

Bloodline Tribune

November- The Love of Vinyls

An Overview of Classic Black Vinyls In Relation to Current Black Culture and Liberation




THE ROOT NOTE

CHUCK KING

As the year closes, we may not celebrate the coined holidays — but time will still be spent with family. Spades will still be slammed on the card table. Laughter and little sparks of anger will still rise from family jokes. The rituals remain, even when the traditions shift.

On this journey we take a moment to appreciate the era of vinyl records — the culture our people embraced to ensure our expression never slipped away. There is





so much legacy in our Bloodline through vinyls. So much legacy in the vinyls themselves.

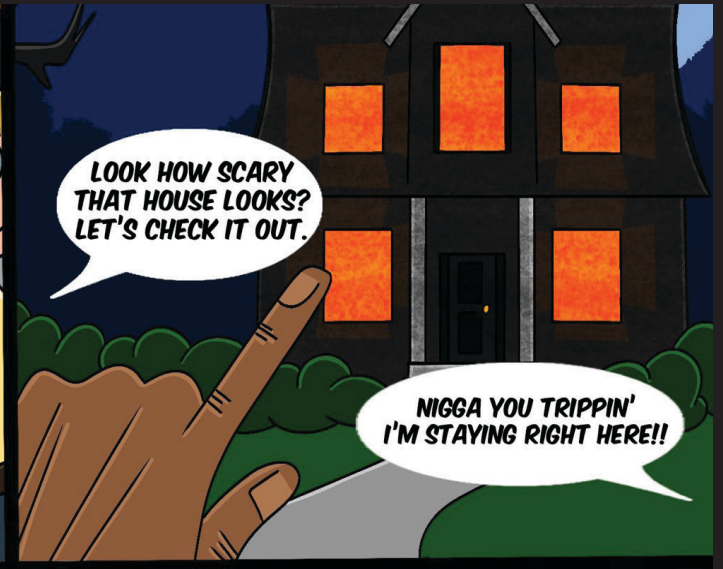
In this issue, we take a look at Gullah photographer Marley Nichelle and her story — a true tribute to the ancestors through her art.

It brings me pride.

Topping charts.

Breaking records.

This is the Bloodline.



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Miseducation of Lauryn Hill

Re-education of Me



Lauryn Hill: the

“I wrote these words, For everyone who struggles in their youth” – Everything is Everything

Selina Gellizeau

A Love Letter to the Young Black Girl I Used to Be

There are albums you listen to, and then there are albums you feel in your spirit, as if they were written with you in mind. The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill felt like that for me. It found me at a time when no one was teaching me who I could become. I was just a young Black girl trying to make sense of myself with no map, no model, and no mirror that reflected anything true.

I didn't have people around me who offered gentle parenting or emotional safety. I didn't grow up seeing women rest or choose themselves. I didn't even know what it meant to feel protected. But when Lauryn's voice came through those speakers, something in me finally felt seen. Not for who I pretended to be to survive, but for who I was underneath everything life had piled on me.

For a girl who had no choice but to raise herself from the inside out, that meant more than I even knew how to explain.



I didn't know it then, but I was being held by a woman who understood things I wouldn't have words for until much later in life.

Learning My Worth Through a Woman I Never Met

“Miscommunication leads to complication, My emancipation don't fit your equation” — Lost Ones

Hearing Lost Ones and recognizing myself in it felt like someone had finally put language to the life I was living.

Watching women's lives was never central to my upbringing. But neglect was. I grew up in a house where I learned very early that the family I was born into could not be the family I became. I understood young that my milestones would be ignored, celebrations of me would be rare, and I would not be loved, nurtured, or protected in the ways a child deserves. My mother made sure of that. She poured her energy into alienating the only father I knew and built an isolation around me that served her comfort more than my

wellbeing. I became a threat to her in ways I still cannot fully understand or explain, and she handled that threat by embarrassing me, diminishing me, and shrinking me every chance she got.

And the women around her were not a refuge. Their loyalty to her became another form of distance from me. They found solace in criticizing me while hiding their own secrets. They stood beside her even when standing beside her meant ignoring the harm being done to a child. Their silence built the walls I grew up inside of. Their loyalty to her ensured that trust, safety, and softness would not be available to me. I learned to make a home inside my own loneliness, because it was the only place I was allowed to exist without criticism.

I thought that was normal. I thought disappearing was the cost of survival. I thought accepting disrespect and embarrassment was the price of love.

That one line (“Miscommunication leads to complication, My emancipation don't fit your equation.”) felt like someone naming the reality I had lived quietly for years. Her voice cracked open the silence I had grown used to. She told the truth





about people who benefit from your quiet. She told the truth about freeing yourself even when others believe your liberation has to make sense to them. She told the truth about choosing yourself when the world around you never wanted or learned how to.

Her music cut through the lies I inherited. She made it clear that peace is not optional. It is a requirement. She taught me that love should not erase you and that heartbreak is not just pain. It is a lesson, an instruction. It is a turning point. It is the moment you decide your spirit will not be reduced to fit someone else's comfort any longer.

She taught me that boundaries are protection, not punishment. Not the cruelty I experienced as a child for having needs, but self-respect in motion.

My heart was something I needed to guard. It was something I needed to listen to and honor. Not something I needed to harden, but instead something I needed to reclaim as mine after a childhood spent being taught it meant nothing, served me no purpose, and didn't even belong to me.

When Music Turns Into Medicine

"How you gon' win when you ain't right within?" — Doo Wop (That Thing)



The first time I heard that line, I felt reached. I felt understood. I felt like someone finally saw the part of me I had never been able to show. Nobody around me was giving language to the kind of confusion I was carrying. Lauryn didn't sound like she was singing from a stage. She sounded like she was speaking from a place that was familiar, a place that felt like home even though I had never lived in a home like that.

Her voice had this mix of strength and softness that made me feel like I was being guided, not judged. I didn't feel talked down to. I felt spoken to. There is a difference.

Her songs felt like the conversations I never had the chance to hear growing up. The kind that teaches you how to trust yourself before you hand your heart to anyone else. The kind that reminds you that you are allowed to feel everything you feel.

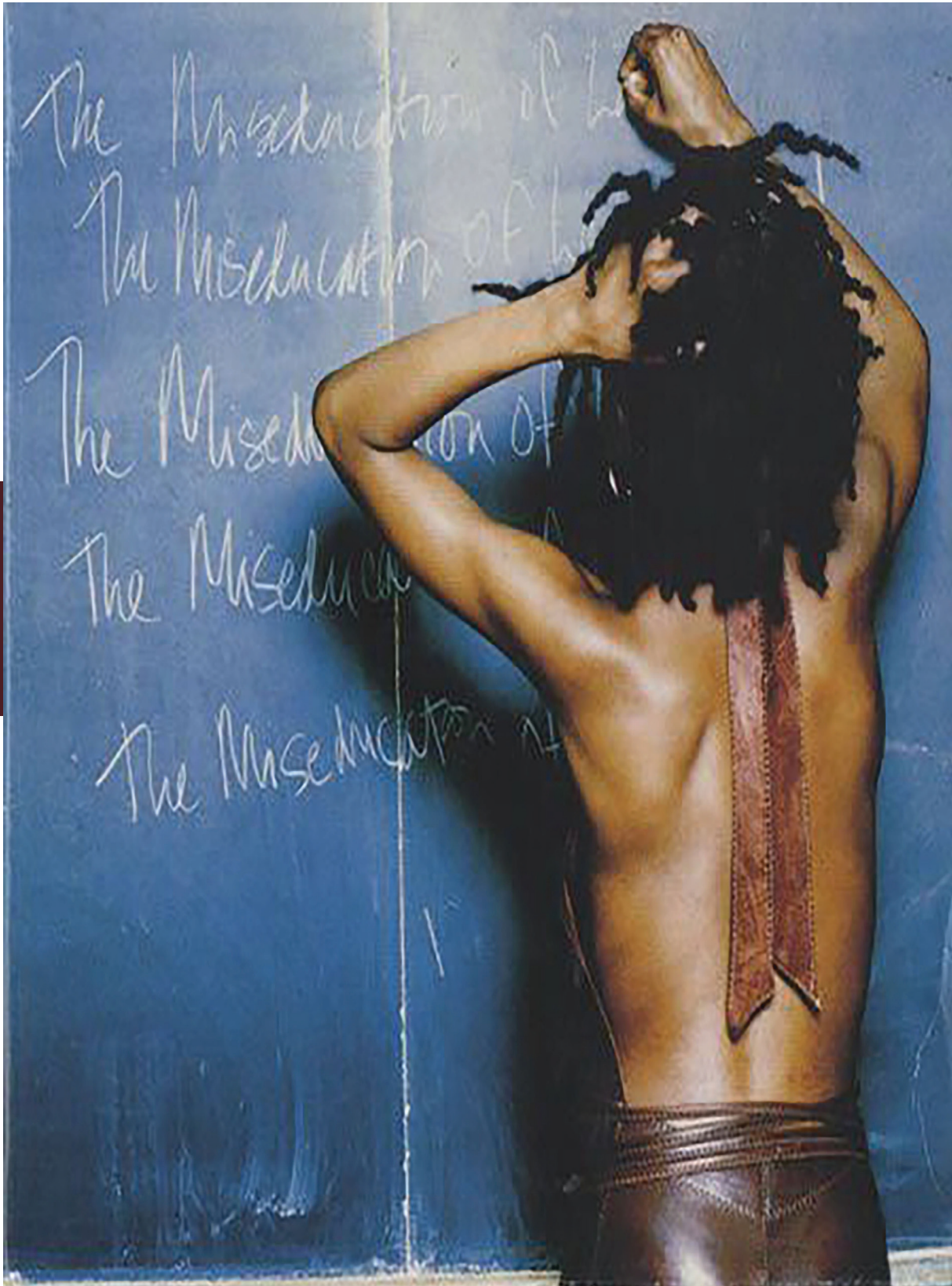
And for a girl who learned to swallow her emotions

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just to make it through the day, that was a kind of healing I didn't know I needed.

A Black Woman Who Refused To Shrink

“I was hopeless, now I’m on Hope Road...” — Lost Ones





What I loved most about Lauryn was that she never made herself smaller so other people could feel bigger. In the 90s, Black women were boxed into all kinds of stereotypes. You could be the strong one, the loud one, the funny one, or the struggling one, but never the full one.

Lauryn walked in with all her layers showing. She was elegant and unapologetically authentic. She was tender in spirit and powerful in her truth. She was sensual in essence and transformative in her presence. She was soft in nature and sharp in her discernment. She was feminine in her energy and strongly rooted in herself.

She taught me, without ever meeting me, that there is nothing wrong with being a complex woman. There is nothing wrong with having depth. There is nothing wrong with refusing to choose between strength and vulnerability.

I watched her exist without apology, and realized I was allowed to do the same.

Healing the Unparented Girl

***“Sometimes it seems, we’ll touch that dream, but things come slow or not at all”
— Everything is Everything***

There is a unique kind of loneliness that sits inside Black girls who grow up emotionally unparented. You learn early how to survive, but you do not learn how to feel. You learn how to stay strong, but not how to be soft. You learn how to show up for others, but never how to show up for yourself.

This album softened the edges of that loneliness.

Lauryn gave me words for things I had only ever held in silence. She helped me understand emotions I didn’t know I was allowed to have. Through her voice, I learned that what I was feeling wasn’t wrong or dramatic or childish. It was human.

She helped me understand myself long before therapy, long before self-help books, long before I had anyone in my life who cared about the state of my heart, my mind, or my spirit. Her voice filled in the emotional gaps my childhood left behind.

As I grew older, the way I heard her began to change too.

“Everything is everything. What will be, will be.” — Everything Is Everything

The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill has never been just a breakup album. It is a lesson in coming home to yourself. It is a reminder that your spirit will always try to guide you back to your truth, no matter how many times life experiences pull you away from it.

She taught me that choosing myself is not selfish. It is spiritual. It is self-respect. It is necessary for survival and foundational to living life.

She helped me understand that healing is quiet, extensive, ongoing work that doesn’t stop just because you feel better one day. She taught me that my healing and wellness journey does not need to be announced or performed. It is a rebuilding that happens



from the inside out, one honest, intentional moment at a time.

“And I made up my mind to define my own destiny.” — *The Miseducation of Lauryn*

When I listen to the album now, it feels different yet familiar. I hear it with ears that have lived a little, cried a little, learned a lot. It reminds me of every version of myself that had to be strong before she knew what strength actually was or how it looked. It reminds me of the girl who desperately needed guidance and craved love. It reminds me of the woman who eventually found it anyway.

It reminds me that so many Black girls like me were raised by art when those around us failed or chose not to raise us at all.

Lauryn didn’t just influence a generation. She helped mother us, aunty us, sister us. She gave us language, dignity, grace, and permission. She reminded us that we are more than what the world tried to teach us.

The Miseducation Was the Lesson

And the Lesson Was Love

“*But deep in my heart the answer, it was in me*” — *The Miseducation of Lauryn*

While the world tried tirelessly to force its own version of Black girlhood on us, Lauryn Hill gave us back our own reflection.

She reminded us that our softness was not a weakness and our sensitivity was not a flaw. She held a mirror up to the parts of us we were taught to mute and said, “This is yours, claim it.” In a world that wanted us to shrink, she offered language for expanding. She sang about love in a way that felt like prayer and protest at the same time, and she taught us that healing could be loud, tender, raw, righteous, and imperfect. All while being useful, intentional and necessary to our growth, our development, and our elevation.

For so many of us, girlhood did not come with protection or gentle hands. It came with survival assignments. It came with being strong too early and silent too often. But Lauryn made space for our complicated upbringings. She showed us that brilliance could have varying textures and that beauty could keep unfolding in ways we had never been taught to expect. She made room for our questions, our contradictions, and our

unpolished feelings.

Most of all, she affirmed that Black girls are allowed to belong to themselves. To feel deeply. To think critically. To be spiritual and skeptical. To be hopeful even while being heartbroken. To grow beyond the messages we consumed as children. Her voice carried freedom, and every note reminded us that we did not have to perform a version of ourselves that the world preferred.

Lauryn gave us everything we needed to eventually understand that we did not need permission to be whole. She taught me that the real journey is the one that brings you home to yourself.

And because of that, *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill* has never lived as miseducation in my life. It has always been the teaching that met me where I was. The one that carried me through all of my most breakable periods. The one that held my hand when no other hands reached for me. The one that grounds me each time I return to it, reminding me of my roots, honoring the woman I fought to grow into, and guiding me toward the future my spirit keeps moving toward.

This album will always be home to me. Not because it taught me who to become, but because it reminded me who I already was.



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THE BLOODLINE 743



The Tree That Remembers
YEAR 1 ANTHOLOGY

Year collection of articles, essays, poems,
photography and more from Bloodline
contributing artists

DELTA SIGMA THETA PRESENTS

THE FOURTH ANNUAL BLACK CHILD BOOK FAIR

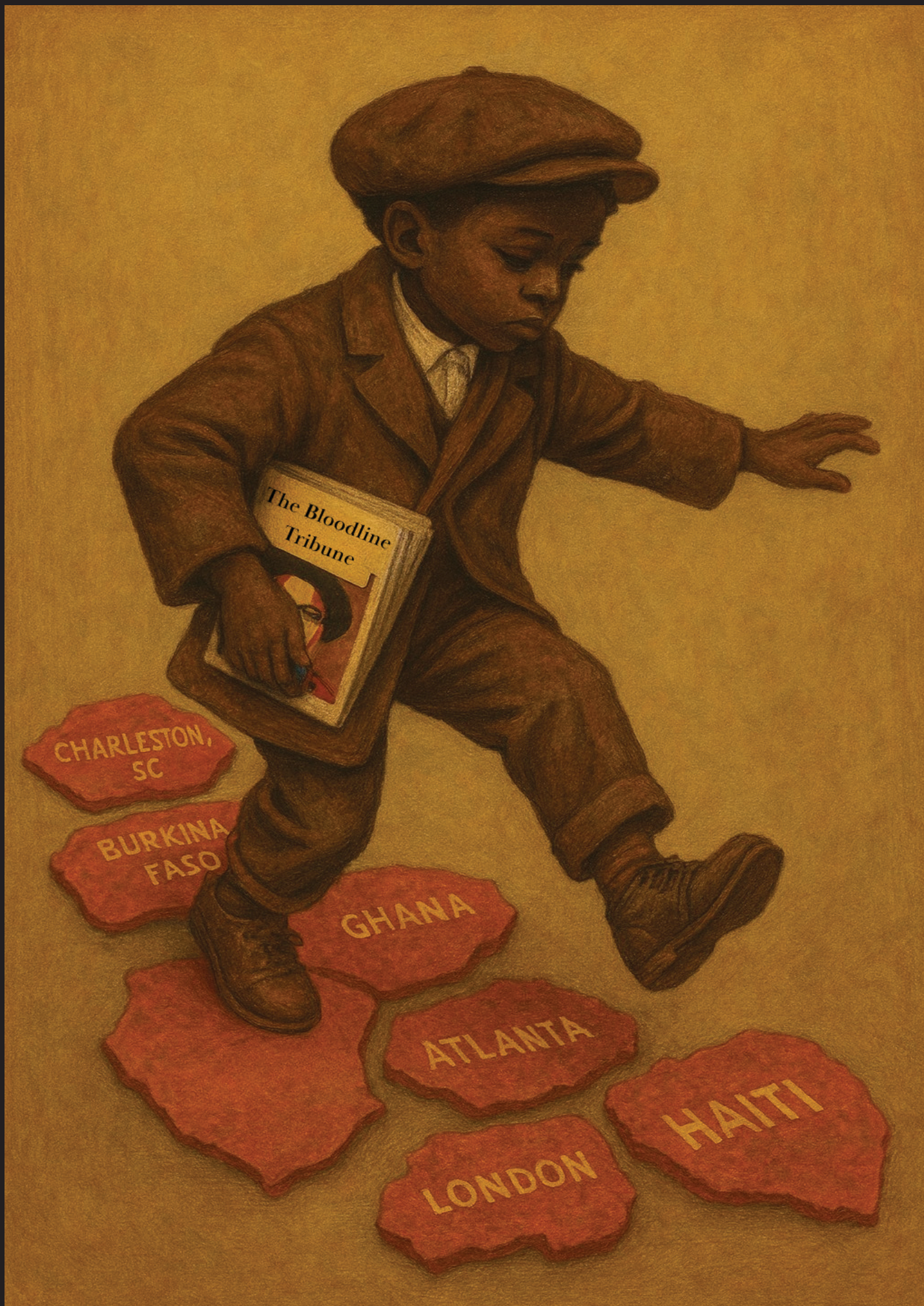
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Dallas, TX**

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welcome.**





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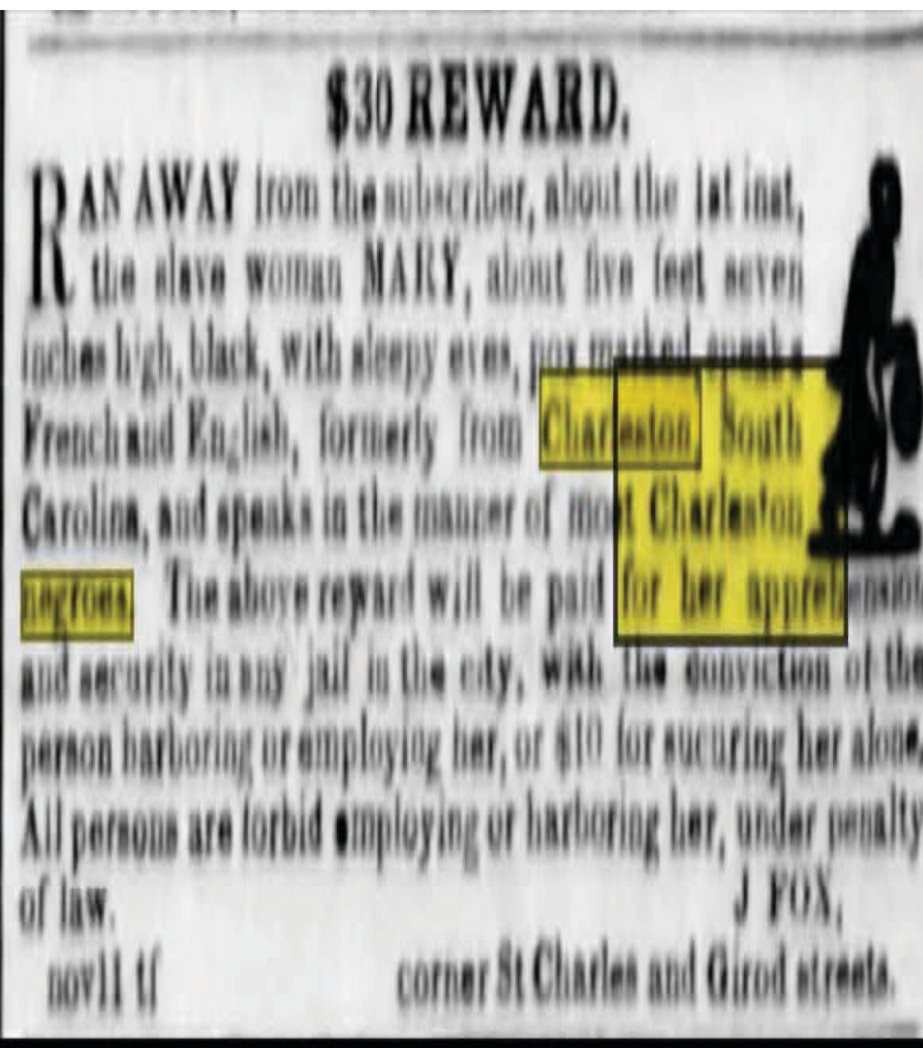
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The Louisiana Creole and Gul- lah Connection: Shared Roots Across the Deep South

Dominique Holliday

The story of African descended people in America is a story of movement forced movement, violent movement, but also cultural survival. Gullah Geechee roots begin in the coastal and Sea Island areas of South Carolina, Georgia, North Carolina, and Florida, with branches extending inland into many surrounding counties and communities. These were the regions where West and Central African languages, agricultural knowledge, and cultural traditions blended into what we now recognize as Gullah Geechee culture.



The Daily Delta Sun, Nov 16, 1851

But the reach of Gullah culture did not remain confined to its birth-place.

Through the domestic slave trade, thousands of Gullah-speaking men, women, and children were forcibly moved into the Deep South. Many were taken into the Gulf region especially Louisiana. And even after being uprooted from their homeland, their distinct language and cultural identity remained so strong that enslavers could recognize them hundreds of miles away.

The historical record proves that truth.

Runaway Slave Advertisements Reveal the Connection

Runaway slave ads tragic but powerful historical documents provide some of the clearest evidence of Gullah people living in Louisiana.

One 1859 ad from The South-Western describes a freedom seeker named John as having “the brogue of the low country negroes of South Carolina.”

That is unmistakably Gullah.

Not just any southern dialect specifically the Lowcountry speech patterns rooted in South Carolina and Georgia’s Gullah communities.

(From The South-Western, June 29, 1859)

Another Louisiana ad describes a man named Mike, “raised in Charleston, South Carolina.” His speech and mannerisms were so distinctive that his birthplace became a key identifying detail.

(1850s Louisiana newspaper)

A third advertisement identifies an enslaved woman named Mary who “speaks in the manner of most Charleston negroes,” again pointing to a recognizable Lowcountry dialect—almost certainly Gullah.

(From The Daily Delta Sun, November 16, 1851)

These ads make one thing clear:

Gullah Geechee people were transported into Louisiana, and their way of speaking remained recognizable even far from home.

\$500 REWARD.—Ran away from the undersigned, on the 4th of April last, a negro man, named Mike, a black, heavy set fellow, about 32 years of age, 5 feet 6 or 7 inches high, the end of one thumb off, a brick-layer by trade. said boy was raised in Charleston, South Carolina, but has, for several years, been in this city and on the Coast about Bayou La-fourche. He has several times been heard of since he left, in the neighborhood of the St. Mary's Market, Jefferson city, and on the opposite side of the river, about McDonoghville. He is, no doubt, harbored by some white person, and the above reward will be given for the delivery of the negro and proof to convict the party who has concealed or employed him, or two hundred dollars for the negro's delivery to D. M. Matthews, or his owner, H. G. HARBIN, 159 Gravier street.

Two Creole Cultures Meeting in Louisiana

Now imagine the cultural exchange happening at that time:

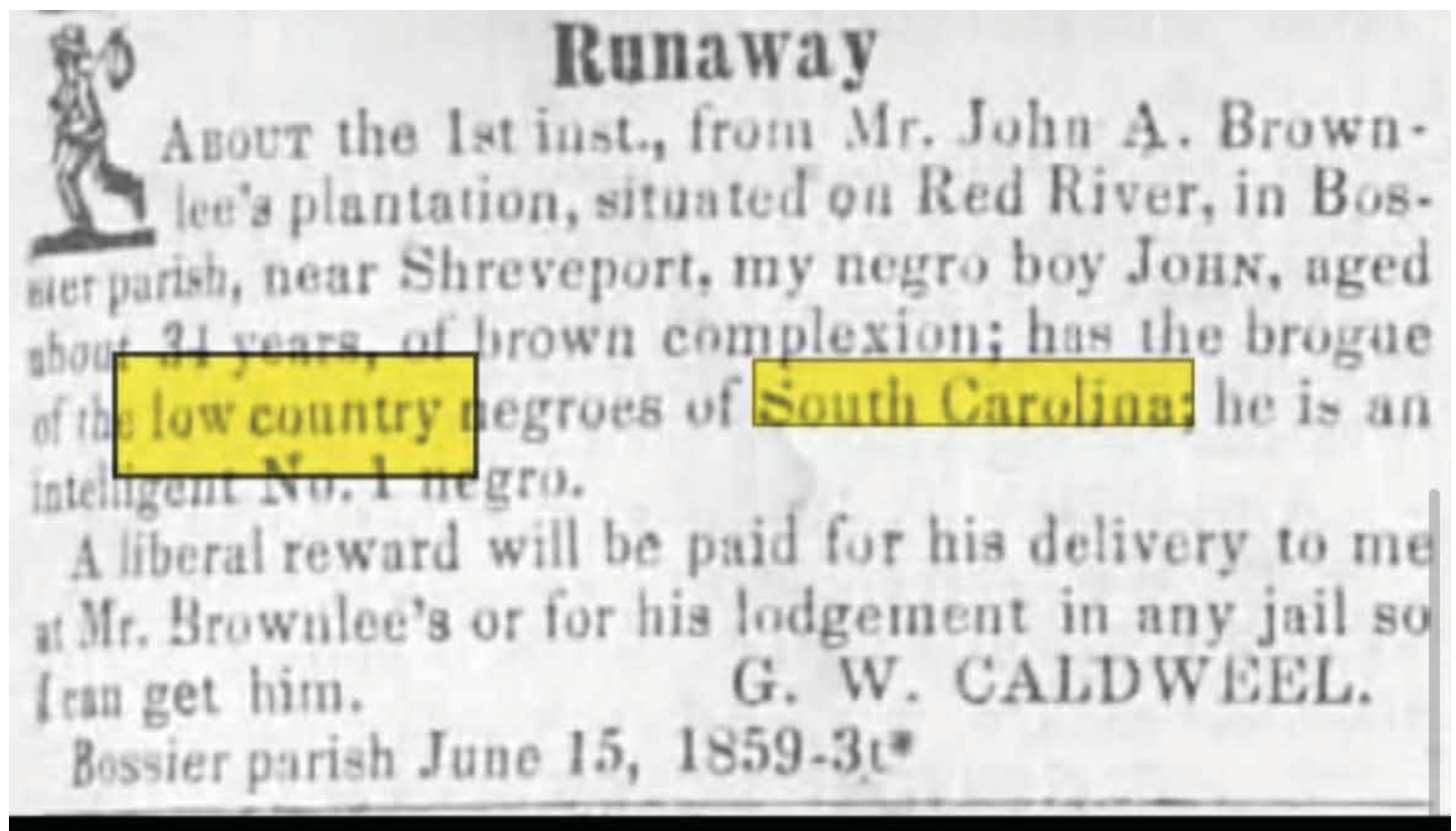
Gullah speaking Africans from the Carolinas and Georgia living among Louisiana Creole speaking Africans.

Two distinct Creole cultures one English-based with strong African retentions, and the other French and African-based with layers of Native and European influence interacting daily on plantations, in bayous, and in the city centers of Louisiana.

These cultures influenced each other.

They shared space, words, foods, and ways of life.

They blended where survival required unity.



Runaway

ABOUT the 1st inst., from Mr. John A. Brownlee's plantation, situated on Red River, in Bossier parish, near Shreveport, my negro boy JOHN, aged about 31 years, of brown complexion; has the brogue of the low country negroes of South Carolina; he is an intelligent No. 1 negro.

A liberal reward will be paid for his delivery to me at Mr. Brownlee's or for his lodgement in any jail so I can get him.

G. W. CALDWELL.

Bossier parish June 15, 1859-3t*

The South-Western Wed, Jun 29, 1859



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Returning to the Lens: A Conversation

Interviewed by Lauren McCaskill

Ancestral Memory, Inner-Child Calling & Revolutionary Storytelling Through

Photography

Georgetown-born photographer Marley Creative speaks with a grounded humility that makes you lean in. Her artistry is not just about images—it's about portals. It's about returning to the inner child, honoring ancestral instruction, and documenting the living archive of Charleston and the Gullah Geechee world.

What began as childhood joy with a pink Canon camera has evolved into an emerging international vision—one rooted in collective consciousness, intuitive creativity, and a revolutionary insistence on telling the truth of her people.

In this conversation, Marley Creative opens up about how she found photography, why Charleston shapes her artistic eye, and how ancestral guidance informs every frame she captures.



©MarleyNichelle

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Conversation with Marley Creative





Q&A WITH Marley Creative

Q: What first drew you to photography, and how did Charleston shape your early artistic eye?

Marley Creative:

Honestly, photography began as an inner-child journey for me. As a kid, I always had something in my hands that let me record life—a camcorder, a little pink Canon my dad bought me. Back then it wasn't "a career." It was just fun. But that joy was pure. It was natural.

By 2019, I reached a point where I wanted to step into something that felt aligned with who I am. So I tapped back into that child version of me—the one who loved cameras before the world told me what I should be doing. That's when it clicked: "This is what you've always been good at."

Charleston shaped everything. The land here holds memory. The water speaks. The community—our Gullah Geechee lineage—created my eye for detail, for meaning, for soul. When I shoot in Charleston, I'm not just taking pictures. I feel like I'm documenting the living history of my people. The ancestors are everywhere here. They guide how I see.

Q: How did you teach yourself the technical side of photography?





Marley Creative:

YouTube University, for real. I sat down and taught myself how to shoot manually—learning aperture, ISO, shutter speed, lighting, all of it. I didn't have formal training, but I had determination and curiosity. My first camera was a Canon T3. Not the fanciest thing in the world, but it was enough to get me started. I took that camera outside and practiced on everything—people, streets, landscapes—just learning through trial, error, and intention. That camera was my initiation into seeing the world differently.

Q: Your work feels guided, spiritual even. Do you feel a connection to your ancestors when you shoot?

Marley Creative:

Absolutely. I feel like I'm not creating alone. I feel like I'm documenting what they survived for us to still see, feel, and carry. Sometimes when I'm shooting, it's like something in me knows exactly when to click—but it's not coming from my brain. It's intuition. It's collective consciousness.

A lot of what I photograph isn't just the person in front of me.



It's the story behind them.

Their lineage. The generations standing in the frame even if you can't see them. Photography feels spiritual to me. It feels like listening.

Q: How does Gullah Geechee culture show up in your work?

Marley Creative:

Gullah Geechee culture is the foundation. Even when I'm not shooting traditionally "Gullah" scenes, the essence is always there—community, resilience, the land, the rhythm of our people. I feel responsible for documenting it with care, not in a way that's extractive or stereotypical. There's something revolutionary about telling the story from the inside. From someone who grew up knowing these landscapes, these foods, these family yards. I want my photos to feel like home to the people who see themselves in them.

Q: What were the biggest challenges you faced teaching yourself photography, and how did you overcome them?

Marley Creative:



The biggest challenge was honestly believing I could do it. When you're teaching yourself something, especially something technical like photography, you're battling doubt just as much as you're learning settings. There were moments where I felt overwhelmed—learning manual mode, figuring out lighting, trying to understand why a picture looked one way in my head but not on my camera.

It was just me, my camera, and my determination. I had to learn how to be patient with myself. I had to accept that mistakes are part of mastery. But I overcame it through discipline, intuition, and the feeling that my ancestors were guiding me. I spent hours on YouTube, hours

outside practicing, hours studying my own work. Every time I wanted to give up, something in me said,

“Keep going. You're building something bigger than you can see.” Eventually, things started connecting—the technical side and the spiritual side. Once I realized photography wasn't just a skill, but a calling, the challenges turned into stepping-stones. I grew because I refused to stop learning. I grew because the work mattered. And I grew because the vision was bigger than the fear. Your recent trip to Ghana was transformative transformative.

Q: How did that experience impact you personally and artistically?

Marley Creative:

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“It was a homecoming”

Q: What do you want to tell the
about becoming a photographer

- 32 -



It's not about how you start, it's about how you finish. I want the next generation to know that photography is not about having the most expensive camera or the fanciest equipment. It's about vision. It's about heart. It's about seeing the world in a way only you can see it. Your eye is your gift—trust it.

Don't be afraid to start small. My first camera wasn't anything special, but it taught me everything. What matters is your willingness to learn, to experiment, to fail, and to keep showing up anyway. Growth comes from practice, patience, and giving yourself grace.

Also, stay rooted. Know where you come from. Your culture, your ancestors, your community—those are your greatest teachers. Let them guide you. Let them shape your lens. And most importantly, don't rush your journey. Photography is powerful because it captures moments, but becoming a photographer takes time. Let yourself evolve. Let your vision deepen.

Q: What inspires you to continue creating?

Marley Creative:

Just knowing that I'm part of something bigger than myself. I'm capturing evidence that we lived, that we loved, that we survived. The world doesn't always tell our story the right way—so I feel called to be part of that truth-telling.

Even as my work grows international, I stay rooted. My community, my ancestors—that's who I create for. Every picture is a thank-you and a reminder that we are still here.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Marley Creative's artistry is more than an image; it is a testament.

with me into every photograph I

next generation coming up
?

A testament to self-discovery.

**A testament to ancestral guidance. A test
radical act of documenting Black Southern
life through a lens of dignity, reverence
interconnected consciousness.**

**Her work reminds us that the camera is
tool—it is a vessel for memory, truth, and
liberation.**



testament to the
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Generational Curses was written to heal the Black community. The Bloodline743 is fully Black-owned — from the vision to the printing press, every page runs through Black hands.

For every ten copies sold, we'll donate one to our brothers and sisters in reentry and incarceration facilities, county jails, halfway houses, and group homes.

A reminder that our people still have a village — and that village is us. — *Chuck King*

HEALING FORWARD

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ARTIST- MARCOS XIORRO



GENERATIONAL CURSES

Trauma Letters from Our Time to Yours



CHUCK KING



The Deacon Who Snuck Lust and Laughter – True Black South

Churchboy Roots

The Gullah man with the slick jerry curl, hailing from the sweetgrass land of Johns Island, will always be a legend to the people. Even today, you still hear his tunes on the radio, in the hole-in-the-wall juke joints tucked deep in the woods, and echoing right inside our homes. His transparency made him unforgettable. He spoke on the things the everyday man was wrestling with silently. And in the words of my hundreds of uncles across the diaspora: a man will be a man—right or wrong, good or bad, succeeding

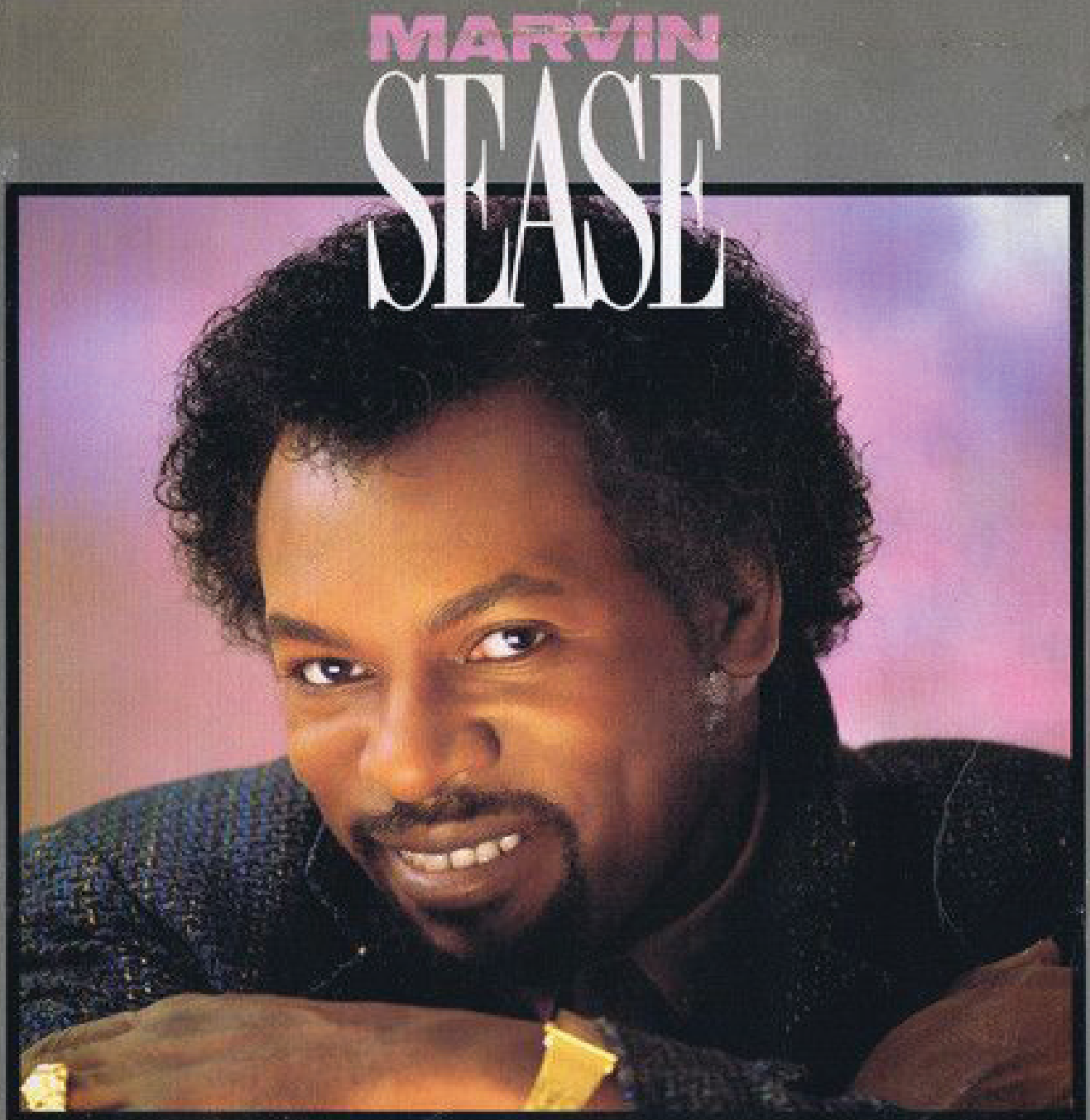
or stumbling.

Marvin Sease made you feel at home. He told the truth without blinking, so it's an honor to share his stories. Some of it may offend, some may anger, but this is real, raw, authentic culture. Nine times out of ten, you probably have an Uncle Marvin in your family. And ten times out of ten, you might just be Uncle Marvin yourself.

When I was 14 years old, I snuck

Marvin Sease - Marvin Sease (1986)

Out the Choir Loft th about Desire in the



CHUCK KING

a girl into the church with intentions that were far from holy. I surely wasn't planning on praying. We had skipped school, and even though I had principles, my desires pushed my morals to the back burner. I didn't follow through with it, but it showed me early that even in the Lord's house, a man's natural instincts rise.

Black women were created not only to capture the Black man's eye but to reach into his soul. That kind of pull is what shaped a young man's tunes—from the choir loft to the finest juke joints. It's the energy behind expressing love, lust, pain, betrayal, and desire through slow, rhythmic jingles men could relate to and women could feel. It's the soundtrack of our people's complicated passion.

Uncle Marvin

Marvin Sease was born on February 16, 1946. Like so many jazz, blues, and soul legends, his music career began in the choir lofts of old Southern gospel churches—where the organ held the melody and the drums and tambourine kept the tone steady. The church is where most musically inclined Black folks begin our journey. Sease joined the Five Gospel Crowns in Charleston, a group that later became The Gospel Crowns as they traveled up to New York. There are so many similarities between these early gospel groups and the bands that shaped entire eras of music. I remember the quartets in three-piece suits, spinning around to the mic stands like the Temptations on opening night. If we look closely, we can still see the threads of our culture woven through every genre we've touched.

In his twenties, Marvin never lost his passion for music—he simply outgrew the confinement of the church. While working, he formed a small band with his brothers and began shaping music into his full platform. And beneath what some might



call hypersexual or promiscuous, there were lessons—lessons our grandfathers lived by. Sease never dodged the accountability of a man’s duty to provide. To take care of his family, his children, his home. He stressed this often, even in the middle of the most heated jingles about men providing for their women... who would later, ironically, end up providing for him.

He took pride in a man working a full 40-hour week, paying bills, keeping food on the table—sometimes holding that pride like a crutch to justify his wildest adventures. He was undeniably a free spirit.

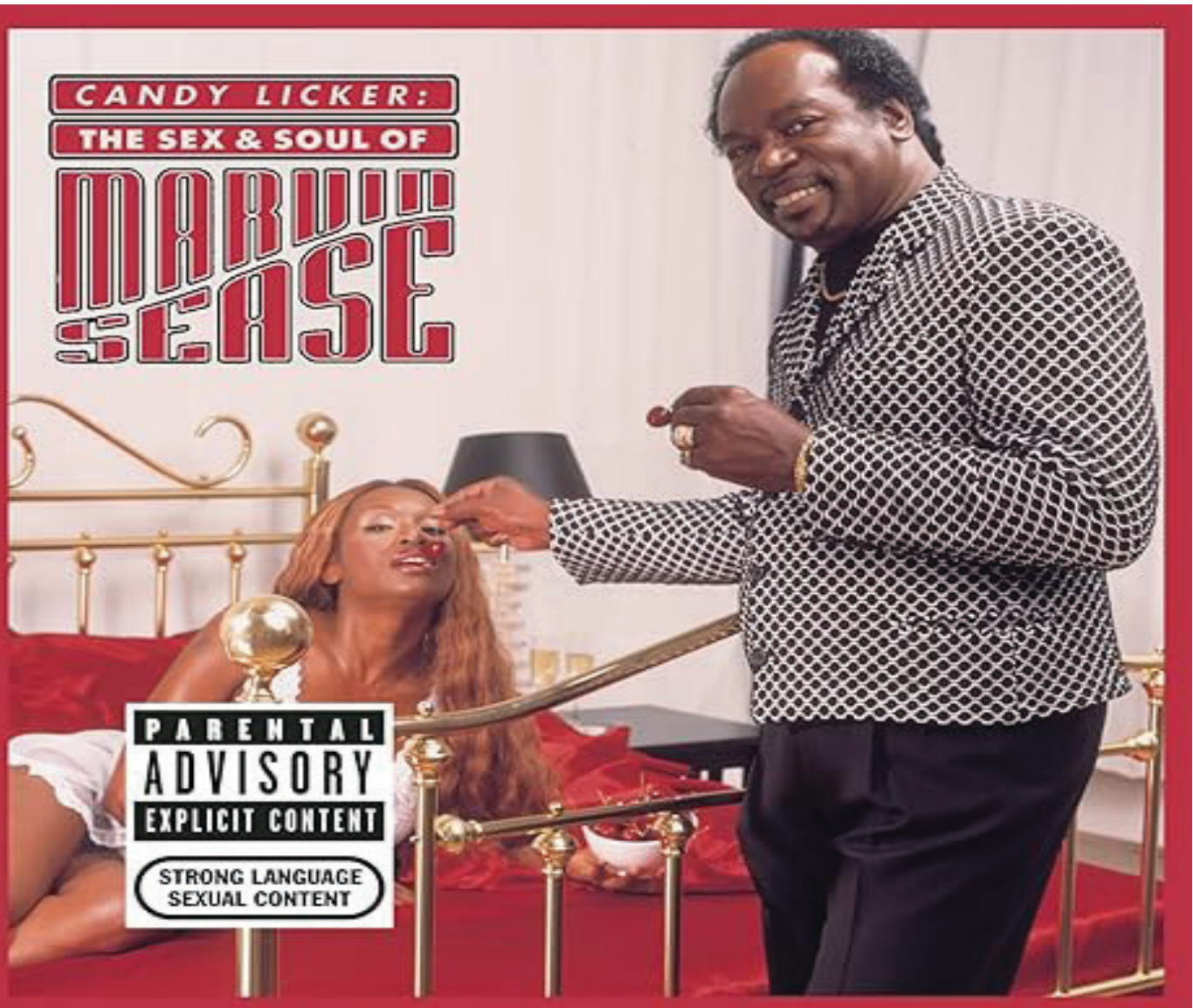
Candy Man

His 1986 track “Ghetto Man” was transparency in pure form. He didn’t try to woo women with unrealistic promises the way men often do today. He was blunt. If he was broke, he said he was broke. If he had flowers, he’d bring them. His honesty behind those jingles made it clear: no one else could tell Marvin Sease’s story but Marvin himself.



And with this authenticity—the long choir-pleading harmony runs, the blues-drenched rhythms—Marvin brought a whole new wave. Juke joints across the South filled up off his raunchy lyrics. So raunchy that if I included them here, I’d have to rate this article R... maybe even X. The church boy went on to serenade other people’s women and turn their stories into songs.

Marvin Sease became the anticipation to the weekend—the soundtrack to good times, mischief, release, and laughter. His song “Candy Licker” was an underground phenomenon. Even though it never hit any national charts, it still gets constant airplay in the city to-



day. That tells you everything: his audience weren't the type of people topping "their" charts. They were the working class—clock in by day, party by night, regular Black folks trying to breathe between the struggle and the joy.

His music resonated with the Black working class of the 80s. Even though vinyls weren't booming at that time, he had one—because his sound carried that vinyl energy. The kind of music you could clean the house to, handle errands with, or fall into something a little more promiscuous behind closed doors. It was people's music—no judgment, no criticism, just raw and authentic living.

Brothers have always had to plead, and Marvin was the king of pleading. He was not letting go of a woman without hitting every note God gave him. Before the pleading harmonies of 90s greats like Dru Hill, K-Ci and JoJo, and so many others, Marvin was



already out here using his high notes to try and save himself from every situation imaginable.

Sharing this isn't to justify the toxic culture Black men have normalized, but if we never talk directly about it, there can never be solutions. Fighting for love shouldn't be an actual fight. There's a difference between preserving something sacred and fighting to keep things that are self-centered instead of we-centered. But I'm no marriage counselor. I'm just another man who, like Marvin, has had to plead myself.

This is why men and women could relate to him. This wasn't just music—it was culture. The good, the bad, and the ugly. I don't know how many relationships he saved, or how many he ruined. But I know love was there. Love is still in the room every time Uncle Marvin comes on.

Relationships

Deep questions always rise in the controversy surrounding Marvin Sease. Some people hated him because of how casually he pursued women. Others adored him because of the respect he held for Black women simply being themselves. The mother. The caregiver. The comforter. Despite how wild his lyrics got, Marvin never denied that the Black woman is the Black man's peace.

Each person should be respected in their beliefs—because for many, monogamy is mandatory. And the only example we see outside of it in our culture is “cheating,” which showcases betrayal, lies, deceit, and abandonment rather than any form of Black love. On the contrary, polygamy itself has existed in Black culture long before European religion shaped what relationships were “acceptable.” And while it is lightyears away from Marvin Sease’s practices, true polygamy is more about family structure than collecting women.

In many cultures, mothers are nurturers and fathers are protectors. Polygamy ensured that every child had both aspects present. The truth is, healthy Black love exists in monogamous and polygamous scenarios. Healthy environments, communication, and honesty are the real focal points.

Marvin often referred in his music to the love his mother gave, the love mothers give their children. That nurturing presence was the root of everything—his desire for comfort, his search for affection, and the longing that spilled out in his songs.

Story Teller

As a Gullah descendant myself, I can attest that our history is rarely found in textbooks. Our ancestors preserved our ways through the art of storytelling. That’s the same reason Marvin Sease’s songs are still keepsakes today. Whether finding love, losing it, or stumbling back into it again... whether work-



■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

ing decades on a job or standing in the middle of a storm of mischief, Sease's songs carried stories no different from those our ancestors told.

This is what makes him a legacy we cannot afford to forget—a symbol of love, life, pain, and resilience in the deep South's Gullah culture. Uncle Marvin... everybody's got an Uncle Marvin.



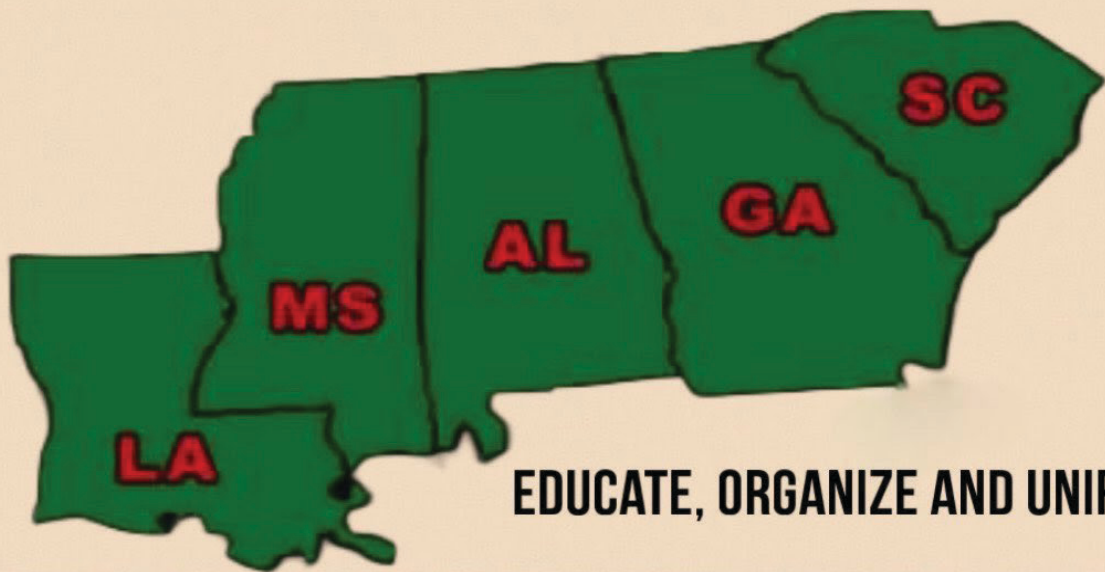
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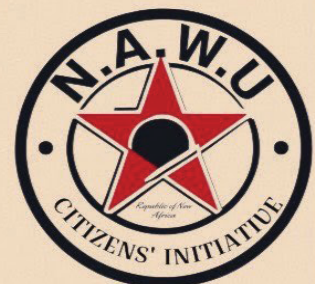
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**President of the
New Afrikan Workers Union
Ghazi Gaidi-Shakur**

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Erykah Badu- Mama's Gun

Lauren McCaskill



In 2000, Erykah Badu released *Mama's Gun*, her second studio album following the breakthrough *Baduizm*. While *Baduizm* introduced her distinctive neo-soul voice, cosmic sensibility, and poetic interiority, *Mama's Gun* emerges less as a traditional successor and more as a laboratory — a charged and intimate site where Badu experiments with sound, identity, vulnerability, healing, trauma, love, politics, ancestry, and the ever-evolving contours of Black womanhood. The word “laboratory” is intentional: in this space, there is trial and error, excavation and risk, revelation and transformation. Badu is both scientist and subject, observing her own emotional chemistry and testing which truths resonate and which ones combust.

She uses self-study as her primary instrument — gathering the raw materials of her lived experience, her inner voice, her relationships, and the collective memory of her community — and distills them into a textured soul tapestry that feels both deeply personal and widely ancestral. This is music as method, soul as inquiry, Black womanhood as a site of continuous research and becoming.

Within this framework, frequency becomes a central organizing principle. It is literal in the musical sense — the vibrations, tones, analog warmth, and organic production that pulse through the album. But it is also profoundly metaphorical: the vibrational state of selfhood, the energetic resonance of Black womanhood in its fullness, the shifting wavelengths of healing, grief, desire, and creation. Badu understands that sound is not just what we hear; it's what we feel, metabolize, and transform through. In *Mama's Gun*, frequency becomes both a diagnostic tool and a healing modality — a way to tune into the self, recalibrate what's unsettled, and transmute experience into clarity, power, and new forms of knowing.

Black Womanhood, Healing and Chaos

One of the most compelling aspects of *Mama's Gun* is how it engages Black womanhood — not as a monolithic ideal of strength, but as inscribed with complexity: vulnerability, agency, rage, tenderness, fatigue, joy. As one commentator puts it: the album “shattered everything I thought I knew about Black women ... It showed me that women can be jealous, be in love, insecure, confident, unsure, and express all of those feelings.”

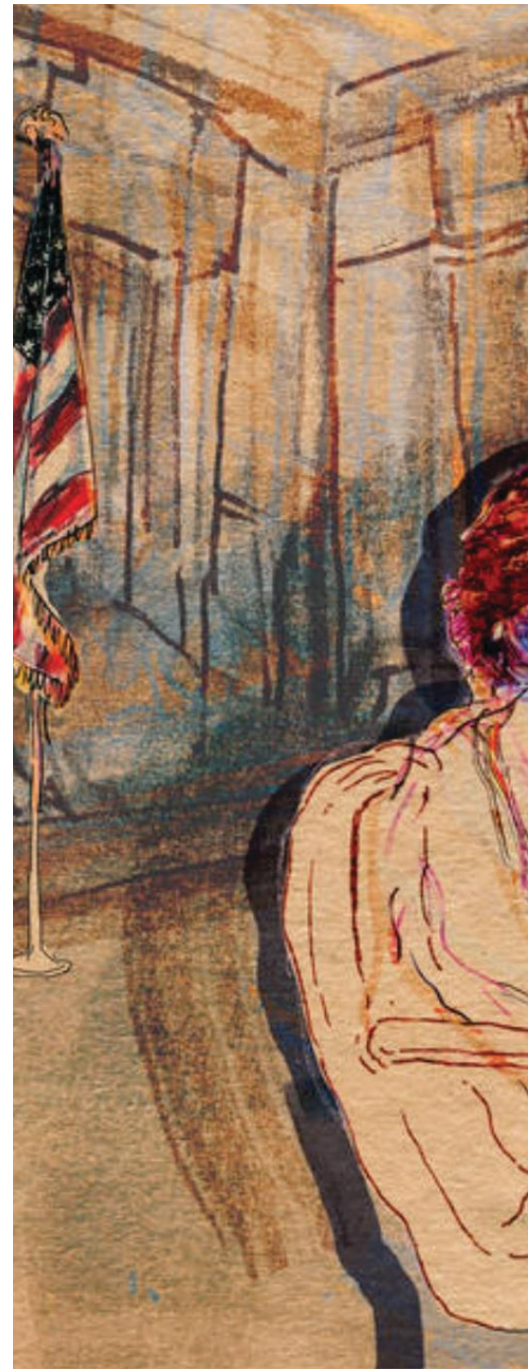
From the opening track “Penitentiary Philosophy,” Badu confronts cycles of incarceration — both literal imprisonment and the metaphorical cages imposed on Black life — that afflict Black communities, especially Black men, and by extension the Black women who love them, lose them, and labor emotionally around them. The track is raw, funky, insurgent; its live-instrument groove pounds like a march, a percussive call-to-arms, contrasting sharply with the lighter jazz

inflections of Baduizm. In this sense, Badu's musical composition mirrors a chaos and bodily immediacy that remains painfully present today. She situates the listener inside the psychological turmoil that Black men endure, revealing the brutality, confusion, and oppression they navigate daily.

Badu's critique asks why society normalizes the loss of Black men to prisons and police violence, why families are expected to endure, to be strong, to move on, as if this ongoing devastation is simply a natural part of life. In her framing, the American landscape becomes a battlefield without a declared war: discriminatory policing, disproportionate sentencing, and generational criminalization form an unending conflict waged against Black communities. The street, the courtroom, and the prison become the terrain on which this war is fought. And within this violence, Black women are expected to carry the grief of sons, partners, and brothers locked away or lost, even as the nation treats such suffering as inevitable.

Badu's insurgent production — its distorted guitar, marching-drum intensity, and explosive vocal delivery — becomes a sonic embodiment of resistance. Through sound, she exposes the gap between America's professed commitment to justice and the lived reality of systemic discrimination and incarceration. Her work unmasks the machinery of state violence not through imagery of soldiers or battlefields, but through the reverberations of a cell door, the thrum of a bassline, and the unrelenting truth of her voice.

But the album does not stop at society's oppression — it turns inward. Tracks like "Bag Lady" speak to the burden of emotional baggage, the need to let go, to heal: "I guess nobody ever told you / All you must hold on to / Is you / Is you / Is you" (as Badu sings). Through that song and its video (which draws on the choreopoem *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide / When the Rainbow Is Enuf), she directly



addresses the inner emotional life, how we carry weight, how we relate

In this sense the "chaos" is both external and internal (self-doubt, relationships). The painting doesn't pretend the path is linear. It shows a man (Amadou Diallo) yet also reflects on structural violence. The emotional response is passive: it is an act of remembering



es of Black women —
ease it, how we heal.

external (racism, gender/judgment, trauma)
ship breakdown, emotional evolution). Badu
On “A.D. 2000,” she honours a fallen Black
reflects on the loss and anger that accompany
al terrain is messy and rich. Healing is not
ng, naming, releasing, reclaiming. And Badu

frames Black womanhood as at the centre of this process — not simply as victim, not simply as warrior, but as soulful scientist.

Self-Study into Soul

What it means to “turn self-study into soul” is that Badu examines her own life — her relationship, her motherhood, her spiritual growth, her creative identity — and translates that into song. The album was made after a period in which she took time away (including motherhood) and returned to the studio determined to speak more directly. The live-instrumentation, the warm vintage microphones and equipment used in recording lend the album a texture of authenticity, organic feel, and depth.

For example: the track “Cleva” plays on self-worth — what it means, for a Black woman specifically, to be clever, attractive, desirable, and visible in a society shaped by a long legacy of psychological control dating back to enslavement. The “Willie Lynch theory” has come to symbolize the deliberate breaking of Black identity through manipulation, division, and self-negation. Its power lies in describing a psychological wound: teaching Black people to distrust themselves, devalue their own bodies, and police one another’s identities. “Cleva” operates as an antidote to that conditioning. When Badu sings about her “booty” being “a little big” and her “hair” being “a little nappy,” she is confronting the internalized voice of racialized beauty standards — a voice directly born from the social engineering that the Lynch letter represents. Instead of shrinking, Badu chooses radical self-regard. She flips those supposed “flaws” into affirmations. In doing so, she models a process of decolonizing



the mind: redefining beauty and intelligence on one's own terms, outside of the psychological warfare that attempted to dismantle Black self-love for centuries.

“My Life,” another track on Mama’s Gun, deepens this theme of self-development by voicing the confusion and disorientation that often accompany the unlearning of oppressive narratives. After generations of structural racism, controlling images, and psychological trauma — again symbolized by the Willie Lynch paradigm — the question of “which way do I go?” becomes existential. Badu does not offer easy clarity. Instead, she honors the emotional fog, the spiritual dislocation. In Black psychology, this mirrors the phase of identity reformation, when individuals begin to recognize how external forces shaped their self-perception and start the difficult work of reclaiming agency. “My Life” becomes a sonic meditation on that threshold moment: the point where old programming breaks down but new grounding has not yet fully formed.

“Didn’t Cha Know,” produced by J Dilla, captures the liminality of self-discovery with even greater musical poignancy. Over Dilla’s floating, time-bending groove, Badu sings about losing her way, wandering, searching, circling. This is the psychology of becoming — not linear growth, but spiraling transformation. After the psychological damage described in the Willie Lynch theory

(divide-and-conquer, fear-conditioning, self-hatred), healing must happen in waves. The song's structure mirrors this: you fall, you rise, you repeat. Badu acknowledges the shame of mistakes but reframes them as necessary steps in the journey toward spiritual agency. "Didn't cha know?" becomes an ancestral whisper, a reminder that lessons return until they are learned, that wandering is its own form of divine instruction.

Throughout the album, Badu's voice waxes and wanes — soft, whispering, commanding, playful, introspective. This vocal shapeshifting is not aesthetic alone; it reflects the shifting frequencies of a Black woman rebuilding her interior world. Her voice becomes a tool of psychological realignment. In Black liberation psychology, voice is synonymous with self-definition — the thing enslavers tried hardest to silence. Badu's willingness to oscillate between vulnerability and authority models a full-spectrum humanity denied to Black women under the mental strategies of racial domination. She creates a frequency of self-reflection, of emotional honesty, of growth, inviting listeners into a collective unlearning. Her songs become small laboratories of healing, where the residues of generational trauma can be exposed, dissolved, and transformed.

In this way, Mama's Gun doesn't just document self-development; it enacts it. Track by track, Badu performs the slow dismantling of inherited psychological shackles and the reconstruction of a liberated self. Where the Willie Lynch theory represents the blueprint for fracturing Black identity, Badu's album becomes a counter-blueprint — a set of frequencies designed to remind Black listeners of their inherent worth, complexity, and power. Her music becomes both therapy and resistance, a soundtrack for the long work of turning self-study into soul.



Soul here is more than the genre. It is essence, spirit, vibration. In exploring her interior world, Badu taps into a frequency of Black womanhood that is healing: not just surviving but creating, not just bearing witness-ing but producing meaning. The “lab” is her songs; the experiments are the grooves, the lyrics, the interplay of voices and instruments; the results are shifts in consciousness — for Badu and for listeners.

Creation and Frequency

The album’s sonic palette is varied: funk, soul, jazz, rock, reggae. This speaks also to the breadth of Black womanhood — multiple modes, shifting attunements. According to one source, the album “experiments with a broad array of genres, including jazz, funk, rock, reggae and traditional soul.” The live instrumentation, the musical textures, the interplay of groove and lyric all contribute to a certain vibrational field — a frequency that invites listeners into a space of resonance, of healing, of movement.

Within Black womanhood and healing, frequency becomes a form of attunement — to self, to community, to spirit, to ancestral memory. Erykah Badu, with her hippie-soul aesthetic, spiritual leanings, and Afrocentric sensibility, creates not just songs but vibrational environments that Black women can inhabit, breathe in, and heal through. This is especially evident in “Bag Lady,” one of the album’s most iconic tracks, where Badu turns the act of letting go into a communal ritual. “Bag Lady” is not merely about individual emotional baggage; it is about the ways Black women carry inherited burdens — generational trauma, care-taking exhaustion, heartbreak, disappointment, the weight of always being “strong.” These bags are psychic, cultural, emotional, and intergenerational. Badu steps into the role of sister-friend, healer, and truth-teller as she sings, “You gon’ hurt your back / draggin’ all them bags like that.” Her tone is tender, not accusatory; she speaks the way Black women speak to each other



when telling hard truths gently: Girl, let it go

Through this, Badu models a version of sisterhood and compassion. She reminds listeners that healing comes through relationships built on shared experience and vulnerability. Black women are often expected to mother everyone else, and in this album, sisterhood becomes a sacred



before it breaks you.

hood grounded in accountability and
ng is not achieved in isolation but through
mutual care. In a world where Black wom-
se — partners, children, communities — sis-

counter-institution, a place where Black women mother each other. “Bag Lady” offers that space. Its frequency is the frequency of release: the soft, melodic invitation to set burdens down, to choose rest instead of martyrdom, to refuse the emotional labor that White supremacy and patriarchy have historically demanded of Black women.

At the same time, Badu underscores that letting go is an act of creation. By teaching the listener how to put the bags down, she teaches her how to make room for new identity, new joy, new freedom. This aligns with broader Black feminist traditions — from Audre Lorde to bell hooks — which emphasize that healing is inherently political, inherently creative. When a Black woman releases what has been placed upon her, she is crafting a new self, not just shedding an old one.

This creative energy pulses throughout *Mama's Gun*. In “Time’s a Wastin,” Badu invokes the frequency of transformation, urging listeners not to delay their liberation. The track becomes a motivational prayer disguised as a groove, a reminder that becoming oneself is urgent, necessary, revolutionary. Meanwhile, “Green Eyes” offers a different frequency — one of introspection, named pain, and radical vulnerability. Across its three movements, Badu allows jealousy, hurt, fear, acceptance, and rebirth to coexist. It becomes an emotional map of healing, showing that recovery is not linear but cyclical, like waves or breath.

Taken together, these tracks embody the collective dimensions of Black womanhood. They articulate the spiritual and emotional truth that one woman’s healing is never just her own — it carries reverberations for sisters, friends, mothers, aunties, ancestors, and daughters yet to be born. When Badu sings, she is singing with them and for them. She creates a web of sound where personal experience becomes communal knowledge. The frequencies she establishes — letting go, transforming, reflecting — are not only inner states but shared practices, transmitted

through music as cultural technology.

Thus, *Mama's Gun* becomes more than an album; it becomes a collective healing instrument, a sonic circle of sisterhood. Through her voice, her musical collaborators, and her lyrical candor, Badu constructs a space where Black women can rest, reflect, release, and reimagine themselves. In this way, the album becomes both a work of self-care and a profound act of cultural care: a reminder that when Black women heal, communities heal; when Black women create, new worlds are made possible.

Conclusion

In *Mama's Gun*, Erykah Badu invites us into her living laboratory of Black womanhood — a space where healing, chaos, and creation coexist with urgency and grace. The album is not merely listened to; it is experienced, studied, and metabolized. Badu practices a kind of spiritual and artistic alchemy, taking the raw materials of her life — heartbreak, exhaustion, pressure, desire, ancestral memory — and transforming them into something luminous, textured, and deeply instructive. She shows that soul music itself is a vessel of frequency and vibration capable of transmuting pain into wisdom, confusion into clarity, and vulnerability into power.

As I moved through the album, I realized I was moving through my own mirrors. The songs became tools that helped me heal, grow, learn, and eventually teach what I was coming to understand about myself. Badu's openness gave me permission to examine the burdened places within my own life — the expectations carried, the inherited roles performed, the silences swallowed. She reminded me that healing is not passive; it is active,



intentional work. It is cyclical. It spirals. It returns y

Every track became a lesson: a meditation on bound quiet power of self-study. Through her voice, I learn of running from it, how to reframe my struggles as began to practice my own alchemy — taking what f into



knowledge, agency, and creative clarity. And as I healed, I grew. As I grew, I learned. And as I learned, I felt compelled to teach, to share what the journey through this album—and through myself—had shown me.

Mama's Gun becomes a site of inquiry not only into Black womanhood but into the human capacity for transformation. It is a reminder that we have laboratories inside us — places where our experiences, emotions, and histories mix, react, and reshape us. Badu's work shows that creation is both internal and external, that sound can be medicine, that soul can shift the architecture of a life.

For any listener willing to tune in, the gifts are profound: a mirror, a rhythm, an initiation. A laboratory of possibility. An alchemical space where you can enter one version of yourself and emerge another — more whole, more aware, more aligned, and more capable of teaching what you were once only trying to survive.

you to yourself differently each time.

boundaries, intuition, emotional truth, and the
ned how to sit with my discomfort instead
catalysts for transformation. Like Badu, I
felt heavy or confusing and transmuting it



MUDUSA WITH LOCKS

CHUCK KING

Medusa with locks

They call her the devil because her locks look like serpents

They call her mean and toxic because she has an attitude

But she's the sweetest person you'll ever meet.

Her beauty goes from the heart to the skin and pours out her eyes where I
can see our ancestors our bloodline our tribe.

She carries the pain and burdens of our tribe so eloquently while maintain-
ing her peace

My only role is to protect her, she's our tribes biggest prize most valuable
possession.

The world places her a medusa but Kandake carries the skin glow of Sudan

This beauty cannot be redefined no matter how many times European writ-
ers try.

They can try until their pencils break, until they run out of lead.

Kankakee is beautiful from Sudan to the states.

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