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CONTINUE THE LEGACY OF DR. KING

Couple Champions Human Rights, Upholds Community- focused Initiatives

Apostle Antonio Palmer (left) and his wife, Dr. Barbara Palmer were called to ministry to serve through Kingdom Celebration Center, a non-denominational church, and Kingdom Kare, Inc., a nonprofit community organization. The couple founded Kingdom Kare, Inc. in 2013 as an outreach extension of their church. The Palmers have been engaged in this work for over twenty years.

(See article on page 6)

Photo: Crista Booth Photography





Peace Is King

This MLK Day, pause. Take a break, reflect, and breathe. In all its forms, Dr. King understood the power of peace. Explore the stories, movies, documentaries and more inspired by Dr. King on the Black Experience on Xfinity.

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Anatomy of a Job Scam

By Karen Clay

Clay Technology and Multimedia, L.L.C.

A Real-Life Conversation with a Friend:

“Hello?”

“I got the job!”

“Wow! That’s GREAT! When do you start?”

“I start on January 27th. My first two weeks I’ll be in training.”

“So, will you be working from home like you wanted?”

“Yes, girl! I already have my laptop; I just need to buy a desk and a chair. Oh, and I need to go to Staples to buy a standard business check refill.”

“Wait, WHAT?! A check refill?! Why would your new job require you to buy that?!”

How It Started

This was a conversation I recently had with a friend. She had been looking for a job to supplement her retirement income, and this opportunity seemed perfect. The job was posted on LinkedIn—a platform many people trust for professional networking and job searching. Everything seemed legitimate at first. The email exchange was between her and the “hiring manager” whose signature included the name of an established company. The initial email included the key job responsibilities, benefits, and pay. It also included interview questions, including a question regarding the financial institution she would use for payroll.

Upon receiving the responses from my friend, the hiring manager responded with an offer to hire, but then came the red flag. She was instructed to purchase a “Standard Check Refill (Business)” from Staples, supposedly to print and deposit an eCheck they would issue

for purchasing work equipment, etc. They promised reimbursement, but something didn’t sit right with me.

I asked her to forward the email exchange to me so I could review it. There were a number of red flags that immediately popped out for me. For instance:

- The email address from which the “hiring manager” sent her email did not match the domain name of the company she supposedly represented.
- Forms, such as the W-4 form, typically completed on or before the first day of employment were not going to be completed until after the two-week probationary period.
- The name of her bank was requested before a hire offer was made.
- She was instructed to purchase a “Standard Check Refill” for printing eChecks, with a promise of reimbursement.

These inconsistencies, coupled with the unusual request for upfront expenses, led me to suspect she was being scammed.

A Common Scam

This is the hallmark of a growing type of job scam. Fraudsters pose as legitimate companies, post enticing job offers on reputable platforms like LinkedIn or Indeed, and lure in unsuspecting job seekers. Once “hired,” they ask new employees to pay upfront for equipment, training materials, or other seemingly reasonable expenses, with a promise of reimbursement. Unfortunately, the reimbursement never comes, and in many cases, the checks they issue are fraudulent.

This scam preys on eager job



It’s important to look for red flags during a job search. Graphic Design by Karen Clay

seekers, especially those looking for remote work opportunities. The scammers leverage platforms with high credibility, like LinkedIn, to add legitimacy to their schemes. They often provide detailed job descriptions and conduct fake interviews to make their offer appear genuine.

Spotting the Red Flags To protect yourself from falling victim to these scams, it’s crucial to recognize the warning signs:

- 1. Upfront Payments:** Legitimate employers never ask employees to pay for equipment, training, or supplies out of pocket. If you’re asked to make a purchase before you’ve even started, it’s a scam.
- 2. Unusual Payment Methods:** Be wary of requests to use unconventional payment methods or processes, such as eChecks or gift cards.
- 3. Vague Job Descriptions:** If the job details or responsibilities seem overly broad or generic, proceed with caution.
- 4. Too-Good-To-Be-True Offers:** Scammers often entice victims with high pay for minimal effort or experience.
- 5. Poor Communication:** Watch for grammatical errors, inconsistencies



*Karen Clay,
Clay Technology and Multimedia
Photo: Courtesy, Karen Clay*

in communication, or pressure to act quickly without time to verify details.

What to Do if You Suspect a Scam

If you think you’ve encountered a job scam, take the following steps:

- **Stop Communication:** Immediately cease contact with the company or individual.
 - **Report the Scam:** File a report with the platform where you found the job posting and with organizations like the Federal Trade Commission (FTC).
 - **Protect Your Information:** If you’ve shared sensitive information, such as your banking details, contact your financial institution to secure your accounts.
 - **Warn Others:** Share your experience to raise awareness and prevent others from falling victim.
- Job scams are on the rise, and even trusted platforms like LinkedIn are not immune. If a job offer sounds too good to be true or asks you to pay for something upfront, step back and investigate. Protect yourself by staying informed and vigilant.

'Hug Lady' Upholds Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's Call for Peace, Nonviolence

HUG Dealers Spread Peace, Message of Nonviolence 'One Hug at a Time'

By Andrea Blackstone

Val Jenkins, founder of Hug Don't Shoot, is on a mission to bring a sense of peace to every community, one hug at a time.

"Everyone needs a hug," Jenkins suggested. "And the reason why I always emphasize every community is because I don't want to be that nonprofit that says, 'I want to go out to the Black community.' We have been called to the Jewish synagogue; the Muslim mosque, and I even had a meeting with atheists. We go to the Hispanic area."

The Baltimore-based nonprofit was born in 2017 out of Jenkins' frustration with crime everywhere and a belief that spreading compassion and empathy through communities could attract improvements.

Hug Dealers come from all walks of life. Jenkins stated that she met 70 percent of Hug Dealers because of some sort of community tragedy. They can be spotted wearing Hug Don't Shoot t-shirts while participating in various geographical areas' positive, grassroots movements.

"Hugs go a long way. We do have Hug Don't Shoot North Carolina in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. We have Hug Dealers in New York; New Jersey; and Pennsylvania," said Jenkins, who resides in Baltimore County.

Patrice Meekins, a former Baltimore resident who was one of the first Hug Dealers, asked Jenkins if she could take the idea with her. The movement has extended as far away as Mexico. People send photos to Jenkins while they are wearing Hug Don't Shoot t-shirts and dishing up hugs. Betsy Gardner was another early Hug Dealer who assisted with expanding the reach of the

nonprofit. Earl Young was also mentioned as a key Hug Dealer.

Hug Don't Shoot also provides community support. Tierre Tate, Jenkins' daughter, assists with the nonprofit's backend tasks such as providing donations that are distributed to the public.

"Amazon and Focus Movers are keeping Hugs Don't Shoot afloat. We partner with Amazon, which provides monthly merchandise to give to the community and to those in need. So, my vision and my help go for helping, not only to bring hugs, but to bring resources as needed," Tate said.

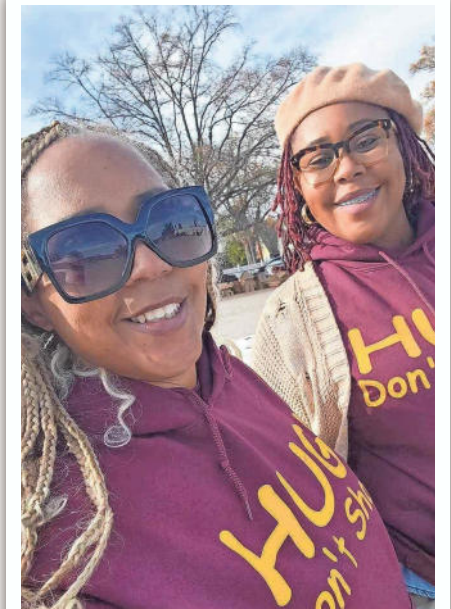
Jenkins added that Kermit Fowlkes, owner of Focus Movers Relocation Service, assists with picking up monthly donations. BGE is Hug Don't Shoot's number one supporter.

"Many people help us," she stated. Tate remarked that her mother had been a community activist before Hug Don't Shoot began.

"You see violence, then you go home, but to be able to be with the families, and to be able to see the crime scenes after things happen, or to be there... to see that in real life is eye-opening," she also said. There are times when Hug Don't Shoot shows up after a violent incident occurs. However, Jenkins noted that the incident must be vetted and determined that someone's life was taken because he or she was simply in the wrong place at the wrong time,



Peter and Beverly O'Neil hosted the 2024 Kindertime Christmas Toy Give away with KSal Organization, Kennedy Krieger, Ronald McDonald House, and others. (L-r): Khloe Tate; Charlotte Skinner; Val Jenkins; Kinsley and Kyle Fowlkes; and Blake Skinner (rear) attended the event.



Val Jenkins (left) and her daughter, Tierre Tate.
Photos courtesy of Hug Don't Shoot

instead of a retaliatory event.

Both Tate and Jenkins work full-time jobs and give time to Hug Don't Shoot. Jenkins also runs two businesses. Time is tight but they remain committed to the cause and mission to promote nonviolence and end gun violence in Baltimore and beyond. Jenkins offered insight about Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's mission and message about nonviolence, protecting justice, democracy, and freedom to help build up communities.

She believes that Dr. King wanted everyone to love each other, regardless of race or religion.

"He wanted to stop the crime. He wanted the racism to stop. So, I tried my best, even before starting Hug Don't Shoot to live in that walk. I tell people all the time that 'When I was a child, I needed a Val Jenkins, because I

was a child who needed the village."

"Now that I'm an adult, I became a Val Jenkins to other people's children, regardless of their age."

Hug Don't Shoot's promotion of peace also gives the next generation an example to follow and a sense of hope that Dr. King's transformative views about nonviolence are still relevant today. For example, fifteen-year-old Khloe Tate, Tierre's daughter and Jenkins' granddaughter assists her mother with backend tasks and attends events with her grandmother. "We don't wait for events. We make events. Say, for instance, someone is feeling sad and down, or they just want to go out and hug. They just reach out to me. If I'm unavailable, I reach out to another Hug Dealer to see if they are available," Jenkins said. "The hug you give just might be the hug that you need!"

2024 WINNERS

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Ravens vs Bills in Clash of MVP Favorites

By Tyler Hamilton

The Baltimore Ravens continue their quest for a third Super Bowl on Sunday when they hit the road to face the Buffalo Bills at Highmark Stadium on Sunday, January 19. It's a prime-time game, the perfect opportunity to have the spotlight on MVP favorites Lamar Jackson and Josh Allen.

Both quarterbacks were selected in the first round of the 2018 NFL Draft. The Bills traded from the 12th overall pick to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers seventh-overall pick to secure Allen. He's since taken over and led their team to great success.

Allen didn't have the same level of statistical impact as he normally does. But he was pretty much the Bills whole offense. Allen's 3,731 passing yards, 28 touchdowns, and six interceptions are still respectable. His 12 rushing touchdowns showed he's a true dual threat.

The fact that Allen had such a strong year without a true number-one receiver makes it even more impressive. Buffalo managed to find balance on offense by establishing a legitimate rushing attack that Allen had a part of but it was led by James Cook's 1,009 rushing yards and 16 touchdowns.

Jackson's regular season statistics read like a John Madden video game. He finished with 4,172 passing yards, 41 touchdowns, and only four interceptions. Jackson also rushed for 915 yards and four touchdowns.

His 119.6 passer rating ranked as the fourth-most all-time in a single season. The three better finishes resulted in NFL MVP seasons: Aaron Rodgers, Green Bay Packers in 2011 (122.5) and 2020 (121.5) and Peyton Manning, Indianapolis Colts (121.1) in 2004.

A third MVP is a strong possibility



Lamar Jackson and Josh Allen

Photo: AP Photo/Julio Cortez

for the quarterback who was told he would need to switch positions to make it in the NFL. The arrival of Derrick Henry complemented Jackson. Henry warrants MVP consideration himself after rushing for 1,921 yards and 16 touchdowns.

Jackson's impact is felt in the run game because defenses have to use an

extra defender as a spy because of his explosive running ability. That helps to open up lanes for Henry.

The Associated Press named Jackson First-Team All-Pro at quarterback with Allen coming in at a close second. They're the same people who vote for the MVP, so don't be surprised if Jackson wins a third.

In the meantime, there's a playoff game to take care of. The Bills have the number two seed, so they'll host the Ravens, who finished with the number three. It'll be an intense game where a lot of points should be scored thanks to these two MVP candidates.



Join The Conversation: Empower Men – Navigating Mental Health, Building Resilience



John Clarence Stewart
Actor

Dr. Troy Williams
**Chief Impact Officer,
Sacramento Urban League**

Dr. Bryant K. Woodford
LPC, Psychotherapist

Diwee Sewell
**Behavior Health
Specialist**

Taroue W. Brooks
**Advocate and Author of
"Don't Audition For Your
Life... It's Already Yours"**

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88828685

Fast PLAY

RK: AASSAA55-555AAASA-SAS5555A-AAAAA555-SAS

\$1

\$100 SUPER CASH BLOWOUT

TOP PRIZE \$100!

When any of YOUR NUMBERS match any of the WINNING NUMBERS, win PRIZE shown under the matching number. If a matching YOUR NUMBER is on a "2x" win DOUBLE the PRIZE shown under that number.

WINNING NUMBERS
9 34 13 7 29 32 11

YOUR NUMBERS

5 FIVE	16 SIXTEEN	7 SEVEN	23 TWENTY THREE	10 TEN
+200 TWENTY HUNDRED	+20.00 TWENTY	+2.500 TWO THOUSAND FIFTY	+100 HUNDRED	+1,000 ONE THOUSAND
25 TWENTY FIVE	24 TWENTY FOUR	26 TWENTY SIX	12 TWELVE	18 EIGHTEEN
+50.00 FIFTY	+50.00 FIFTY	+40.00 FORTY	+100 HUNDRED	+500 FIVE HUNDRED
31 THIRTY ONE	14 FOURTEEN			

087-000241-000-8-77157233-68048
XX XXX XXXX 04-25
Term: 90610112-03
88828685

Fast PLAY

RK: AASSAA55-555AAASA-SAS5555A-AAAAA555-SAS

\$2

\$200 SUPER CASH BLOWOUT

TOP PRIZE \$200!

Match any of the COMIC STRIP SYMBOLS to any of the WINNING SYMBOLS, win PRIZE shown for the matching symbol.

WINNING SYMBOLS

COMIC STRIP SYMBOLS

+4.00 FOUR	+10.00 TEN	+2.00 TWO
---------------	---------------	--------------

088-000241-000-8-77157233-68048
XX XXX XXXX 04-25
Term: 90610112-03
88828685

Fast PLAY

RK: AASSAA55-555AAASA-SAS5555A-AAAAA555-SAS

\$5

\$500 SUPER CASH BLOWOUT

TOP PRIZE \$500!

When any of YOUR NUMBERS match any of the five WINNING NUMBERS, win PRIZE shown under the matching number.

WINNING NUMBERS
10 22 13 6 29

YOUR NUMBERS

2 TWO	14 FOURTEEN	5 FIVE	26
+40.00 FORTY	+20.00 TWENTY		
30 THIRTY			

089-000241-000-8-77157233-68048
XX XXX XXXX 04-25
Term: 90610112-03
88828685

Fast PLAY

RK: AASSAA55-555AAASA-SAS5555A-AAAAA555-SAS

\$10

\$1,000 SUPER CASH BLOWOUT

TOP PRIZE \$1,000!

When any of YOUR NUMBERS match any of the six WINNING NUMBERS, win PRIZE shown under the matching number. If a matching YOUR NUMBER is on a "2x" win DOUBLE the PRIZE shown under that number.

WINNING NUMBERS
9 34 13 7 29 32

YOUR NUMBERS

5 FIVE	16 SIXTEEN	7 SEVEN	23 TWENTY THREE	10 TEN
+15.00 FIFTEEN	+20.00 TWENTY	+1,000 ONE THOUSAND	+100 HUNDRED	+10.00 TEN
25 TWENTY FIVE	24 TWENTY FOUR	26 TWENTY SIX	12 TWELVE	18 EIGHTEEN
70.00	+50.00 FIFTY	+30.00 THIRTY	+100 HUNDRED	

090-000241-000-8-77157233-68048
XX XXX XXXX 04-25
Term: 90610112-03
88828685

Fast PLAY

RK: AASSAA55-555AAASA-SAS5555A-AAAAA555-SAS

\$20

\$2,500 SUPER CASH BLOWOUT

TOP PRIZE \$2,500!

When any of YOUR NUMBERS match any of the seven WINNING NUMBERS, win PRIZE shown under the matching number. If a matching YOUR NUMBER is on a "2x" win DOUBLE the PRIZE shown under that number.

WINNING NUMBERS
9 34 13 7 29 32 11

YOUR NUMBERS

5 FIVE	16 SIXTEEN	7 SEVEN	23 TWENTY THREE	10 TEN
+200 TWENTY HUNDRED	+20.00 TWENTY	+2,500 TWO THOUSAND FIFTY	+100 HUNDRED	+1,000 ONE THOUSAND
25 TWENTY FIVE	24 TWENTY FOUR	26 TWENTY SIX	12 TWELVE	18 EIGHTEEN
+50.00 FIFTY	+50.00 FIFTY	+40.00 FORTY	+100 HUNDRED	+500 FIVE HUNDRED
31 THIRTY ONE	14 FOURTEEN			

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