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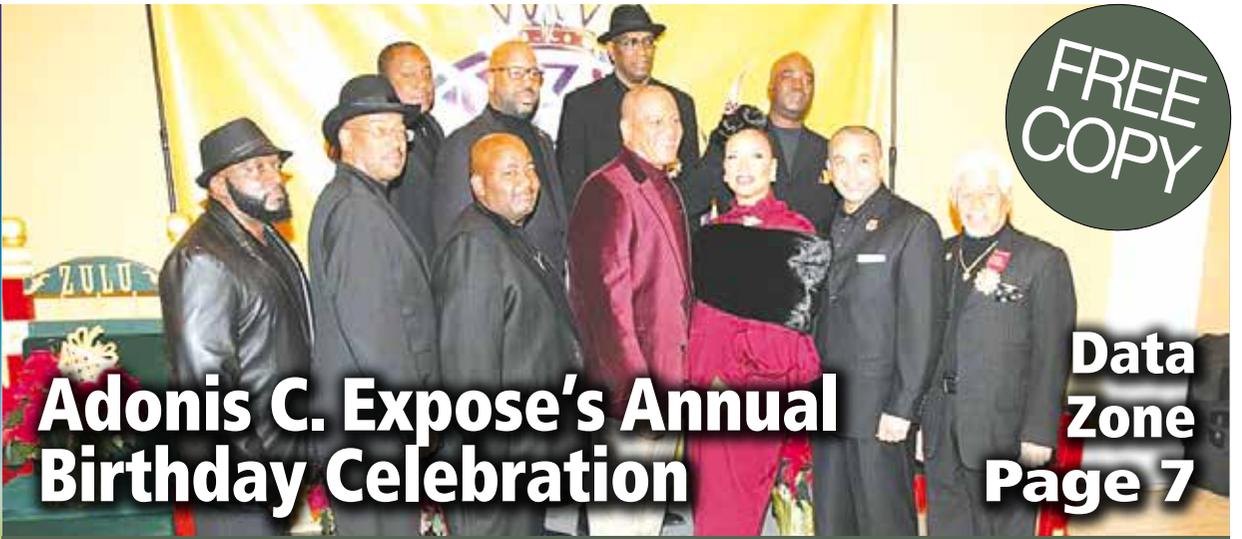
New Orleans

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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

# LOUISIANA STAND YOUR GROUND LAW

## What You Need to Know



Page 2



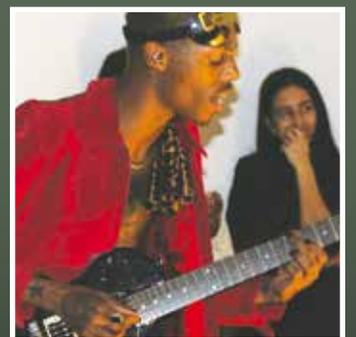
### Newsmaker

NOLA to Host CBS 2016 Sports Classic

Page 5

### Fashion & Style

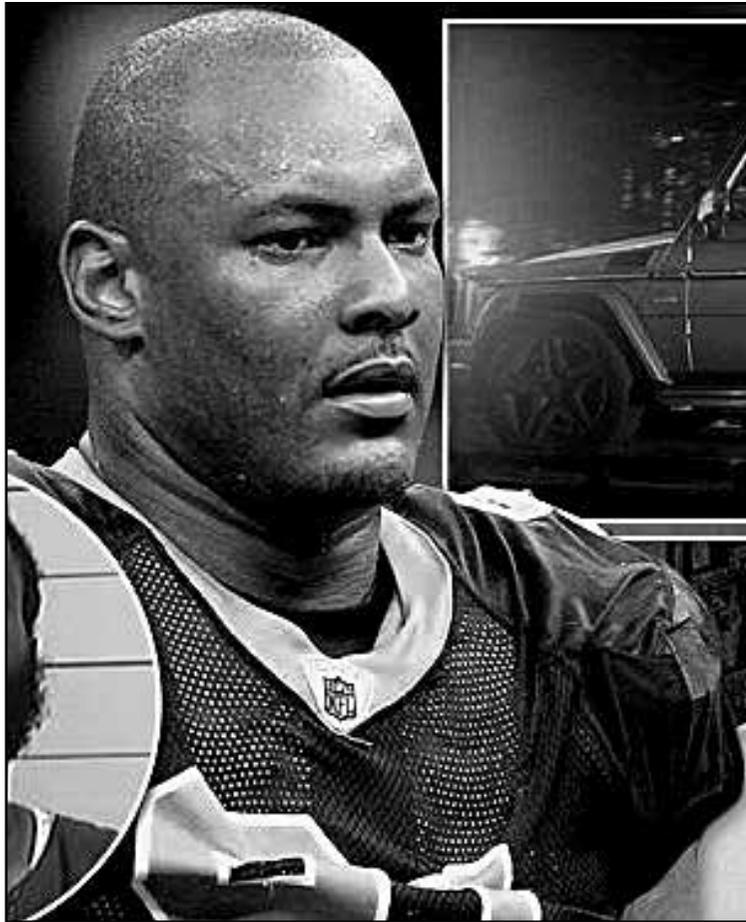
Liquid Geezus Review



Page 6

# Stand Your Ground Laws in Louisiana

## A State Review



Pictured above is the late Will Smith, former Defensive End for the New Orleans Saints. Smith was killed in April, 2016 after a night out with his wife and friends in New Orleans. He was shot eight times, including seven in the back.



A jury found Cardell Hayes, (above) guilty Sunday of manslaughter in the April shooting death of Smith and guilty of attempted manslaughter for shooting Smith's wife, Racquel Smith. He faces up to 60 years at the sentencing hearing in January, 2017.

**Eric M Craig**  
Multimedia Editor

Gun violence is unfortunately a common crime in New Orleans, but two high profile shooting deaths of former NFL players Will Smith and Joe McKnight have sent shockwaves through the city and nation leading to questions surrounding the controversial issue of Stand Your Ground laws.

In considering the last two road rage-inspired shootings, the incidents had several things in com-

mon: Both cases involved the shooting of an unarmed Black victim. Both cases uphold that the shooter's life was threatened. But, in considering both cases in the court room, the Louisiana Stand Your Ground law is applicable.

As one case comes to an end, and as the other begins, what is the Louisiana Stand Your Ground Law, and how might it affect the Joe McKnight case?

What is the Stand Your Ground Law?

As Stand Your Ground laws have become more

common around the United States, it has called for research to assist in understanding the phenomenon.

Joshua Mitchell, a Professor of Public Policy at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, has studied Stand Your Ground laws and other laws that have been diffused across the United States.

According to Mitchell, the laws are rooted in United States history.

"Stand Your Ground laws are grounded in the Eng-

**Cover Story, Continued on page 4.**

On the cover: Joe McKnight Crime Scene December 1, 2016.

### INSIDE DATA

Cover Story . . . . .	2	Health News . . . . .	9
Newsmaker . . . . .	5	National News . . . . .	10
Data Zone . . . . .	6	Fashion & Style . . . . .	11
Commentary. . . . .	8		

### DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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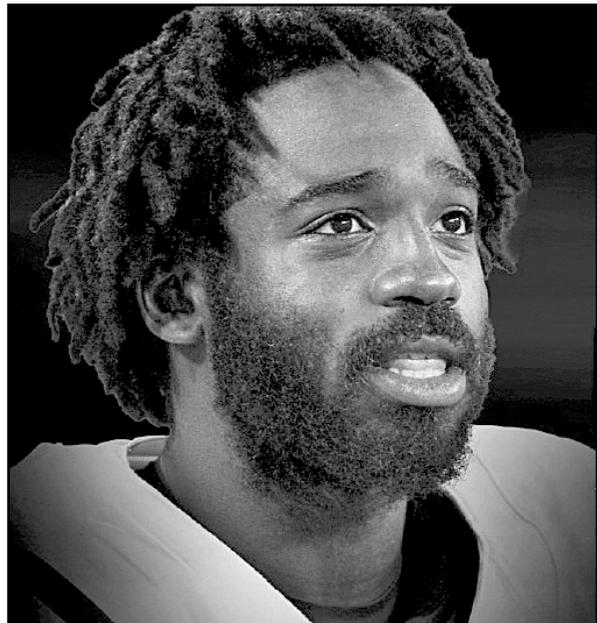
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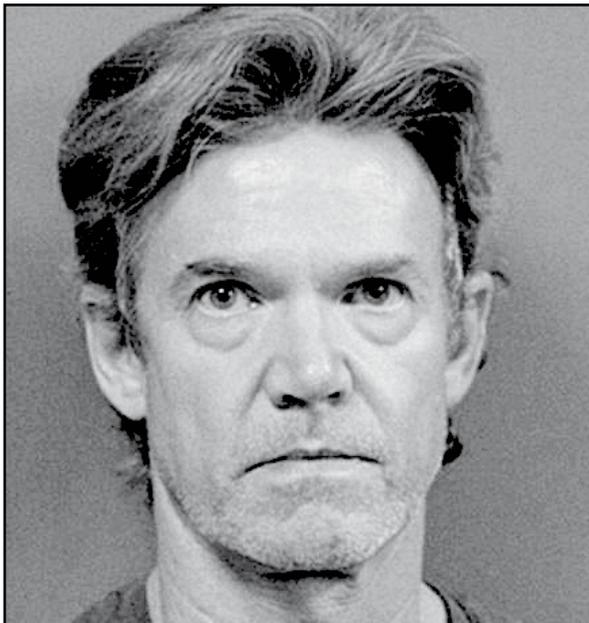
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Cover Story, Continued from page 2.



Former New York Jets running back Joe McKnight (28) was shot and killed in a fatal incident of road rage on Thursday, December 1, 2016 by Ronald Gasser



Ronald Gasser (above) who has been charged with manslaughter in the shooting death of former New York Jets running back Joe McKnight, has claimed Stand Your Ground as his defense.

lish Common Law Principle known as the Castle Doctrine, which gives individuals the right to protect their homes from intruders," Mitchell said.

However, changes to the Castle Doctrine begin to occur in 2005.

"The first SYG Law was adopted in Florida in 2005, where it had

wide popularity in the Florida State Legislature," Mitchell said.

That law was executed by Florida Governor Jeb Bush. Stand Your Ground, according to the governor, expanded the instances where homicides could be justified in self-defense.

"After Florida, SYG laws spread

throughout the country. The following year, ten other states passed similar laws including Louisiana," Mitchell said.

As of 2016, 49 states have a similar Castle Doctrine Legislation.

According to Findlaw.com, 23 states have adopted Stand Your Ground Laws. Arkansas is the only

southern state that has not adopted the law. Each state, however, has adopted a unique version of the law that varies by state.

**Stand Your Ground in Louisiana**

In 2006, Louisiana State Legislation expanded its Castle Doctrine, transforming it into a modern notion of Stand Your Ground. The law was signed into effect by Gov. Kathleen Blanco.

The Louisiana-specific law makes it legal to use deadly force in self-defense in any public or private space as long as the defending person has the legal right to be present.

Additionally, in a criminal case where Stand Your Ground is applied, the jury cannot consider the possibility of retreat in the given scenario. Lastly, anyone protected under this law cannot be prosecuted.

Louisiana's Stand Your Ground Law is nearly identical to Florida's Stand Your Ground Law, according to Nola.com. The National Rifle Association has been a strong supporter of Stand Your Ground Legislation and has helped drafted both the Louisiana and Florida Stand Your Ground Laws.

city status," he added.

As an alternative, the community needs to reevaluate the law.

"Given Trayvon Martin, or any other case around the country, you would think that a country that prides itself in democracy would have revisited these laws based on how they have affected people."

Similar views were held by Louisiana State Senator Troy Carter.

"Given what happened in the Joe McKnight case, and cases around the country, it is prudent that we review the current Stand Your Ground Law in Louisiana," Carter said.

"Honest law abiding citizens should not be violated by criminals. But by the same token, we can't allow people to use these laws to unilaterally decide to take someone's life and hide behind the law when it was intended to do good," he added.

Carter believes the Louisiana community needs to reconsider Stand Your Ground law in instances where fleeing may be easier and safer, such as driving a car. As of Now, Carter says that he will work with elected officials, law enforcement and other actors to encourage a dialogue about this law across the state.

"In our country we have far too many guns and far too much anger. We have to do more to resolve our anger," Carter said.

**The Public's view on Stand Your Ground**

In early December, the Stand Your Ground Law was anticipated to be used in the Will Smith case, but was not considered by the Jury. Instead, the defendant, Cordell

Hayes, was found guilty of manslaughter and could face up to 40 years in prison.

"Justice served for #WillSmith! Cardell Hayes found guilty of manslaughter and guilty of attempted manslaughter for shooting Will Smiths wife. Now, we shall let the Justice System do the same for #JoeMcKnight," Zachary Belander in a public Facebook post.

Other agreed with those sentiments, but were concerned about the outcome of the Joe McKnight case.

"If a Black man gunned down a White man & stayed at the scene & claimed #StandYourGround he would never see the light of day #JoeMcKnight," said twitter user Ruiningmusic.



As of today, 23 states have adopted Stand Your Ground Laws. Arkansas is the only southern state that has not adopted the law.

**Stand Your Ground Political Perspective**

As the Joe McKnight case develops, many people are concerned with the potential outcome of the case with the Louisiana Stand Your Ground law.

Former City Council Member, and WBOK 1230 AM Radio talk show host, Oliver Thomas, says the Stand Your Ground in Louisiana can be a tricky law to evaluate.

"Stand Your Ground was created to enhance protection in not just your home, but anywhere you may be under the threat of danger anywhere you have the right to be," Thomas said.

"However, it is up to the district attorney, sheriff and law enforcement to perceive that reality. It's based on your race, class and celeb-

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# CBS Classic Coming to New Orleans for First Time in 2017

## Data News Staff Edited Report

The Greater New Orleans Sports Foundation (GNOSF) and SMG announced today New Orleans has been selected to host the CBS Sports Classic, to take place Saturday, December 23, 2017, in the Smoothie King Center. The Classic is a neutral-site, four-team college basketball tournament among perennial powers Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio State and UCLA.

"There is no doubt that the fans of these four teams, all traditionally nationally ranked in the top 25, will experience an incredible holiday weekend of basketball in one of the world's best cities. And, if history holds true, one of these matchups in the Smoothie King Center could prove to be a 2018 Final Four preview. That could certainly be the case this year with the way that Kentucky and North Carolina are



ranked right now," said Jay Cicero, President and CEO of the GNOSF.

Together, Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio State and UCLA have won 25 NCAA Championships and

made 175 NCAA Tournament appearances. They are among college basketball's all-time winningest programs, combining for more than 7,700 victories. They are also

known for strong, loyal fan bases, many of whom travel for this event each year. The Classic is expected to serve as a strong leisure travel draw to the City of New Orleans during the holidays, bringing new visitors from across the country to the Crescent City.

"Landing the event was a collaborative effort between the Greater New Orleans Sports Foundation and SMG, with great support from the New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation and the CVB," said Alan Freeman, SMG General Manager for both the Smoothie King Center and Mercedes-Benz Superdome. "CBS is also to be commended for creating a unique property with talented teams and fan bases with proven enthusiasm to travel. New Orleans certainly promises to raise the bar for the CBS Sports Classic, especially as we look ahead to the Men's Final Four in 2022, re-

inforcing our reputation as the destination of choice for major sporting events."

Mark Starsiak, CBS Sports Classic Director of Operations, noted the importance of a strong host committee when selecting New Orleans as the 2017 site.

"The experience, enthusiasm and support of Greater New Orleans was a tipping point in our decision to pull the trigger rather quickly on committing to New Orleans for 2017," commented Starsiak. "Our staff, partners, and participating teams appreciate the type of attention that the Sports Foundation and SMG, along with their host committee partners, are already delivering beyond the scope of the basketball games. They made us feel as valued and confident in their ability to support our event as they do for Super Bowls, Final Fours or NBA All-Star Games."

## City Hosts Eleventh STRIVE NOLA Graduation

### Data News Staff Edited Report

The City of New Orleans hosted the Eleventh STRIVE NOLA Graduation Ceremony this past week. Launched in March 2015, STRIVE NOLA seeks to connect disadvantaged jobseekers to employment opportunities by providing workforce case management, job readiness training and supportive services.

"STRIVE NOLA is focused on preparing the men and women of New Orleans with the tools they need to be ready for work," said Mayor Mitch Landrieu. "Too many of our residents, particularly young African-American men, do not have the necessary skills to secure long-term employment. STRIVE NOLA promotes long-term success by creating a pathway to prosperity for these residents."

STRIVE NOLA is in line with Mayor Landrieu's Economic Opportunity Strategy—a comprehensive effort to connect disadvan-



The 2016 Class of STRIVE NOLA Graduates.

tagged jobseekers and businesses to new opportunities by working to ensure that every resident can take part in the City's economic growth through partnerships with local training providers, social service agencies and community advocates. This year, the

City announced that the African-American male's non-employment rate is down from 52 percent to 44 percent.

"Investing in our disadvantaged jobseekers through STRIVE NOLA will always remain a top priority for us," said Judy Reese Morse, Dep-

uty Mayor for Citywide Initiatives. "Along with our committed partners, we are creating a pathway to prosperity for all residents of New Orleans."

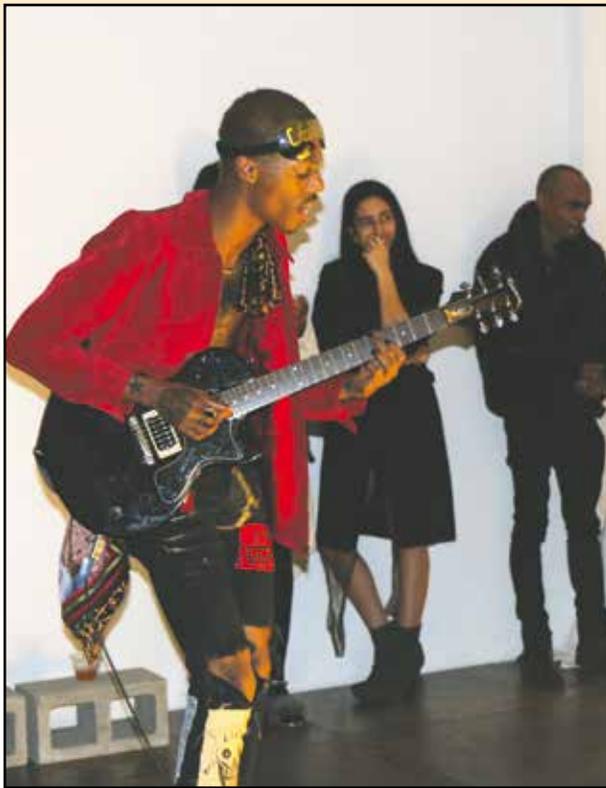
STRIVE NOLA prepares and connects local jobseekers, specifically African-American males, to ca-

reer pathways through local anchor institutions. During the Four-Week Job Readiness Training Program, participants arrive to work daily dressed professionally from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m.

"STRIVE NOLA is a key component in developing solid opportunities for the people of New Orleans," said Ashleigh Gardere, Senior Advisor for Economic Opportunity and Executive Director of the Network for Economic Opportunity. "We are excited to celebrate the work of the eleventh cohort of STRIVE NOLA and look forward to continuing to create pathways to prosperity for our disadvantaged jobseekers."

The STRIVE employment model ensures that every client is not only ready to find a job, but also ready to keep it through five components: CORE Attitudinal and Job Readiness, Skills Training, Workforce Case Management, Job Placement, and Job Retention and Ongoing Follow-up.

# Delaney's Armoire Premiere of Liquid Geezus



Photos by Delaney George



Delaney George  
Columnist

This past Sunday, a New Orleans Model, Musician, and Fashion Figure, Hirkish, held his first show and premiere of new his clothing line "Liquid Geezus".

The fashion presentation showed Hirkish's peculiar take on fashion, involving high fashion makeup on models, fur accents, and an array of unorthodox yet unique styles of garments: such as lace, sheer, and the unusual images on Hanasaki's T-shirt line.

Although the show only consisted of two models, the crowd stayed engaged by Hirkish's antics and style. The scenery of the show consisted of flashing lights, a customized Liquid Geezus screen, and a clothing rack with Hirkish's designs that were up for purchase. Electrifying mood setting music provided the entire night by local DJ Lil Jodeci. Hirkish also gave a live performance showcasing his musical side, showing how he interprets his brand and line through music.

At only 23 years old, Hirkish has modeled for lines such as Hood by Air, premiered in New York Fashion Week, and achieved a spread in W Magazine as one of Rihanna's leading male models just to name a few.

For more information on Hirkish and the Liquid Geezus line visit [LiquidGeezus.tumblr.com](http://LiquidGeezus.tumblr.com) or visit Hirkish on Instagram. More photos of the Liquid Geezus show can be found on [Laneslense.Pixieset.com/LiquidGeezus](http://Laneslense.Pixieset.com/LiquidGeezus).

Visit [www.ladatanews.com](http://www.ladatanews.com) for more photos from these events

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# King Zulu Elect 2017 Adonis C. Expose's Annual Birthday Celebration & Toy Drive

**Edwin Buggage**  
Editor

King Zulu Elect 2017 Adonis C. Expose' held his 18th Annual Birthday Celebration & Toy Drive on Saturday, December 10, 2016 at the Roy E. Glapion, Jr. Reception Hall. Many guests attended this celebration with a toy in hand. The event was a success as over 250 toys and 50 bicycles were collected and will be donated to Zulu's Toys for Tots.

The Toys for Tots give-away will take place on Saturday, December 17th at 8am at the City Hall Council Chambers.




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# Will White Workers Accept Trump's Billionaire Cabinet Picks?



**Julianne Malveaux**  
NNPA Columnist

the United States, even though they had earlier announced that they would have moved jobs to Mexico.

The Carrier deal that Trump has been crowing about is so deceptive, that some business writers describe it as a scam and a union leader accused Trump of lying his hind parts off. Trump says he saved over a thousand jobs, but the real number may be closer to 730. Carrier will still relocate more than 500 jobs to Mexico, and they had already planned to keep about 300 jobs in the United States. So Trump may have "saved" 400 jobs, not 800 or a thousand, and Indiana Governor Mike Pence had to give up \$7 million in tax benefits to keep the jobs here. Trump and Pence have also signaled that they are willing to play "let's make a deal" on a case by case basis to keep jobs

in the United States, instead of using public policy to encourage the development of U.S. jobs and to limit the mobility of capital. And, Carrier is still closing another Indiana plant, but there has been no intervention for that closure.

Now, Mr. Trump has indicated that Andrew F. Puzder is his choice for Secretary of Labor. Puzder, the CEO of CKE Restaurant Holdings, a company that franchises Hardee's and Carl's Jr. fast food outlets, has opposed minimum wage increases, worker protections, paid sick leave, and the Affordable Care Act. He has said that he welcomes automation in the restaurant industry, because machines are "always polite... never take a vacation, never show up late, there's never a slip and fall or an age, sex, or race discrimination case." While the Department of Labor has been the advocate for

workers, Mr. Puzder seems to be an advocate for worker exploitation.

Okay, y'all working-class White folks, those of you who voted for Mr. Trump, are you ready to swallow a bitter pill? Because Mr. Trump has shown you, yet again, what he thinks of you. The historian Doris Kearns Goodwin wrote about President Abraham Lincoln's "Team of Rivals." What Mr. Trump seems to have assembled is a team of war-mongering generals and bombastic billionaires. The Puzder appointment, then, is consistent with Mr. Trump's philosophy, but it is inconsistent with the notion that the Labor Department should be an advocate for workers, and should regulate labor markets and enforce labor legislation.

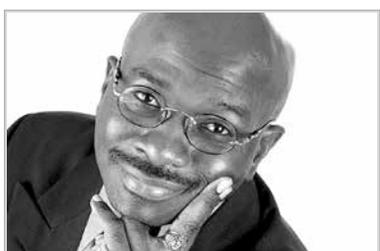
The minimum wage was stuck at \$5.15 an hour for ten years before it was increased in 2007. Then,

Congress approved a three-step increase, raising the wage to \$5.85 an hour in July 2007, then \$6.55 an hour in 2008, finally increasing to \$7.25 an hour in 2009. It has been stuck there ever since. President Obama has recommended an increase of the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour, less than the \$15 an hour that many activists are advocating through the Fight for Fifteen. Puzder does not think the minimum wage should be more than \$9 an hour. He also opposes Obama Administration efforts to give overtime pay to more workers.

It would be crass to say that Puzder purchased his position, but it is important to note that he contributed more than \$300,000 to the Trump campaign. His nomination

**Commentary,**  
Continued on page 9.

# If Confirmed, Dr. Ben Carson Will Lead HUD with Compassion



**Armstrong Williams**  
NNPA Columnist

who possesses remarkable vision. He imagined possibilities in his chosen field of medicine and then made them a reality.

He was the youngest chief of pediatric neurosurgery in the United States at the age of 33 when appointed at Johns Hopkins Hospital in 1984. He has served on the boards of major companies like Costco and Kellogg, received more than 60 honorary doctorate degrees, numerous national merit citations, and was a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2008. And yet, arguably the most important trait that makes Dr. Benjamin Carson a fantastic appointee for the cabinet position of the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is his compassion.

Dr. Carson believes that whenever there is a concentration of people with a lot of poverty, it doesn't matter what their race is. A multitude of conflict and the types of trouble we have seen over the past decade will continue if we aren't able to carry out the mission of HUD. HUD's

mission to create "strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all... improving the quality of life; build inclusive and sustainable communities free from discrimination."

In recent years, Dr. Carson was called to serve, and he accepted the call by running for the presidency. He would have made an outstanding President, but it was not to be. Part of what makes him so unique is his vision for what this country can achieve and how it can be shaped to reach its full potential.

Growing up in inner city Detroit and Boston, Dr. Carson has seen a lot of trauma and has spent a significant amount of time in neighborhoods with various problems. He has also spent time reflecting on the Obama Administration's HUD rule designed to "desegregate" housing by withholding funds from communities that fail to further their projects "affirmatively further" fair housing. He has written: "The new rule would not only condition the grant of HUD

funds to municipalities on building affordable housing as is the case today, but would require that such affordable housing is built primarily in wealthier neighborhoods with few current minority residents and that the new homes be aggressively marketed to minorities.

In practice, the rule would fundamentally change the nature of some communities from primarily single-family to largely apartment-based areas by encouraging municipalities to strike down housing ordinances that have no overtly (or even intended) discriminatory purpose — including race-neutral zoning restrictions on lot sizes and limits on multi-unit dwellings, all in the name of promoting diversity."

Dr. Carson will continue to possess that vision and work toward its realization.

Running an agency of the government is a management challenge that requires incredible organizational skills and expertise. The President entrusts his cabinet officials with enormous re-

sponsibility and looks to them to master the details and muster the men and women who work within their agencies to accomplish the objectives at hand.

I have no doubt that Dr. Carson would have met and exceeded any challenge set before him and done a fantastic job. However, it's important to keep in mind that you can hire management, but not vision. It's a unique attribute that people either possess or not.

In the end, Dr. Carson will work tirelessly on behalf of the American people, including those in our rural and urban communities to assure that all Americans have affordable, safe and quality homes.

Armstrong Williams is Manager / Sole Owner of Howard Stirk Holdings I & II Broadcast Television Stations and the 2016 Multicultural Media Broadcast Owner of the year. Join the discussion live at 6-8 p.m. and 4-6 a.m. est. on Sirius/XM UrbanView 126. Become a fan on Facebook, and follow him on Twitter

In recent days, the media has been abuzz with speculation over cabinet appointments within the incoming President-elect Donald Trump administration. Specifically, much talk has focused on Dr. Ben Carson and his announcement that he was not interested in serving in a cabinet post.

Observers have tried to read the tea leaves and read into some underlying story as to how Dr. Carson arrived at this decision and what it signals. However, they are missing the point.

I have known Dr. Carson and his family for 25 years. This is a man

## Doc Griggs Corner

# Healthy Party Tips



**Eric Griggs, MD**  
Data News Columnist

**Contributing Authors: William Kirchain, PharmD; Michael Tran, Xiang Jiang and Emmanuel Kouagou**

Every major holiday comes with a party. The food that are presented might be a bit overwhelming if you are looking to stay on the healthier side of the plate. There are ways that you can cut out all the

unhealthy items and still throw a great party that everyone would remember years down the future.

First of all, let's think of the drinks that you will be serving. Soda, juice, alcohol, and other holiday themed drinks. Just one 12 oz. can of coke or orange juice contains about 39g of sugar. A replacement could be to get a pitcher of cold water and place pieces of fruits,



While chips and dip is fun, there are other healthy alternatives to start off your new year. Photo by Andrew Bossi, via Wikimedia Commons

such as peaches or oranges and let those flavor the water. When you consume too much sugar, it will increase your blood sugar levels, and over work your body. At some point in time, your body will become so overworked and you can develop into what we call diabetes. This will lead to weight gain, excess thirst, and frequent urination.

Other items that are likely to be at your party are chips and dips. A serving of tortilla chips contains more than 110 mg of salt and 7 g of fat, that's only 7 chips per serving. One serving of dips or salsa contains over 280mg of salt per serving. If you were to substitute it with some baked chips or some vegetable chips, you can reduce way down the amount of fat and salt content.

Commentary, Continued from page 8.

is consistent with that of Oklahoma attorney general Scott Pruitt, a climate change denier, to head the Environmental Protection Agency. Just as Pruitt has no intention of protecting the environment, prioritizing energy production over environmental protection, Puzder has no intention of advocating for or protecting workers.

Lots of people who voted for Mr. Trump swear they aren't racists and

say they simply voted for "change." If Mr. Trump and Mr. Puzder have their way, they'll get chump change for hourly pay. Is that the change they want to believe in?

Julianne Malveaux is an author and economist. Her latest book "Are We Better Off? Race, Obama and Public Policy" is available via [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) for booking, wholesale inquiries or for more info visit [www.juliannemalveaux.com](http://www.juliannemalveaux.com).

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## MCDONOGH 35

The National McDonogh 35 High School Alumni Association is reaching out to all graduates as it begins the celebration of the school's Centennial Celebration (1917 to 2017).

If you are a graduate or if you know of someone who graduated from the school, contact the alumni association at [mcdonogh35alumni-association@yahoo.com](mailto:mcdonogh35alumni-association@yahoo.com), [mcdonogh35alumniassociation.org](http://mcdonogh35alumniassociation.org), or write to McDonogh 35 Alumni Association, P.O. Box 50306, New Orleans, LA 70122, ATT: Alumni Association.

Submit New Orleans school items to [Orleans@nola.com](mailto:Orleans@nola.com). Include contact information.



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# Black Community Shocked by Michael Slager Mistrial

**Lauren Victoria Burke**  
NNPA Newswire Contributor

Last week, the nation was shocked to learn that the jury for the trial of Michael Slager, the North Charleston police officer who shot and killed an unarmed Black motorist as he jogged away from a traffic stop in 2015, could not agree on a murder or manslaughter conviction or any punishment for the officer.

"I don't have anything new to say," tweeted Deray Mckesson, a prominent activist associated with the Black Lives Matter movement. "I mean, we have a video of an execution and planting evidence and even that's not enough."

After a brief struggle off-camera, a passerby recorded Slager, shooting Walter Scott in the back from nearly 20 feet away. Then Slager

walked back to where the initial struggle took place and picked up what looked like a Taser. Slager then returned to Scott's body and dropped the Taser, contradicting his initial police report.

Mckesson, who gained national attention in 2014 for his social media presence and citizen reporting in the aftermath of the shooting death of Michael Brown, an unarmed Black teenager in Ferguson, Missouri, was not the only person who expressed disbelief on Twitter.

Ta-Nehisi Coates, the author of "Between the World and Me" and a national correspondent for "The Atlantic," commented about the Charleston County chief prosecutor's opening statement, where she "acknowledged from the beginning of the trial that she thought Mr. Scott had contributed to his own death by running away," according



North Charleston police officer Michael Slager stands over Walter Scott's body after shooting him in the back following a traffic stop.

dence, the American police uniform has consistently shielded officers who commit murder from prosecution.

The case of Tamir Rice in Cleveland, Ohio, Philando Castile in Falcon Heights, Minn., and John Crawford in Beavercreek, Ohio, are only a few examples of police shootings caught on camera, where the officers involved escaped murder convictions.

The mistrial in the Scott case comes on the 61st anniversary of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which started on December 5, 1955. The boycott began four days after Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a White man on a Montgomery bus. For doing so, she was arrested and fined. The boycott lasted 381 days and a decision in a case that went before the United States Supreme Court forced Montgomery to integrate its public bus system.

Months before the Montgomery Bus Boycott in late August 1955, Emmett Till was murdered in Money, Mississippi at the age of 14. Till was beaten, tortured and mutilated by two White men, Roy Bryant and J.W. Milam. Both men were acquitted in Till's murder by an all-White jury and some would suggest that police officers are given the same preferential treatment by the criminal justice system today.

Civil rights leaders have suggested that it will take the same type of sustained economic pressure of the Montgomery Bus Boycott to force real reform in the criminal justice system.

During a press conference following the announcement of the mistrial, Judy Scott, Walter Scott's mother said that, "justice will be served, because the God that I serve is able. Injustice will not prevail."

Scott continued: "It's not over. [God] will get his just reward."

to "The New York Times."

"Re: Walter Scott. When DA sounds like the defense, can't really be surprised by a mistrial. This is incredible," Coates tweeted.

During an interview last week on the "Today" show, Dorsey Montgomery II, the jury foreman from the Slager trial, said that several jurors had doubts about convicting the former police officer.

"Initially it was going to be murder," Montgomery said. Then jurors requested additional information about the evidence presented in the case and about the possible charges and "the things that were

presented to us by the judged, we had come to find out he didn't do anything malicious."

Since the 2014 murder of Eric Garner in Staten Island, N.Y, dozens of videos have surfaced showing violent, sometimes fatal, interactions between police and Black men and women. The ease of use of video technology in the information age has brought into public view a problem that has for decades been ignored and dismissed by mainstream media and White society at large: police brutality in the Black community.

Despite the brutal visual evi-



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## The Curly Corner

## Is Hair Typing Necessary?



**Destiny Johnson**  
Natural Hair Columnist

When you become a natural and then begin to peruse the internet for more information on how to care for your hair, you soon learn that natural hair is typically categorized into several different hair types. The hair types range from very tight curls to waves. If you Google “hair typing”, you can self-assess your own curls and decide if they fall into the 3C or 4B categories.

These hair types have been around for several years. Oprah’s personal hairstylist curated this list prior to the boom of the natural hair movement. However, many years later the hair typing system is still part of the natural hair bible. Everyone is supposed to fit into a category. Each category uses a number and a letter to decide how tightly curled your hair is. This list does not include strand density and assumes the person has the same curl pattern all over their head.

Each number and letter represents a different curl pattern. If you are in the 2 Category, your hair is mostly wavy and loosely curled. If you are in the 3 Category, your hair has tighter, corkscrew curls that are well-defined



without much product. The 4 Category, is characterized by very tightly curled hair to hair that does not have much of a curl pattern at all without manipulation.

Unfortunately, the hair typing system has led to division within the natural hair community. Instinctively, the categories of 2 and 3 are overrepresented in the

media. They are meant to epitomize the beauty of natural hair and have become the new “good hair”. A woman with type 4 hair, especially if she does not have defined curls, does not always meet the traditional natural hair aesthetic and is often ignored by the larger natural hair community.

Natural haired women with

looser, spiraled curls tend to enjoy large followings on YouTube, blogs and social media more often. Some women often work hard to prove that hair in Category 4 can grow long while it is expected that hair in Category 3 can grow longer with minimal effort.

The hair typing system has led to women and girls manipulating their hair to look like another hair type. This system even intuitively places each category ranging from 1 to 4 with 4 seeming like the lowest and least desired. Many woman have a range of textures on their head and a simplistic hair typing system will not represent them.

Hair typing places natural haired women in categories when we should be working together to place greater value on the beauty of all Black women. Although, these categories are helpful to possibly find out which products will work for certain hair types, the coarseness or fineness of your strands tends to play a greater role in how well your hair may be able to handle a specific product.

The hair typing system was a great stepping stone into developing my identity as a natural but my curls are so much more than a number and a letter. Natural curls and kinks cannot be categorized. Love your hair because it is yours and not because it falls in line with a system that cannot reflect the unique beauty of your strands.

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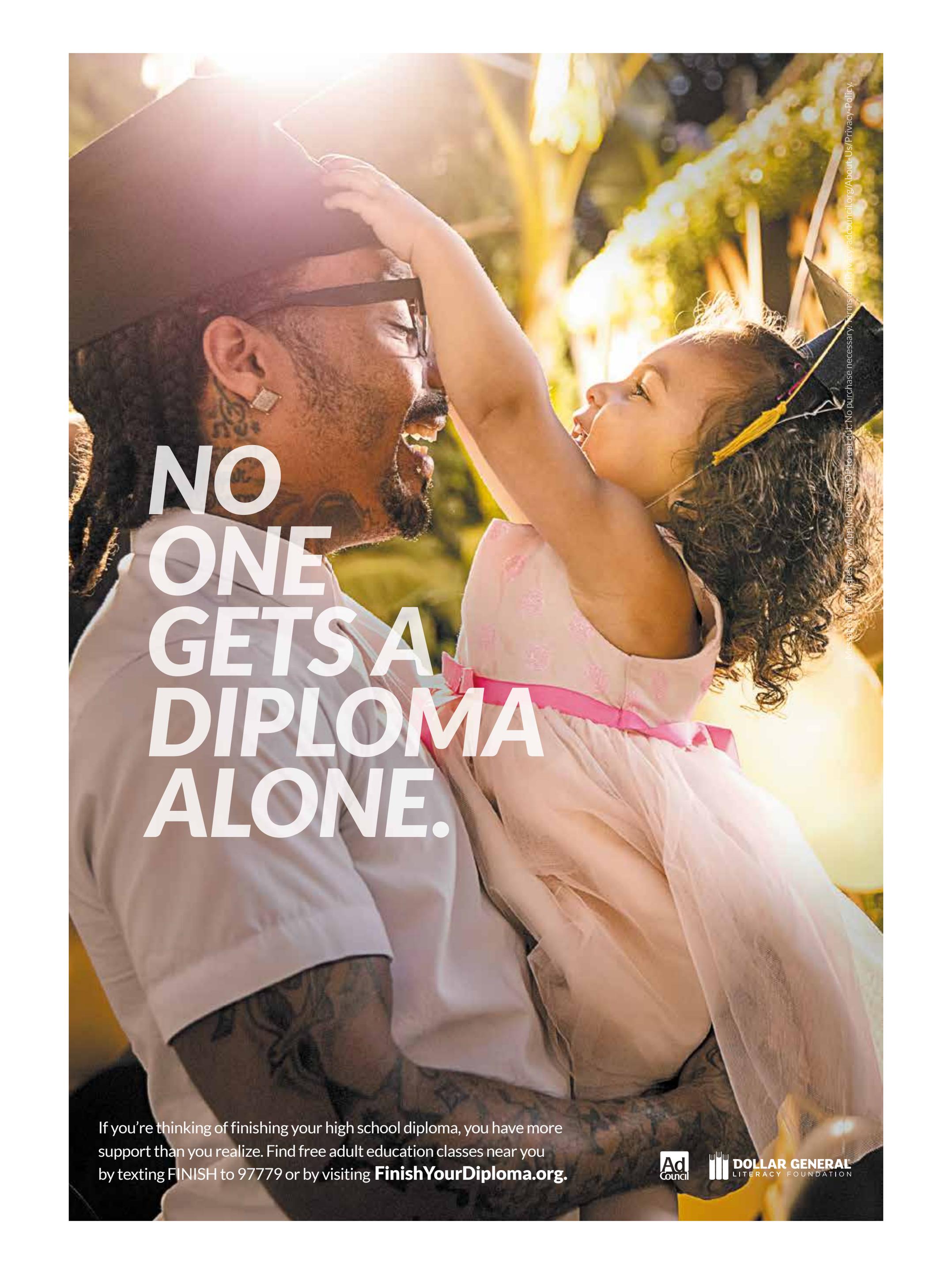
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