



PEPPA WINS

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CARNIVAL MEMORIES

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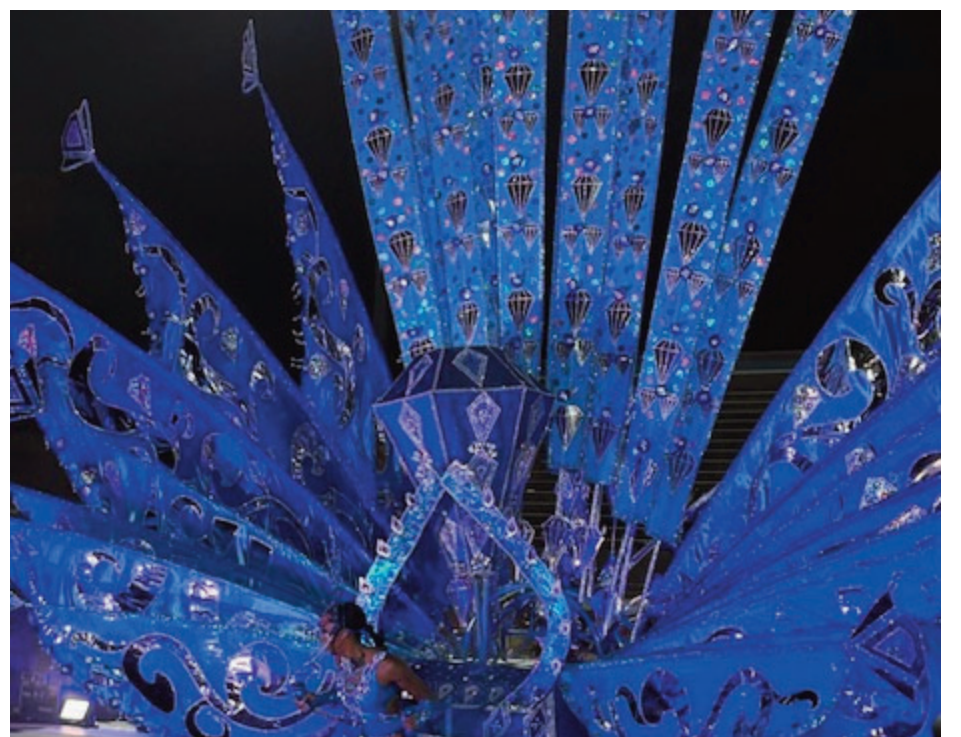
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The Kings & Queens. *Photos by Chris Lee and Raynier Maharaj*



CHANGING THE Pattern

There comes a point where you start seeing the pattern clearly. Maybe it shows up in your reactions, your relationships, your self-doubt, your overthinking, your silence, your people-pleasing, or the way you keep expecting the worst before anything has even happened. And once you start seeing it, another question usually comes right behind it: how do I change this? I think that is the part so many people want to know, and I understand why. Because once you realize you are carrying old beliefs, old hurts, old protective patterns, and old reactions, you do not want to stay there. You want to move differently. You want to stop repeating what keeps hurting you. You want to stop feeling like your past is still running things in the present.

The good news is, patterns can change. But I do not think real change happens by forcing yourself, shaming yourself, or trying to become a completely different person overnight. Most of us have tried that in one way or another. We tell ourselves to stop being so emotional, stop overthinking, stop reacting, stop caring so much, stop going back, stop getting triggered, stop doubting, stop repeating the same thing. But when a pattern has been in place for a long time, it usually has roots. It is there for a reason. And if you only fight the pattern without understanding what is underneath it, it often finds a way to come back.

That is why changing the pattern starts with awareness. You have to see it before you can shift it. You have to notice when it shows up, how it shows up, what sets it off, and what it leads you to do. Maybe your pattern is to shut down when you feel hurt. Maybe it is to become defensive. Maybe it is to over-explain. Maybe it is to go quiet, pull away, please everyone, or abandon yourself just to keep the peace. Maybe your pattern is more internal, like the way you speak to yourself, the way you expect rejection, or the way you talk yourself out of what you really want. Whatever it is, the first step is not to judge it. The first step is to notice it honestly.

That alone can be powerful, because when you start noticing the pattern, you stop being completely inside it. You begin to see it as

something happening, not as who you are. And that space matters. I think many of us have spent years believing that our patterns are just our personality. We say, this is just how I am. I always do this. I have always been like this. But many times, what we call personality is actually protection. It is something we learned. It is a way we adapted. It is how we survived something, managed something, or protected ourselves from something. Once you understand that, you stop making yourself wrong and start getting curious. That shift changes a lot.

Then comes the deeper part, and this is where real change often begins. You ask yourself, what is this pattern trying to do for me? That may sound strange at first, especially if the pattern is hurting you. But most patterns begin as protection, even the ones that no longer serve you. Shutting down may have protected you once. People-pleasing may have protected you once. Overthinking may have protected you once. Pulling away first may have protected you once. Staying small may have protected you once. These things did not come from nowhere. They usually came from some part of you trying to stay safe, avoid pain, avoid rejection, avoid conflict, or avoid being hurt again. That does not mean you have to keep them, but it does mean you can stop treating yourself like the enemy.

I think this is where people often miss the doorway to change. They become so frustrated with the pattern that they attack it. But when you attack the pattern, you are often attacking the very part of you that was trying to survive. That part does not need more shame. It needs understanding. It needs to know there may be another way now.

Once you begin noticing the pattern and understanding what it has been trying to do, you can start interrupting it. This is where change becomes practical. Not perfect, just practical. It can be as simple as catching yourself in the moment and pausing. Not reacting right away. Not sending the message right away. Not explaining right away. Not shutting down completely. Just pausing long enough to ask, what is happening in me right now? That pause can feel small, but it is not small. That pause is where

choice begins.

Maybe you notice that what you are feeling is older than the moment. Maybe you notice that what is coming up is fear, hurt, shame, rejection, or not feeling safe. Maybe you notice that the pattern is already trying to take over. That is the moment where something new can begin. You may still feel everything you feel, but now you are also aware. And awareness gives you options.

Sometimes changing the pattern means doing the opposite of what the old pattern wants. If the old pattern says shut down, maybe the new choice is to stay present a little longer. If the old pattern says over-explain, maybe the new choice is to say less and stay grounded. If the old pattern says please everyone, maybe the new choice is to be honest about what you feel. If the old pattern says run, maybe the new choice is to pause and stay with yourself first. If the old pattern says make yourself smaller, maybe the new choice is to speak anyway.

I know that sounds simple, but simple does not always mean easy. Sometimes the new choice feels uncomfortable at first. That is because the old pattern feels familiar, and familiar can feel safer even when it is hurting you. That is why change often takes repetition. You are not only changing a habit. You are teaching your mind, your body, and your nervous system that a different response is possible now. That takes time. It takes patience. It takes honesty. And I think it also takes kindness. Because if every time you slip into an old pattern you shame yourself, you just create more of the same pain. Real change does not grow well in shame. It grows better in awareness, compassion, and truth.

This is also why support matters. Sometimes the pattern is so old and so automatic that it is hard to see clearly on your own. Sometimes you need someone to help you hear what you are not hearing, see what you are not seeing, and hold space while you untangle what has been living underneath the surface for a long time. There is strength in that, not weakness.

And let me say something else that matters. Changing the pattern



HEART
& SOUL

with
Dianne Ojar



does not mean you never feel triggered again. It does not mean you become untouched by life. It does not mean you never get hurt, never react, never struggle, and never have another hard day. That is not real. Changing the pattern means you start meeting those moments differently. You start noticing sooner. You start understanding faster. You start recovering more gently. You start choosing with more awareness. You stop letting every old wound write the ending.

Sometimes people think healing means becoming someone else. I do not see it that way. I think healing is often about coming back to yourself. The real you underneath the fear, underneath the bracing, underneath the old story, underneath the pattern that kept repeating because it did not know another way. There is something very powerful about realizing that you are not trying to become a brand-new person. You are allowing more of your true self to come forward without the old pattern controlling everything.

So if you are in that place where you are starting to see the pattern, do not rush past that. That is important. Seeing it is part of the healing. And if you are in the place where you are tired of repeating it, that matters too. That tiredness can become a turning point. Not the kind that happens through pressure, but the kind that happens through truth. The kind where you quietly decide, I do not want to keep living like this. I want something different. I want to respond differently. I want to treat myself differently.

And if the pattern still shows up sometimes, that does not mean you are failing. It means you are human.

Dianne Ojar is an author, speaker, transformational guide and Kuan Yin Lineage Holder with professional credentials through the American Board of Hypnotherapy and the American Board of Neuro-Linguistic Programming.



Vybz Kartel taps the baby bump of girlfriend Sidem Öztürk on stage during the Reggae Land 2026 music festival in the UK

COME BREED ME

Vybz Kartel gets his wish as new baby on the way with Sidem Öztürk

Jamaican dancehall star Vybz Kartel and his fiancée, Sidem Öztürk, have announced that they are expecting their first child together.

The couple revealed the news during Kartel's performance at the Reggae Land 2026 music festival in Milton Keynes, England, on August 2.

With about 28 minutes remaining in his set, Kartel, whose real name is Adidja Palmer, invited Öztürk onto the stage before launching into his 2009 hit, Come Breed Me.

As the song's lyric, "Can you give me a baby," played, the dancehall deejay affectionately rubbed Öztürk's visible baby bump, confirming the pregnancy to thousands of cheering fans. Videos of the moment quickly circulated across social media, with fans congratulating the couple on the announcement.

Kartel and Öztürk have been together since 2015 after she began corresponding with the entertainer while he was incarcerated. Over the years, Öztürk remained a steadfast supporter of

the dancehall star and has frequently accompanied him to public appearances since his release from prison in 2024.

The pregnancy marks the couple's first child together. Kartel is already the father of several children from previous relationships.

The announcement comes amid a busy period for the "Fever" hitmaker, who has continued to perform internationally following his return to the stage, including appearances at major music festivals across Europe.

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Fightland

50 Cent comes out swinging as executive producer of new Starz drama

“Fightland” is coming out swinging.

The new Starz drama is set in the underworld of British boxing and boasts a cast of talented British actors including Howard Charles as Maduka “Duke” Kilroy who climbs to the top of the sport before tragedy strikes, motivating him to seek revenge against those he believes are responsible.

But for some in the US the hook might be rapper turned Hollywood power player Curtis “50 Cent” Jackson, who serves as an executive producer.

It’s a world Jackson is familiar with. In 2012, he got into boxing promotion with his company SMS Promotions before it dissolved in 2015 after filing for bankruptcy.

Jackson has thoughts on why boxing holds such a central place in culture.

“I think it goes all the way back to Rome,” he said in an interview. “It’s the gladiators, it’s our modern-day version of it.”

Jackson believes audiences are attracted to the discipline it takes to be successful in the sport and noted that “it’s the only sport that you can’t pass anyone the ball.”

American culture has long loved a boxing storyline. “Fightland,” which premieres Friday, comes as buzz begins to build around the Sylvester Stallone bio-pic “I Play Rocky.”

The film stars Anthony Ippolito as the actor who scored a knockout with the now iconic 1976 boxing film after insisting that he portray the main character in the movie he wrote.

When asked which he preferred, “Rocky” or its 2015 spinoff/sequel “Creed” starring Michael B. Jordan, Jackson didn’t hesitate to answer “Rocky” with a smile.

“To me with Stallone, what he did in that



Curtis ‘50 Cent’ Jackson

period was so incredible because sometimes we gotta make it, we gotta come up with it ourselves and make it,” Jackson said. “If he didn’t come up with it then no ‘Rocky,’ no ‘Creed.’”

“Fight films, fight stories, they are a metaphor for our own struggle,” said Howard Charles, who plays the main character Duke. “That’s why boxing is so big and always will be I think because people can relate to a greater or lesser degree.”

“To live is to fight, as that Latin expression goes,” he added. “We’re all fighting for something, be it love, money or whatever.”

Deborah Ayorinde stars as Joy Marshall, who is both the wife of kingpin Kingsley Marshall (played by Nicholas Pinnock) and the object of Duke’s desire. She said that fighting spirit is reflected in the plots.

“All of the characters are fighting for something or fighting against something,” she said. “Some of them are fighting against themselves. I feel like Joy is fighting with herself so I think that people who are fans of boxing or even not will really be able to relate and enjoy.”

Pinnock, the show’s resident villain, has doubled down on pugilism as he also stars in the boxing film “Heavyweight,” which recently started streaming on Prime and Apple TV. He believes audiences naturally enjoy seeing winners and the “fight for dominance” that in real life can equate to fighting to be the dominant one in relationships and careers.

“In this particular show, Kingsley is fighting for dominance over London against the other gangs,” he said. “There are some really good parallels there that will really resonate with the audience and how they the duality of the rise and the fall of these men.”

Crime and boxing isn’t just the formula for “Fightland.”

Bobby Harrison, a manager and promoter for more than 15 years, pointed out that there are real life parallels when it comes to the history of the sport.

“In the 30s, 40s, maybe even 50s, you had the organized crime element. Gangs were involved, especially in the East Coast,” said Harrison, who works with several current boxers including Eridson Garcia and The Grandy Twins. “People always like gangster stuff when it comes to TV and movies and at least back then boxing was closely related to organized crime.”

No one knows better how much audiences enjoy it than Jackson.

His partnership with the Starz network has seen success thanks to gritty crime dramas including his “Power” franchise and the “BMF” series.

Jackson is hoping to score a knockout by duplicating that success with his series set across the pond in a city he considers “one of the most beautiful places that I experienced.”

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Hype behind bars

Dancehall producer sentenced to nearly six years

Dancehall producer Countree Hype, whose legal name is Taugea Ubert Dayes, has been sentenced to five years and 10 months in federal prison after pleading guilty to his role in a gun smuggling operation into Jamaica.

The 33-year-old was sentenced on June 24 in a Miami, Florida court after appearing before Presiding Judge Roy Altman. He faced two counts: smuggling goods from the United States and delivering a firearm to a common carrier without written notification. He received 70 months on the smuggling charge and 60 months on the second count, with both sentences ordered to run concurrently. He was also ordered to pay a US\$200 special assessment.

Following his prison term, Dayes will be subject to three years of supervised release,

though authorities noted he is likely to face deportation proceedings back to Jamaica after completing his sentence. He also retains the right to appeal the ruling.

Prosecutors had pushed for a sentence of 70 to 75 months, arguing it was necessary given the scale and seriousness of the offence, while Dayes had sought a lighter 36-month term. Court records and U.S. prosecutors outlined a detailed smuggling operation in which Dayes allegedly concealed 30 firearms, 32 magazines, and more than 100 rounds of ammunition inside five office chairs. The weapons were wrapped in foil and foam, then sewn into seat cushions before being shipped via freight in March 2025 from the United States to Jamaica. The shipment was intercepted in Kingston eight days later.



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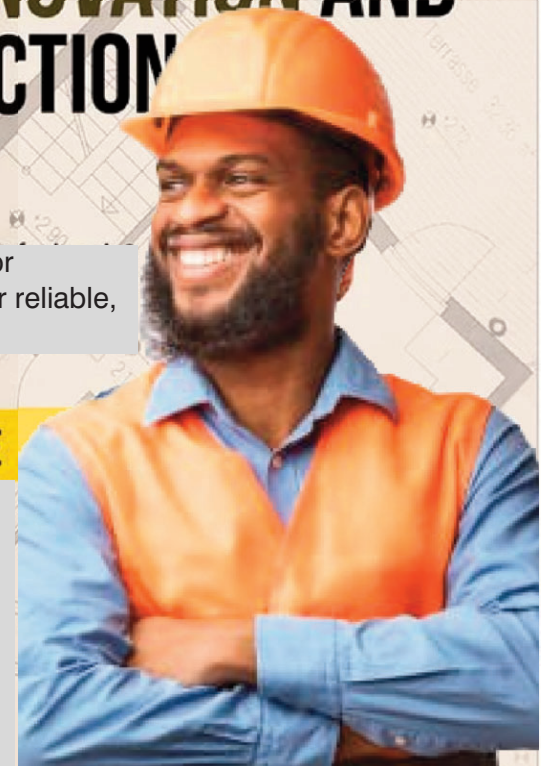
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Munga Honourable was charged in a 2017 murder

MUNGA IS HONOURABLE

Dancehall star freed of 2017 murder

Dancehall entertainer Munga Honourable and his co-accused Sheridan Gordon were freed of murder on July 25 after prosecutors offered no further evidence against them in the Jamaica Supreme Court.

Munga, whose given name is Damian Rhoden, and Gordon had been on trial for the 2017 killing of Cleveland Smith Jr. in Ackee Walk, St Andrew.

The decision came after the defence challenged the credibility of the prosecution's sole eyewitness during cross-examination. The witness, who completed her testimony on Thursday, had told the court that she saw Smith being beaten and shot by two men shortly after 1 a.m. on May 12, 2017.

According to the prosecution's case, Rhoden and Gordon attacked and fatally shot Smith during a dispute along Church Lane, off Molyne's Road in St Andrew, while attending a party in the area.

However, defence attorneys argued that the identification evidence was unreliable. They pointed to inconsistencies in the wit-

ness's testimony and questioned her ability to identify the accused men in what they said were dark conditions.

Following the witness's cross-examination, the Crown indicated that it would offer no further evidence, resulting in both men being formally freed.

Rhoden was represented by attorneys Christopher Townsend and Chadwyk Berry, while Gordon was represented by King's Counsel Peter Champagnie and Sayeed Bernard.

Speaking after the ruling, Townsend said the defence had successfully undermined the prosecution's identification evidence.

"It has been a long nine years. But Mr. Champagnie and myself were able to cross-examine the Crown witness, the only witness for the Crown, to the point where the credibility fell down significantly," Townsend said.

"And therefore, the prosecution threw in the towel. The main issue was identification, and we were able to demonstrate that the evidence concerning identification was extremely poor."



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SIMPLY THE BEST

Dominica named Caribbean's Best Island by Travel + Leisure



Dominica has reclaimed its place as the Caribbean's top island destination, earning the No. 1 ranking in the Caribbean and No. 9 spot among the world's best islands in Travel + Leisure's World's Best Awards 2026.

The recognition marks the fifth consecutive year that the Nature Island has been featured among the Caribbean's leading islands in the publication's annual readers' survey. Dominica's return to the global top 10 highlights growing international appreciation for its untouched landscapes, biodiversity, and nature-focused tourism experiences.

Readers awarded Dominica a score of 91.87, praising the island's dramatic scenery, including its rainforest-covered mountains, volcanic peaks, black-sand beaches, natural hot springs, waterfalls, and pristine ecosystems.

The award also reflects Dominica's ongoing efforts to protect its natural environment and position itself as a leader in sustainable tourism.

"To once again be named the No. 1 island in the Caribbean and return to the top 10 islands in the world is an extraordinary milestone for Dominica," said Marva Williams, CEO and Director of Tourism of the Discover Dominica Authority.

"These awards are especially meaningful because they reflect the experiences of travelers who have connected with our people, culture and landscapes firsthand," Williams said. "Being recognized among the Caribbean's best islands for five consecutive years, and returning to the top 10 globally this year, speaks to the authenticity of our tourism product."

Dominica also received recognition in the luxury travel sector, with Secret Bay named the No. 6 Best Resort in the Caribbean in the 2026 awards.

The Relais & Châteaux resort, located within a secluded rainforest overlooking the Caribbean Sea, has gained international attention for its private villas, plunge pools, personalized service, island-to-table dining, wellness experiences, and sustainable approach to luxury hospitality.

The latest accolades come as Dominica's tourism industry continues to expand. Total visitor arrivals increased 15 percent in 2025, reach-

ing 496,635 visitors, while stayover arrivals grew 19 percent to 99,846.

That growth has continued into 2026, with stayover arrivals during the first quarter rising 10 percent compared with the same period in 2025. Cruise tourism has also recorded strong gains, with 373,764 cruise visitors arriving between October 2025 and March 2026 — the strongest performance for that period since the 2010/11 cruise season.

The island is also investing in major infrastructure and sustainability projects aimed at improving access and enhancing the visitor experience. Construction of Dominica's international airport remains on schedule for completion ahead of the winter 2027 travel season, while expanded air service and improvements at Douglas-Charles Airport continue to strengthen connectivity.

Other initiatives include the planned Dominica Cable Car, the world's first Sperm Whale Reserve, and a geothermal power project supporting the island's goal of achieving 100 percent renewable energy by 2030.

With the addition of new accommodations such as Ocean Oasis Hotel, Dominica is expanding its tourism offerings while maintaining its reputation as a destination centered on conservation, adventure, and authentic experiences.

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FRENZY

Rihanna surprises fans alongside Jay-Z at Yankee Stadium show

Barbadian superstar Rihanna has sent the internet into a frenzy after making a surprise appearance alongside longtime mentor and collaborator Jay-Z during the third night of his historic sold-out concert series at New York's Yankee Stadium.

The performance went viral within hours, with thousands of fans capturing the reunion and flooding social media with clips.

Jay-Z's three-night run at the iconic stadium marked several major milestones in his career, celebrating the 30th anniversary of his debut album *Reasonable Doubt*, the 25th anniversary of *The Blueprint*, and a special third installment dubbed *Extra Innings*. The concert series also made history by breaking the attendance record for a music event at Yankee Stadium, drawing approximately 50,000 fans.

When Rihanna emerged on stage, the crowd erupted.

The pair reunited to perform their Grammy Award-winning anthem "Run This Town," the 2009 smash hit that also features Kanye West. While West was noticeably absent from the celebrations, Rihanna and Jay-Z delivered an electrifying rendition that reminded fans why the collaboration remains one of hip-hop and pop's defining records.

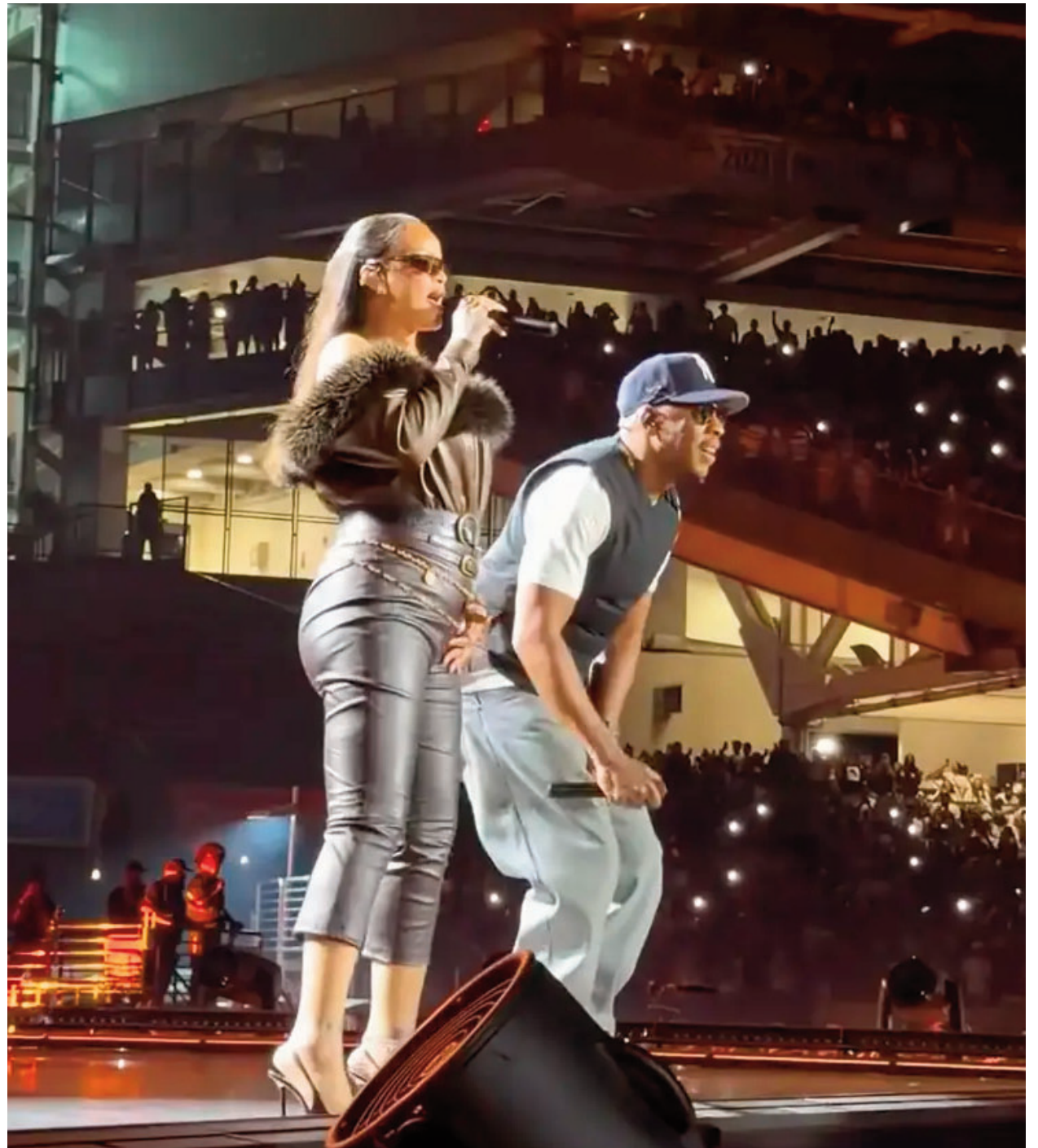
Following the duet, Rihanna kept the momentum going with a solo performance of her gritty 2015 anthem "Bitch Better Have My Money," sending the stadium into another wave of excitement.

The appearance has reignited widespread speculation about the singer's long-awaited return to music, with fans across social media pleading for a full-scale comeback.

The performance marked Rihanna's first live appearance since headlining the Super Bowl LVII Halftime Show in February 2023, where she stunned audiences with a hit-filled medley while simultaneously revealing she was expecting her second child.

Although that Super Bowl performance became one of the most-watched musical events in television history, it was a standalone appearance rather than the beginning of a touring cycle.

In fact, Rihanna has not embarked on a full



Rihanna joined Jay-Z on stage at New York's Yankee Stadium

concert tour since wrapping up her critically acclaimed ANTI World Tour in November 2016. The global trek, which supported her chart-topping album ANTI, sold out arenas across North America, Europe, and Asia.

Over the past decade, the Caribbean icon has largely shifted her focus away from music, building one of the entertainment industry's most successful business empires. Through her ventures in beauty, skincare, haircare, and fashion, Rihanna has transformed herself into a billionaire entrepreneur while continuing to influence global pop culture far beyond the

recording studio.

Despite her business success, anticipation for new music has never subsided. Her surprise appearance with Jay-Z has only intensified those conversations.

The pair share a relationship that stretches back nearly two decades. Jay-Z famously signed the then-17-year-old Rihanna to Def Jam Recordings in 2005 after hearing her audition, helping launch a career that would produce 14 Billboard Hot 100 No. 1 singles, nine Grammy Awards, and make her one of the best-selling recording artists of all time.

BIG SCORE

Dancehall music becomes soundtrack at FIFA World Cup

While football nations battle for glory on the pitch at the FIFA World Cup, dancehall has emerged as one of the tournament's dominant soundtracks, with songs from Jamaica and the wider Caribbean reverberating through stadiums, dressing rooms and social media feeds around the globe.

From official FIFA anthems to viral team arrival videos and post-match celebrations, dancehall rhythms have become part of the World Cup atmosphere.

Leading the charge is Shenseea, whose collaboration with Latin music icon Daddy Yankee, "Echo," has become one of the standout records of the tournament.

Released on April 27, 2026, as part of the official FIFA World Cup album, the track has enjoyed tremendous international success, recently climbing to No. 1 on Billboard's Latin Airplay chart. The achievement made Shenseea the first female Jamaican artist to top the chart, cementing her status as one of dancehall's most successful crossover acts.

However, Shenseea is far from the only Caribbean artist making waves.

French football giants Les Bleus also embraced dancehall ahead of one of their biggest matches of the competition. Before taking the field against Spain in Houston, Texas, the French national team released a now-viral stadium arrival video soundtracked by the infectious WYFL Riddim, produced by Jamaican producers DJ Mac and CrashDummy.

The clip, shared on the official Équipe de France Instagram page, quickly gained traction online, receiving more than 130,000 likes and thousands of reposts as fans praised both the team's style and the soundtrack accompanying their entrance.

Although France ultimately fell to Spain, the video further demonstrated dancehall's appeal beyond the Caribbean, particularly among athletes who continue to embrace the genre as part of their pre-game rituals.

Even before the World Cup officially kicked off, Jamaican music had already found itself at the center of another viral football moment.

Following DR Congo's victory over Jamaica's Reggae Boyz in a FIFA World Cup qualifier, jubilant Congolese players and supporters



Shenseea scored big at the 2026 World Cup with Echo

celebrated by singing Masicka's hit "Whites."

Videos circulating on social media showed fans waving Congolese flags while singing the track in unison. The celebrations quickly spread across multiple platforms, earning widespread attention from both football and dancehall fans.

For decades, reggae and dancehall have

transcended geographical boundaries, becoming staples in locker rooms, training camps and celebrations across numerous sporting disciplines. This year's World Cup has simply provided the genre with its biggest stage yet, thousands of miles from Kingston.

HAIL THE KING

Reggae singer Fantan Mojah dies at 49 after heart-related complications

Jamaican reggae singer Fantan Mojah has died at age 49, just weeks before his 50th birthday.

The Rastafarian entertainer, whose given name was Owen Lennox Moncrieffe, passed away on Tuesday evening at the University Hospital of the West Indies (UHWI) in Kingston after suffering complications related to his heart.

A close associate of the singer told Observer Online that Fantan Mojah's health had deteriorated rapidly in the days leading up to his death.

Born on August 5, 1976, in White Hill, St Elizabeth, Fantan Mojah became known for his conscious reggae music, spiritual lyrics and strong connection to the Rastafari movement.

Before gaining recognition as a recording artist, he worked with a travelling sound system, where he performed during sound checks to develop his craft. He initially adopted the stage name Mad Killer, inspired by dancehall veteran Bounty Killer, one of his favourite artists.

After embracing the Rastafari movement, his music shifted toward more uplifting themes, and he was encouraged by veteran reggae singer Capleton to adopt the name Fantan Mojah.

Fantan Mojah emerged as part of a new generation of reggae singers known for promoting positive messages through their music. His songs often reflected his Bobo Ashanti faith, with themes centred on praise for Jah, Rastafari teachings, respect for women and criticism of social issues and immoral behaviour.

He gained popularity through performances at major Jamaican festivals and record-



Fantan Mojah— sang positive lyrics

ings on several popular riddims before signing with DownSound Entertainment.

His breakthrough came in 2005 with the release of his debut album Hail the King, which featured songs including “Hail the King,” “Nuh Build Great Man” featuring Jah Cure and “Corruption.”

The album helped establish Fantan Mojah as one of reggae's rising voices and gained significant attention internationally, particularly in Europe. Its success led to multiple European tours in 2006 and expanded his audience around the world.

Throughout his career, Fantan Mojah remained recognized for his message-driven music and his commitment to Rastafari-inspired themes.

His death comes just three weeks before his 50th birthday and has prompted tributes from fans and members of Jamaica's entertainment community.

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INDIAN MOVIES

T&T-American Filmmaker bringing Indo-Caribbean stories to the big screens

For generations, Indo-Caribbean communities have shaped the cultural fabric of Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Suriname and the wider Caribbean. Yet despite their significant contributions to the region's history and identity, their stories have remained largely absent from film and television.

Trinidadian-American filmmaker, writer and actress Keisha Bissram is helping change that.

Through films rooted in family, identity and cultural memory, Bissram is creating space for Indo-Caribbean women and their experiences to be seen with authenticity and nuance. Rather than relying on stereotypes, her work explores the richness of everyday life—capturing the traditions, relationships and emotional complexities that define many Indo-Caribbean families.

"I started realizing how absent Indo-Caribbean stories were from film and television. I didn't see families like mine, women like the ones I grew up around, or the specific humor, resilience and contradictions that existed in our households," Bissram told About Her Culture.

That realization became the catalyst for her work behind the camera.

As global audiences embrace Caribbean storytelling, Bissram believes authentic representation must reflect the full diversity of the region.

Her work highlights a reality that has long existed but has rarely been portrayed on screen: the Caribbean is home to multiple cultures, histories and identities, each deserving of thoughtful representation.

Her award-winning short film *Black Cake* follows an Indo-Caribbean woman navigating grief after the death of her mother while confronting questions of family, tradition and identity during the Christmas season. The story explores the emotional inheritance passed from one generation of women to the next and the quiet ways culture is preserved within families.

The film draws inspiration from women Bissram has known throughout her life.

"I grew up around Indo-Caribbean women who were hilarious, resilient, emotionally complicated, deeply giving, stubborn, loving, and exhausted all at once. They carried entire households, traditions, recipes, relationships



Trinidadian-American filmmaker, writer and actress Keisha Bissram

and emotional burdens quietly for years without recognition."

Rather than portraying these women through familiar stereotypes, Bissram presents them as fully realized individuals whose lives reflect both strength and vulnerability.

Much of Bissram's work focuses not only on challenges but also on joy.

From holiday traditions and family recipes to music, language and celebrations, her films embrace the everyday moments that often define cultural identity but are rarely documented on screen.

That perspective is reflected in About Her Culture's recent editorial series exploring Indo-Caribbean heritage, which argues that preserving these stories is essential to understanding the Caribbean's cultural landscape.

For many members of the diaspora, particularly younger generations, authentic storytelling offers an opportunity to connect with traditions that might otherwise fade over time.

Rather than waiting for the entertainment industry to recognize Indo-Caribbean voices, Bissram chose to create opportunities herself.



SUMMER VIBES

Jamaica launches 2026 campaign to spotlight festivals and events

The Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) has launched its Jamaica Summer Vibes 2026 campaign, a destination-wide initiative aimed at attracting visitors with a packed calendar of festivals, sporting events, cultural celebrations and culinary experiences through Aug. 31.

The campaign encourages travelers to explore Jamaica beyond its beaches by highlighting entertainment, nightlife, local communities and signature summer events across the island.

"Summer in Jamaica is unlike anywhere else in the world," Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett said in a statement. "From world-class sporting events and internationally renowned festivals to our rich cultural celebrations and culinary traditions, Jamaica offers travelers an opportunity to experience the very best of the Caribbean."

He said the campaign invites visitors to create lasting memories while experiencing the island's summer offerings.

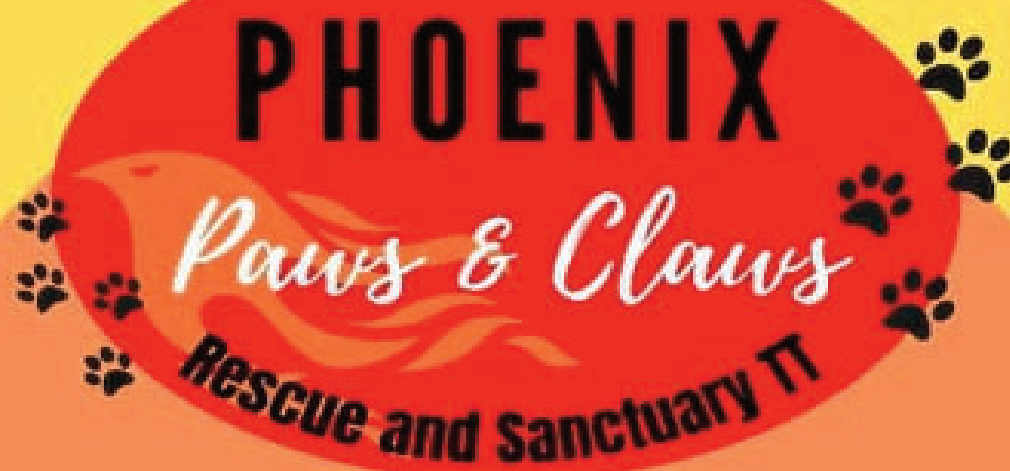
Among the featured events are A Taste of Reggae Sumfest in Ocho Rios on July 18, Dream Weekend in Negril from July 30 to Aug. 3, the MoBay Jerk & Food Festival in Montego Bay on Aug. 1, Emancipation Day celebrations on Aug. 1, Independence Day festivities on Aug. 6, Best Weekend Ever from Aug. 6-10, Caribbean Premier League cricket matches in Kingston from Aug. 11-18, AnimeCom Fest on Aug. 15-16, the Pan American Men's Lacrosse Championship from Aug. 16-23, Amalgamation: The Global Gala from Aug. 28-30, and the Lover's Leap Lighthouse Series on the South Coast on Aug. 28.

JTB Director of Tourism Donovan White

said the campaign is designed to showcase the island's unique atmosphere during the summer season.

"Whether you're dancing at a music festival, cheering on athletes, enjoying authentic Jamaican cuisine, discovering cultural traditions, or simply relaxing on one of our beautiful beaches, there's an energy here that visitors can only truly understand by experiencing it firsthand," White said. "This campaign captures that spirit and invites travelers to make Jamaica part of their summer story."

At the center of the campaign is a promotional film titled "This Could Be Your Summer," which highlights Jamaica's people, landscapes and experiences.



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FOOD, REFRESHMENTS, ON SALE

Body in a Tesla

US singer D4vd to go on trial for murder in death of 14-year-old

A judge has ruled that US musician D4vd will go on trial for murder over the death of a teenage girl.

The decision came after a five-day preliminary hearing, in which Los Angeles prosecutors questioned a dozen witnesses and displayed graphic photographic evidence as 14-year-old Celeste Rivas Hernandez's family watched on.

The star, whose legal name is David Anthony Burke, is accused of killing the girl, whose remains were found last September in a Tesla registered to his address.

Burke, 21, has pleaded not guilty to charges of murdering and sexually abusing her.

Burke is scheduled to be in court next on 31 August to have the charges against him formally read. The trial is to start within 90 days of that date.

The charges include first-degree murder, mutilation of human remains and child sexual abuse. The murder charges include special circumstances linked to financial gain that could make Burke potentially liable for the death sentence.

Prosecutors have alleged Burke stabbed the teen before dismembering her body after years of sexual abuse.

The accusation of murder for financial gain is among the special circumstances included in the charges making Burke potentially liable for the death sentence.

They allege he killed her because the teen had threatened to reveal his relationship with a minor and destroy his multi-million dollar music career.

Evidence read in court on Monday showed threats Hernandez made to Burke on 22 April 2025, stemming from arguments about his friendship with another girl.

"I swear to GOD I will kill u", one expletive-laden text said, followed by a threat to strangle him and tell her dad lies about him. "i will end ur career and ur life I will damage anything," the text went on.

The following day, Hernandez went to



David Anthony Burke — had a relationship with a child who was later murdered

Burke's Hollywood home in an Uber he had sent to pick her up.

Prosecutors alleged that Burke stabbed her once she arrived.

During questioning at the hearing on Monday, Detective Corey Farrell of the Los Angeles Police Department said text messages indicated that the defendant and the girl had attended church with her family.

In response to the defence, the detective said he was aware the teen had misrepresented her age to the defendant, telling him she was 16 and 18 at different times.

Burke's defence lawyers argued there was not sufficient evidence that he had committed the crime.

They said her parents were aware of what was going on between them and had even given written consent for her to travel to London with Burke for a week.

The defence highlighted texts on the 22nd

and the 23rd of April that suggested Celeste had insisted on going to Burke's Hollywood Hills home and that he had argued against her coming before agreeing to send her an Uber on the night of the 23rd.

He "repeatedly expressed love and care for Ms Hernandez after they broke up", defence attorney Marilyn Bednarski said in court.

The medical examiner's inability to prove how the two penetrating wounds found in the girl occurred and the lack of surveillance video capturing Burke being home on the night of 23 April showed a lack of evidence, the defence argued.

Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Charlaine Olmedo ruled that evidence presented during the preliminary hearing provided probable cause for a trial.

Burke is charged with murder, continuous sexual abuse of a child under 14, and unlawful mutilation of human remains.



STRICTLY DANCING

Former England football star Shaun Wright-Phillips joins dance show line-up

Former England and Manchester City winger Shaun Wright-Phillips is the latest star to join the line-up for this year's Strictly Come Dancing.

The football pundit, who is the son of Arsenal legend Ian Wright, had 36 caps for England and also played for clubs including Chelsea and Queens Park Rangers.

His fancy footwork may have dazzled on the pitch but Wright-Phillips says this latest challenge "is definitely outside my comfort zone. Dancing is in my blood -but mainly at family events! I'm super excited to get started and really looking forward to the challenge!"

While ex-footballers have had mixed fortunes on previous Strictly series, former soccer star Karen Carney flipped the script last year by winning the coveted glitterball.

Wright-Phillips is the tenth celebrity to be confirmed for this year's series, joining stars including Delta Goodrem, Lacey Turner, Dani Dyer and Jaime Winstone.

Strictly Come Dancing is the UK's equivalent of the American Show Dancing with the

Stars.

More celebrities are set to be announced in the coming weeks, among them Game of Thrones star Bethany Anthony (below left) and Love Island's Cach Mercer (below right).





Peppa Pig — was illegally copied, ruled a British judge

Peppa vs Wolfoo

A judge has ordered all videos featuring popular animated character Wolfoo to be removed from platforms including YouTube after ruling that the cartoon illegally copied audio from Peppa Pig.

Wolfoo, a Vietnamese animation about a young wolf who lives with his family, has had hundreds of millions of views online.

A High Court judge in London recently ruled in favour of entertainment giant Hasbro, which owns the rights to Peppa Pig, after it sued Wolfoo's makers SConnect for copyright infringement.

Mr Justice Smith said the copying - in which Wolfoo videos used short audio clips of Peppa and her family saying words like "hooray!" - had been "prolific" and "long-standing".

In a ruling this week, the judge said "all videos featuring Wolfoo" must be taken down.

Hasbro and Peppa Pig's creators Astley

Baker Davies Ltd originally took court action in London in 2022.

They claimed SConnect had attempted "to deceive the young Wolfoo viewership, most aged between two and five, into believing that Wolfoo is the same character as Peppa Pig" or connected to Peppa, the judge wrote.

The companies initially complained about Wolfoo's appearance and artwork, but focused their legal case on the audio because they believed it would be easier to prove that sound clips were directly copied.

The evidence of "copying of the audio clips is compelling", the judge decided.

"That copying was extensive, seemingly endemic at least so far as the English language Wolfoo videos are concerned."

SConnect denied the copyright infringement claim but accepted that some Wolfoo videos made before mid-2020 included audio from

Peppa Pig because an independent third-party contractor had used the clips without the company's knowledge.

SConnect said all infringing videos were removed, and that Wolfoo animations made after mid-2020 used only voices and sounds that were created in-house. However, the judge said the fact the sounds were supplied by a third party was "irrelevant"; that while many infringing videos were removed, some were simply moved to other channels; and that the claim that all new sounds were recorded in-house "can be disproved". The judge said clips from Peppa Pig were found in all 92 English-language Wolfoo videos that were examined, and about 75% of the foreign-language videos.

SConnect said the ruling should only apply to the videos examined in the sample, but the judge declared that all Wolfoo videos should now be removed.

HE'S A TERRORIST

Salman Rushdie attacker convicted of terror offences in USA

A US man who is already serving 25 years in prison for attempting to kill Sir Salman Rushdie has been convicted of additional charges, including providing material support to a terrorist group.

Hadi Matar was convicted in a New York federal court on Wednesday of providing assistance to Hezbollah, the Lebanese armed faction which is designated as a terrorist group by the US, UK and many other countries.

Prosecutors argued that Matar had been motivated by a fatwa, a religious edict, issued by Iran's religious leader in 1989 for Sir Salman's death.

The award-winning author testified during the trial, describing the attack and crediting a firefighter with saving his life by providing medical care.

The jury convicted Matar of engaging in an act of transnational terrorism and providing material support to Hezbollah.

During the trial in the New York city of Buffalo, prosecutors argued that he had been motivated by a 2006 speech by the then-leader of Hezbollah, calling for the fatwa against Sir Salman to be enforced, and that he had plotted the attack for two years.

"The defendant decided no one was going to do it, so he had to do it," Assistant US Attorney Timothy Lynch said in his closing statement, according to The Buffalo News.

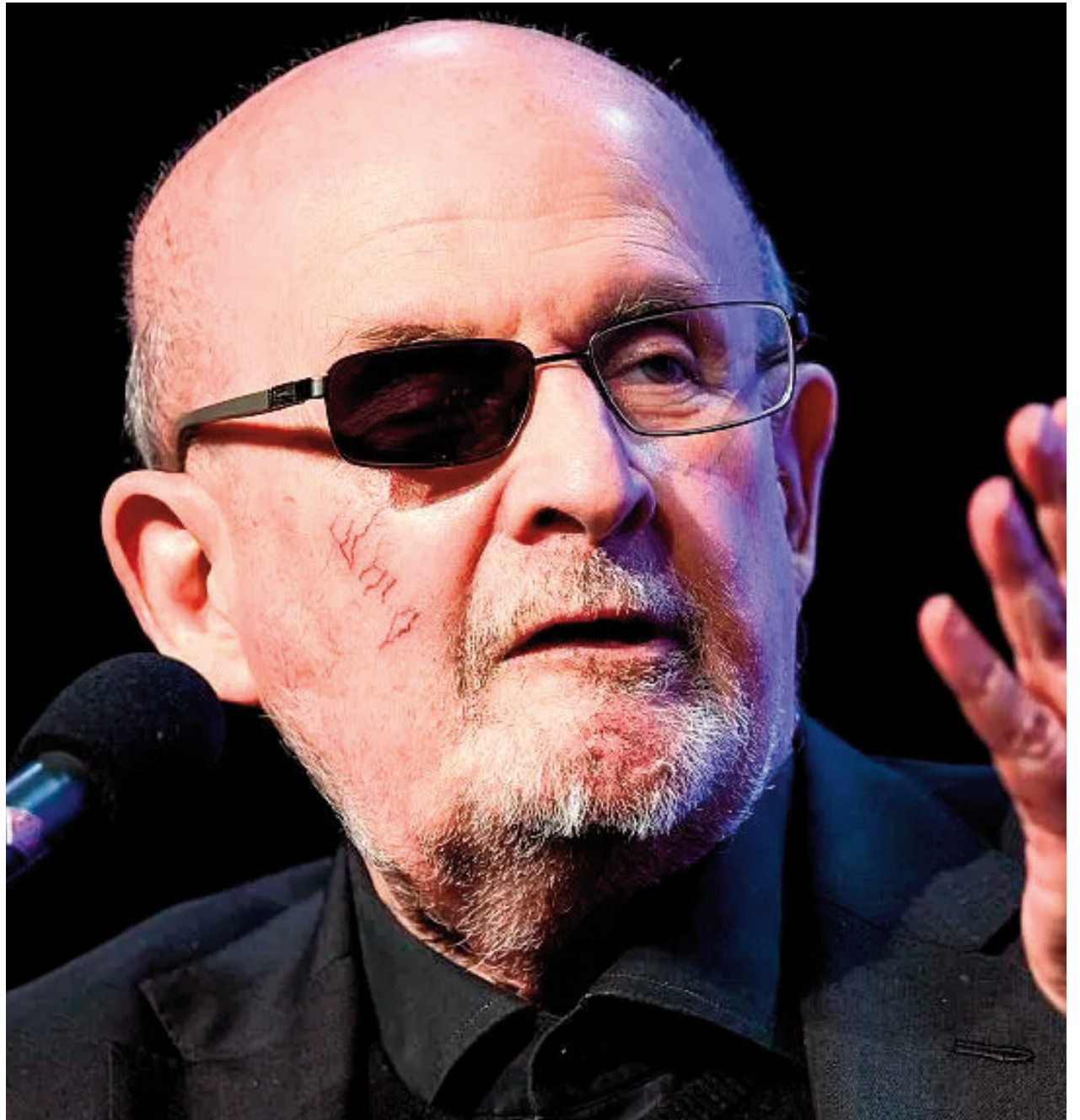
"The defendant is the one who answered that call."

They also played videos made by Matar, 28, and interviewed Sir Salman on the witness stand about being stabbed 15 times, including to his cheek, chest, eye, neck and thigh.

"I was on the stage, lying down, with an enormous pool of blood all around me," he testified, adding: "It was an enormous and expansive lake of blood."

He also lifted the darkened lens on his glasses to reveal the wound to his eye, which has left him partially blinded, saying the attacker's knife had come "within millimetres from my brain".

Defence attorneys argued that Matar's attack had not been motivated by terrorism, and questioned the author about whether he should



Salman Rushdie: angered Muslims

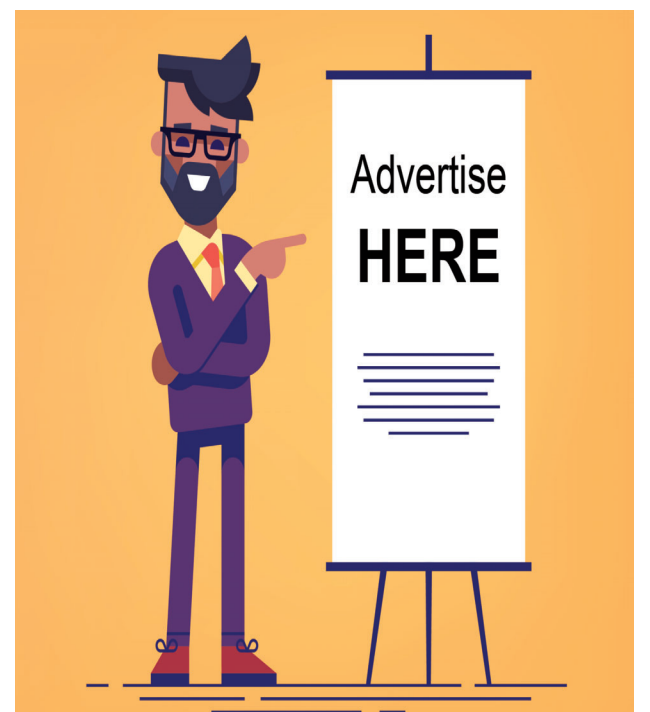
have expected a backlash to his controversial 1988 novel *The Satanic Verses*.

"I don't believe the book is on trial," Sir Salman responded. "Somebody else is on trial."

Matar is already serving a 25-year sentence after being convicted of attempted murder by a state court in 2025. He could now face life in prison in the federal conviction.

Sir Salman's novel, inspired by the life of the Muslim Prophet Muhammad, sparked outrage among some Muslims, who considered its content to be blasphemous.

He faced countless death threats and was forced into hiding for nine years after Iran's religious leader issued the fatwa.





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