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Seven-Year-Old Author Debuts at Essence

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Newsmaker

Outrage Erupts in Baton Rouge After Police Shooting

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Eric Craig
Multimedia Editor

The proverb blood is thicker than water describes the importance of family relationships. However, two brothers from Hahnville, LA take that bond to a new level.

22-year-old Jordan Hamilton put his life on hold to give his older brother, Alexander Hamilton, his kidney. In the summer of 2015, Alexander discovered that he had an issue with his kidney after taking a mandatory physical required by his job. When Alexander took his physical, the doctor noted an abnormally high blood pressure reading. Initially the doctor thought it was temporary. However, Alexander was called back to the hospital for an emergency testing shortly after.

Alexander stayed three nights at the hospital to undergo additional testing. Each day Alexander’s blood pressure continued to rise abnormally.

"The second night the doctor came in and told me Alexander said that he and his brother Jordan have always been close. After the transplant the bond grew even stronger, Alexander said.

Cover Story, Continued
on page 4.
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that I had scarring of the kidneys in one kidney," Alexander said.

Alexander’s scarred kidney prevented his organ from filtering harmful substances from the body’s blood stream. The doctors noted that Alexander carries genes that make this disease more likely.

“So I said, ‘okay, Doc, What’s next? Can I die from this? Is this something that can be cured?’” Alexander said.

“And they really didn’t know at the time and said that there might be a transplant down the line,” he added.

Alexander’s family was saddened to hear the news about their son’s declining health.

“I was trying to be calm before the storm. I knew when they started speaking about blood pressure for a young man, I knew it wasn’t normal,” said Alexander’s father Jimmie.

“I was just looking and hoping that maybe it was his diet, or hereditary or something minor. Not for one moment I thought it was as severe as it was,” he added.

Alexander’s mother, Giovanni, was concerned at the options available for Alexander in the coming months.

“I was just praying and hoping for the best. But as the months passed his conditions got worse. I felt helpless because you couldn’t do anything. The medicine wasn’t helping. We just figured it was all in God’s hands,” Giovanni said.

Overtime Alexander’s condition worsened. His visits to the doctor became more frequent while they monitored his body fluids and kidney status. Alexander’s creatine level, which is the amount of a waste product the body produces and is filtered by kidney, was at 7 milligrams per deciliter. Average creatine levels are between 0.7 and 1.3 milligrams per deciliter according to the U.S. National Library of Medicine.

Alexander’s creatine level continued to rise. By the end of December 2015, Alexander’s creatine reached a level of 14 milligrams per deciliter. Doctors told Alexander that a kidney transplant was urgent.

“So I had to stay focus, I had to eat right and stay away from things I like. A lot of salt and a lot of fried foods,” Alexander said. “It was hard being from Louisiana. But when dealing with your life you had to put it to the side,” he added.

Alexander was put on dialysis to help filter his blood until a kidney match could be made.

“Everybody who seen me didn’t know what was going on. I had to stay strong for myself and my family, to know everything will be alright. It was a real battle.”

Finding a Transplant

According to Kidneylink.org, the average wait time for a kidney transplant is three to five years. The Hamilton family did not waste any time searching for a kidney. While several people offered to donate their kidney, none of the donors served as a match.

Until Jordan, Alexander’s younger brother, volunteered.

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Jordan was recognized for his bravery after donating his kidney to his brother.

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Baton Rouge Man Shot and Killed by Police

Data Staff News Edited Report
An impromptu protest filled the streets of Baton Rouge, LA, hours after a man was shot and killed by police.
37-year-old Alton Sterling was detained and shot by police officers on Tuesday, July 5, 2016 outside of the Triple S Food Mart. The two officers involved, Blane Salamoni and Howl Lake II, were put on administrative leave early Wednesday morning. The U.S. Justice Department's Civil Rights Division is currently leading an investigation on the shooting.

Many people saw Sterling as the “CD man,” who regularly sold music and DVDs outside of the Triple S convenience store, including his family lawyer, Edmond Jordan.

Jordan is an attorney and Louisiana state legislator representing Sterling's family after the shooting.

Alton was a respected man. He was beloved in the community. He did not deserve the treatment and this excessive force that was exerted on him by the police department,” Jordan, his attorney, told CNN.

Earlier that morning, an anonymous individual called to make a complaint that a man outside of a convenience store was carrying a gun. The caller also reported that the armed man was making threats nearby. Nearby store owner, Abdulah Muflahi told NY Daily News that he did not see Sterling with a weapon or witness Sterling being involved in any confrontation before the police arrived.

According to the viral video that shows Sterling being apprehended and shot by the police, the candide videographer captures the officers confronting Sterling in front of the Triple S Food Mart. One of the two officers pulls Sterling over a hood of a car and then pins Sterling to the ground. The second officer begins to assist restraining Sterling. In the video, an unidentifiable person yells “he’s got a gun.” Afterwards there is unintelligible yelling and an off-

New Outlook on Life
After the surgery, the two brothers saw life differently.

“It makes me feel like I have a different outlook at life. I don’t get wound up about things like I used to,” Jordan said.

Alexander appreciate a new opportunity at life, and believes this is a sign to do more.

“Thinking about it, it was hard. But God wasn’t ready for me. He blesses you and is telling you to do something more. Don’t even think about what could of happen, but look forward,” Alexander said.

Alexander’s mother still finds skeptical about making Jordan a donor because they did not know if he was also at risk to develop a similar scarred tissue disease or experience high blood pressure.

Giovanni was concerned about putting both of her sons at risk.

“It was still a difficult decision to say ‘am I sacrificing one son for another? Jordan is giving his kidney and hopefully he doesn’t come down with the same disease,’” Giovanni said.

After several tests, doctors determined Jordan does have the gene responsible for the disease, but it would be improbable that he would develop it. In the spring of 2016, the doctors cleared Jordan as a donor.

“There is no luck in nothing. It’s already written,” Alexander’s father said.

“Jordan confessed to me that I’m not doing this for any other reason, but for this reason: because I love my brother,” he added.

Jordan decided to put his education on hold to undergo the surgery to help his brother. Jordan was enrolled at Xavier University of Louisiana.

The transplant took place on Monday, April 4, 2016. Jordan, the donor, was released the day after the surgery. Alexander was released a day later.

“I just have to thank my brother. Without him I would still be looking for kidney right now,” Alexander said.

New Outlook on Life

The transplant was a success, and Alexander is doing well. He is grateful for the opportunity at life, and believes this is what God had planned for him.

“I know from this day I don’t have to worry about my sons. They are men; By faith, by love, and by strength. I’m a pretty proud father, more than any man could imagine,” Jimmie said.

“This shows that brothers are truly their brother’s keepers. My son is an example and I’m so proud of him,” he added.
Essence Fest 2016

Harvey Brown
Photographer

Essence 2016 celebrates its 22nd Annual Festival in the City of New Orleans. The festivities kicked off independence weekend on July 1, 2016 and ended on July 3, 2016. During the day there were several free panels from entertainment to financial empowerment. Attendees were able to listen to several speakers, including Charlie Wilson, Oprah Winfrey, Anthony Anderson and many more. Festival goers were also able to participate in several activities, including singing, dancing and social media posting. Many ticket holders attended performances by Maxwell, Kendrick Lamar and Ciara. Despite the intensive heat during the summer, the festival remained a staple for the 2016 year.

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Coming in August, 2016
The day after 52 percent of United Kingdom citizens voted to leave the European Union, Google was deluged with questions. The most common – what is the European Union? That suggests that the people who voted to leave the European Union didn’t even know what it was. They didn’t know that financial institutions, headquartered in London, might shut down their offices because they would lose the advantage they had by considering London a European banking center. They didn’t know that thousands of jobs now based in London might migrate to Paris or Brussels, because international banks wanted European centers of commerce, not simply British centers. They didn’t expect that the value of the pound would plummet. They didn’t know.

Instead, they responded emotionally to those who encouraged them to vote to leave the EU. They responded to the notion that immigration was their enemy, and that immigrants were “taking their jobs.” They responded to an ugly divisiveness, and they voted, they thought, to protect themselves. They didn’t know that their protectionism might leave them more vulnerable than ever. Now they know. The European Union has asked the U.K. to speed up the inevitable separation, even as more than 2 million Brits are, by petition, asking for a “do over,” a second referendum. Few have patience for the remorseful second-guessing after the unnecessary “Brexit” vote, Prime Minister Cameron, after all, chose to sell a bunch of wolf tickets when he called for the referendum. His egoism has had an ugly outcome, and an unnecessary one. The vote need not have taken place. Brexit has implication in the United States. The callous eulogizing of immi-
grants made it possible for too many Brits to vote against their own selfinterest. Now, we see too many in the U.S. leaning toward Donald Trump, because he says he will “Make America Great Again.”

Great for whom? Great how? In going back to the past is Mr. Trump harping to the “Leave it to Beaver”-1950s days when independent women were invisible, and people of color hardly showed up. I’d love someone to remind me of any episode where Leave it to Beaver had a Black ac-
tor. Ha! When we go back to our nation’s “old greatness,” we go back to times when women and people of color were, at best, invisible.

Thanks to Brexit, the world will experience more financial instabil-
ity than it has experienced in the last decade or so. The stock market will fluctuate, and then settle, and some folks will find their 401k accounts dropping, and then recovering in a month or so. Interest rates will fall, but that really only matters in the short run, and with those who are managing stock markets. While it is impossible to predict the outcomes of the Brexit vote, it is surely possible to speak to the financial instability that is a byproduct of the Brexit vote. The short-term implications don’t specifically affect United States shareholders (although those invested in the U.K. will see more immediate losses). In the longer run, the fracturing of the EU collective has financial impli-
cations for all world stakeholders.

There is a parallel between that which has happened in the U.K. and that which has happened in the U.S. Voters in the U.K. were goaded into voting “leave” even though too many knew that staying was the bet-
ter choice. In the U.S., we have a demagogue who is exhorting people to “leave” our diversity reality by embracing his cause and conveying his vote. The mainstream media has been an unindicted co-conspirator on this Trump crusade, because he has garnered far more visibility than he deserves. But his message resonates, even as the “leave” message resonat-
ed in the U.K.

People aren’t asking the critical questions. Why has Trump refused to release his tax returns? Why does he promise charitable contributions that he does not honor? Why are the Trump products manufactured in China, even as he declares outsourcing?

Will we, in these United States, start Googling Trump after he is nominated? Will we wait until it is too late to ask about the Trump pecadil-
loes? Will asking too late provide us with the same buyer’s remorse that those in the U.K. are now experienc-
ing? Will we protest vote express our angst and also place an ill-equipped man in the White House? Will we ask the most important questions when it is too late?

Julianne Malveaux is an author and economist based in Washington, D.C. Her latest offering “Ain We Better Off? Race, Obama and Public Policy is avail-
able via Juliannemalveaux.com or Amazon.com.

Some days just trying to be a Christian can accelerate that feeling of just treading water. I get it. Add to that whatever situation you’re in or circumstances that you’re going through and the overwhelming feeling can be summed up with “what’s the point?” One of my habitual sayings, which you’ve heard before is Mr. Temptation meet Ms. Test. Being a Christian, as we all know, does not guarantee a life void of trial and tribulation. The small but important point I’m making is a factoid that I believe and brings more inner peace to me than I can explain: God is always in your life. No matter the situation, He will never abandon you regardless of how lonely life gets or appears to be. I liken it to pushing a huge rock uphill. On many a day that rock becomes a boulder and that hill transforms into a very steep and treacherous mountain. At these times, one must recognize that were it not for God’s presence in your life, that rock would trample you and the hill would turn to quicksand. It’s all in your attitude. I admit it’s easy to get down even though you are a believer. But because you’re a believer, it should also be impossible to stay down. I went to two different churches recently where members were allowed to give testimony and request prayer. One was very large and high tech and those who spoke, spoke of their real life journeys to Christ by concluding that “Jesus is more than a story.” Each testimony of Christ’s reality in changing a life forced me to rethink my own situation and conclude, I have no right to be down. Heaven, I’m blessed. In the other much smaller and more intimate church, member after member told stories of specific trials and tests and the need for prayer; from family situations in which a six month old died prematurely and a seven year old from cancer, to a person so allergic to life that the smell of perfume would cause excruciating pain and a life of seclusion. I have no right to be down. Heaven I’m blessed. I pass these stories along because in all instances the people involved found a way to cope, to live, to survive. Remember every testimony was relayed in church as an acknowledge- ment of the power and love of the Lord through whom all blessings flow. Every story was an entreaty for prayer and a profession of faith. Real Christians...real life...the real world. I just thought I’d take this opportunity to again let you know that my real world, no matter how messed up it can be and has been, is never as bad as it could be without the love of the Lord in my heart, the faith of Jesus Christ in spirit and the invitation to the Holy Spirit to ride shotgun with me wherever I go. I don’t have room to insert Psalm 23 here but read it today. Look around your valley of death and fear no evil. Bathe in the grace of God. As the kids say, “you better recognize.” Recognize and be blessed. This I ask for you in Jesus’ name.

May God bless and keep you always.

James A. Washington
NNPA News Wire Columnist

State & Local News

Lawsuit Challenging Ascension Parish Court Spurs Legislative Reform

In April, the nonprofit, public interest law firm filed the class-action lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Louisiana on behalf of all those appearing before the Ascension Parish Court as criminal defendants. In Ascension Parish Court, people convicted of misdemeanor or crimes—including traffic and municipal ordinance violations—are charged a fee of $15. This “conviction fee” is deposited into the Court’s Judicial Expense Fund and used to pay part of the Judge’s salary, retirement, and benefits. The Judicial Expense Fund also pays the salaries of most of the Parish Court’s staff and other operating expenses. This is part of a broader pattern in Louisiana in which courts are not fully funded but forced to rely on a hedgepodge of fines and fees levied against the citizens who appear before them. Prior to the MacArthur Justice Center’s Lawsuit and consequent change in the statute, the judge had exclusive control of the Judicial Expense Fund, creating a conflict of interest that violated the Constitution’s Due Process Clause. Act 612 puts the fund directly under the control of the Ascension Parish Government and its Chief Financial Officer. The amended law also obli- gates the Parish to fully fund the court’s operations through either the Parish’s General Fund or the Judicial Expense Fund.

“While we see this as a step in the right direction toward ensuring a fair and impartial judiciary for Louisiana, we are going to be watching the situation on the ground very closely to make sure the statute in fact makes the court’s funding independent of the money it collects through convictions,” Foley said. “Judges should never be placed in a position to consider their court’s finances or their own salaries when determining someone’s guilt or innocence.”

In response to passage of Act 612 by the Legislature and its signing into law by Governor Edwards in June, the MacArthur Justice Center on Tuesday filed a request in Federal Court to dismiss its Class-Action Lawsuit Challenging an Unconstitutio- nal Conflict of Interest in the Funding Scheme of the Ascension Parish Court.

“We are pleased that the Loui- siana Legislature has amended the law to remove control of the Ascension Parish Court’s Judicial Expense Fund from the Judge of Ascension Parish Court,” said Eric Foley, Staff Attorney at the New Orleans office of the Roderick and Solange MacArthur Justice Center.

Data News Staff Edited Report

In the Spirit

In The Spirit

Spiritually Speaking...

Newsmaker, Continued from page 5.

ladianews.com
Lionman Foundation Partners with Navy for STEM Program

GrandMaster Eric O’Neal, Founder of Lionman Foundation, Inc., U.S. Navy Commander Thomas DeLarge, Officer-In-Charge at Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center Atlantic (SSC LANT) New Orleans Detachment (NOLA DET), and Mr. Marcus Hall, Engineering Competency Lead at SSC LANT NOLA are excited to announce Lionman Foundation’s STEM and Robotics Club coming in August.

Lionman Foundation’s mission is to transcend socio-economic boundaries and ensure the success of young people by providing programs focused on the development of D.E.F. – Discipline, Education and Fitness. GrandMaster O’Neal has been inspired by STEM Programs in New Orleans and around the Country to expand Lionman Foundation’s educational support to include a STEM and Robotics Club.

SSC LANT also known as SPAWAR LANT is the U.S. Navy’s Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command. The Goal of the SPAWAR LANT Outreach Program is to collaborate with academia, other government organizations, local businesses, and professional organizations to increase Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics literacy in our communities; and to provide an adequate pipeline of STEM talent that will be required for the future.

LIONMAN Foundation and SPAWAR have partnered together to achieve their shared objective of preparing today’s youth to meet tomorrow’s challenges and to ensure that kids are being exposed to Math, Science, Engineering and Technology at a young age. Students in grades 3 thru 6 are invited to join LIONMAN Foundation’s STEM and Robotics Club for some hands-on educational fun.

Participants will create a variety of projects ranging from simple tools to remote control drones using applied Sciences, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.

STEM and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) are paramount to school curriculum today. Many students are learning theories and methodologies with few opportunities to apply that knowledge within the learning environment. The Lionman Foundation’s is for students to have a holistic educational experience with interactive learning. Mr. Hall and his team will advise the Lionman Foundation’s STEM and Robotics Club.

The public is invited to visit the Lionman Foundation New Orleans Office at 9954 Lake Forest Blvd. where parents will be able to register their child/children for the Lionman Foundation’s STEM and Robotics Club which will meet once a month on Thursdays from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm.
Oprah Winfrey at Essence Fest

By Edwin Buggage
Data News Weekly
Contributor

The Essence Music Festival has again concluded in New Orleans and was an amazing success. One of the highlights of the festival was an unexpected appearance by Media Mogul and Humanitarian Oprah Winfrey, who spoke to a capacity crowd and many others watching on screens located in the Ernest Morial Convention Center.

She walked out on stage greeting her audience looking chic, svelte and sophisticated in a red dress showing off her new slimmer figure. Her speech was inspirational and where Ms. Winfrey channeled her inner T.D. Jakes, Maya Angelou and Iyanla Vanzant throughout her moving address.

"Speaking to this crowd feels like family, I hope today that you take home from my speech words that will empower and embolden you," said Winfrey. Continuing she spoke of the key in her rise is a testament to the power of the collective. "I come as one, but I stand as 10,000, it is not who I am but whose I am." She urged the audience to dream big and be authentic to what that means to them. Striking a chord, she asked the questions, "What is a dream for you and what is it you believe is God dream for you?"

Speaking of her own life and dream she spoke of driving through White neighborhoods in her native Mississippi and her image of being rich as having trees in her backyard. She recalled going to a friend's house and seeing six trees. Speaking of God's plans for bigger dreams for her life she said, "6 trees I could dream but today I have 368 trees outside my house. At the time I could only dream six but God saw beyond six."

In her presentation she spoke of her career and her latest projects on her Network OWN and her collaborations with Tyler Perry and Filmmaker Ava DuVernay. She is one who's overcome many challenges and is an amazing example for people to follow. Throughout her career she has been atop her field with uplifting and enlightening entertainment. Winfrey has embodied the words of the William Ernest Henley poem, Invictus, that she quoted during her speech which its last lines states, "I am the master of my faith: I am the captain of my soul."

Morgan also had the opportunity to meet with several celebrities at the Essence Festival. 

Seven-Year-Old Author Debuts at Essence

Morgan Elizabeth Taylor is a second grader at Eastern Elementary School in Greenville, NC. Signed to Taylor Made Publishing, Morgan co-wrote the book "Daddy's Little Princess" with her father G. Todd Taylor. When writing the book, she said she wanted other girls to be able to believe that they can be a princess regardless of their race.

The elementary level book is about real princesses of color from different parts of the world. It was written to be educational and empowering, while featuring real historical features.

Morgan had the opportunity to meet with several celebrities at the Essence Festival.

"It makes me feel really special. I met amazing people and I loved the beignets. There were a lot of celebrities, and I'm glad that I got to meet them," the seven-year-old author said.

Morgan's co-authored book "Daddy's Little Princess" was released on October 1, 2015.

Speaking of her own life and dream she spoke of driving through White neighborhoods in her native Mississippi and her image of being rich as having trees in her backyard. She recalled going to a friend's house and seeing six trees. Speaking of God's plans for bigger dreams for her life she said, "6 trees I could dream but today I have 368 trees outside my house. At the time I could only dream six but God saw beyond six."

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Morgan also had the opportunity to meet with essence performers. "One exciting moment was singing with Keri Hilson at Essence. She asked for my autograph. She also liked my book," Morgan said.

Morgan will continue to show case her book around the country through Taylor Made Publishing teaching other girls they can be a princess too.

Singer Keri Hilson reads Morgan's book at the Essence Festival.

Data News Staff Edited Report

A seven-year-old author makes a debut at the 2016 Essence Festival in New Orleans, showcasing her first published book.
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