as “the fixer, the nerve center” of the operation and cited her previous convictions in denying her bond. Her courtroom testimony also played a role in her being deemed a flight risk.

Kingston did not testify during the trial. His defense portrayed him as financially naive and irresponsible with money, while placing the blame for the fraudulent activity on his mother.



Cassie Ventura and P Diddy

POWERFUL PROOF

Defense attorneys for Diddy try to get Cassie abuse video excluded from trial

Diddy doesn't want the damaging Cassie video to be used against him during his sex trafficking trial, prosecutors are saying.

According to federal prosecutors in the Diddy case, the rap mogul's legal team is trying desperately to exclude the video that allegedly shows him assaulting his former girlfriend Cassie Ventura. According to the feds, the video is a "powerful proof" of guilt and that's why defense attorneys are actively trying to sway the judge in excluding it.

So far, the judge has ruled in favor of prosecutors on that exact matter, but defense attorneys are not giving up the fight. Both sides have been clashing in court and in the media sphere for the past month over various aspects of the

case. One thing that was agreed upon early is the trial date set for May 2025.

However, Diddy's attorneys asked the court for an extension which was denied. The judge ruled earlier this month that lawyers had ample time to prepare for the trial and he will not further delay it. Perhaps one reason the defense wants to extend the trial date by two months is because of reports that Diddy is trying to hire a new high-profile attorney.

In April, Diddy hired Brian Steel, the lead attorney who represented Young Thug in his YSL Rico case in Atlanta, which saw Thugger being freed after copping a guilty plea. Perhaps Steel needs additional time to get up to scratch with the case.

At least a portion of the Cassie beating video hit the internet last year, showing Diddy attacking her at a hotel in Los Angeles. The graphic video shows the hip-hop mogul chasing her down before pushing her to the ground and stomping on her. There are rumors that he had paid a large sum to have the decade-old video destroyed but it appears that someone kept a copy and it somehow made it to the internet.

After watching the video, it's no surprise that he doesn't want it to be played in court. Sean 'Diddy' Combs' charges include racketeering conspiracy, sex trafficking, and kidnapping. He faces decades in prison if convicted.

WHEN STARS ALIGN

Shenseea and YG Marley said to be new power couple

Shenseea and Lauryn Hill's son, YG Marley, may be the newest couple on the block.

The two artists sparked dating rumors this week after being spotted together looking cozy. The clip was shared on Shenseea's Instagram Story showing her smoking hookah in YG Marley's arms as Bob Marley's "Is This Love" plays in the background.

YG Marley is the son of Ms. Lauryn Hill and Rohan Marley, Bob Marley's son, which makes him a third-generation artist in the Marley lineage. Last year, he scored a massive hit "Praise Jah in the Moonlight" which samples his grandfather's classic single "Crisis," released in 1978 on his Kaya project.

Neither Shenseea nor YG Marley have confirmed their relationship and this could be just an innocent interaction among two Jamaican celebrities. The clip was captured by ShenYeng in Brooklyn at a popular local spot. However, their linkup was enough to send dancehall fans into a frenzy, with some people asking about her ex-boyfriend London On Da Track.

"Wasn't she just with London on da track the other day or was it Rvssian idk but seems she is trying to make one of them jealous," one fan wrote.

Shenseea previously ignited dating rumors with London On Da Track between 2022 and 2023, following his split from Summer Walker. They were first spotted out publicly when they held hands while attending the Super Bowl LVI in Los Angeles in 2022. At the time Shenseea denied that they were an item, but London On Da Track's baby mother later spilled the beans forcing them to come clean about their relationship.



YG Marley and Shenseea: star powered couple

London also worked on Shenseea's debut album Alpha and was signed to the same label as her, Interscope Records. The producer famously attended her album release party in Jamaica where he gifted her a custom diamond encrusted chain.

In the meantime, Shenseea is fresh out of her record deal as she recently shared that she

is back to being an independent artist after exiting Interscope. The Jamaican artist shared that she will be dropping new music soon, as she gets back to her dancehall roots. ShenYeng also recently performed with Vybz Kartel at night two of his sold-out show at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn earlier this month.



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Sandals has resorts across the Caribbean spectrum

SANDALS FOR SALE?

Leading Caribbean luxury resort chain is on the market, reports say

Sandals Resorts International, the Caribbean's leading luxury all-inclusive operator, is reportedly renewing efforts to sell, just a few years after the passing of its founder, Gordon "Butch" Stewart. The move comes amid a multi-million-dollar marketing push to reposition the brand.

According to a report in The Wall Street Journal, Sandals is seeking a valuation between \$6 billion and \$7 billion and has engaged bankers to explore potential bids from major hotel groups and private equity investors. However, no final decision has been made, and the company may ultimately choose not to proceed

with a sale.

Founded in 1981, Sandals has grown into a dominant force in the Caribbean hospitality industry, with luxury resorts in Jamaica, the Bahamas, Saint Lucia, Grenada, Barbados, Antigua, Curaçao, and Turks and Caicos. Since the passing of its founder in 2021, leadership has transitioned to Butch Stewart's son, Adam Stewart, who now serves as executive chairman.

The company had previously considered selling in 2019, but those plans were halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Butch Stewart's passing. Now, with the all-inclusive market

booming, industry giants such as Hyatt, Marriott, and Accor are aggressively expanding their resort portfolios.

The potential sale comes as Sandals is in the midst of its most ambitious brand overhaul yet, with the multi-million-dollar "Made of Caribbean" campaign. The marketing blitz, which includes ad placements in Times Square, the Super Bowl, the Golden Globes, and even rideshare vehicles in major cities, seeks to broaden Sandals' appeal beyond its traditional wedding and honeymoon market.

PHOENIX

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Auntie Vi's mentorship

Trini-born "Equalizer" actress to bring star power to film forum in Barbados

Trinidad-born actress Lorraine Toussaint, best known for her commanding role as Aunt Vi on CBS's hit series *The Equalizer*, is set to bring her star power, mentorship, and Caribbean pride to the 2nd Annual Cross Continental Forum (CCF) in Barbados, taking place from June 14-18, 2025.

Toussaint joins an elite lineup of Black creatives, including acclaimed filmmaker Ava DuVernay and Booker Prize-winning Jamaican author Marlon James, at the pioneering event which focuses on Decolonizing Co-Production for Black Filmmakers. The Forum, spearheaded by the Canada-based CaribbeanTales Media Group (CTMG), is becoming a key platform for reshaping the global media landscape through the lens of Black storytelling and collaboration.

Toussaint, an award-winning actress, producer and teacher, will serve as a mentor throughout the five-day forum, supporting and guiding participants across the Caribbean and diaspora. She will also lend her voice as a celebrity juror for the forum's "Big Pitch" alongside DuVernay.

From *Orange Is the New Black*, for which she won a Critics Choice TV Award, to her standout roles in *Law & Order*, *Saving Grace*, and *The Fosters*, Toussaint has become a fierce presence on screen. Her return to the Caribbean for this forum underscores her deep commitment to nurturing Black talent and giving back to the region that shaped her.

"Lorraine brings a unique blend of brilliance, authenticity and generosity that will deeply enrich this platform," said Frances-Anne Solomon, CEO of CaribbeanTales Media Group and founder of the CCF. "Having her at the Forum from beginning to end will be a powerful gift for all participants."

CCF 2025 is supported by a wide range of



Lorraine Toussaint plays "Auntie Vi" on the hit TV show *The Equalizer*

global partners, including the Canada Media Fund, British Film Institute (BFI), Invest Barbados, the University of the West Indies (Cave Hill), and the National Cultural Foundation of Barbados. The forum aims to stimulate meaningful co-productions between Black and global majority creatives from Canada, the Caribbean, the UK, Africa, and beyond.

Guyanese-born actress and activist CCH Pounder, known for *Avatar* and *NCIS: New Orleans*, will also attend the forum in her role as

head of the CCF Steering Committee. Meanwhile, James, author of *A Brief History of Seven Killings* and co-creator of the Jamaica-shot Netflix series *Get Millie Black*, will participate as a panelist, sharing his expertise and creative insights.

Applications for producers interested in participating in the 2025 Cross Continental Forum are open until March 31, 2025. For more information, visit ccf2025.com or contact applications@ccf2025.com.

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Special guest Sheryl Lee Ralph joined the cast of *Love and Marriage and New York City*

GREEN CARD

Timely Immigration comedy set for 25th anniversary run in NYC

Would you marry for a green card? That's the bold and timely question at the heart of Jamaican-born playwright David Heron's hit romantic comedy-drama, "Love and Marriage and New York City," which makes its triumphant return to the New York stage this June to mark its 25th Anniversary.

The special Silver Anniversary Performance will be staged as a one-night-only reading at the Jamaica Performing Arts Center, (JPAC) in Queens on Sunday, June 22 at 7 P.M., in celebration of Caribbean American Heritage Month in New York City.

Presented by Broadway World Award-winner David Heron, who will also direct and produce the event, the performance will be preceded by a complimentary Caribbean cuisine reception beginning at 5:30 PM. The exclusive cultural event builds on the success of last year's American premiere of Alwin Bully's *McBee*, and continues Heron's commitment to spotlighting Caribbean storytelling on U.S. stages.

Set in late-1990s Manhattan, *Love and Mar-*

riage and New York City follows the journey of two Jamaican-born couples who enter into marriages of convenience to gain U.S. residency – only to discover that matters of the heart rarely follow the rules of immigration. The play blends humor, drama, and romance while addressing the enduring allure of the American Dream and the complexity of immigration in a deeply human way.

"Over twenty-five years after its world premiere, the play is more relevant than ever," Heron said. "Immigration remains a complicated and emotionally charged topic. This play shows the lengths people will go to secure a future, with both comic and dramatic consequences."

Originally premiering in 1999 at the Little Little Theatre in Kingston, Jamaica, the production has since enjoyed international acclaim. It has been staged throughout South Florida, the UK, and Canada, with performances at renowned venues including London's Peggy Ashcroft Theatre, New York's Billie Holiday Theatre, and the Paul Robeson Theatre. The 2005 Off-

Broadway production, directed by theater legend Woody King Jr., was an official selection of the 2007 National Black Theatre Festival.

The play has earned critical acclaim and numerous honors, including eight Actor Boy Award nominations (Jamaica's equivalent to the Tonys), three AUDELCO nominations for Excellence in Off-Broadway Black Theatre, and a New York City Council Proclamation recognizing Heron's contributions to the arts.

Casting for the June reading will be announced soon, with Heron promising a stellar lineup from stage, film, and television to deliver a memorable experience "right in the heart of Jamaica, Queens."

In addition, Heron's Sure Thing Productions Free Student Ticket Initiative will once again make tickets available at no cost for college and high school students (ages 16+) as well as theater interns across the New York Tri-State area.

For more information, contact Sure Thing Productions at 646-533-7021.



No Ganja for You

St Vincent Prime Minister says full legalization will break international law

St. Vincent and the Grenadines' Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves has firmly shut down the idea of fully legalizing marijuana in the country, citing binding international laws that prohibit such a move.

Speaking recently on NBC Radio, Gonsalves emphasized that while his government has taken progressive steps — including decriminalizing small quantities for personal use and developing a regulated medicinal cannabis industry — full legalization remains off the table.

“What the convention permits is what we have done,” Gonsalves said, referencing inter-

national drug control treaties. “You can allow small quantities for recreational use, exemptions for religious or sacramental use, and develop a well-regulated medicinal cannabis sector — which we’ve done. But beyond that, you’re stepping outside the law.”

The Prime Minister called suggestions for full legalization “irresponsible,” warning of serious financial and diplomatic consequences.

“If you legalize, you can’t use the banking system. Correspondent banking relationships will be cut off — that means no Western Union money, no trade, no access to international fi-

nancial networks,” he cautioned.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines established its Medicinal Cannabis Authority in 2019 to oversee the industry and maintain compliance with global standards. The island nation has since emerged as a leader in the Caribbean’s medicinal cannabis movement — but Gonsalves made it clear that any step beyond this framework could jeopardize international relations and economic stability.

The comments come amid rising pressure from some quarters advocating for broader cannabis reforms across the Caribbean.

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STANDING OUT

CNN anchor Abby Phillips captivates audience at Eric Williams Memorial Lecture in Texas

To a captivated audience of over 250 both in-person and online, CNN anchor Abby Phillip, proudly of Trinidad and Tobago heritage, delivered a powerful keynote recently at the 23rd Eric E. Williams Memorial Lecture, held at The University of Texas at Austin.

In a talk titled “Journalism in Challenging Times,” Phillip demonstrated the clarity, courage, and command that has made her a stand-out voice in U.S. media. She emphasized the urgent need for journalism that not only amplifies all voices – including those we may disagree with—but also stays rooted in facts, amidst a rising tide of misinformation on social media.

Drawing inspiration from Dr. Eric Williams’ legendary “University of Woodford Square” addresses, Phillip reflected on her own upbringing and her family’s journey from Trinidad and Tobago to the U.S. “His policies around free secondary and tertiary education shaped generations—including mine,” she said, noting how her parents, thanks to Williams’ vision, believed in limitless possibilities.

Phillip shared the challenges of moderating polarized discussions on her show, comparing it at times to managing a classroom of unruly students. Still, she holds fast to the principle that respectful, informed dialogue is essential—even when passions run high. “You have to be willing to listen, to check yourself, and to bring the facts,” she stressed.

A lively Q&A followed, with a standout moment coming from Eric Williams’ 15-year-old granddaughter, who asked how her generation could use social media for good. Phillip’s advice: “Seek truth. Be politically aware. Think before you post.”

The lecture marked its first year at UT Austin’s John L. Warfield Center for African and African American Studies, after 19 years at Florida International University. It continues to honor the enduring legacy of Dr. Eric E. Williams – Caribbean scholar, author of the revolutionary *Capitalism and Slavery*, and Trinidad and Tobago’s first Prime Minister.

Notable past speakers have included scholars, heads of state, and icons like Angela Davis, Portia Simpson-Miller, and Mia Mottley. The Lecture series offers a platform for critical reflection on Caribbean and African Diaspora politics, history, and media—making Phillip’s voice this year a timely and resonant one.



Abby Phillip: celebrated CNN anchor is originally from Trinidad

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