

JANUARY 2022 ISSUE
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CIRCLE OF
Boss SISTERS

QUEEN'S STORY

**Stephannie L.
Addo-Zuniga -**

FOUNDER OF
DR. STEPHANNIE L.
ADDO-ZUNIGA
ENTERPRISES

KING'S STORY

Travis Wright-

CEO/FOUNDER OF
TRAVIS WRIGHT
PRODUCTIONS

YOUNG INNOVATORS

Kevin Wilson -

CEO/FOUNDER OF GET
LOAFS FOOTWEAR

WOMEN'S WERK

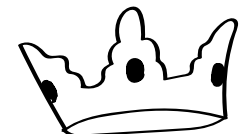
**Tamala
Baldwin-**

CEO/FOUNDER OF
SOUL KISSES
PRODUCTIONS

Featured Story
“**MELISSA
HARVILLE
-LEBRON**”

CEO/Owner of -
**W.M. Stone Enterprises,
Inc E2 Northeast
Motorsports, Inc**

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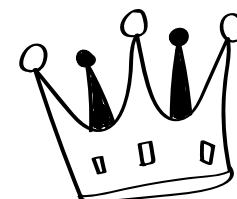
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EDITOR'S NOTE

HAPPY NEW BEGINNINGS!!!



It's officially January 2022!!! Grace and Blessings to all of you who are blessed with God's grace to see another year. In 2021, I've encountered losing a few loved ones that God called home. I had to learn how to have strength for others even in my mourning. Imagine having strength for others even when you need it the most.

LEVELING UP!!!!

2022 is my season to Level up – I am not making a new year's resolution; however, I am walking in the season to **EXECUTE!** NO more talking just doing! I am mentally and spiritually pregnant with ideas, concepts, and visions. When a woman is pregnant and wants to know the gender of her baby, she can get her response by an ultrasound. Well, in this spiritual pregnancy, I don't need an ultrasound because God revealed to me what I am carrying. I am carrying greatness on the inside, that will be birthed in due season. I am no longer planning a to-do list; however, I will be creating an execution list. *Execution is defined as the carrying out or putting into effect a plan, order, or course of action.* My theory on this is to write down what's completed and move on to my next. For example, if I write down a trip to the island for my birthday the execution is to set a date, book it, print our tickets, pack for it, and get to the airport on time. That's execution. This is my new leveling up for 2022. Look what the bible says about being a doer of the word. It is telling us to stop talking the talk and be about action.

James 1:22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror;²⁴ for he observes himself, goes away and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

CHALLENGE

You must challenge yourself to fully operate in your becoming. You must stay on your grind, focus on what is ahead of you, change your habits, level up in your thinking, add meditation, use your time wisely, stop saying I need to relax if its wasted hours, change your circle, network, take a few classes, do things out of your normalcy, and connect with people who are birthing their dreams. What does not challenge you it will not change you. I started following a lot of gym quotes and no I am not building my body for muscles, but I am building the way I think. Bodybuilders focus on building muscles by lifting weights every day. I do the same thing with my intellect. I am implementing daily prayer, walks, mediation reading, and connecting with new and interesting people.

Doing Hard Things Makes You Stronger – Challenge Yourself Every Day! – gym quotes

Email me and let me know how you're going into your 2022? I might drop you a shout-out in my next issue.

Blessings

Trevi Booker

TREVI BOOKER PERSHAY

MEET THE STAFF

TREVI BOOKER PERSHAY

Editor-N-Chief

Trevi Booker Pershay is Editor-N- Chief and Founder of C.O.B.S. – Circle of Boss Sisters. Trevi wears many hats she is CEO & Founder of PDM Performing Arts Corp., Trevi Pershay Productions Inc, PDM Productions LLC and she is author of the book "A Different Type of Church Girl – The Battle of the Calling on Amazon. Trevi is also Senior Pastor of Restoration, Hope and Deliverance Center, mentor, dance teacher and she is known as Tyler Perry of the Hood and the Purpose Pusher.

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TINIKA THOMAS

Beauty Editor

Tinika Thomas is CEO & Founder of Shay Beauty Consultants, she currently is Vice President on the Board of Directors for Trevi Pershay Productions, PDM Performing Arts as well as business advisor/manager to Trevi Booker Pershay. Tinika juggles many hats, she is a mom, soon to be wife, make-up designer and enjoys being with her 3-year-old grandson Cam.

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ARIELLE PERSHAY

Fitness Editor

Arielle Pershay wears many hats, she is CEO & Founder of Astar Dance Movement – which she choreography dances for weddings parties, dance competitions, music videos and private parties. Arielle is Artistic Director of PDM Performing Arts as well as Music writer for Trevi Pershay Productions theater and movies soundtrack.

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RODNISHA "NISHA" PERSHAY

Hair Editor

Nisha Pershay specializes in taking care of weaves; therefore you will have them for a long time. She is CEO & Founder of The Traveling Salon 2. Nisha holds down a full-time job with investment company as well as she is Sound & Stage Manager for Trevi Pershay Productions Inc.

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MEET

MELISSA HARVILLE-LEBRON

**CEO/OWNER OF W.M. STONE ENTERPRISES, INC.
AND E2 NORTHEAST MOTORSPORTS, INC.**

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: We welcome the phenomenal Melissa Harville-Lebron, a powerful woman building an Empire. Can you tell our readers who Melissa Harville-Lebron is and about your journey to success?

MELISSA HARVILLE-LEBRON: Who is Melissa Harville-Lebron? Good question. I am 51 and learning new things about myself EVERY SINGLE DAY! I am a True Believer in God. I am an obsessively praying mother. When it comes to my babies, I try to be their superheroes. I was taught to lead by example. I have worn many hats in my life. I refused to be defined by other people's interpretation of what and who I should be. I am a forward-thinking, innovative entrepreneur that loves being a Disruptor. I am a single black middle-aged woman that grew up during the real crack era. I have dodged plenty of potholes that my friends and family became victims of. I was taught to be humble by my grandmother. I have had major setups and setbacks! But I will tell you that every delay was truly creating the perfect timing for me. I always came back so much further ahead than I ever imagined. Measured success is a long process and it is never quick. When you have the right people around you, the process will be energized, and you will move at warp speed.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Where does your strength come from as a mom?

MELISSA HARVILLE-LEBRON: As a mom, nothing was more important than making sure I removed any excuse for not succeeding in life, and sadly I chose to divorce my children's



father. I needed my children to understand generational wealth, being the owner and protector of their future selves. I was taught to lead by example. I struggled to raise my children. There was never enough time. I had to balance being the breadwinner, the cook, the teacher, the cheerleader, and Superwoman. Lol, mommy fixes everything. I put a lot of pressure on myself because I refused to fail at being a good parent. I, Melissa Harville-Lebron, got lost in my titles along the way. Gradually, everything and everyone can become more important than yourself.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Can you tell us about your business? What did you hope the platform you created would accomplish?

MELISSA HARVILLE-LEBRON: I own 3 corporations, the parent company is named after my grandmother, my mentor. I will tell you; I reached my greatest success after I named my holding company after her.

Coutrá Music Group, Inc. is a boutique music label that I initially started to help recording artists retain their masters and generate income from licensing deals. Now, we produce mostly soundtracks for TV shows and movies.

E2 Northeast Motorsports, Inc. is a developmental NASCAR team that was inspired by my 2 sons. The original influence was from a female driver that I briefly worked with on a music project. We debuted in 2018 with a Top 15th finish. Getting sponsorship has been impossible! We are planning a return in the "22" season opener and a few races in Lamborghini Super Trofeo. Let's see if we can get some support then. If not, we will continue as a self-financed team. I hope to create an environment in racing that includes the communities that my sons and I represent. They were, and still are, grossly underrepresented in auto racing as a whole.

W.M. Stone Enterprises, Inc. is a multifarious corporation that holds several other business entities. We specialize in commercial real estate, government contracting, and now private equity.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: What challenges did you face starting your own business? Did you ever just want to give up?

MELISSA HARVILLE-LEBRON: I am self-financed. My challenges have always been sexism, racism, and intimidation. In a meeting, I am always sized up and I normally speak last so that I speak based on the level of professionalism shown me. I don't let the disrespect, the flirting, and the crap fly. I am there for business, not my next boyfriend. I am not going to run off to the bathroom if I don't like what's being said. Giving up was not an option for me! Of course, I am human, and disappointments can get the best of us all. I had a toxic relationship that literally paralyzed me until I realized I was on to something big since the devil was trying to keep me distracted! "I CAN'T" is not part of my vocabulary.

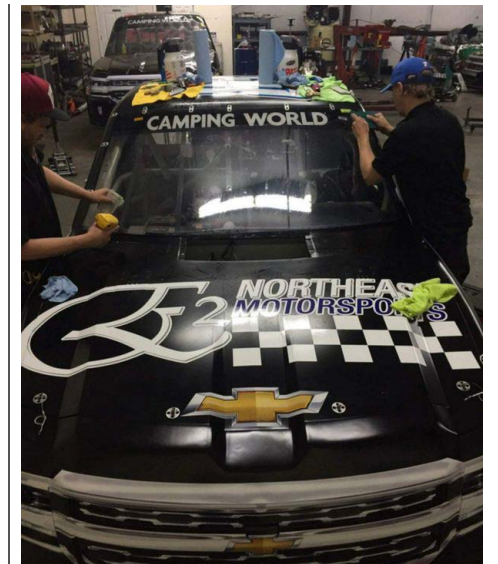
C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Was entering racing a culture shock for you since you were the first African American woman to create such a team? How were you viewed by others?

MELISSA HARVILLE-LEBRON: It was intimidating at first. My first owners' meeting made me want to run! But I caught a glimpse of my reflection while they had me waiting in the lounge. I never saw so many people walk into a water fountain in my life. Some couldn't even contain themselves. They just stared at me. I realized then that I held the power to do what had never been done and on a level that none of us imagined. I stood up and walked into that room because I knew I was creating an opportunity and raising the bar. Those coming after me would surpass me if given an honest chance. Honestly, plenty of people

embraced me. Of course, you have those that will spend your money and call you every name in the book under their breath. Most took a "let's wait and see" approach. I earned a lot of respect from others that I expected issues from. So, it was a balance. Being a true face of diversity is long overdue in racing, especially on a global platform. I am merely looking to be the segue for change and raise that bar of excellence, as we as a culture often do when given the opportunity. Honestly, NASCAR was extremely supportive without being directly involved. My issues were more on the supply side and breaking that glass ceiling as a woman of color. My money is green like everyone else's, but some forget that I obviously have a brain to have made some!

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Why was it so important to you to build this empire for your family?

MELISSA HARVILLE-LEBRON: It was important to build a legacy for my children. We are supposed to go to college so we can get a good job that creates wealth for someone else. Other cultures teach their children at a young age to own a business, to go out and create a lane of prosperity. They teach their children about credit! We don't, so creating generational wealth was important to me. My grandmother laid a foundation, and I must surpass what she did. I love the shift that I am seeing. Women are the movers and shakers. I walk into meetings, and I am no longer the only woman and woman of color. I support mentoring. Our children don't believe that anything is possible, mostly because they are truly not seeing themselves in the images that we do have in the public eye. I hate to see us have these incredible platforms on TV and use them to confirm the stereotypes people have of us. We are some of the most brilliant people walking the earth. Our children are the future! We need to preserve their childhoods and pour into them!



Be prepared for your opportunity when it comes, I am so glad that I protected my future self.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Can you leave our readers with one piece of advice on conquering fear and following your dreams?

MELISSA HARVILLE-LEBRON: As a woman you must, ALWAYS carry yourself with the highest integrity and NEVER let them pull you out of character. If you must, do it with a mic drop. You must have tough skin when you play on an all-male field. Earning respect is so much more valuable, they will never forget your name! It was extremely difficult balancing 7 kids (4 adopted from my younger siblings) and traveling 4-5 times a week. I used to fly right back from my meetings on the West Coast, so I was home to tuck my little ones in or at least wake them up for school. I never had a personal life. Any free time I had was spent with my kids. I was truly burning out, but I pushed through by praying and being still when I felt it in my spirit.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Can you please your social media platforms with our readers?

MELISSA HARVILLE-LEBRON: Please follow me on Instagram Melissa Harville-Lebron. Visit my website <https://e2northeastmotorsports.com/> for information about E2 Northwest Motorsports Inc.

MEET

Q. WILLIAMS

R&B SINGER, SONGWRITER, ACTOR AND MODEL

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Can you share with our readers who is Q. Williams? Where were you born and raised?

Q. WILLIAMS: Q. Williams is a student of the arts, music, acting, songwriting, composing, producing, and always continuing to learn. I was born in Brooklyn, NY but raised in Virginia where I spent most of my childhood.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: How long have you been in the music industry? How did you get started in the music business in the first place? Who are your inspirations?

Q. WILLIAMS: I have been in the music industry for about 20 years. I started singing when I was a little boy. I was raised by my Grandparents who had a strong love for music. My grandfather was a DJ back in the days and my grandmother was a dancer. I was constantly surrounded by the motion and beauty of music. Music made all things seem okay, no worries, no concerns just simplicity. My inspirations were simple because singing made me feel good. Singing to me made all things better it was my safety net.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: You are also a songwriter how do you go about writing a song and what is your process? What are must-haves when you are in the studio working?

Q. WILLIAMS: I believe that we all have stories buried inside of us and everyone has their ways of self-expression. My process is simple I allow myself to be the character in the story versus just writing about it. I listen to the energy of the music which puts me in a space to understand the vulnerable parts of me. I like to find the hidden spaces where the melodies live, and I pick one to begin from there. I always feel the words will come later that is the easy part, but the vibe of the melody helps set the tone of the

song will be sad, happy, deep, or shallow. My requirements for the studio are minimum I don't need much water, gummi bears, great positive vibes, and honesty it's simple when you let the moment unfold. In the studio is where all freedom comes alive, and you can't crowd that with unnecessary elements. These are the just beliefs I follow as an artist.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Do you think your music is mostly enjoyed more for the beats or the lyrical flow and content?

Q. WILLIAMS: I believe my music is enjoyed for the entire vibe because every part is important, the lyrics, the beats, and flow beautifully connect forming an understandable message.

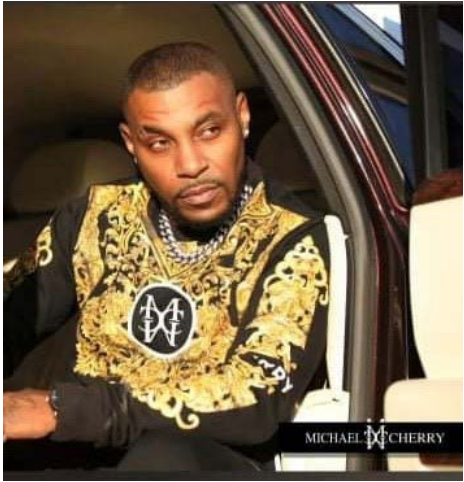
C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Are you working on any forthcoming projects with music, acting, or modeling career?

Q. WILLIAMS: I just recently signed an independent deal with Daniel Azure @Avmgdigital and we have some wonderful projects happening for 2022. I am in a few web series currently work with Rayloot on his hit series Fostersin on Tubi and Roku. I am also playing a lead detective for a series dropping May 2022 directed by StuccoBey. I have a clothing line called WRDPLY soon to be released.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: What is the best piece of advice in this business you've followed?

Q. WILLIAMS: The advice I followed is my own. Don't misunderstand me because I do listen to the knowledge given to me, but I have learned your way isn't my way. We must find our paths to our victories because honestly who is going to believe in you more than yourself. I always say respect the advice, but you don't always have to take it.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Any new territory you would like to explore

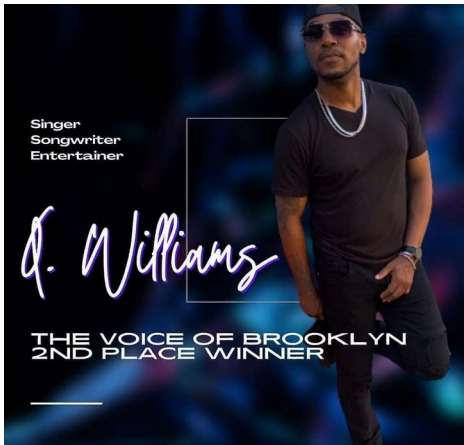


that you haven't yet? Will you be collaborating with any other artists in the future?

Q. WILLIAMS: There is always new territory to explore in the music industry. I'm going to keep going, growing, singing, performing, and acting to be the best me. I believe that what's next will come and it's my job is to prepare to be ready for that moment. I am always willing to work with an artist that still has a passion for music and love.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Can you share your social media platforms and any sites where our readers can download your music?

Q. WILLIAMS: You can find my music on YouTube Apple Spotify or Any other Major Platform. Follow on Instagram at qwilliams_moca and Facebook as Itz Q Williams.



YOU JUST DON'T WAKE UP STRONG

ft

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THE QUEEN'S COURT

MEET

STEPHANNIE L. ADDO-ZUNIGA

FOUNDER OF DR. STEPHANNIE L. ADDO-ZUNIGA ENTERPRISES

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: We welcome Stephannie, wife, mother, and entrepreneur. Please tell us about your journey to entrepreneurship.

STEPHANNIE L. ADDO-ZUNIGA: I have been a full-time entrepreneur for over 10 years. I enjoy helping and being of service to people through my business. I consider having a business a form of ministry. As with many other entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship for me was birthed out of necessity. My first business was a daycare that I opened to provide for my family and be at home with my children as they were growing. At the time, I was going to school to be a teacher so that seemed like a good fit. As time progressed, I realized I enjoyed the business side of owning a daycare more than the teaching side, so I worked more on administration, marketing, and sales and taught other entrepreneurs how to do the same.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Tell us about your company and the mission behind starting your enterprises?

STEPHANNIE L. ADDO-ZUNIGA: The name of my current company is called ACJ Luxury Maintenance. We offer facilities maintenance and construction services to the federal government, commercial, and private entities. The mission of our company is to help business owners and organizations maintain their facilities. We want our employees to be able



to provide a living for their families and grow within our organization.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: You were formerly in the United States Army. Did that experience help with creating a strong platform for your company?

STEPHANNIE L. ADDO-ZUNIGA: Yes, the leadership skills from the Army did help me with creating a strong organization. After the military, I joined programs for veterans such as the Institute for Veterans and Military Families. In this organization, you can learn from top fortune 500 companies and network with other veteran businesses. They have been a vital part of acquiring my knowledge about entrepreneurship and helping me to develop my business.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: How important is it for individuals to obtain more success during these challenging times? What techniques do you teach to produce great results?

STEPHANNIE L. ADDO-ZUNIGA: In these times, with many businesses facing hardship, it is vital to learn how to pivot your business. Therefore, training and development are vital. I teach businesses how to market and create systems to grow their business during challenging times. When COVID hit, I chose to pivot my business and get into janitorial services which allowed me to obtain a government contract and employ 50 workers to clean hospitals across New York City.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Do you believe failure is a crucial step to success?



STEPHANNIE L. ADDO-ZUNIGA: Absolutely!! Failure is important because it helps entrepreneurs learn. To be honest, through all my challenges in business I do not believe I failed but learned. Without failure, I would not be where I am today. I would still own the daycare and not be reaching my full potential. When you fail in your business, take it as a learning experience and re-evaluate what you have done. Use that experience as a stepping stone to your greatness.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: You are also the founder of "Champs for Autism". Can you tell us about the company, the mission, the vision, and the purpose? Can you please tell us the importance of your role for being an advocate for Autism?

STEPHANNIE L. ADDO-ZUNIGA: Champs for Autism is my passion. I truly enjoy advocating for families and individuals with Autism. As a mother of a child on the spectrum, I know firsthand the battle that parents face every day and what it takes to keep a positive mindset about your child when everyone else says something different. The goal of the organization is to provide hope to parents of children with Autism and to offer recreational and educational programs for families of individuals on the spectrum.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: As a mom of three what values do you instill in your children about

entrepreneurship and being successful? How do you create a balance?

STEPHANNIE L. ADDO-ZUNIGA: For my children, they learn that if they are constantly learning and growing, they will be wealthy. Your bank account does not define your wealth, it is your mind and action that defines your wealth. They learn to put God first in all their business endeavors and to keep Him at the center of their business. I tell them the truth that they will have hard times, but it does not mean that their business is failing. It just means that it is time for you to grow and pivot. My 13-year-old daughter currently has an online business that is yielding about 2k a year. She works on it part-time, and I am extremely proud of her because she learned these skills by herself with no help from me. My 9 yr. old daughter figured out a way to make money online by doing surveys. All my kids know and understand entrepreneurship and I plan to be their mentor on their journey.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: You label yourself as a serial entrepreneur. What sets you apart from a regular entrepreneur?

STEPHANNIE L. ADDO-ZUNIGA: I label myself as a serial entrepreneur because I have opened multiple businesses and I enjoy the startup process of opening a business.

The process excites me. I don't think I am different from any other entrepreneur. I only utilize the word "serial" because I have opened multiple businesses in many different areas from daycare to construction.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: What advice can you offer someone who wants to take the plunge into entrepreneurship, but fear is standing in the way?



STEPHANNIE L. ADDO-ZUNIGA: One of the things that keep me going is a quote I heard from Les Brown and other motivational speakers. He says to "live full and die empty". I listen to him often on YouTube and I have met him in person. He stated that you would hate to be on your deathbed and have your dreams and hopes come to you disappointed, stating that, "only you could have made us come true and now we have to die with you". We only get one life, and you have the right to go after your dreams. Don't let your dreams die with you. You want to enjoy your life, the good and bad, and die knowing that you gave it all you got! Every day is a chance to go after what you are called to do. It doesn't matter if that field is saturated or not because your gift will make room for you!

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Please share your information on how our readers can contact you as well as your social platforms.

You can find me on Facebook by liking the page Dr. Stephannie L. AddoZuniga or by going to my site www.StephannieLAddo.com

Talk beauty

TINIKA THOMAS

Inside tips for everyday make-up routine – regardless if you're a newbie or experience in the makeup world.

A Few Makeup Trends for 2022

Just like that 2022 is here. This pandemic has made it hard to be trendy when it comes to makeup, but I have a few trends to share for the New Year. This year is all about being your most extra with colors and glitters. A new year is always an opportunity for a clean slate to anything we want to do why not be even bolder this year. After a year of limitations, beauty will not be limited in 2022.

JUICY TEXTURES



Go glossy with a shiny finish for your lips and eyes. I recommend MAC Cosmetics Shine Mixing Medium for that juicy texture.

CLEAN BEAUTY

I recommend Cover Girls Clean Fresh Skin Milk Foundation which will give a lightweight clean and buildable coverage.



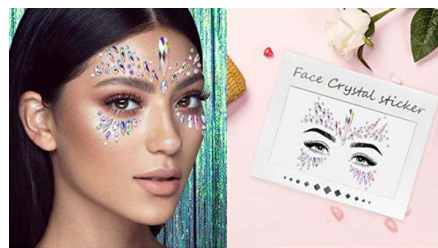
DRAMATIC EYELASHES



Why not add a little intensity with long lashes. Eyelashes will make a statement with your eyes. Just a tip I recommend taking your strip and cutting it into three pieces. Place the outer longer end first along the lash line, then the middle, and last the shorter piece if you like to go for a more natural look.



FACE JEWELS



Make no limitations when it comes to your makeup and by applying a few face jewels. Adding these fun details adds sparkle and playfulness to your look. There is no right or wrong way to apply the face jewels just bring out your creativity.

Nisha's 101 Hair Care Tips!

Haircare mask and treatments that will keep your hair healthy during the winter!



Hello my wonderful readers, if you are a person who hates to attempt doing your hair because it's time-consuming? Well, let me help you with some hair tricks and go-to styles to simplify your day!

Hair mask treatments 101 or in-store products to purchase

- What are good mask ingredients to use at home? Bananas** are a good ingredient to include in a hair mask. The silica in bananas may also help make your hair softer and shinier. Bananas also have antimicrobial properties. This may help reduce dryness and dandruff. **Eggs**, the nutrients in egg yolks, including vitamins A and E, biotin, and folate, may help promote hair growth, while the protein in egg whites may help strengthen your hair. **Honey**. Honey is considered a humectant, which means it can help your hair pull in and retain more moisture. It can also stimulate the growth of skin cells which may help promote stronger hair follicles. **Avocado oil**. The minerals in avocado oil, such as folic acid, iron, and magnesium, may help seal the hair cuticle. This can help make your hair more resistant to damage and breakage. **Coconut oil**, due to its low molecular weight, coconut oil can penetrate the hair shaft for deep conditioning. **Olive oil** contains squalene, which is produced naturally by the body but declines as we age. **Aloe vera** has anti-inflammatory properties. It also contains vitamins C, E, and B-12, folic acid, and choline, which may help strengthen and nourish your hair.
- DIY frizzy and damage mask** – you will need two ingredients for this mask, 1tbsp of organic raw honey and 1 tbsp. organic coconut oil. You will need to heat the honey and coconut oil together in a saucepan. Stir until blended and let it sit for 40 minutes, then shampoo and condition as normal
- DIY dry hair or dandruff mask** – ingredients to use are 1 ripe avocado, 2 tbsp. of aloe vera gel and 1 tsp. of coconut oil. Blend the 3 ingredients, then apply to wet or dry hair from root to tip and let it sit for 30 minutes, then rinse with lukewarm water.
- DIY fine, thinning hair** – ingredients for this mask are 2 egg whites and 2 tbsp of coconut oil. Whisk the egg whites and oil together until blended and apply from root to tip to damp hair, and let it sit for 20 minutes. Shampoo with cool water. This is especially important for masks that contain eggs, as hot water can cause the egg to cook in the hair.
- In-store products** – 1. Aunt Jackie's Fix My Hair Intensive Repair Conditioning Masque - 15oz, 2. Africa's Best Original Hair Mayonnaise 15 Ounce Jar (443ml), 3. Queen Helene Hair Conditioning Cream, Cholesterol, 15 Ounce. 4. Design Essentials Almond & Avocado Wash Deep Moist Ure Masque Hair Mask-12 oz.



MEET

TAMALA BALDWIN

ACTRESS, TV HOST, SINGER, PROFESSOR, WRITER,
AND FOUNDER OF SOUL KISSES PRODUCTIONS

C.O.B.S MAGAZINE: We are excited to have the multi-talented award-winning Tamala Baldwin to discuss her amazing journey. Please tell us who is Tamala Baldwin?

TAMALA BALDWIN: I love answering this question because it morphs year after year, which I find to be magnificently beautiful. At this point, I am a humble individual doing the best that I can to be the light and love in a world that's on a massive shift. One of the ways that I love to spread joy in the world is through storytelling whether on stage, through my pen, or a song. Taking this a step further, especially after what we've collectively experienced in recent years, I am an alchemist. My superpower is the ability to transmute energy through my art. Essentially, I heal myself and others through art that comes from God.

C.O.B.S MAGAZINE: You are the founder of Soul Kisses Productions. What was the inspiration behind starting your own company? What were the challenges and struggles you experienced?

TAMALA BALDWIN: Soul Kisses Productions came to me while I was still in graduate school. The goal was always to create content that helped people to see themselves the way God sees them, without being too preachy. I find that media is a powerful tool that can be used for good purposes. For years

I struggled with depression, a low sense of self-worth, and negative thinking. It has taken years of self-conditioning to shift how I view myself. Soul Kisses Productions is my way of helping others to feed their minds, hearts, and souls with narratives that transform how they see themselves and the world around them. Heaven can be a place on earth, but it starts within each of us. Soul Kisses Productions is how I wish to cement that ideation to the masses through feeling good, high vibes, and positive self-affirming content.

C.O.B.S MAGAZINE: The world of the arts is such a huge community, what was the moment that you knew this was the walk that you wanted to take? Was the decision hard? Who or what gave you the motivation to continue the path?

TAMALA BALDWIN: I've always been an artist and my mom nurtured those natural gifts ever since I was a little girl. She put me in dance classes, acting classes, vocal lessons, and so forth. However, when it came time to select a major after high school, I deviated out of fear. It wasn't until after working in corporate and getting two business degrees, I chose to go back to what I love most which were performing and storytelling. It is extremely hard because this path is full of unknowns and is a true walk of faith, but it brings me joy. I think about the end



of this lifetime and the reviews that will surely come but I want to proudly show that I used all that was instilled in me to do my best. I want to say to my creator and my higher self that I moved in faith even though I was afraid but trying my best is all the motivation I need.

C.O.B.S MAGAZINE: The word "stereotype" carries a lot of negative connotations. As a female writer how important is it to you to convey African Americans in a different demeanor through your productions?

TAMALA BALDWIN: This is what motivates and shapes a lot of my narratives. Art can either reflect life or it can shape it. I want my art to help shape the way people

think about black Americans and how black Americans think about themselves. I believe this can happen by showing our beautiful experiences through idealistic, hopeful, and fairytale-like variations.

C.O.B.S MAGAZINE: The circle that you surround yourself must be important. I am sure through your success you attract different personalities and traits. How do you decipher who you allow in your circle or who is right for your team?

TAMALA BALDWIN: As an empath, it's all about energy for me. If it doesn't feel right, I tend to shy away from it. I also pray for help in all that I do, and God answers those prayers through people. It's like the right person with a certain skill or ability will enter my life immediately after asking God for help for me that's usually a sign. I also believe it's really important to build across rather than up.

C.O.B.S MAGAZINE: Where are you now in 2022? What are you looking forward to? Can you share some information about any other upcoming projects that are in the work?

TAMALA BALDWIN: I am looking forward to 2022 because there are some amazing new developments in the work. We go into production for season 2 of Bubbly Brown Sugar in March for a June release, which I'm excited about so please stay tuned. If you haven't seen season 1 of the show it is currently streaming for a limited time on YouTube. We are also launching our official Bubbly Brown Sugar merchandise, which I'm so thrilled about, this will be available in February 2022.



C.O.B.S MAGAZINE: What would be your best advice for young filmmakers, actresses, writers, or entrepreneurs who are just starting?

TAMALA BALDWIN: To persist. I believe worldly success isn't necessarily about being the best but about both strategic and methodical persistence. I always encourage reading because of the journey it allows you to take. We are the lucky ones to be brave enough to pursue our dreams so have fun in the process. Do not allow the destination to rob you of the present just sit back and enjoy the ride. Embrace the hustle. Relish in the moments of waiting and stay persistent.



C.O.B.S MAGAZINE: Can you please share your social media information with us?

TAMALA BALDWIN: Please connect with me across all social media platforms at @tamalabaldwin Instagram, Facebook, and Tik Tok though I haven't posted on there yet. Please follow @bubblybrownsugarseres on Instagram to stay tuned for season 2 updates.

MEET

TRAVIS WRIGHT

YOUTH PASTOR, PLAYWRIGHT, PRODUCER, DIRECTOR, AND ACTOR

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Thank you for taking the time to talk to us. Before diving into the interview please tell give us some background about yourself?

TRAVIS WRIGHT: I am a Christian man who loves God. I am also a husband, a brother, a playwright, a writer, a pastor, and a leader in my church Evangel Revival Community Church in Long Beach, NY.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Can you tell us the name of your production company and the mission behind your company?

TRAVIS WRIGHT: The name of my company is called Travis Wright Productions. The mission of my company is to inspire and create a platform to share the kingdom of God with the world through storytelling, laughter, and drama.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: You wear a lot of hats how do you separate the roles from each other? How did you learn to make your business work for you?

TRAVIS WRIGHT: I have a small production company therefore, I am required to juggle various roles as the Producer, Director, Writer, and Actor but frankly I love it all. However, I am blessed to have my wife and others that have helped out during productions. Separating my roles can be difficult but I am still honing my skills and business acumen. I continue to educate myself through constant research.



C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Is it part of your dream to create a "Black Hollywood" to show young people a different platform of success?

TRAVIS WRIGHT: My legacy would be to produce theater plays and films that showcase a variety of comedy, drama, and faith-based films that showcase a creative range. Yes, I would

love for these works to show young people how success can be obtained with confidence and partnership with God.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: It has been hard to stay positive during this pandemic. How have you managed to remain optimistic? How did you find ways to be creative? Now with restrictions being lifted and things starting



to return to normal how exciting is this moment for you?

TRAVIS WRIGHT: If anything the pandemic strengthened what faith and trust I already had in God. It showed life's fragility and simplicity how everything we owned could be taken away. Being creative comes relatively easy when you realize how simple life can be from one moment to the next. You learn to enjoy life, the people, and the situations they are in it lol. I'm very happy things are trying to open up however, I would love it if this virus just goes away completely.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: If Travis Wright's biopic is made, what would a person need to have in his performance for you to say, "Wow they nailed me!"

TRAVIS WRIGHT: Lol, it's hard for me to even consider a biopic being made of me I feel there's so much work that I have to do to even qualify for such an honor. If someone needed to portray who I am as a servant of God they will need two things, one to love God and two to respect his people.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: As married man support from your partner has to be important. Can you tell us how important of a role your wife plays?

TRAVIS WRIGHT: Wow, what a great question. Sometimes we can forget how important our loved ones are in our careers. My wife is my backbone with my ministry and my career. She catches a lot of details that I have a tendency of missing. I know without her intuition and discernment things would not flow as well as they do.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: What advice were you given early in life that you can share with someone wanting to follow in your footsteps?

TRAVIS WRIGHT: The greatest advice that I can share is what I have learned from the Bible. If you want to be great in life, I believe you must learn how to serve others through business, faith, relationships, and life services.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: What goals are you looking to accomplish for 2022? Any projects that you are working on that you would like to share? Please can you share your social media information?

TRAVIS WRIGHT: My goals are to go higher, go further in ministry, further with my dreams, and definitely in my business. I am working on my next production that I'm sure will bless, uplift, and entertain audiences everywhere. I am praying this will be a major hit play for Travis Wright Productions. I'm also working on an idea of turning my play production of "Beneath the Layers" into a featured film. You can find me on social media via Facebook and Instagram as Travis Wright holding my beautiful wife.





CYNTHIA AVENT

AUTHOR OF "THE LITTLE GIRL THAT HIDES INSIDE OF ME"

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Thank you for taking the time to sit down and chat with us. Can give us some background about yourself? Please give us the meaning behind the title of your book.

CYNTHIA AVENT: I was born and raised in Paterson, NJ. I love helping others and mentoring young girls as well as teaching praise dance. I am a strong believer in Jesus Christ, my Lord, and Savior. I enjoy being a vessel and a blessing to others, especially those who are dealing with things that I have dealt with in the past. The reason I titled my book, "The Little Girl That Hides Inside of Me" is because when I was ten years old, I got molested and I felt like my whole world had stopped. At different times throughout my life, the "little girl" inside of me would peek out at different situations until God helped me to become free from the shadows of that little girl.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Did you know from early on that you wanted to be an author?

CYNTHIA AVENT: When I was younger, I used to always say I wanted to write a book about my life, but at that time I was just saying it. I never thought I would be an author.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: When you sat down to write The Little Girl That Hides Inside of Me, was it nerve-racking? Who were your first-time readers?

CYNTHIA AVENT: Yes, it was nerve-racking. When I would sit down and write, I cried every time I read it, because the thought of the

experience was very painful. I felt like I was just putting bandages over the scars and never really healed from it completely at that time. The first person to read it before I published it was one of my sisters in Christ, who actually proofread it for me as well.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Why did you feel it was important to write this book?

CYNTHIA AVENT: It was important for me to write this book so that I would be able to help young people who have gone through hard times, trials, tribulations and who have felt stuck in their lives. I also wrote this book to remind them that God has a greater plan for their lives and to keep growing in God and he will heal them.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Writing this book did you want your readers to experience more of a healing journey, spiritual journey, or both?

CYNTHIA AVENT: "I would say both because you have to accept God for the healing to take place. I feel as though healing and spirituality coexist with one another. If you believe in God and seek him, he will heal you.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Can you describe your ideal writing atmosphere? Are there any authors whose works inspired you?

CYNTHIA AVENT: "Every time I went through something, I jotted down the experience and some ideas, which helped me to write the book. I used to always write and brainstorm when my kids went to sleep. I would also write in my room, where it would be quiet and free of distractions. Joyce Meyers is an author that that inspired me to write my book because we share some of the same experience through life hardships. Joyce Meyers and I are truly God's champions we stood in the face of adversity armed with the word of God.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: What are some of the unconventional writing techniques you've learned to stand by?

CYNTHIA AVENT: "I didn't necessarily use any specific writing techniques when writing this book. I just wrote down whatever came to mind during brainstorming. God gives us all strategies for his plan all we must do is be still and listen to his voice.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Can you tell us what next for your books?

CYNTHIA AVENT: "Right now, I haven't thought about that in too much detail. However, I would love to write a book about my journey of adopting my two nieces and my nephew and the journey of parenthood.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Can you please share where to purchase your book and your social media platform?

CYNTHIA AVENT: "You can purchase my book on Amazon or contact me directly and I can mail it to you. You can find me on Facebook by my first and last name, Cynthia Avent.



Cajun Garlic Shrimp and Grits

By: Chef AB (Smokin and Grillin)

PREP TIME 5 mins
COOK TIME 10 mins
TOTAL TIME 25 mins



INGREDIENTS

- 6-8 slices Bacon
- 1 lb. Large Shrimp peeled and deveined
- 1 tbsp. Sweet Smokey Joes Creole Kick
- 1/2-1 cp. Parmesan cheese shredded
- 3 cloves Garlic
- 1 cp. Grits
- 2 cp. Chicken Broth
- 1 cp. Milk
- 1 tsp. Salt
- Fresh Ground Pepper to taste



INSTRUCTIONS

1. To begin, cut bacon into small pieces. Fry and set aside for later use.
2. In the same skillet used for the bacon (set at medium-high heat) cook the shrimp for 2 minutes on each side, seasoning each exposed side with Creole Kick seasoning. Remove and set aside for the next step. ***NOTE*** For a presentation like the photo attached to this recipe, use wooden BBQ skewers for each shrimp to keep them from curling while cooking.
3. In the same pan, melt a tablespoon of butter over medium heat. Add minced garlic and Sautee until fragrant. Remove from heat carefully and coat each shrimp in the garlic butter. Set aside.
4. To prepare grits, start by boiling chicken broth. Add grits, salt, and milk to the broth and stir frequently. Once well blended (and beginning to thicken), reduce to low heat.
5. As the grits continue to thicken, add the shredded parmesan cheese in increments, blending well. Remove from heat and add ground pepper to taste. For presentation, plate grits with seasoned shrimp placed on top. Finish with parsley and some more freshly ground pepper and enjoy!

MEET
KEVIN WILSON
CEO/FOUNDER OF GET LOAFS SHOES



C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: We have the pleasure of talking to footwear designer and innovator Kevin Wilson. Who is Kevin Wilson?

KEVIN WILSON: Kevin Wilson is a family-oriented creative thinker who loves to follow the road less traveled and skips to the beat of his drum. I believe fashion speaks for you in a room full of people without you saying a word. Therefore, I have always used different styles, colors, and garments to show my classy but fun personality.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: What prompted you to set out to start your footwear brand? How long have you been established?

KEVIN WILSON: I started my company to create generational wealth for my family. Get Loafs was established in 2017 and my goal is to continue the business to be passed down to other family members throughout the years to come.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Where did you get the idea for the name of your label?

KEVIN WILSON: The idea for the brand name started from the love of shoes and their comfort. The thought of comfort led to the idea of “loafers” being as soft as a “loaf” of bread. I have worked various jobs that required being on my feet for long periods. This gave me an appreciation for having a comfortable but formal shoe that does bruise, cause discomfort, or cause common foot disorders. Get Loafs continues to grow as a brand that provides attire for all occasions and styles.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: How do you decide on the colors? How do you keep up with the revolving seasonal fashion trends?

KEVIN WILSON: My color palettes for the Loafs are mostly based according to the season. An example would be neutral calm colors in the fall and more bright footwear for the spring/summer months. The fun part about having creative control is showing a color such as a sky blue simply because the sky caught my eye. Even seeing a unique color someone may have worn on the train may result in a new color for the shoes.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: How do you describe what sets your style of shoe apart from other designers? Do you try to bring creative tactics to market your footwear?

KEVIN WILSON: I describe my shoe as a universal shoe that can be styled with numerous looks for any occasion. Get Loafs can transition any outfit from work to a casual gathering. It is a simple alternation of your clothes without ever having to change your footwear. My creative tactics mostly pertain to allowing comfort to be at the forefront of



my vision. The most stylish shoes are not only overpriced but give customers a tremendous amount of discomfort. Choosing Get Loafs can provide the look that the top brands offer while also being able to enjoy the day-to-night endeavors.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Are there any materials that you would like to explore for your future designs?

KEVIN WILSON: Yes, thank you for asking that great question. Get Loafs will be expanding to different styles of shoes that can still meet the criteria of comfort and elegance. This will include Chelsea boots, slippers, sneakers, and possibly a comfortable heel but I understand walking in any heel is a tough task on its own. These designs will all be sampled and tested before production to make sure all goals are met.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: How was your business during the pandemic? Are there any valuable tips that you learned and will utilize going forward?

KEVIN WILSON: The pandemic has affected the business’s direction regarding future business proposals that were in

place. Thankfully Get Loafs were available to purchase online so my company’s loss was minimal. I have seen the rise of online shopping and the importance that social media, promotions, online marketing, and ads play to target your audience. I have learned that is a vital point because it helps with your product being seen by potential customers, product awareness, and growing website engagements all leading to sales.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: What is the most influential piece of advice you have ever received? What advice can you offer young entrepreneurs interested in starting a footwear business?

KEVIN WILSON: The most influential piece of advice that I have ever received is that an idea will always remain just an idea until you invest in yourself. Invest your time to perfect your craft and invest money into the business or it will remain a thought. No idea starts perfect but that is the best part because learning the ins and out is a part of investing in your future.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: What is next for Get Loafs for 2022?

KEVIN WILSON: Get Loafs will be expanding to men’s shoe wear and wholesaling to your favorite department stores. My core audience and returning customers will finally be able to physically try on their favorite colors and styles instead of ordering online. I am looking forward to this step and so are the potential customers who email me daily with product questions.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Please share where your shoes are available for purchase. Can you please provide your social media platforms?

KEVIN WILSON: Get Loafs are exclusively available at www.getloafs.com. More information on these transcending shoes can be found on Instagram @getloafs. Thank you for the amazing interview and I will be more than happy to inform others about the amazing reads from C.O.B.S. Magazine!!

ACTOR'S CORNER

GERI WHITE

ACTRESS AND EXECUTIVE PRODUCER- From New York

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Welcome to the Actors Corner. Can you please give our readers some background about yourself?

GERI WHITE: I was born and raised in Brooklyn New York and always had a love for the Arts, Music, and Film. Growing up I attended Fashion Industries High school for Art and as a hobby had an in-home music studio. I watched my talented sister Miyoshi act and dance for the All-Stars talent shows. I would love to watch her perform at her high school shows rapping on stage. In my adult years, I later became a mother and began a blossoming Career in Health Care Administration at Weill Cornell Medicine in New York City. Although earning a Master's Degree in Public Administration, I've never lost my passion for the arts.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: How were you introduced to becoming an actress? Did you attend a special arts school?

GERI WHITE: I remember watching an episode of Empire with my sister Miyoshi and I said to her "I can be on that show, I can do that, and she encourage me to go for it. While encouraging my daughter GG to pursue her dreams in Musical Theatre at the Harlem School of the Arts, I rediscovered my hidden talents and love for entertainment. I then attended classes at the Acting & Voice Studios for On-Camera Acting. There I learned techniques and film protocols.

C.O.B.S MAGAZINE: What are the most challenging and rewarding things about being an African American female actress?

GERI WHITE: The most challenging part of being an African American female actress is getting the typecast to depict stereotypical roles that the masses assume is how African Americans live or behave. The rewarding factor is being able to play diversified roles while having the opportunity to make the words of a script come alive. Also being able to showcase my talent as an African American female actress to inspire other women to have the courage to do the same.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Have you ever had reservations about taking roles given the limited roles that are offered to a woman of color?

GERI WHITE: Yes. I only take roles that I feel will bring out the best depiction of my talent. I am not interested in taking demeaning roles, defaming, or will disgrace my character. If my family or friends can't watch my films that is something I am not willing to portray. Being a new actress in the game the roles are limited but some amazing independent filmmakers write creatively to enhance the depiction of African American women.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: When you think of media representations of African American women



what comes to mind? How do you work around the typical stereotypes of the angry black woman, the baby momma, or the gold digger?

GERI WHITE: Media representation of African American women is up for debate. One can say we aren't portrayed in the best light with the amount of sexual exploitation that the media exposes. There are also prominent African American doctors, lawyers, politicians, and entrepreneurs

that the media highlights that give inspiration that we are more than just an angry black woman or a baby momma. It's all about how you look at the glass, half empty or half full. I like to focus on the positive depictions and stand in that light to use my platform to be shown as a role model figure. I work around the typical stereotype but do not feed into the hype that's all "we" are. Knowledge is power and understanding that the media will portray people's places and things in the light in which they want it to be interpreted.

C.O.B.S MAGAZINE: What piece of advice have you received that would you like to share? Any projects coming up that should be on the lookout? Can you please share your social media platforms and any sites to find your work?

GERI WHITE: The piece of advice I'd like to share is that confidence is key. Believing in yourself will take you to heights you've never imagined. The best advice I give myself is the serenity prayer to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

I have a few amazing projects coming up. I just finished a featured film titled "Sweet Burn" that will be coming out February 2022, written and directed by Willie Coggins starring myself, Omar Salgado, and Rene Henry under FFIC entertainment. The team that I work with includes the masterminds of Willie Coggins, Omar Salgado, Crescent Coggins, Kevin Harris, and Brittney Denise. We all work very closely and will be bringing many films and series to a TV platform near you. I have a short with my best friend from childhood. The

IT'S NOT HOW YOU START, IT'S HOW YOU FINISH

Dear Dad

BASED ON A TRUE STORY



film titled "The Touch" will be out this month written and produced by Jamarr Felton and James Felton from his entertainment company Patty Productions.

I have two series I am in that will come out in 2022 Written and directed by Lavon Collins and Stephanie Colon from King and Queen Media. The projects are titled "Surrender" and "Retribution". Stay tuned for that. That's going to be dope. Also, I have a small part in a biopic written and directed by Staxx titled "I am Relentless" which is going to be amazing. Another

series that I am entitled "Radar" written and directed by Scorp Dolo who was on the hit series Respect Life will be coming out this month so please stay tuned for that as well. I have a few more projects to come out in 2022 but naming all will take all day as I am working hard and on my grind.

You can find me on Instagram at **Geri_b4thefame**

You can find me on IMDB Geri White.

ACTOR'S CORNER

RONALD E. SMITH II

SEASONED ACTOR FROM NEW YORK CITY

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Welcome to The Actor's Corner. Can you please give our readers some background about yourself?

RONALD E. SMITH II: Most definitely. I would like to say thank you for the honor to be recognized in COBS Magazine. I am born and raised in New York City, N.Y. where my introduction to acting was with the theatre. I was taken under the wing by the legendary George Faison where his passion was so radiant that I grew an addiction to the theatre as well and began my acting career doing so. I have been fortunate enough to pursue my acting career and give all glory to God throughout how far I have come and how far I still must go.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: How were you introduced to becoming an actor? Did you know if you wanted to be a movie actor or a stage actor? Did you attend a special arts school?

RONALD E. SMITH II: I have discovered battle rapping in the yard of my high school during recess by a founding member of The Last Poets Mr. Abiodun Oyewole. I joined his after-school program where he taught me, to turn my rap lyrics into spoken word and poetry performances. He also took me to my first play which was "Top Dog Under Dog" written by Suzan-Lori Parks. It was a two-man play performed by Yasiin



Bey (Formally known as Moe Def) and Jeffery Wright, whom I heavily credit for influencing my love for acting. By working with Mr. Abiodun Oyewole I was introduced to Mr. George Faison where that love and talent were sculpted and pushed. I was trained as a theatre actor until attending college at the New York Conservatory for Dramatic Arts, where they introduce me to acting for him and television. At the Conservatory they completely tore down the actor I thought I was and reconstructed me into. The confident actor that I am today. They taught me the value of "falling in love with the journey" of acting and living in a

character/role. I also give them a huge amount of credit for shaping me into the actor I am today.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: What are the most challenging and rewarding things about being an African American male actor? Do you consider yourself a sex symbol?

RONALD E. SMITH II: I feel like the most challenging and rewarding part of being an African American male actor is the journey. As actors, we all have individual journeys where some are a bit more linear than others. As black male actors, we



often end up competing a lot for the same roles because of the scarcity of major roles for black people in general. What I appreciate most about being a black actor but more, so a BLACK MAN is that regardless of what's given to us we're going to create lanes. With knowing the scarcity, I face and meeting rejection after rejection I was taught and groomed to pursue and create my opportunities. That is a lesson that will forever keep my dream breathing. I don't need their acting jobs; I can create my own acting jobs for myself and others.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: I've read most actors experience imposter syndrome which is loosely defined as doubting your abilities and feeling like a fraud. Have you ever felt this way? Were there moments when you were not being true to yourself?

RONALD E. SMITH II: Imposter syndrome is a case that I feel us as black people battle with daily. Most industries were not designed for blacks to succeed in, and now that we do succeed there is a level of imposter syndrome that I believe lives in us all. Personally, I feel it every

day. As a dark-skinned black male, I know the discrimination that comes along with being "presentable enough". I love to wear suits but with wearing a suit and presenting myself in the industry I'm viewed as the "acceptable *ni##er*", because of how comfortable I come across certain audiences. I also love wearing hoodies, jeans, and sneakers but am often viewed as a *thug or gangster*. I feel comfortable as either, but the industry will typecast me depending on what makes them comfortable as opposed to my racial counterparts. Regardless of which appearance I show up as I feel like an imposter simply off the notion that catering to their comfort above my own makes me an imposter to myself "RONALD SMITH II".

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: During the pandemic, everything stopped how did you continue to work on your craft? What techniques did you develop during this time?

RONALD E. SMITH II: With the weight of the pandemic putting a pause on the industry I kept working by creating my own content and collaborating with like-minded individuals. As stated earlier, I most appreciate the drive to create content regardless of what studios offer me a job. This gift is for God, and he doesn't bow to this industry.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: How do you question stereotypes that society has created of the African American male? How important is it for you to change your perspective through acting? Does this make become more selective of the roles you take?

RONALD E. SMITH II: I do not question the stereotypes. I don't believe there's any point questioning what is stapled. I more so give my focus to solutions, not the problem of stereotypes. I am a 6'1, dark-skinned black male with over a dozen tattoos. Concerning myself with stereotypes would have been trapped in thug roles. Throughout collaboration with other creators, I have starred in romantic comedies, family dramas, etc. If I concerned myself with the stereotypes, I would trap myself. I am extremely selective over the roles that I take on. Regardless of creating our own content as black creators our room for error with our brands is significantly less than our racial counterparts. I love being a part of the projects that move me.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: What piece of advice have you received that you would like to share? Any projects coming up that should be on the lookout? Can you please share your social media platforms and any sites where your works can be found?

RONALD E. SMITH II: If there was any advice, I can offer it would be "Faith+Focus+Success". God gave that one to me over 10 years ago. There are a few projects on the way for 2022 but the biggest would be "The Curse Within" film dropping. To date that is my most challenging on-screen role. I poured in a lot and sacrificed a lot to bring that character to life that we'll of course dive into later. I'm grateful to that character for the lessons he taught me. Other projects are coming but those are seeds planted. We're playing the long game here. My social media handles are Facebook as myself and Instagram as yrests_nyc. #TheMarathonContinues

ACTOR'S CORNER

BRANDON MCGEE

INSPIRING ACTOR FROM ATL

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Welcome to the Actor's Corner. Can you please give our readers some background about yourself?

BRANDON MCGEE: Peace and prosperity to you all. I'm from St. Louis, MO, born and raised. I attended the illustrious North Carolina A&T State University, graduated with a degree in Electrical Engineering, and it's there I was introduced to acting. I've been acting now for a little over six years. I enjoy reading, boxing, photography, and video games in my spare time.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: How were you introduced to becoming an actor? Did you know if you wanted to be a movie actor or a stage actor? Did you attend a special arts school?

BRANDON MCGEE: I was introduced to acting through a student org called "Aggie Night Live" my sophomore year; Aggie Night Live would perform a live comedy sketch show for the students one show per semester. At the time it was just something fun to do with my friends and that pushed me way out of my comfort zone. I'm naturally a shy person. Surprisingly it wasn't until I took an acting class my very last semester where I realized that acting was something that I had a passion for. Shortly after that, I did my first film, "Life Expectancy", and I knew then and there that film acting was for me.



C.O.B.S MAGAZINE: What are the most challenging and rewarding things about being an African American male actor? Do you consider yourself a sex symbol?

BRANDON MCGEE: I would say it's coming into the industry without having much of a background; especially when you come across dynamic performers that went to school for acting.

I tend to come into a lot of productions with a chip on my shoulder, having something to prove. That's the rewarding part as well; I've had moments where I had strong performances and it even surprised me. That feeling of growth is a natural high. Funny, I've never been asked that. I've never considered myself a sex symbol, but that would be interesting if it ever were to happen.



C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: I've read most actors experience imposter syndrome which is loosely defined as doubting your abilities and feeling like a fraud. Have you ever felt this way? Were there moments when you were not being true to yourself?

BRANDON MCGEE: I still have a bad habit of doubting my abilities, but I don't ever recall feeling like a fraud or being untrue to myself; My truth is what will allow me to stand out, I could never shy away from that. As artists, we tend to be our own worst critics, but that is something I'm working on.

C.O.B.S MAGAZINE: During the pandemic, everything stopped how did you continue to work on your craft? What techniques did you develop during this time?

BRANDON MCGEE: Thankfully, I was still able to train, whether it be in person or online. I also read a couple of acting books at that time, which led me to work with the Chubbuck Technique from the book, "The Power of The Actor" by Ivana Chubbuck.

"I was introduced to acting through a student org called "Aggie Night Live" my sophomore year."

It's important for me because I believe I'm capable of playing any role outside of "the norm", there are no limitations.

C.O.B.S MAGAZINE: What piece of advice have you received that you would like to share? Any projects coming up that should be on the lookout? Can you please share your social media platforms and any sites where your works can be found?

BRANDON MCGEE: With all the success I've had in my life, all of it has come down to simply deciding to try. So that's my favorite piece of advice to share; whatever you have a remote interest in, especially with something creative, decide to try it and figure the rest out later. You just might surprise yourself. Like Nike says, just do it. I can't say too much now but there are three features that I am honored to have been a part of that should be coming out sometime next year, not sure what platforms yet but stay tuned.

IG: @mcgee_ambitious

IMDB: <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm9948191/>

ACTOR'S CORNER

NYISHA BELL

YOUNG INSPIRING ACTRESS FROM ATL

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: Welcome to the Actor's Corner. Can you please give our readers some background about yourself?

NYISHA BELL: Yes, so my name is Nyisha Bell. I am an actress, writer and entrepreneur based in Atlanta, GA. I was born in Rockledge Florida and raised in Palm Bay, Florida. May of 2018, I decided to move out here and become an actress.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: How were you introduced to the becoming an actress? Did you attend a special arts school?

NYISHA BELL: I started off doing background work which led me to training and eventually landing my first speaking role and when I got to experience what it was like to be "someone else" and then watch it all come to life that's when I knew I wanted to do this for the rest of my life.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: What are the most challenging and rewarding thing about being an African American female actress?

NYISHA BELL: For me personally, the most challenging thing has been the support I want and never really receive unless it's something very notable I.E if it's indie I would rarely get the same support. The most rewarding would have to be the process and journey I'm very grateful to be on this path and I am loving all that has happened for me so far.

C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: I've read most actors experience imposter syndrome which is loosely defined as doubting

your abilities and feeling like a fraud. Have you ever felt this way? Were there moments that you were not being true to yourself?

NYISHA BELL: Yes, I think I can say this for all actors we are very sensitive about our craft so I had to learn to just accept it and tell myself it's okay to just let the unknown within myself happen because when it happens it's scary at first because you don't know how others will react but it's liberating too because you discovered something new about yourself!

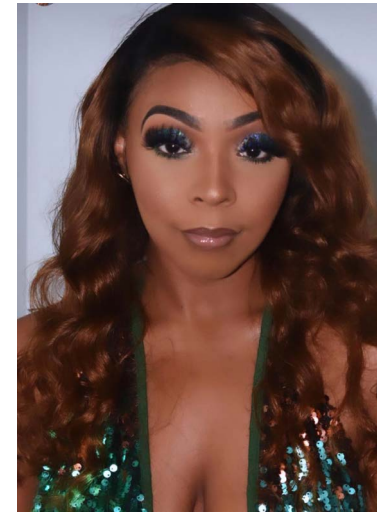
C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: When you think of media representations of African American women what comes to mind? How do you work around the typical stereotypes of the angry black woman, the baby momma, or the gold digger?

NYISHA BELL: When I think of media representation of African American women. I feel that we are represented in a more positive light than before. Growing up I remember I'd see videos of men stating they wouldn't date us because of our "attitude or how we carry ourselves" I think that it's progressing as far as putting us black women in the same light that we do for any other race. Yes, still do, at the age that I am now (26) I feel as if I will or can be cast as the typical mean girl, baby mama, girlfriend, wife etc. However, I feel that I have more to offer than just the regular normal roles. I think we shouldn't put a limit on what we could do but we also shouldn't be limited to just the stereotypical ones either.



C.O.B.S. MAGAZINE: What piece of advice have you received that you like to share? Any projects coming up that we should be on the lookout for? Can you please share your social media platforms and any sites to find your work?

NYISHA BELL: My advice to anyone on this journey with me as an actor is to trust the process and enjoy the journey! My upcoming projects: Jakobs Wife is streaming on all platforms- Prime Video, Apple TV, and Shudder. The Curse Within The Movie is currently in post-production. My social media platforms @ nyishabell on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook.



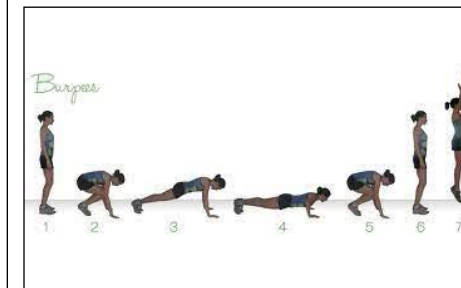
Tricks and Tips to Stay Fit

BY ARIELLE PERSHAY

STAYING FIT

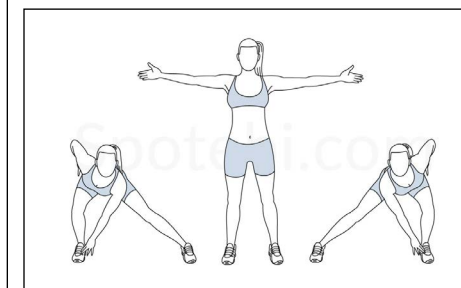
Hello beautiful People! I have another Tip and Tricks to help you stay healthy.

Workout #2



Flat Out Burpees: Targets your core, shoulders, and upper back, and the vertical and horizontal jumping motions also sneakily work your glutes, hamstrings, and quads.

Workout #3



Touchdown Lunges: The main lunges muscles worked are the quads, glutes, and adductors, but the lunge variation you choose determines which muscles work the hardest. The lunge is of the best lower-body exercises to build strength and stability in your legs and hips

Workout #4



Push-up Shoulder Taps: Works your upper body strength and balance.

I hope this article pushes you to your ultimate goal. Working out can be tough and time-consuming. If you add 15 minutes or even 10 minutes of working out to your normal routine, I guarantee you will see results. Lastly, I want to add to always keep loving yourself, you are already beautiful, you have a purpose, you are needed on this earth. Let's keep winning with these Tricks & Tips to stay fit.

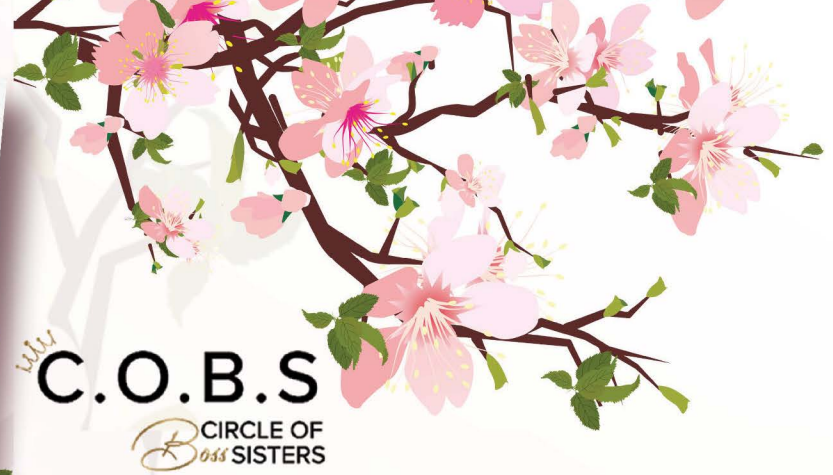
Below I am going to explain how you can burn calories in 15 minutes. Yes, you are correctly reading 15 minutes work out to burn calories. Please be sure to confirm with your doctor before trying these works out. Okay, people let's get to burning calories in 15 minutes.

These workouts may be a little tough, but make sure before you start your workouts be sure to stretch every part of your body. (Watch warm ups on YouTube to be your guide)

Workout #1



Squats Strengthen your core, Crushes calories, Strengthen the muscles of your lower body.



C.O.B.S MAGAZINE

speaks to women
"UpRising Entrepreneurs" in
 the local Black and Hispanic
 communities.

Our women went from weeping to
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 and from the struggle to their
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