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## Omar Tyree Makes Literary Return, Holds Tight to Big Dreams, Embarks on Summer Tour

*Omar Tyree, a seasoned writer, kicked off his latest book “Control” with a book tour in Harlem, New York on May 21, 2024.*

*The psychological thriller was published by Kensington/Dafina and restarts Tyree’s literary career. The acclaimed author began publishing novels in his early twenties. Thirty years later, he is still writing books, after taking a 15-year break. “Control” marks Tyree’s 31st book as Tyree returns to the mainstream literary scene. It touches on mental health and interpersonal relationship topics while incorporating the topic, control and how much of it we have in life. The New York Times Bestselling author and NAACP Image Award winner will be at the Baltimore Hair Show Meet & Greet Event on Saturday, June 1, 2024 at 1 p.m. at Stevenson University, Owings Mills Campus, located 100 Campus Circle. (See article on page 9)*

*Photo: Mario Clark Media*



# The Overcome: A Black Passover - A New Perspective on Triumph and Resilience

By **Karanja Gaçuca**

In the realm of literature that explores the experiences of people of African descent globally, both in Africa as well as her diaspora, and America in particular, “The Overcome: A Black Passover,” by Father Peter W. D. Bramble, Ph.D., stands as a transformative work. Drawing parallels between the Jewish Passover and the African diaspora’s journey from slavery to liberation, Bramble offers a conceptual solution to the problems encountered by the Black community not just in America but globally as well.

I sat down with Bramble to delve into the themes of the book’s prescription for overcoming adversity. Bramble, a retired Episcopal priest and native of Montserrat in the West Indies has left remnants of his community activism all over Baltimore. He served as Rector of St Katherine of Alexandria Episcopal Church in Baltimore from 1976 to 1997 and as Rector and Pastor of St Mark’s Episcopal Church in Brooklyn, New York from 1997 to 2015. Once referred to as the “entrepreneurial priest,” by a Baltimore Sun article (Apr 5, 1992), Bramble has had a hand in everything from running grocery stores to building housing. I asked Bramble to extrapolate on the themes in the book. It was particularly noteworthy that despite being a priest, He approaches faith from a broad spiritual perspective that acknowledges a diversity of faiths and even harkens back to African spirituality.

Furthermore, Bramble emphasizes the need for unity that transcends political and philosophical divisions. He states, “It cannot be a partisan thing” on the question of ideological

interpretations of history. “We want something that’s more unifying... The quest for a common experience that lifts humanity up should go beyond labels and ideologies.”

### The Strength of Overcoming

The resilience and ability to overcome adversity is borne out daily in the lives of people of African descent.

This interpretation of Bramble’s prescription places Africans globally in the rightful place of strength. It acknowledges history while also recognizing the uniquely inherent strength and resilience of people of African descent. This perspective does not negate the challenges faced but instead reframes them as evidence of the ability to overcome.

In this light, “The Overcome” becomes not just a liturgy of Black remembrance but also a celebration of Black triumph. It becomes a testament to the strength of the African spirit and the resilience of African people globally.

Bramble critiques the approach of asking for reparations without demonstrating power. He draws parallels to the biblical story of Moses confronting Pharaoh. Just as Moses demanded, “Let my people go,” contemporary struggles for justice require assertiveness and a demonstration of strength.

He further draws a distinction between mere survival and triumphant overcoming. He likens it to a Passover—a powerful metaphor. Just as the Jewish Passover commemorates liberation from Egyptian slavery, overcoming represents a universal victory. “It’s not passive; it’s active transformation.”

The subsequent celebration in “The

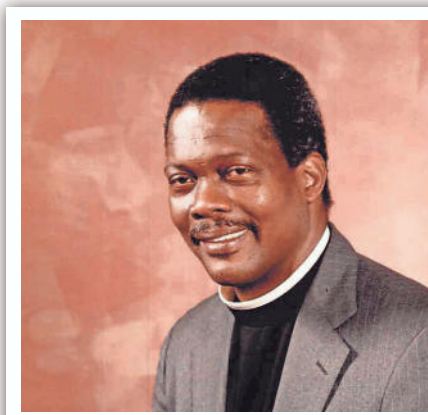
Feast of The Overcome,” celebrating the achievements and contributions of people of African descent will serve to keep people informed as well as engaged and constantly aware of this amazing resilience, positioning people of African descent globally in their rightful place as the greatest overcomers in history.

### Roadmap to the “Feast of The Overcome”

The Baltimore Times will undertake a monthly series of articles that celebrate and expound further on the individual overcomers named in the book. This series will culminate on April 4, 2025, the anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s assassination, with a celebration of the Overcome. “The Overcome Institute” will be established to lead the efforts of the logistics of the celebration of the “Feast of the Overcome.” Specific activities will be funded, initiatives implemented, as well as working with organizations to do the important work that showcases the resilience of people of African descent everywhere.

### Call to Action

This ceremony can become an annual celebration in concert with existing organizations that currently exist to celebrate the individual overcomers named in the book, as well as others



*Peter W. D. Bramble, Ph.D.*

not named, such as the assassinated President of Burkina Faso, Thomas Sankara, MauMau warrior Dedan Kimathi, as well as others paving the way for a global celebration.

### Conclusion

In the end, the true power of “The Overcome” lies not just in its narrative but also in its ability to inspire new narratives. It encourages us to redefine ourselves from the position of our strength, rather than on the challenges. Indeed, challenges are a universal reality. It is the “Overcoming” that in fact sets Africans everywhere apart. Bramble’s unique perspective, rooted in both spirituality and pragmatism, invites readers to rethink their role in shaping a more unified and empowered future.

*Karanja is a former Wall Street analyst, consultant, journalist and activist who writes on issues of global geopolitics as it pertains to people of African descent globally, as well as politics, economics, finance and tech! Karanja is also a tech founder.*

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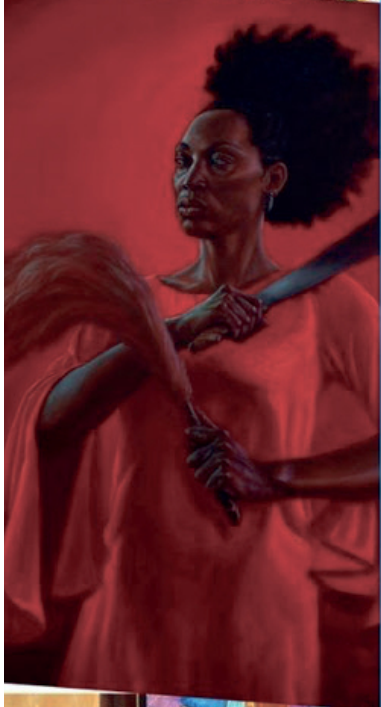
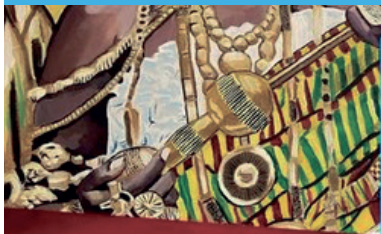
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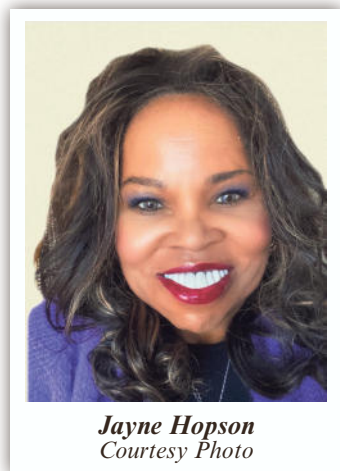
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**Jayne Hopson**  
Courtesy Photo

# Staying Alive: Water Safety Practices to Save Lives of Black Children

By Jayne Hopson

Death by drowning is often silent, occurring quickly and without warning. Each year, water accidents claim the lives of hundreds of children. In an instant, a fun-filled summer outing can become the scene of a fatal swimming accident. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that drowning is the leading cause of accidental death for children.

The statistics are particularly alarming for Black children ages 10-14, who are 7.6 times more likely to drown than their white peers. This is a preventive health crisis. To combat this disparity, the community must take immediate and comprehensive action.

Essential measures include offering water safety classes, organized swimming lessons, and encouraging diversity in aquatic employment. Providing access to Red Cross lifeguard training and certification to Black children can help bridge the gap and ensure that pools are staffed with individuals who can serve as both lifeguards and role models.

Teaching Black children how to swim is not just a preventative measure; it is a life-saving imperative. This effort requires the involvement of various community stakeholders. Health providers, particularly school nurses, can play a crucial role in educating families about the importance of swimming skills.

Faith leaders can advocate for swimming lessons as part of their community programs, including vacation Bible school curriculums. Parents, too, can push for water safety and swimming instruction to be incorporated into school curricula.

Dr. Claire McCarthy, a primary care pediatrician at Boston Children's Hospital and an assistant professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School, emphasizes the practical skills that can save lives. She notes, "A child doesn't need to be able to swim butterfly or do flip turns, but the ability to get back to the surface, float, tread water, and swim to where they can stand or grab onto something can save a life."

The CDC offers the following advice to guide parents in selecting safe facilities and properly trained instructors for swimming lessons:

- **Supervision:** Ensure that a qualified lifeguard or swimming instructor is present at all times during the swimming lessons. They should be vigilant and attentive to the swimmers in the pool.
- **Qualified instructors:** Make sure the swimming lessons are conducted by certified and experienced swimming instructors who are trained in water safety and rescue techniques.
- **Age-appropriate lessons:** Ensure that the swimming lessons are tailored to the age and skill level of the participants. Young children and beginners should start with basic skills and gradually progress to more advanced techniques.
- **Proper warm-up and stretching:** Begin each lesson with a warm-up session and stretching exercises to prevent injuries and prepare the body for swimming.
- **Swim in designated areas:** Make sure the swimming lessons take place

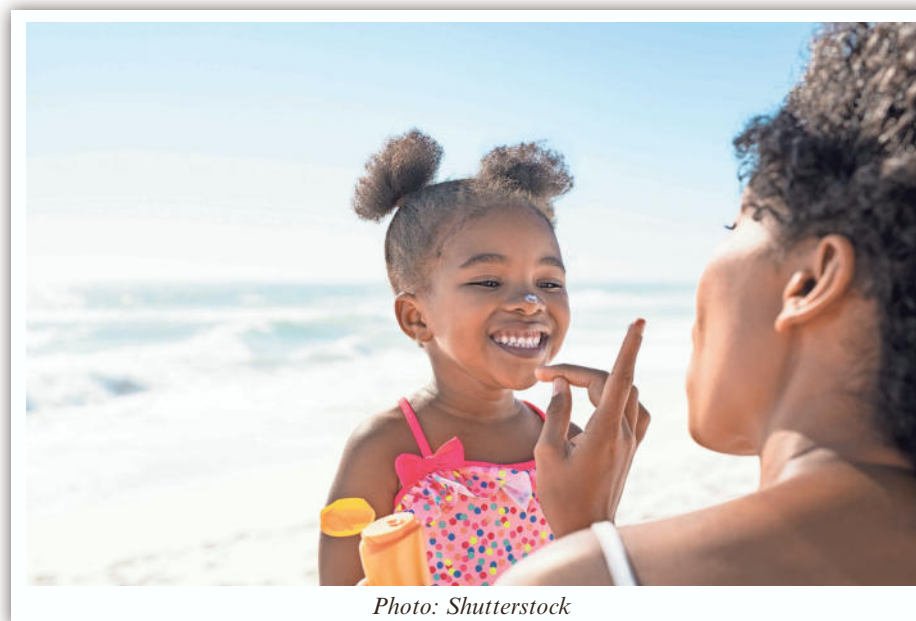


Photo: Shutterstock

in designated swimming areas, such as swimming pools or supervised beaches, that are safe and free from hazards.

- **Teach water awareness:** In addition to swimming techniques, emphasize water awareness and safety rules, such as not diving in shallow water, not swimming alone, and knowing how to recognize and respond to signs of distress in the water.
- **Learn basic rescue techniques:** Teach advanced swimmers basic water rescue techniques, including how to assist someone in distress without endangering themselves. This knowledge can be invaluable in case of emergencies.
- **Proper use of flotation devices:** If needed, use appropriate flotation devices, such as life jackets or floaties, especially for beginners or those who are not confident swimmers. However, remember that these devices do not replace proper supervision and swimming skills.
- **Sun protection:** Remind students to apply waterproof sunscreen before the

lessons and reapply it regularly, especially if the swimming lessons take place outdoors. Additionally, encourage the use of hats and UV-protective swimwear.

- **Hydration and breaks:** Encourage swimmers to stay hydrated by providing water breaks during swimming lessons, particularly in hot weather conditions.
- **Pool rules and etiquette:** Teach swimmers about pool rules, such as no running on the pool deck, no diving in shallow areas, and respecting other swimmers' space. This helps to create a safe and enjoyable swimming environment.

Dr. McCarthy reminds parents, "Just because a child can swim doesn't mean he can't drown. Children can get tired, hurt, trapped, snagged, or disoriented. Even strong swimmers can get into trouble. While swimming lessons help save lives, children should always, always be supervised around water, and should wear life jackets for boating and other water sports."

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## National

# President William Ruto's Historic State Visit to the United States

By Karanja Gaçuça

As President Ruto embarked on his state visit to the United States on May 22 - 23, 2024, the spectacle of diplomacy was on full display. The visit, marking the 60th anniversary of official U.S.-Kenya relations, was hailed as a celebration of shared values and cooperation.

While the visit was marked by affirmations of shared democratic values and mutual commitments, it is essential to examine the claims and the implications of the agreements made.

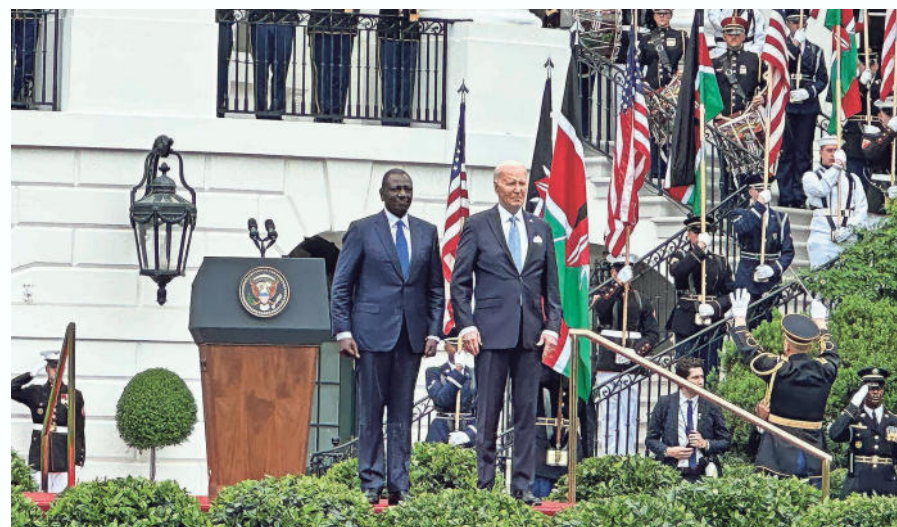
The joint press conference between Presidents Biden and Ruto echoed these sentiments, focusing on the partnership's benefits, including health, climate solutions, trade, and security.

Despite the White House's optimistic portrayal, there were elements of the visit that sparked controversy and criticism. For instance, President Ruto had an engagement with former President Obama, but House Speaker Mike Johnson wouldn't allow Ruto to address Congress, raising eyebrows and questions about the diplomatic snub.

### Economic Concerns and the Nairobi-Washington Vision

The Nairobi-Washington Vision initiative, aimed at reducing the debt burden on developing nations, was a key topic during the visit. There are real questions about whether Washington is a credible partner on this question.

Why might any of this matter for a Baltimore resident? Well, firstly, there is a significant segment of Baltimore's population that is of Kenyan descent. Secondly, there was much touted about technological cooperation, particularly around the manufacturing of microchips which has emerged as a national security concern.



(L to R): President William Ruto of Kenya and President Joe Biden at the welcome ceremony on the South lawn of the White House on Thursday, May 23, 2024.

Photo: Karanja Gaçuça

For Baltimore, a city that is seeking to get to the forefront as a tech hub, agreements made around chip manufacturing actually warrant a second gander.

### Technology: The Silicon Savannah and Beyond

The visit underscored Kenya's ambition to become a "Silicon Savannah," a hub for technology and innovation in Africa. For Baltimore, a city striving to bolster its own tech industry, this presents an opportunity to observe and learn from Kenya's burgeoning tech sector. The partnerships and discussions around technology during the visit, including engagements with major tech companies, could pave the way for future collaborations that might benefit Baltimore's tech community.

### Health Tech: Strengthening Global Health Systems

On the health tech front, President Ruto's visit resulted in significant

agreements aimed at transforming the Kenya-U.S. health partnership. The signing of MoUs between the CDC and Kenya's health institutions to develop a sustainability roadmap for Kenya's HIV Programme and the operationalization of the Kenya National Public Health Institute are noteworthy. Of course, the outcomes will depend on implementation which will be determined by the motivation of both parties. The whims of U.S. presidential executive orders have shown us that agreements can be as transient as the administrations that sign them.

However, these developments do resonate with Baltimore's ongoing efforts to improve public health infrastructure and address health disparities. It remains to be seen upon execution and implementation whether there will be positive lessons and/or even outcomes for Baltimore residents.

See **PRESIDENT RUTO**, page 9

# Raise Money Like a Pro: Bring Your Idea to Life with Help from Crowdfunding

By **Andrea Blackstone**

Many small business owners aspire to market their ideas or reach more potential clients, but many just do not possess the expertise to raise funds to finance their ideas without taking out loans, especially in the startup phase. Dr. Letitia Wright, a television personality, talk show host, and producer who founded Wright Place Studios is also regarded as a Top 100 Crowdfunding Expert in the United States. The Southern Californian transitioned from being a Doctor of Chiropractic Care, and having a practice, to launching Wright Place TV in 2000.

Dr. Wright is a highly regarded businesswoman who has become a resource for entrepreneurs. She has learned how to pivot to achieve success. “At the time I started my TV show, my practice was struggling. Although I was a good doctor, I had not learned the ins and outs of business to create a successful, viable practice. I wanted to interview and get into proximity with experts and found that a television show was an incredible way to learn from experts and ask your most pressing questions,” said Dr. Wright.

Her show has transitioned to ROKU; Amazon Fire TV; and Apple TV in more recent years.

Crowdfunding has become a resource that allows companies and individuals to raise funds. Dr. Wright’s additional passion includes helping business owners, entrepreneurs, and nonprofits with crowdfunding work. She became a crowdfunding expert in 2010.

Dr. Wright mentioned that crowdfunding works for every category

and industry when it is done well and effectively. A campaign must be put together in a seamless manner.

“Misinformation has been spread about crowdfunding, like all things, and some people think it is easy and quick. For a successful campaign, it’s very important to take the proper time to plan it and truly have an idea of how you want things to go,” said Dr. Wright.

She explained that many factors determine the success of a crowdfunding campaign.

“The first of those is mindset; it’s important to understand that your supporters are investors. They believe in your message and mission so much that they wanted to be a part of making it happen,” Dr. Wright noted.

She stated that people who start crowdfunding campaigns should consider if they have a tribe to bring to their crowdfunding page. They should also assess if a budget exists to bring it to market and ask themselves if they have a high-quality video to use for the campaign.

“Be honest with yourself and realistic when answering these questions [while] understanding what assets you have at your disposal as well as what areas might need some additional work,” Dr. Wright said.

She shared that crowdfunding users should choose a platform that he or she feels is user-friendly, easy-to-navigate and ethical. According to Dr. Wright, when it comes to business crowdfunding, crowdfunders have investors and customers, not donors.

“It’s such a crucial distinction to make when you are entering the realm of business crowdfunding [which is dramatically different than personal].

When people are choosing to invest



**Dr. Letitia Wright, a television personality and crowdfunding expert**

*Photo: Deb Halberstadt Photography*

in your business, they believe in the product, service, or expansion you are bringing to fruition. This may or may not be people you know, but [it] will always be investors/customers.”

She further advised that people should consider how long to keep a campaign active for pre-sale crowdfunding. This method could help with a product launch when raising capital to fulfill a product is needed.

Dr. Wright added, “This is enough time to state your case and create a significant brand presence without overwhelming people or prolonging the efforts. The 60–90-day span is also the best amount of time for the person running it. If you run a campaign too long, you run the risk of burning yourself out.”

She also stated that a clear, strong and easy to complete call to action

is the most important part of any crowdfunding campaign because the whole purpose is to raise money for your project. Do not forget to thank investors and donors who contributed to your crowdfunding campaign.

“Gratitude goes a long way in crowdfunding. All of us like to feel valued, so make sure to take the time to value those who have invested in you and supported you,” said Dr. Wright.

The crowdfunding expert shared that she has a list of 150 platforms and their uses. Dr. Wright recommends them to people as a giveaway and resource. Email [drletitia@wrightplacetv.com](mailto:drletitia@wrightplacetv.com) if you would like her to provide the list. Visit <https://www.wrightplacetv.com> and <https://www.wrightplacestudios.com> to learn more about Dr. Wright’s endeavors.

# Omar Tyree Makes Literary Return, Holds Tight to Big Dreams, Embarks on Summer Tour

By **Andrea Blackstone**

Omar Tyree, a New York Times Bestseller and NAACP Image Awards winner made a long-awaited literary return. He kicked off his latest book, “Control” with a book tour in Harlem, New York on May 21, 2024. Although Tyree self-published his book “All Access” in 2015, “Control” was traditionally published by Kensington / Dafina.

“I have a Black woman psychologist from Camden, New Jersey, who studies control pathologies, and she has six clients in Atlanta who all have toxic control issues that turn fatal. The doctor tells us their stories. This is definitely a mental health and interpersonal relationship book,” the acclaimed author said, providing insight into his new psychological thriller.

Tyree has an obvious passion and talent for telling stories.

He added, “Control makes [book] 31, and yes, at least eight of my books were self-published, including “Fly Girl,” the new poetry book, “For the Love of Black Women,” and four original eBooks.”

The author’s mainstream literary industry break ultimately helped him to look at fresh ideas with fresh energy. A book about control is a new topic that Tyree explores.

“I’ve had a lot of psychology on my mind over the past dozen years or so, especially the past two or three years. So, I wanted to write about a lot of the current human issues in a good book,” Tyree said.

Tyree has proven to be a versatile writer. His writing credit includes a wide array of published works, including a notable life story that takes

readers from Mississippi cotton fields to executive offices. He and the late Marion Barry, a politician and Civil Rights activist who served as mayor in the District of Columbia (1979-1991 and 1995-1999), collaborated to craft “Mayor for Life: The Incredible Story of Marion Barry, Jr.” together.

Tyree explained that he felt proud when the book was complete. It was a tedious process. However, the two legends worked on the book about Barry’s legendary life and career.

Tyree added, “I hope to do as much as he [Marion Barry] did one day with my books. So, I still have work to do.”

Tyree, who has resided in Charlotte, North Carolina for the past 24 years, still considers himself to be an author of “contemporary urban classics.”

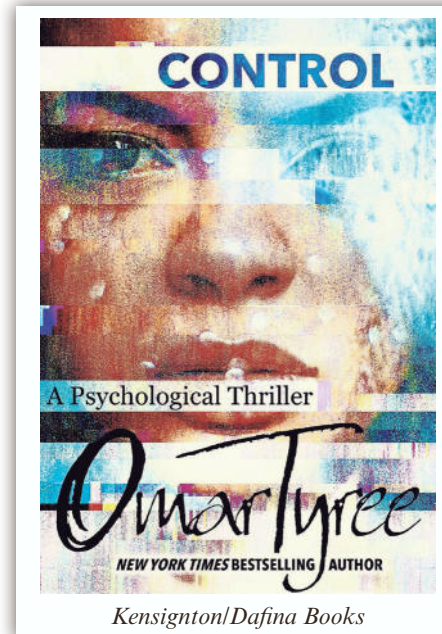
Tyree first started publishing novels in his early twenties. He remarked that a lot of older writers did not believe his pursuit would not last. He was once a 19-year-old sophomore attending the University of Pittsburgh. “Fly Girl,” a coming-of-age story, sparked an urban book movement.

Upon arriving at Howard University, Tyree began editing the widely popular book in 1992 and early 1993.

“That’s when I really thought more about what it could eventually become. I was more like 23 or 24 by then,” Tyree added.

The seasoned author earned a degree in Print Journalism from Howard University. He once held an internship with The Capital Spotlight, a Black newspaper in Washington, DC, back in 1990. The position evolved into a real job.

“Then, I moved on with the editor to a new Black paper called News Dimensions in 1992, where I was the lead reporter/writer. I wrote and



published more than 300 articles as a journalist, including two dozen magazine articles, with articles in Ebony, Essence and many more,” Tyree said, recounting his journalism experiences.

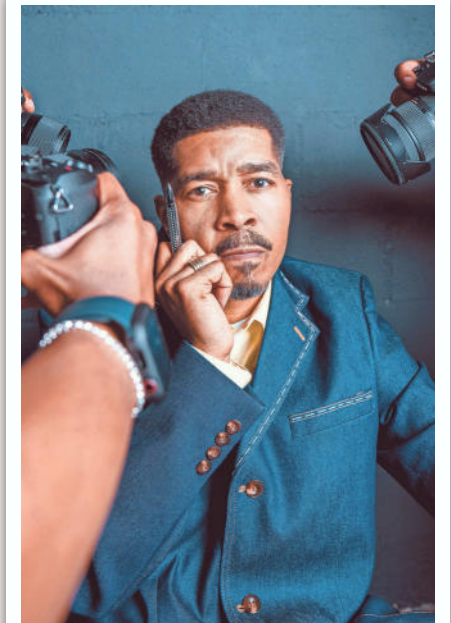
The author’s writing has changed over the years.

He stated, “You mature over time, so your characters become older and the issues you write about become more universal, or more specific. But your ideas definitely change because your mind and life perspectives change.”

According to Tyree, readers should support him because he writes “good mental medicine.”

“Plain and simple. I write things that make you think and feel, but some folks like a lighter read, and I don’t really do those. My work is heavy on purpose. I want us to think deeper.”

Tyree was in Baltimore at an Enoch Pratt Library event with Marsha Jews on Wednesday, May 29. He



*Omar Tyree, best-selling and award-winning novelist*  
Photo: Mario Clark Media

will return to Charm City for the Baltimore Natural Haircare Expo 2024 Meet & Greet Event on Saturday, June 1, 2024 at 1 p.m. at Stevenson University, Owings Mills Campus, located 100 Campus Circle. Visit [naturalhaircareexpo.com](https://www.naturalhaircareexpo.com) to obtain ticket information.

“I’ve always wanted to inform and inspire people with the ideas that I come up with. And when it works well for them, I get excited, and it inspires me to do it again,” Tyree said, reflecting on his exciting literary adventure.

You may access Tyree’s 30-city book tour schedule and updates via [www.HotLavaEntertainment.com](http://www.HotLavaEntertainment.com). Follow @OnlyIOmarTyree on Instagram. Find “Control” by visiting <https://www.amazon.com/Control-Omar-Tyree/dp/1496748042>.

## Billie Holiday's Great Niece Charts Her Film Course, Raises Awareness About Domestic Violence

By Andrea Blackstone

Andrea Ward, an award-winning filmmaker, producer, celebrity designer, activist against domestic violence, and domestic violence survivor stated that she is the great niece of the notable jazz singer, Billie Holiday. Ward discovered her connection to Holiday as a young woman.

She said that she learned about Holiday “When I became the age of 23.”

Ward grew up in Baltimore, Maryland and now resides in Atlanta, Georgia.

Ironically, Holiday also spent much of her young life in Baltimore.

Independent filmmakers have been on the rise. Ward is a woman who strives to add contributions to a male dominated industry. The film director and producer stated that she does not have musical abilities like Holiday.

“Anything else creative, I am great at, from fashion to writing and acting,” Ward stated.

She remains interested in continuing Holiday's legacy through the film world and industry. Ward strives to pave a path for more women of color and spread awareness about domestic violence.

Redemption Images is Ward's full-service production company for television and film. She aspires to make as many films through it as possible.

“Dreams don't work unless you take action. The surest way to make your dreams come true is to live them,” Ward wrote on a Facebook post along with an action-packed film clip.

Ward, who likes horror, action and thriller film genres, stated that she is currently working on “Fiend: The Awakening,” a feature film and psychological thriller about a young, aspiring musician who relocates to Los Angeles, California to pursue her studies in medicine. She meets a mysterious male.



*Andrea Ward attends an album release with Musicash Records in 2019. Photo: Sir Jones*

The plot continues with Sophia's need to face her biggest fears and darkest desires.

Ward has remained unafraid to explore carving her own niche and charting her own course. In some ways, her journey has mirrored pieces of Holiday's career exploration. She was famous for her voice, glamorous image and gardenia-adorned signature look that was pinned in her curled hair. Ironically, Ward has also been drawn to fashion.

Five years ago, Ward sewed fashion gowns. The self-taught designer participated in LA Fashion Week, an exciting fashion event where designers and artists showcase their talents.

Overall, Ward is drawn to entrepreneurship because it offers “the freedom to control your business and destiny while making a difference in the world.”

Ward also shows an interest in supporting others who are overcoming abuse. LIFE AFTER THE STORM is a program that she aspires to launch in the spring of 2025 to help battered women and children suffering violence or domestic violence.



*Andrea Ward appears on the Steve Harvey Talk Show in 2018. Courtesy*

“In the United States, an average of 20 people experience intimate partner physical violence every minute. This equates to more than 10 million abuse victims annually,” according to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

Domestic violence can touch anyone's life, whether famous or someone living in the community. The domestic violence topic was recently renewed when 2016 surveillance video footage obtained by CNN surfaced. Sean “Diddy” Combs was seen engaging in a violent episode with his then-girlfriend Cassie Ventura.

Beyond working with cast and crews, Ward recalls her personal obstacles and courageously serves as an activist who speaks up about them in public forums.

She added, “The scars are deeper to heal from not just physically, but mentally and emotionally. It took me a long time to heal and find my voice to help others, because when I was a victim, at the time I didn't have a hero or someone to save me, but I had to learn to save myself. Finding the courage within, it's from such a dark place is bravery itself.”

Ward explained that she relocated to another state, went to therapy,

documented all events, learned self-defense, told her family and friends about the abuse, then focused on a new skill or goal to overcome abuse and heal from it.

“I am a member of the National Coalition of [Against] Domestic Violence as a public speaker. I often speak to many women and men about abuse on multiple platforms,” Ward added.

The survivor of domestic violence and rape pondered what makes her most proud of herself.

“Everything I was able to accomplish and overcome from abuse, homelessness, change in careers, awards, magazine publications, finishing school with my degree, being a great mother and becoming someone I am proud of, as well as being an inspiration for young girls.”

Visit [www.Redemptionimages.com](http://www.Redemptionimages.com) to learn more about Ward's company. She stated that feature films and an inspirational book are in development.

Reach the National Domestic Violence Hotline via 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or [www.TheHotline.org](http://www.TheHotline.org) if confidential support is needed with a domestic violence situation.



# President Ruto

Continued from page 5

## Economic Impact and Fairness

While the technological and health tech aspects of the visit are promising, it is crucial to consider the economic implications. The agreements should have included clauses on fair living wages for Kenyan workers and fair pricing for Kenyan products, ensuring that the benefits are not one-sided. With its history of economic challenges, Baltimore can relate to the need for equitable economic growth that uplifts all communities.

The White House fact sheet cited nearly \$40 million allocated for democracy, human rights, and governance programming in Kenya. This figure seems like a drop in the bucket. Firstly, considering a recent local U.S. senate primary race where David Trone spent \$61 million of his own money in the primary. One can't

help but wonder what such a tokenistic action might portend. Further, we have our own challenges with democracy and human and civil rights to contend with.

President Ruto's state visit to the U.S. has highlighted key areas of technological and health tech cooperation that could have far-reaching implications. For Baltimore residents, the visit offers insights into how international partnerships can foster innovation and public health advancements. It also serves as a reminder of the importance of ensuring that such agreements lead to equitable economic benefits for all parties involved. The outcomes of this visit will be watched closely, with the hope that they will contribute positively to the global tech and health tech landscapes.

The state visit was presented as a celebration of partnership. Still, citizens must critically examine these partnerships and demand transparency, equity, and respect in all policy and in particular in international relations.



*First Lady of the Republic of Kenya, Rachel Chebet Ruto and First Lady, Dr. Jill Biden. Photo: Karanja Gaçuça*

After all, the true measure of a partnership is not in the grandeur of state visits, but in the day-to-day realities of those it purports to serve.

*Karanja is a former Wall Street analyst and consultant, a journalist and*

*Pan African activist who writes on issues of global geopolitics as it pertains to people of African descent globally, as well as politics, economics, finance and tech! Karanja is also a tech founder, and CEO of Enkaare LLC.*

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By Rosa Pryor

“Great Balls of Kitty Kat” my friends, I am so excited! This is my time of the year. Oh, I got so excited, I forgot to say hello! Hello everyone, hoping you all are feeling pretty good today. My friends and fans who are under the weather, I am keeping you in my prayers. For those of you who can get out and around, I have some non-stop entertainment you can enjoy in the next couple of weeks. First of all, we are going to start off with my show on Saturday, June 1, 2024 at the Avenue Bakery on Pennsylvania Ave and Baker Street in the Courtyard from 4-7 p.m. Just bring your own folding chair and relax on the lawn or under the tent. I am your Mistress of Ceremony while you listen to Greg Hatza and his band. Light fare and drinks are available for purchase. Yours truly, Rosa “Rambling Rose” Pryor is your hostess. This event is FREE! If you get there early, you can get some of those homemade rolls that will melt in your mouth. My friend and the owner of the bakery, Jim Hamlin makes them fresh right there in the bakery.

Check this out! The first Wednesday of every month starting Wednesday, June 5, from 6-10 p.m. through October, at City View Bar & Grill, 6700 Security Blvd. Tee-Shirt Brian calls it “Summer Soul” inside and outside under the tents “Day Party Summer Series,” featuring live entertainment with groups such as “Songbird”; Crosswinds; Style; Isaac Parham, (GOD, THIS MAN CAN PLAY SOME SAX!); Spice Band; Palovations; Rollex Band; and Ten Karat Gold, just to name a few. We will see you there!

## LIVE ENTERTAINMENT ALL OVER BALTIMORE THIS WEEK

“Jazz at the Armory,” is a FREE outdoor summer music series featuring Baltimore’s best jazz artists, hosted by “Your Girl Cheryl” every Wednesday from 6-8 p.m. with on-site free parking at 610 Reisterstown Road in Pikesville, Maryland. On June 12, the “Rodney Kelley Jazz Experience” will perform.

Not that far from Baltimore in Cherry Hill Park, Falls Church City, Virginia, the Tinner Hill Music Festival will be held on Saturday, June 8, 2024 from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Some of the acts performing are Batala Washington, George Porter, Jr. & Runnin’ Pardners, Blind Boys of Alabama and The Black Byrds. There will be music classes, dancing, and DJs Bill Johnson and Beverly Lindsay-Johnson. In addition to great music, it will be a day of family-friendly fun in their interactive villages, and a lot more.

More entertainment May 31: Music Under the Dome: ‘90s Summer Mixtape with the immersive planetarium dance party at the Maryland Science Center, featuring ‘90s music, drinks, and admission, at the Maryland Science Center, 601 Light Street at 7 p.m.

Have you heard? Frederick Douglass High School Class of 1965 is having their reunion on Friday, June 6 at Martins West, 6817 Dogwood Road from 5-9 p.m. and the dress attire is formal. That’s right, so get out those gowns and tuxs. For more information, email Patricia Cherry at Cherrypie617@hotmail.com or Aubrey Johnson at amps4613@gmail.com.

Father’s Day is coming real soon. If you have not already made plans, you have to check out this Father’s Day Gospel concert on Sunday, June 16 at Israel Baptist Church 1200 N. Washington Street & E. Preston Street. They will feature Harvey Watkins Jr.



See and hear Greg Hatza ORGANization with “Rambling Rose” at the Avenue Bakery, located 2229 Pennsylvania Avenue in the Courtyard on Saturday, June 1, 2024 from 4-7 p.m. It is FREE. Bring a folding chair. “Matinee @ The Royal.”



Tee-Shirt Brian presents Summer Soul 1st Wednesdays at City View. Wednesday, June 5, 2024 featuring Ten Karat Gold from 6-10 p.m. inside, and outside under the tents. Free admission.

& The Canton Spirituals, Dorothy Norwood, Wayne Norwood, and the Children of God, Kenny Davis & the Melodyires, Lil David & the Bells of Joy, and Eric Waddell & the Abundant Life Singer. For tickets and more information, contact Lonnie Parker’s at 443-610-7583 or 410-764-5657. Ladies and gentlemen, if you like gospel music, you don’t want to miss this. I will see you there!

Well, ladies and gentlemen, I am out



Francena Bean-Waters, GBS-NCNW president. The Greater Baltimore Section (GBS) of the Negro Council of Negro Women is hosting ‘Two for Tea’ on June 9, 2024; 3-6 p.m. at the Forum Caterers. This event will highlight GBS members and friends in the spirit of Founder Mary McLeod Bethune. For more information, call 410-227-1590.

of space and time. I have to go. I hope to see you somewhere out there. If you see me, just tap me on the shoulder and say “Hi!” If you need me, just call me at 410-833-9474 or email me at rosapryor@aol.com. UNTIL THE NEXT TIME, I AM MUSICALLY YOURS!

# Ravens Special Teams Coach Chris Horton Adjusts to New Kickoff Rule

By Tyler Hamilton

The Baltimore Ravens special teams portion of practice had a different look to it from previous years when the team took the field for OTAs (Organized Team Activities) recently. That's because a rule change to the kickoff process was adopted at the NFL's Annual League Meeting in March. Team owners officially voted to approve a new kickoff format, adopting a system that was first seen in the XFL.

"You know, it's something new to our league," said Ravens special teams coach Chris Horton last week. "And I've talked to the players about this – we're going to build this thing together because we don't really know what it's going to look like. We've seen video from the XFL, and we understand what that looks like. But we actually have to get out here, and we have to practice it ourselves to kind of see what those angles look like and see what we can run and what we can't run."

So, what is this new rule?

Per the NFL, the new format will still see the ball kicked from the kicking team's 35-yard line, but every player on the kicking team other than the kicker will now line up with at least one foot on the returning team's 40-yard line. At least nine members of the returning team will line up in a "setup zone" beginning five yards opposite on its own 35-yard line (a minimum of seven players must have a foot on what is known as the "restraining line") stretching to its own 30-yard line, with up to two returners in the "landing zone" (defined as the zone between the goal line and the 20-yard line).

No players other than the kicker and



*Chris Horton, Ravens Special Teams Coach*  
Photo: Shawn Hubbard/Baltimore Ravens Photos

the returners can move until the ball is fielded by a returner.

Any kick that is caught or lands in the landing zone must be returned, while any kick that falls short of the landing zone will be ruled a touchback and spotted at the returning team's 40-yard line.

If a kick hits the landing zone and then goes into the end zone, it has to be returned or downed by the receiving team. If it's downed, it will be ruled a touchback and go to the 20-yard line.

If the ball hits the end zone and stays inbounds, it has to be returned or downed – if it's downed, it is a touchback and moved to the 30-yard line. Similarly, if the ball goes through and out of the end zone, it will be a

touchback to the 30-yard line.

Horton feels the new rules allow them to get more reps during practice because it doesn't require players to run as far to get to the returner. Previous rules had kickoff coverage units run from their 35-yard line. Now they're only running 20 – 25 yards before contact.

"We just have to adjust, and we have to adapt to whatever the standards are and whatever the rules are going to be because I know our guys feel pretty good about it. Man, we get to cover kicks. We get to return the ball again. Those are some things that were lost over the last couple of years," Horton added.

The change in rules could alter some

of the backend roster spots as the personnel would like shifts to begin more geared towards players which can impact the kickoff coverage and return of the units.

Everything is a feeling-out process now. Horton is trying different things with various player groupings as they work to find the right mix and allow players to get a feel for the changes. Schemes will evolve as the units get more familiar with the changes.

It's an ongoing adjustment, but one that Horton embraces.

"I am fired up," Horton said. "I told these guys as I was walking up, if you don't adapt, you die."

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