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Westbank Heritage Festival Highlights

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Data Zone Page 7

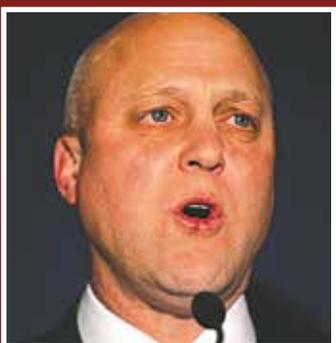
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Kaboom! New 7th Ward Playground Opens!

Page 2



Newsmaker

Will Mayor Landrieu be Under House Arrest?

Page 4

National News

Suicide or Homicide? Sandra Bland's Autopsy Brings Questions



Page 10

Kaboom! New Playground to Open in the 7th Ward



(left) National Urban League President & CEO Marc Morial joins volunteers and Marlon Jackson (center) to build the 7th Ward Marlon D. Jackson/Kaboom Playground on Saturday, August 28th.

Philanthropist Marlon Jackson Brings His Influence to New Orleans

Photos by Otis Henry

More than 300 volunteers from Marlon Jackson Study Peace Foundation, ENCORE Academy, organizers from KaBOOM! and the community joined forces on Friday, August 28, to give area kids the childhood they deserve by building a new playground at EN-

CORE Academy.

The playground build began early in the morning with volunteers arriving at an empty site. Within hours, KaBOOM! lead the volunteers in transforming the space into a vibrant neighborhood-gathering place. Within a few hours 300 volunteers and noted celebrities the entire community came together in the

Cover Story, Continued on page 5.

INSIDE DATA

Cover Story 2	Commentary 8
Newsmaker 4	Heath News 9
Data Zone 7	National News 0

DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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Mayor Landrieu Faces Possible House Arrest, City Held in Contempt

Data News Report

There is now only two days remaining for Mayor Mitch Landrieu and the New Orleans City Council to come up with "a reasonable plan" or for the Mayor to face possible house arrest until it is done. Civil District Judge Kern Reese held the city in contempt Friday September 4th, threatening Mayor Mitch Landrieu with house arrest over a long-running money fight with the city's firefighters.

The judge said he would give Landrieu one week to come up with a reasonable plan to pay the city's firefighters before imposing a sentence. Landrieu and members of the New Orleans City Council were in court when Reese made his ruling. In a press conference, the mayor stated he is extremely disappoint-



New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu

ed. "We believe (Reese) is wrong in the law," Landrieu said. In the courtroom, Judge Reese had this to say, "I don't envy you Mr. Mayor... but the can has been kicked down the road long enough."

The city plans to appeal the ruling. Landrieu said it undermines the fundamental principles of the U.S. Constitution. He added the city has gone "above and beyond" to settle the issue. "I am prepared to stay under house arrest for the next two years of my term," Landrieu said during the news conference. He said he would not sacrifice crucial city services or layoff first responders to satisfy Reese's ruling.

Landrieu inherited this fiscal headache that dates back decades, but as the current mayor, it is in his lap.

"We have a shared responsibility to make this right. This firefighters' pension system is one of the worst in the country. We are spending more on pensions than we are on the entire fire department and the firefighters themselves. Over the last ten years they have gambled and lost you, the taxpayers, money," Landrieu said.

The Firefighters Association had filed contempt charges against the city. It alleges the city failed in an agreement to pay nearly \$75 million in back wages.

A judge has already ruled the city owes the money to more than 1,000 firefighters or their families.

The city has said the association neglected to find a level headed approach, and paying that amount of money at one time could threaten essential services for citizens.

The city previously offered to pay \$15 million of the money upfront and the rest over the next 30 years.

Reese called the plan "absurd." But he expected both sides to come to negotiate a reasonable deal.

Council members were expected to have a settlement plan ready that would funnel \$42 million dollars to the firefighters' pension fund. They met Thursday in executive session to discuss the issue.

Since the council holds the purse strings, they could also be held in contempt. It is unclear when or if that ruling will be made.

"Anybody getting arrested is not where we should be going," said New Orleans Firefighters Union President Nick Felton. "Let's strap on the gloves and get in there and make this right for the city. My

God, it's been 35 years. It's time to put an end to this."

Felton said they are not trying to bankrupt the city and firefighters will continue to serve citizens as this money battle plays out.

"This does not have to be the one thing that breaks the city's back. There is a reasonable way that firefighters and the citizens of the city can move forward and put this whole matter to rest," Felton said.

Councilwoman Stacy Head released the following statement late Friday afternoon:

"The administration and the City Council have worked diligently to resolve long-standing disputes with some New Orleans firefighters. These disputes involve an outstanding judgment as well as reforming their pension system that was poorly managed and provided irrational benefits. My hope has been that



Orleans Parish Civil District Court Judge Kern Reese

with the intense effort that has been put in to resolve these disputes, we could improve the health of the pension system, pay outstanding judgments to the firefighters and other judgment creditors, and fund our city services without the need for a drastic tax increase. These negotiations have been progressing toward a sustainable, long-term solution, and I am shocked that the local state Court has taken what I believe to be a flawed legal position that tramples on the separation of powers, provides politically convenient support for a golden parachute retirement system, and attempts to deprive the people of New Orleans of city services they desperately deserve."

New Orleanians will be staying tuned to watch as this story continues to unfold.

Story originally reported by WVUE and edited by Data News Weekly

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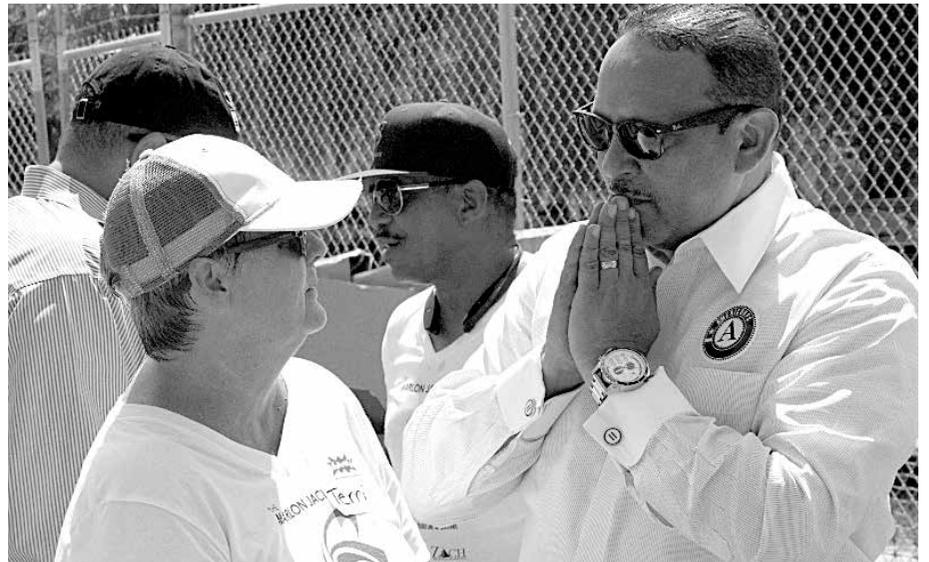


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Cover Story, Continued from page 2.



7th Ward to show support for New Orleans' youth having another safe place to play.

"We made a statement today. We told the world that we can work together for a good and common purpose", stated Terri Smith, Principal of Encore Academy Charter School on Arts Street. "To see the excitement as well as the approval on my kids' faces made all of this worthwhile for me" she concluded. The Encore Academy is slated to open this fall and the interest has been unprecedented...ultimately by all accounts it is destined to become the premiere "arts and music

school" of the entire metropolitan area.

"I have never had a problem with loaning my celebrity to a cause that positively impacts the lives of people, especially our young people", stated Marlon D Jackson of the world famous Jackson 5. This Ka-boom Playground bears his name at the front entrance. "I agree with First Lady Michelle Obama that we must place a special focus on keeping our children active and healthy and not in front of the TV or video games all day. This playground accomplishes that goal and I am honored to make this dedication to a

very deserving school", Jackson ended. The Marlon Jackson Study Peace Foundation was created to provide the basic fundamentals of a healthy environment for children. With the understanding of the importance of a cohesive community, the Marlon Jackson Study Peace Foundation is committed to giving children the balanced and active play they need to thrive.

Other notables is attendance included Harlem Globetrotter Big Nate, National Urban League President Marc Morial, New Orleans City Councilman Jared Brosette, Philanthropist Randy Haynie,

BESE Board Member as well as KaBoom Founder and CEO Darrell Hammond.

"As I look out with utter amazement I am still haunted by a question that my parents chose to never answer when I was a child. Why is it that kids can play so well together until adults become involved? My observation! ", concluded A. Lee Semien of Jackson International.

Since 1996, KaBOOM! has been dedicated to the bold goal of giving all kids – particularly those growing up in poverty in America – the childhoods they deserve, filled with balanced and active play, so

they can thrive. With its partners, KaBOOM! has built, improved and opened nearly 16,300 playgrounds, engaged more than one million volunteers, and served 8.1 million kids.

The ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Marlon D. Jackson Playground was held at 2:30 pm on that very same day to the excitement and applause of those committed to providing safe places for New Orleans' children.

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The Black Panthers

Vanguard of the Revolution



By Dwight Brown
NNPA Film Critic

It was a sign of the times for Black life in the '60s. Police brutality. Poor housing. Few job opportunities. Little chance for higher education. The response to the oppression in the South was demonstrations, sit-ins and peaceful civil disobedience. The response that bubbled to the surface in Oakland, Calif. was sheer anger and defiance. As Stokely Carmichael put it, "You tell all the white people in Mississippi that the scared 'N-Words' are all dead." And so the evolution of the Black Panther Party began.

Spreading from northern California to metropolitan areas across the nation,

a movement was born. Something in the swagger of the Panthers, the high self esteem, intelligence and physical appearance (berets, leather jackets and sunglasses) attracted young disenfranchised African Americans. It's taken 40 years for the story of their grassroots social revolution to be told in a feature-length documentary. At the helm is veteran non-fiction filmmaker Stanley Nelson (Jonestown: The Life and Death of Peoples Temple). He and his crew are well up to the task of sharing this bit of history.

Jamal Joseph, former Black Panther, sets the stage: "You didn't walk down the street with the same sense of safety as a white person. Police beat you up and

put a gun at your head on a daily basis." Elaine Brown a female ex-Panther concurs: "We couldn't unsee what we saw." Party founder Huey P. Newton explains the use of the panther as a symbol: "We used the Black Panther as our symbol because the nature of a panther doesn't strike anyone. When he's assailed, he'll back up first. But if the aggressor continues, he will strike out."

The difference between the Oakland crusaders for racial equality and their counterparts in the South was sheer audacity. These men/women openly carried guns. In fact, they went en masse to Sacramento to stop a law that would forbid people to carry weapons. That show of force garnered media attention

and put the Panthers on everyone's radar. It also marked a beginning of them using the media to their best advantage as they sought to break down a capitalist system, which in their eyes harbored racial and economic inequality.

Ex-panthers, like Kathleen Cleaver, who are now senior citizens, narrate the proceedings adding background and personal anecdotes to visions of iconic Panthers like Newton (the visionary), Bobby Seale (the personality) and Eldridge Cleaver (the intellectual). The trio went through a metamorphosis, camaraderie to mistrust, rivals to enemies.

A barrage of interviews with police, FBI informants, journalists, historians, Latino and White supporters and plenty

Panthers, Continued on page 11.

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Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Westbank Heritage Festival

Photos by Glenn Summers

Here are some of the many highlights from the Westbank Heritage Festival 2015 on Segnette Field at the Alario Center Saturday, September 5th and Sunday, September 6th. The event featured both local and national entertainment and as always, Data was there..



'Angry Black' Gunmen



Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Columnist

By **Julianne Malveaux**
NNPA Columnist

Alison Parker, a rookie news reporter at WDJB, the Roanoke, Va. CBS affiliate, had turned 24 just days before she was murdered on August 26. Her work partner, cameraman Adam Ward, was about to

move to Charlotte, N.C. because his fiancé, a producer at WDJB, had a new job.

Both Parker and Ward were described in superlative terms by their bosses, she as a "star" who lit up the screen and had a limitless future, he as a capable and thorough cameraman, dedicated to his jobs. By now, most have still photographs or footage of them being murdered on camera as Parker was interviewing Vicki Gardner, who led the local chamber of commerce. She was shot in the back, and has survived.

These on-air murders are about as grisly as they come, and there can be no explanation, except insanity, to account for them. What was wrong with Bryce Williams,

whose real name was Vester Flanagan? Why did he stalk and then kill two of his former colleagues? He'd sued his former employer for racial discrimination and had his claim rebuffed. Still, he maintained a sense of outrage because he felt he was treated unfairly.

You probably have never heard of Lonnie Gilchrist, a Wharton MBA, who was dismissed, he said, because of racism. He walked into the Merrill Lynch office in Boston and shot his boss, George Cook, saying, "No billionaire is going to ruin my life." He worked on commission, and according to many, was treated more like an office boy than a professional.

Charles Ogletree, now a Harvard Law professor, defended him

in 1988-89, along with two other attorneys. Gilchrist pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity, and his lawyers used "racial rage" as one of the reasons that Gilchrist killed Cook. The jury took five days and nearly 30 hours, and deadlocked before reaching a conclusion. The case might have been a slam-dunk, but the jury obviously found at least some merit in the racial rage defense.

Nobody deserves to be massacred at any stage of their life. The folks at Mother Emanuel AME Church had their lives cut short. The little children at Sandy Hook Elementary School, in Newton, Conn. had full lives ahead of them. Anyone who picks up a gun and decides to fire at a group of people

publicly has clearly taken leave of their senses.

Yet, there is a difference in the way crazed people are discussed in the media. Vester Flanagan was immediately described as angry and crazed, a judgment the media did not rush to when Dylann Roof, the shooter at Mother Emmanuel in Charleston and Adam Lanza, the shooter at Sandy Hook, embarked on insane massacre activity.

Can race be a factor? What happens when mental illness collides with racial rage?

The man who shot Alison Parker and Adam Ward either experienced or perceived racial slights. The station manager Jeff Marks said Flana-

Commentary,
Continued on page 9.

Demonizing 'Black Lives Matter'



George C. Curry
NNPA

Led by Fox News, conservatives are trying to discredit the #Black Lives Matter Movement by claiming incorrectly that it is a Black hate group that encourages the killing of police officers.

On the Aug. 31 edition of Fox & Friends, Elizabeth Hasselbeck asked, "Why has the Black Lives Matter Movement – Black Lives Matter Movement – not been classified yet as a hate group? I mean, how much more has to go in this direction before someone actually labels it as such?"

Conservative pundit Katie Pavlich, without a thread of evidence, told Fox's Megyn Kelly on Sept. 2 that Black Lives Matter is "a movement that promotes the execution of police officers."

At a news conference on Aug. 30, the Harris County Sheriff Ron

Hickman acknowledged that no motive had been established for the previous day's fatal shooting of Deputy Sheriff Darren H. Goforth outside of Houston. But that did not prevent him from linking the brutal cop murder to the grassroots group dedicated to curtailing violence.

He said, "This rhetoric has gotten out of control." So much so, he said, "to the point where calculated, cold-blooded assassination of police officers happen." Hickman added, "We've heard Black lives matter, all lives matter. Well, cops' lives matter, too. So, how about we drop the qualifier and just say lives matter?"

Of course, there is not a scintilla of evidence that the Black Lives Matter Movement has at any point remotely supported the killing of law enforcement officers. Rather, they have highlighted the troubling number of unarmed African Americans killed by police officers. And for that, they should be commended, not condemned.

After studying FBI data, USA Today found, "Nearly two times a week in the United States, a white police officer killed a black person during a seven-year period ending in 2012...The reports show that 18% of the blacks killed during

those seven years were under age 21, compared to 8.7% of whites."

Despite the highly-publicized killing of police officers in Texas and Illinois, the number of law enforcement officers killed over the first eight months of 2015 is 16 percent lower than it was over a similar period in 2014, according to FBI figures compiled by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund.

So far, 26 officers have been killed this year by firearms, down from 31 over a similar period last year. More officers – 38 – died this year in traffic-related incidents than by gunfire and another 21 died from other causes.

Felony killings of law enforcement officers decreased by 50 percent from 1992 to 2013, from 10,000 to 5,000 annually.

In an attempt to shift the emphasis from the unjustified police killing of unarmed African Americans, conservatives are raising the issue of so-called Black-on-Black crime – as if that's an issue that truly concerns them.

Fox reporter Doug McKelway said on Sept. 1, "The often heard mantra that 'Black Lives Matter,' some say, falls flat when you con-

sider just how many Blacks are killing other Blacks. That remains the majority of homicides across the country."

Larry Elder, a Black conservative, made the same point, the same day on the same network: "This is about people whining and bitching and moaning about nonsense. If they really want to talk about Black Lives Matter, the fact is that last year 6,000 Black people murdered other Black people. Where are they on that? And the number one preventable cause of death for young black men is homicide at the hands of other Black men."

If Elder and McKelway wanted to be accurate, they would have pointed out that just as most Blacks kill other Blacks, most Whites kill other Whites. Yet, there is no mention of White-on-White crime.

According to 2013 figures compiled by the FBI, of the 3,005 White homicide victims, 2,509 – 83 percent – were killed by Whites. Of the 2,491 Black homicides that year, 2,245 – 90 percent – were committed by Black assailants.

It's not just a matter of Blacks killing other Blacks and Whites killing other Whites – most homicides are committed by people who know

their victim. The assailant is usually an acquaintance, spouse, or other family member.

In its annual report on Black homicides, issued in January, the Washington-based Violence Policy Center found that in cases where the relationship between the killer and victim was known, 70 percent of the victims were killed by someone they knew; only 30 percent were killed by strangers.

Furthermore, 52 percent of the homicides involved an argument between the victim and the offender.

In an editorial, the New York Times accused "the Republican Party and its acolytes in the news media" of trying to demonize the Black Lives Matter Movement.

It said, "They [Black Lives Matter] are not asserting that black lives are more precious than white lives. They are underlining an indisputable fact – that the lives of black citizens in this country historically have not mattered, and have been discounted and devalued."

George E. Curry, former editor-in-chief of Emerge magazine, is editor-in-chief of the National Newspaper Publishers Association News Service (NNPA) and BlackPressUSA.com.

Changing the Color of What You Eat

By Valecia Weeks
Special to the NNPA from

Have you ever just stopped and taken a close look at the variety of colors the different fruits are that we should be consuming on a daily basis? Have you ever thought of how these colorful, strangely shaped, consumable objects can benefit our bodies? Well, when it comes to those multi-colored foods, we are what we eat. Not only does an apple a day keep the doctor away; but when we consume a variety of fruits on a daily basis, we get a great source of vitamins and antioxidants that all our bodies need to fight off disease. Each and every fruit is unique in that each one contains different vitamins and minerals; so, when it comes to consumption of your favorite fruit, change it up every now and then because each fruit contains different vitamins and minerals; therefore, making variety your spice of life. Below is a list of commonly consumed fruits and how they can benefit your body.

Apples: If you are looking to build muscle and get those sculpted arms for the summer, try adding apples to your diet on a regular basis. Eating the peel with the apple will help build muscle. Not only do apples help with your outer appearance, they will also give you that daily dose of fiber that you need to help



regulate your digestive system.

Bananas: Bananas contain a healthy dose of potassium, which can keep your heart in a healthier state. They can also help in the prevention of bone degeneration. Bananas help regenerate your bones, organs, and cells. Unbeknown to some, Vitamin C is also found in bananas and helps reduce the nega-

tive effects of aging. Is there a diva around who wouldn't want a natural anti-aging agent?

Grapes: These little sweet round fruits contain potassium, phosphorus, and iron, which a woman's body can definitely benefit from. Grapes also improve nitric oxide levels in the bloodstream to help prevent blood clots.

Oranges: One of the main benefits of oranges is the high amounts of Vitamin C they contain. Oranges protect your heart and keeps inflammation of the body away. Eating an orange a day will help lower the risk of heart disease. The natural oil in oranges helps keep your skin looking young and fresh. Now,

this is something that all we divas can benefit from.

Pineapples: This fruit is a high energy density food that contains more calories than other fruits. Pineapples are great to add to your diet if you're trying to lose weight. So, good bye to all the weight loss powders. The fiber they contain provides a feeling of fullness so you'll eat less.

Strawberries: Nutrition and enjoyment go hand in hand eating strawberries. This fruit promotes healthy teeth and gums. This would be a great fruit to add on a regular basis if you are suffering from any type of gum disease. Strawberries also help heal wounds. They contain a vitamin called folic acid which helps with tissue growth and cell functions.

Watermelon: Surprisingly, this fruit contains high amounts of protein which provides long term energy for your body. Also, the water found in watermelon will keep you hydrated. So if drinking an ample amount of water daily is your challenge, then watermelon is the fruit for you.

There are a wide variety of fruits for you to choose from. All contain healthy benefits for your body inside and out. Eating fruit in the first part of your day will help cleanse your body. Add different fruits to your diet to help your body get all the vitamins and minerals it needs.

Commentary, Continued from page 8.

gan was "a man with a lot of anger." If even a fraction of the slights Flanagan said he'd experienced were true, he had a right to be angry. Watermelon jokes? Monkey slurs? In the 21st century? Come on people.

Some of us can turn the slur around or ignore it. White folks might find this funny and some African Americans might find themselves profoundly offended. Those who already feel beleaguered might feel so offended that they'd respond angrily enough to be labeled "hostile" by a human resource manager.

Lonnie Gilchrist was also labeled an "angry" man. One of his bosses said he got so angry at criticism that he reacted with such an outburst that "we were very frightened." How much stereotyping goes into labeling some Black men as frightening? Do they have to be

taller? Larger? Or, simply blacker? Descriptions of Flanagan as an angry Black man need to be contextualized. Some describe him as an arrogant man with a chip on his shoulder. Some of those terms are subjective.

How many African Americans have been described as "angry" when they simply attempt to hold their own in a mostly White space? One coworker said Flanagan was angry because he responded crisply when she described him as "too quiet." I guess if he laughed aloud he may have been considered "too boisterous."

Even as we mourn Alison Parker and Adam Ward, we have to ask why their murderer snapped. We have to ask why there are so many "angry Black men." They don't all scream, they don't all shout, they

don't all shoot; most let their corrosive anger swallow them from inside. Many of those outwardly functioning Black men die a decade earlier than their White counterparts because of the anger they've internalized.

What happens to a dream deferred, wrote Langston Hughes? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? Does it fester like a sore and then run. Maybe it just sags like a heavy load. Or, does it explode?

Lonnie Gilchrist exploded. Flanagan exploded. We can call them deranged, disturbed, or simply angry. Yet, we do ourselves a disservice if we fail to examine race as one source of their explosion.

Julianne Malveaux is an author and economist based in Washington, DC. She can be reached at www.juliannealveaux.com

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Sandra Bland: Suicide or Homicide?

New Evidence Questions Autopsy Reports

By Mary L. Datcher
Special to Data News Week

When a parent loses a child, it's described as the deepest numbness that encompasses their being. It's often brought on with a freight load of mixed emotions—guilt, anger, sadness, bitterness—grief. It doesn't matter if you are the parent of a small child or an adult—the role rarely changes. This grief increases when a child is murdered or their passing is untimely, caused by a tragic situation.

On July 13th, 2015, Geneva Reed-Veal was notified of the worst news that a parent could possibly receive when her daughter, Sandra Bland, was found dead in the Waller County jail cell in Texas.

The story has been reported. So let's recap.

The 28-year old Naperville, IL woman was pulled over for a routine traffic stop by Texas state trooper, Brian T. Encinia, while in route to the local Walmart to shop for groceries. He cited her for changing lanes without using her turning signal. What was to be a warning, immediately escalated with the junior officer demanding that Bland put out her cigarette and to exit her vehicle. As shown on the video cam, Bland and the officer go back and forth with Sandra informing the officer of her rights. However, what was captured by a bystander was Officer Encinia and another officer pushing Bland to the ground as they handcuffed her. The audio reveals Sandra swearing at the officers after they knocked her head to the ground. When she told them of her epileptic seizures, Officer Encinia angrily replies, 'Good.'

Since her July 10th arrest on a third-degree felony charge of an assault on a public servant, there has been video footage released by the Waller County Jail officials, which contest allegations that she was murdered instead of the reported suicide on the morning of July 13th. The moment that her alleged suicide was announced to the media and fact that she died in custody of a Texas county jail—it didn't make sense. To the African American community, this was an unfortunate and constant reoccurrence of another Black person dying while in custody. Assumptions of foul play immediately lit up social media and brought serious questions to the



surface - what really happened to Sandra Bland?

With a plethora of questions surrounding this case, a wrongful-death lawsuit has been filed in Federal District Court in Houston by Sandra Bland's family. The lawsuit named the Texas Department of Public Safety, Texas state trooper, Brian T. Encinia and two guards at the Waller County Jail, and claims Trooper Encinia had false reasons for the initial arrest. In addition, jailers failed to check on Bland when she refused meals and was uncontrollably crying.

Since the autopsy was released by the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences, its findings coincided with the injuries related to death by hanging. The autopsy was signed by Sara N. Doyle, the Assistant Medical Examiner on July 22.

There is some dissenting information when reading the autopsy, which has raised some eyebrows regarding the accounts which lead up to Bland's death.

According to the autopsy report, on July 13, 2015 Sandra Annette Bland was pronounced dead at 9:06am in the Waller County Jail in cell 95, where she was found hanged. What was received with the body was a paper bag labeled "Trash Bag Used as ligature on 7-13-15 at 12:14 pm. Waller County

Jail took into possession, a transparent plastic bag tied into a ligature, which is described as EVIDENCE OF INJURY.

On the Waller County Jail time stamped video, jailer Cynthia Whidden, (in a dark blue uniform) is seen going back to check on Bland's cell and immediately walks towards another jailer indicating that something is wrong. You see several officers approach Bland's cell discovering her body. In the custody death report, both jailers and deputies (tan uniformed officers) enter her cell. One holds Sandra's body up while the other removes the ligature from around her neck then lays her on the floor to perform CPR. After, deputies attempted to revive Bland, EMS are brought in but she is pronounced dead at 9:06am, which begs the question, why was the ligature put back on Bland's neck and left there for three hours before sending her to the Houston medical examiner's office? The possibility of tampering with the crime scene is being questioned. There was no movement in the hallway for 90 minutes based on the motion detected video camera inside the county jail.

This has created some major doubt regarding the original report and Austin, TX resident, David Fisher is an unofficial crusader, seek-

ing to have all of these questions answered—honestly. He's known as the "Butt-inski". Neither an attorney or licensed private investigator, but over the last 15 years he has carved a niche as a consultant many cases on to review corruption of county medical examiners. His nose for fraud and injustices within the Texas law enforcement system has allowed him entry into working with attorneys, county insiders and other investigators.

He believes the Houston medical examiner's autopsy report can be disputed by the Bland family based on the unexplained accounts which were released by the Waller County Jail.

"This becomes a problem in the autopsy report. There's a notation that strongly suggests that the ligature was replaced around Sandra Bland's neck after she was pronounced dead and left on her neck for 3 hours," Fisher said. "That would be a bomb. That is tampering and that is a third degree felony. This was intended for one purpose only - to make sure there was a mark on her neck; and further suggests that there wasn't a mark on her neck when she was found."

From the time that the Waller County Jail deputies were told by Bland that she had epileptic seizures, there was negligence in

checking in on her, which is required. The Texas Commission on Jail Standards has revoked Waller County Jail's certification. This is the third time the facility has been warned about this violation. Waller County Jail officials are also at fault for not meeting state standards or mental health training.

In late July, an independent committee on the Bland case was formed by Waller County District Attorney, Elton Mathis. There are two African American lawyers assigned to investigate how the case has been handled by all involved including the Waller County Jail officials, Texas Rangers and the Harris County medical examiner's office. Both Darrell Jordan, a Houston attorney and Lewis White from the Sugar Land area along with two other attorneys have the power to subpoena witnesses.

They have been sent key documents and speculations by Fisher's independent investigation, which includes investigating the Waller County Jail breakfast order, which may be critical in the case. It is routine to order inmate's meals one day in advance.

"The sheriff goes through some detail pointing out that on the table beside her bed are sandwiches wrapped in cellophane and points out that this was her dinner that she didn't eat from Sunday night.

He adds, "If she didn't eat her breakfast, then the container wasn't open, it should have been on the table with the sandwiches or on her bed. The video is good enough to count the number of boxes on that cart." On the video, it shows a male officer serving inmates breakfast at 6:34am but it's indicated that Bland refuses her meal. The video is also not clear that there is any actual exchange between the two without audio.

Another observation in review of the cell 95 was the odd oversized trash-can. During the media tour of Bland's cell, the photo clearly shows a brown paper bag in which an untouched sandwich is still inside along with a styrofoam cup, an opened book laying on the bed along with an unused transparent trash bag hanging off the side of the black trash can. The sheriff informed the media that the janitorial service had come into the cell to replace the trash bag.

National News, Continued
on next page.

Panthers/ Continued from page 6.

of detractors gives a full perspective on how that party, its leaders, members and goals were perceived. Archival footage, TV appearances, photos, newspaper headlines, terse discussions, inspiring or inflammatory speeches from podiums at huge demonstrations... few stones are left unturned. In 1h 53m, what parades before your eyes is an historical montage that starts out like an old-school educational documentary, then adds on layers of facts, figures, recollections and shocking revelations that make you question how anyone lived through those times without being politically or socially involved.

The most eerie and unsettling subplot is the insidious, evil and dastardly machinations of the FBI, under the direction of J. Edgar Hoover. Encouraging local police to assassinate Panther members, planting informants in the party whose duplicity lead to murders, sending letters implying infidelities to spouses of party members, manipulating the relationships between Newton and Cleaver so they were at each other's

throats. There was little they would not do to thwart any gains towards racial equality, which they saw as a threat to the government. If only half of the FBI dealings in this film are true, it makes you rethink the assassinations of Malcolm, JFK, RFK and MLK. Hoover's program "Counterintelligence Program Black Nationalist-Hate Groups" was right from the devil's playbook.

Several key moments stand out: 1.) Panther members starting a breakfast program for kids, meals for the poor and free health clinics. 2.) Little Bobby Hutton following Cleaver's misguided call for an armed war on cops after MLK's death, and meeting his own. 3.) 21 NYC Panthers are charged with terrorist activities and jailed for years. 4.) Fred Hampton, Deputy Chairman of Illinois Black Panther Party, gives a profound speech in Chicago with the verve of a born leader, "You can jail revolutionaries, but you can't jail a revolution." 5.) Liaisons with the Latino group the Young Lords and the Young Patriots, white boys from Appalachia,

are noted.

Whittling down what must have been countless hours of possibilities into a coherent film was done by director/producer/writer Stanley Nelson and editor Algernon Tunzil. The pacing starts off slow, and seems to build as the dramatic moments of the Panther's existence materialize. Then, like a decades old drama, that energy splinters and flickers out. The music (Tom Phillips) and sound (JT Takagi) are perfect effects.

There are plenty of incidences of the Panther's being under attack, none on view of the Panthers attacking. Surely a loosely organized national group like this, who didn't vet members, some of whom had prison records, made more mistakes than are accounted for in this film. There is only a brief bit about the sexist dynamics between the women and men that drove some female members out of the group. This aspect needed more explanation. There is no mention of Panther member George Jackson, who was shot to death in San Quentin Prison

during an attempted escape. Cleaver's arrest for rape is not divulged. Bobby Seale, who is still alive, is not interviewed. Why? Sometimes you don't feel like you're getting a "warts and all" accounting.

Stick with this movie. It has a lot to say, a lot to reveal and is pertinent to today's testy police/civilian race relations. For four decades, possibly in a very imperfect way, some determined people sought to change the course of American history. Some lofty goals, such as dismantling capitalism, were not achieved. Some ideals, are now part of the fabric of the country, like breakfast programs for inner city kids.

There is no change without unrest. There is no change without a combined effort. For outsiders who viewed the group as anti-white racists, they are wrong. Bobby Seale said: "We don't hate anyone because of their color. We hate oppression," Bobby Seale.

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National News, Continued from previous page.

Fisher said this is a major amateur move, "The sheriff said janitor came in to replace the bag, so you better tell the media before you present it; that the cell was the crime scene and has not been altered. If the janitorial services came in, why is the cell not cleaned up? Why are there day old sandwiches still on her nightstand?" he ponders.

According to the account of events—this is purely speculation. But, it raises grave concerns and the Waller County District Attorney's office is taking each inquiry quite serious. The most incriminating evidence may be the trash bag used as a 'hanging' tool to allegedly precipitate Bland's death. Apparently, Bland double tied the trash bag to create the ligature hanging it from the 2 inch bar supporting the privacy partition separating the toilet area within the cell. The Boy Scout signature style knot would require the skills of someone who has the ability to tie a sturdy and strong knot.

According to the Custodial Death Report, Waller County Jail officials contacted Texas Ranger Ellison who arrived at 10:37am for a briefing, then entered Bland's cell at 10:39am. At 10:45am Justice of the Peace, Judge Karisch was notified, arriving Waller County Jail at 11:39am.

The Texas Rangers is a unit of the Department of Public Safety and currently working with the F.B.I. but Fisher has his misgivings



Pictured is Jail Cell 95 where Sandra was found hanging.

of the elite group's fairness in this investigation. Based on his experience working on the Rodney Reed case, an African American inmate on death row charged with the Capitol murder of Stacey Stite he has reason for his doubts. Fisher alleges the Texas Rangers are behind framing Reed and should be investigated regarding the mysterious self-inflicted death of a detective that was close to bringing forth evi-

dence to implement Officer Jimmy Fennell. The detective was the former roommate of the unidentified Ranger.

Furthermore, the medical examiner's assessment of marijuana found in Bland's system may allegedly be connected to calming down a major seizure, according to Fisher's account. His speculation leads to the possibility that the slamming of Bland's head to

the ground by Officer Encinia may have cause Bland to later have an epileptic seizure inducing a coma. "They may have attempted treatment of her off the books without notifying a doctor. Since it was up for such a big debate, it's implied that marijuana can reduce a seizure," Fisher said. It is a far fetched measure but one that Fisher doesn't put past the Waller County Jail officials to save face in an incredibly disastrous situation.

According to David Fisher, he's shared his conclusions with the independent committee, the president of the Houston NAACP Chapter and has made several attempts to contact the Bland family attorney, Cannon Lambert without success.

As it stands, the media coverage continues and speculations are being sorted through. The hope that there is 'fair' and 'due' process for justice is the ultimate goal for everyone involved. At a recent dinner for the 60th Anniversary Commemorating the Death of Emmett Till, Geneva Reed-Veal shared her thoughts with attendees.

"All of this is injustice against Blacks, so when I tell you I did not know devastation until now, My 'new normal'—I don't like it. But I'm going to keep speaking for my baby. All of you mothers in here know what I'm talking about. Today, over a month later—we still don't have what we asked for," Sandra Bland's mother said. "This has got to stop. I'm not going to be silent—I'm going to continue to talk."

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