



**25th**  
**BIG ISSUE**



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# VIBRANT

Entertainment & Arts

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VIBRANT Magazine  
c/o Unified Outreach

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Unified Outreach would like to recognize some of the organizations that are making a positive contribution to the arts community!



**VIBRANT Entertainment & Arts Magazine**  
Issue #25, published 2025 by Unified Outreach.  
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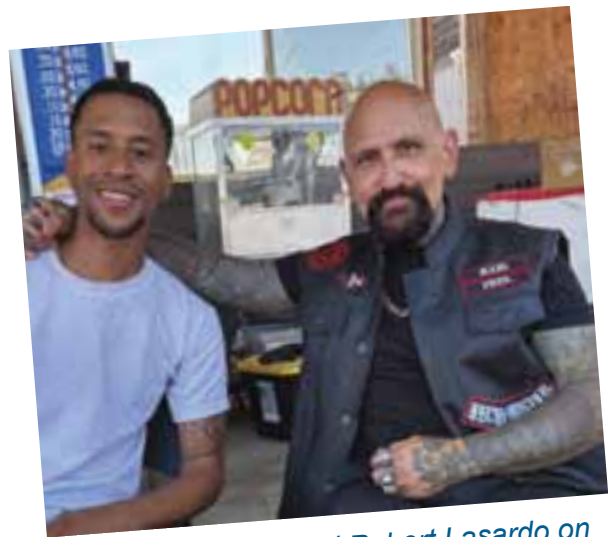
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*The Road to Success with Actor & Director,*

# **JON MEGGISON**

It's been 3 years since Jon Meggison first appeared in Vibrant's Indie Artist Lookout Page. At that time Jon had 7 credits and was already making a name for himself in Seattle's artistic circles. Today, Jon has a 30-movie resume with another 13 films being released this year, including screen time with legendary actor Robert Lasardo (Hard to Kill, King of New York, Nip/Tuck). The two actors recently shared screen time in the acclaimed series, "The Horrorverse" directed by Aaron Carlson and produced by CCC Productions. The storyline follows a special forces unit who have been assigned to hunt down and capture Michael Myers, Jason Voorhees and Fred Krueger. If you are a fan of 80s horror films and their bigger-than-life characters, you'll love this series. *"Sharing the screen with Robert Lasardo was a dream come true. I remember as a kid watching him on Nip/Tuck, Death Race, and The Mule. It was such a surreal feeling."* Jon said.



*Jon and Robert Lasardo on the set of The Horrorverse.*

It's been an exciting journey since he starred in his first lead role as Eric Olsen in the Amazon Prime original movie, *A Haunting In Ravenwood*. This gave Jon the opportunity to work with another seasoned professional, *Eileen Dietz*, who is best known for her roles in *The Exorcist*, *Halloween II*, and *Friday the 13th*. Since then, Jon has amassed a respectable amount of film credits and has even taken on the task of directing his own film, 2025's release of *Where the Road Ends (Battle of Love)*, which is available for streaming on YouTube and other platforms.

Jon was born in Hawaii, but was raised around Everett and Lynnwood (just north of Seattle), where he played basketball and had planned for a career in sports. About basketball, Jon says, *"It really saved my life and kept me off the streets as a kid. It kept me busy. It showed me structure, discipline and how to work with others."* Jon also has an interest in hip hop dance and music. Although he has not had the opportunity to fully display these talents on the big screen, he is open to a role that would showcase these skills.

*"You know, the crazy thing is that I didn't start out thinking that I could be an actor, it wasn't even a thought for me. I was playing basketball and dabbling in commercial print modeling when my agent suggested I should try acting. I went for it and have to say that it was the best decision of my life. I absolutely fell in love with it, and I've been blessed to work on a lot of amazing sets and be around some of the best talent."*

Jon goes on to say, *"My current project, Where the Road Ends, is a full-length feature film, based on an original short called "Battle of Love". I'm so grateful for the team that came together to help me bring my vision to life. This film follows characters Jeff and his wife Michelle, who is played by the incredible Amanda Hoang. It is a drama about a young couple going through issues within their relationship and some of the most common things are communication, loyalty, and honesty. What happens when communication breaks down, and we start looking for connection elsewhere. Additions to the talent pool beyond the initial short include Justin P. Slaughter, Grace Madland, Saman Khan, Mia Mosley, and Jeremy Rudd."*

Although Jon enjoys acting, he has found a new love in the director's chair. With the launch of his new company, JCM Productions, and is looking forward to helping up & coming actors and artists, as well as expanding his own portfolio. *"I think that what sets JCM productions apart from others is that it's a family business. We are creating original stories that are ours and telling stories that are real and that people can relate to."*



# JESSICA NOEL THOMPSON

Fresh off a stellar performance in the Aaron Switzer thriller, *No Good Deed*, actress Jessica Noel Thompson continues to pad her already impressive catalog, which has recently broken the 40+ films mark. She's come a long way from her first on-screen role in *Z-Nation*, where she played a zombie who catches an arrow through her head. Now days she's headlining, with a major role in a feature film called *Divorcing the Mob*, where she plays a leading character, *Angelina the Mob Wife*. The film is in its post-production stage and soon to be released.

Jessica got her start in acting through children's theater camp and small stage roles. Then, around 2015, a longtime friend and *Z-Nation* cast member, Doug Dawson, brought her the opportunity to play a Zombie on the show and she went for it. *"Film work is totally different from stage work, and I found it absolutely fascinating! In film, you get to shoot the same scene a gazillion times at a gazillion different angles with just a dozen or so crew watching, versus performing one-take in front of a theater full of people. I was hooked."* Jessica shared. Since then, Jessica has gone on to work with big name stars such as Michael Madsen and Anushka Shetty in the 2015 movie, *Silence*. She's attended the Cannes Film Festival, and worked with big name cinematographers, such as Nuk Suwanchote.



*Photos by Ian Phares*

A Spokane native, Jessica fell in love with Seattle while visiting her uncle Bill in the Bellevue Bridle Trails area. During that trip, she visited the University of Washington campus to visit her Aunt De, who was a student at the time. Jessica was so taken by Seattle and all it had to offer that she set a goal to one day attend the UW, live in Bellevue Bridle trails and drive a Corvette, just like Uncle Bill. She proudly accomplished the majority of these dreams, except for owning a Corvette, which she is still working on. *"I am a firm believer in setting goals and letting nothing get in my way of achieving them. Dream big and go for it!"* She proclaims.

Readers can find out more about Jessica at her website, [jessicanoelthompson.com](http://jessicanoelthompson.com), or a simple Google search of her name, *Jessica Noel Thompson* to find additional links to extra content, including video shorts, original photography, and modeling, such as the iconic photoshoot with photographer Ian Phares. *"Lady of the Lake"* features a dress made from a 35-foot-wide vintage parachute from the 1950s. Shot near Snoqualmie Pass, the pictures capture Jessica floating on the water. Jessica says the team of Ian and his son Charlie were able to create magic in making her dress catch air and do amazing things for the camera (photo shoot excerpt above).



# JESSICA NOEL THOMPSON

(Continued...)

By  
Xza Yeri

In her spare time, Jessica enjoys gardening and landscaping. *"I have a greenhouse and vegetable gardens and love to be able to feed our family things that I grow myself. I love making jam from our homegrown raspberries, blueberries, and strawberries, and sharing with family and friends. I also really like construction and fixing things around the house. I love the feeling of accomplishment I get from completing a task that I have absolutely no training or experience in. I dig in and research the task online, figure out what parts I need and then complete the project. Things keep breaking, so I always have something going on."*

About her fan support, Jessica goes on to say, *"People are amazing, and I appreciate every single human who takes the time to watch any of my work. My hope is that my fans experience a smile or a tear as result of work I get to participate in."*

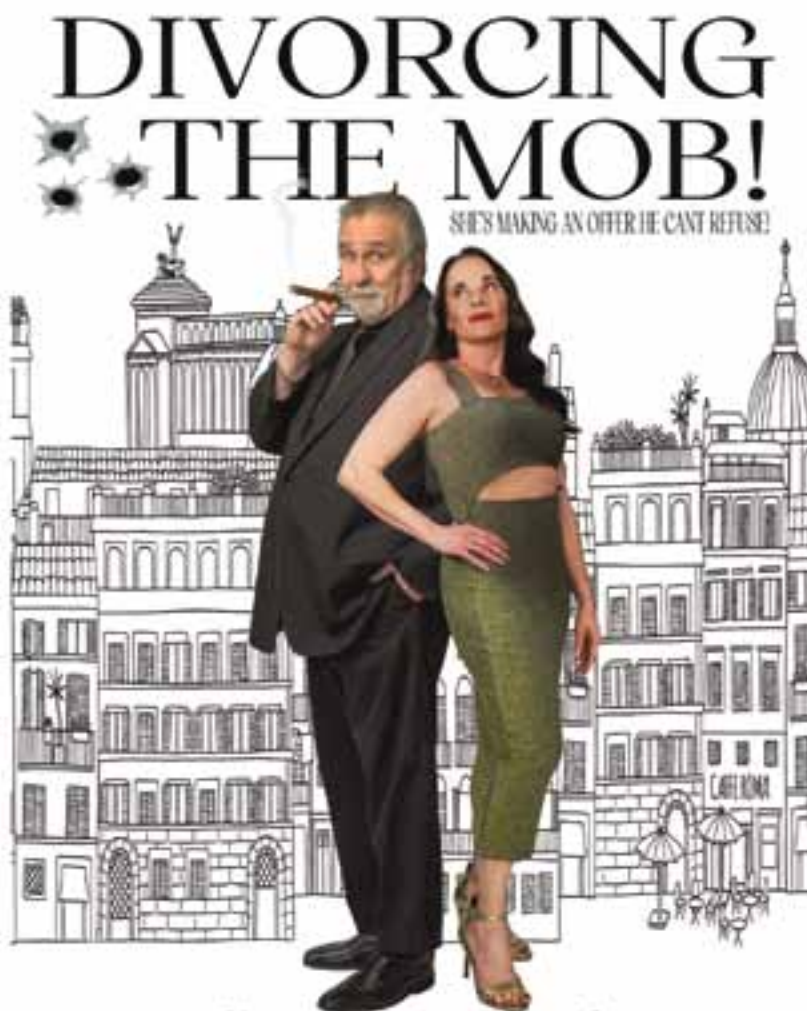
About the actor's life, she says, *"I am so grateful for my family's support of my work. Without it, I couldn't do what I do. Acting is a really complicated job that doesn't just affect the actor, but the actor's whole family and close circle. The work involves digging into one's brain and heart deeply, sometimes too deeply, to develop and portray a character. The close circle is forced to pick up the slack during the process. I give all credit for my work to my family for allowing me to indulge."*

Jessica's 5-year plan is to continue making great films with hopes of eventually landing a great role on a sitcom as a mom and subtly overbearing sassy wife with an outstanding wardrobe (Lol!). She goes on to say that she would love to be part of a series that someday is streamed by future generations as a classic. Future co-stars on Jessica's wish list include Laura Linne (Ozark) and Elizabeth Moss (Handmaid's Tale).

In closing, Jessica says, *"Without my mom starting me in theater as a child, I would probably not have found acting as a career. I highly encourage parents to enroll their children in a local theater program at least once during a school break, and give them a chance to express their artistic side. It is a great way to learn how to work both independently and as a team, and can help build self-confidence."*

*"I had all 3 of my daughters in musical theater programs when they were young and they all benefited. Some loved it and some didn't, but all 3 have worked on set with me at least a few times and I loved sharing that with them! One of them is an independent music artist now and just moved to Los Angeles last week. It makes me so happy to see her following her Kindergarten dreams of being a singer. Raise them in the arts!"*

Find out more about Jessica at [jessicanoelthompson.com](http://jessicanoelthompson.com) and currently available for auditions! ZT Agency - [booking@ztagency.com](mailto:booking@ztagency.com) AKA Talent Management - [Neoretroart2@msn.com](mailto:Neoretroart2@msn.com)



No Good Deed  
**World Premiere**  
**Film Awards 2024**  
*Best Actor - Jonathan Holbrook*

No Good Deed  
**World Premiere**  
**Film Awards 2024**  
*Best Crime Drama - Aaron Switzer*

No Good Deed  
**World Premiere**  
**Film Awards 2024**  
*Best Cinematography - Sheldon Black*



AARON "FOKUS" SWITZER

**DIRECTOR**



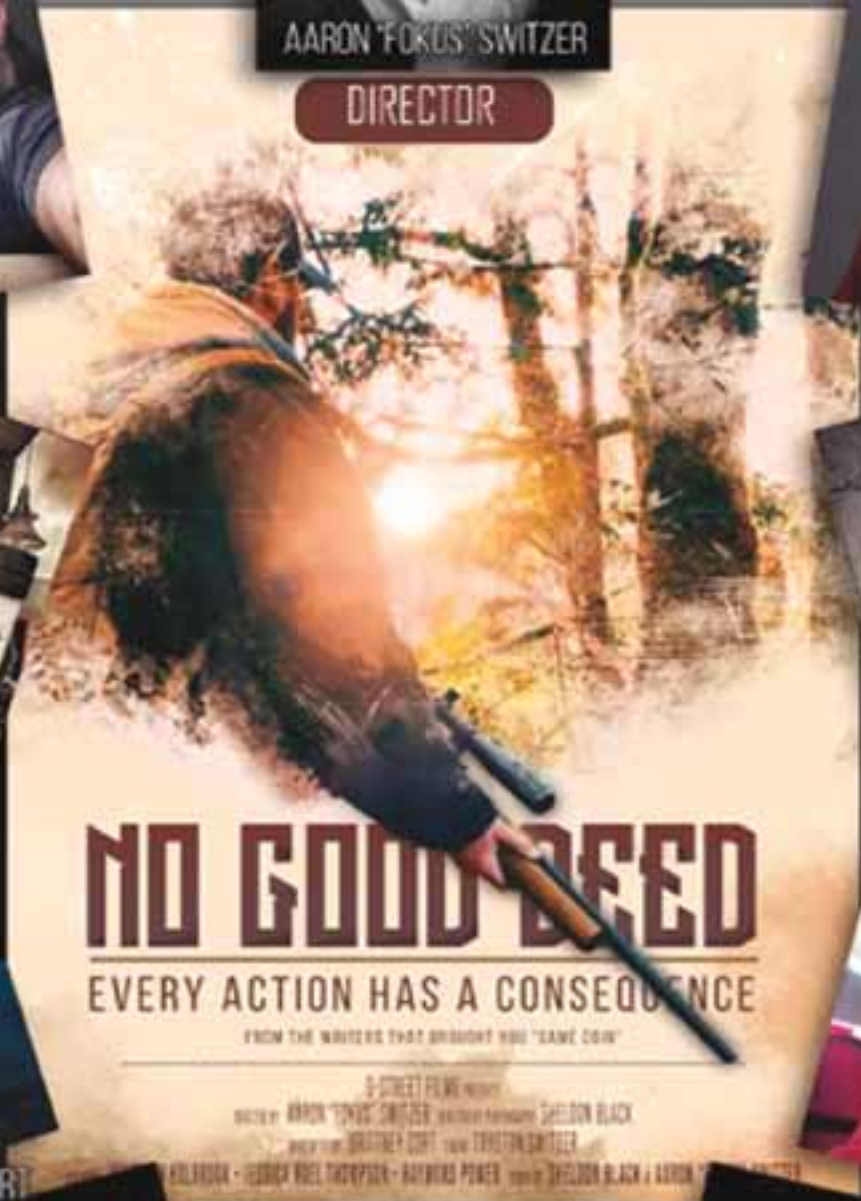
JONATHAN HOLBROOK



SHELDON BLACK



JAMES "BOOGIE BROW" STEWART



# NO GOOD DEED

EVERY ACTION HAS A CONSEQUENCE

FROM THE WRITERS THAT BROUGHT YOU 'GAME COW'

9 STREET FILMS PRESENTS  
 A FILM BY AARON "FOKUS" SWITZER WRITTEN BY SHeldon BLACK  
 WITH THE BROTHERS COIT AND TYRONE SWITZER  
 JONATHAN HOLBROOK • GORDON RUEL THOMPSON • RAYMOND POWER • JAMES "BOOGIE BROW" STEWART • JESSICA THOMPSON • D. A. EVANS (2 O SICEM)



RAYMOND POWER

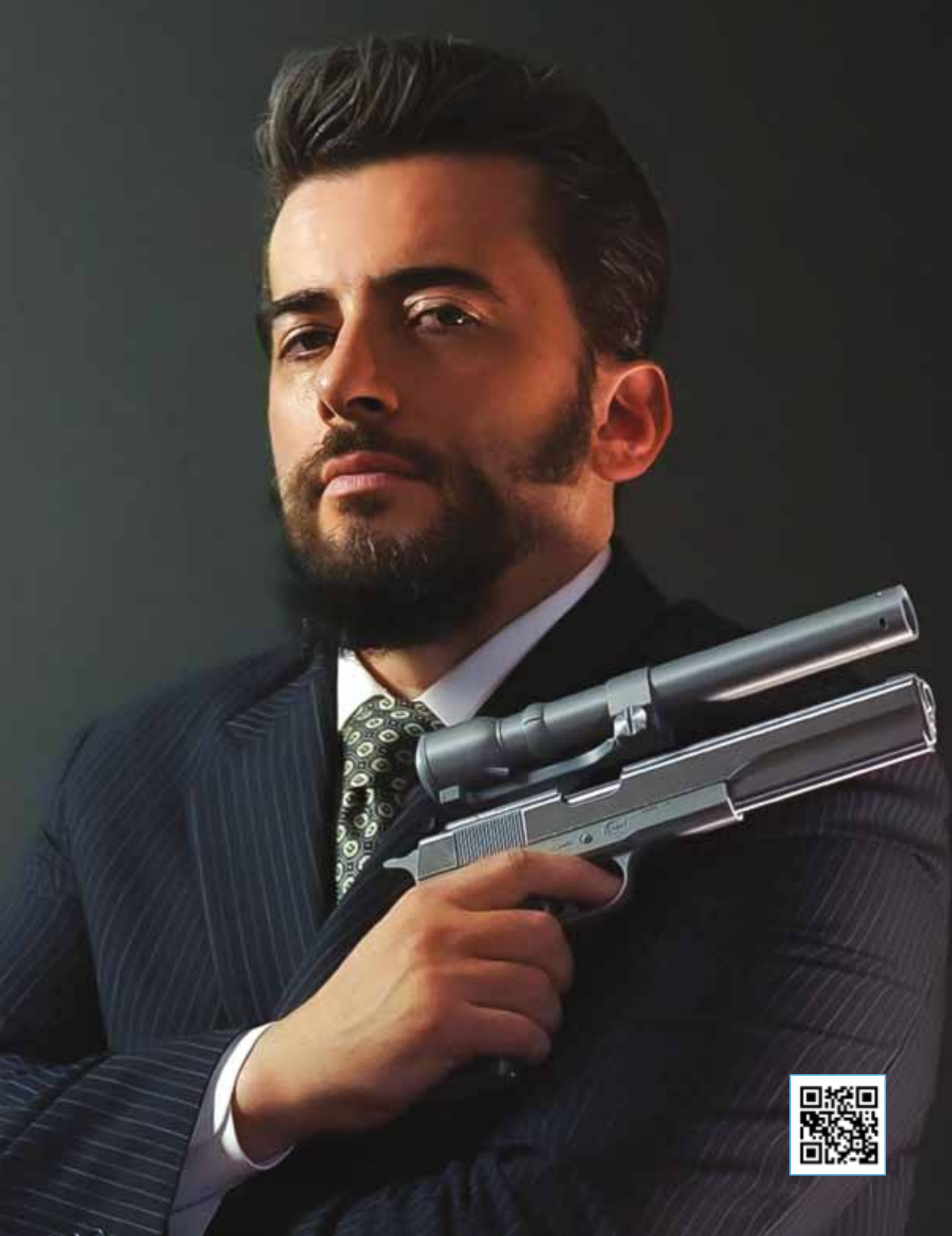


JESSICA THOMPSON



D. A. EVANS (2 O SICEM)





# JACK BERNER



by Jabril Mjuzza

## ONE TO WATCH!

With smoldering good looks and refined machismo, Jack Berner has drawn comparisons to a young Antonio Banderas or Esai Morales, with AKA Talent representative Alexi Angelino naming him as one of her Top Ten Actors to Watch. Jack is currently starring in *The Apex Predators Club* as Holt, a monster wrangler of sorts. Described as *Surviving the Game* meets *Jurassic Park*, with the prey being a menagerie of monsters! It's thrilling, intense, and a lot of fun!

Vibrant had a chance to sit down with Jack, and here's how it went.

**VIBRANT:** You're definitely a hot commodity right now. The AKA Talent endorsement touts you as the next big thing. Are you nervous?

**JACK:** It really is an honor. I started making feature films less than three years ago, with my first project, *Break the Cycle*. Since then, I've wrapped 18 more feature films—and I'm just getting started. You could say I'm on a mission to make up for lost time, diving into every opportunity to grow, challenge myself, and tell compelling stories.

**VIBRANT:** That is an impressive number of projects for such a short period of time. What is driving you to produce at this level?

**JACK:** Drama and acting have been a passion of mine since college at the University of Washington, where I first really fell in love with storytelling. Growing up in a family steeped in Italian culture, movies were more than entertainment—they were part of our identity. My mom admired Sofia Loren and dreamed of being an actress, while my dad jokingly likened himself to Al Pacino. That passion for film was always in the background. But pursuing acting was a big gamble. Like many, I worried about the uncertainty and the odds, compounded by childhood insecurities around failure, especially coming from my father's perspective. That's why I initially chose a safer path in law, where I still performed daily, just for a different audience. Being a trial attorney is its own kind of theater: you're the producer, director, writer, and lead performer all at once, convincing judges and juries with every word.

Then came a turning point. My mom never achieved her dream as an actress herself, not even able to get such a career off the ground as she battled cancer half her life, which she ultimately succumbed to around Thanksgiving 2022, her favorite American holiday. She was taken too soon and with lots of unfinished business. On her deathbed, I promised I would pursue her dream of acting—not just for her, but for myself. Since then, I've thrown myself into this new chapter, determined to make good on that promise.

**VIBRANT:** I am sorry for your loss. I'm sure she would be proud of you and all that you've accomplished. Would you like to share anything else about your life outside of acting? (continued next page)

# JACK BERNER *(continued)*



JACK: I immigrated to Seattle as a child refugee from Ukraine, which was then part of the Soviet Union, along with my parents in the late 1970s. We came seeking freedom from communist oppression and religious persecution. Growing up as a first-generation immigrant, I felt a strong responsibility to build a meaningful life and legacy here. That drive led me to the legal profession. I started working as a clerk when I was just 15 and went straight through college and law school at the University of Washington. I then built a successful career as a trial attorney in the Pacific Northwest that spanned more than 25 years. While law was my first calling, storytelling and performance have always been close to my heart, and eventually, I made the leap into acting. My journey from the courtroom to the screen is one fueled by the same passion and discipline that shaped my legal career.

VIBRANT: You have an incredible story. Thank you for sharing it with us.

JACK: It's my early experiences with my parents that helped to put me on this road. I remember the very first movie I ever saw, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, when I first came to this country. My dad took me, and I left the theater in tears. They weren't sad tears, but tears of joy. Joy from sharing that special moment with him, and from being completely captivated by the magic of cinema. That experience hooked me for life; it was the moment I understood how powerful storytelling could be, and it's stayed with me ever since.

VIBRANT: Your body of work up till now seems to gravitate towards horror, thrillers, and heavy drama. In many of your films, the tension is thick, the stakes are high, and the emotions are raw. They get under your skin, keep you up at night, or make you feel something you weren't expecting. What's your secret to success?

JACK: I don't approach roles as performances, but as conversations. I'm not trying to impress; I'm trying to connect. I go deep—psychologically, emotionally, physically—because that's where the real story lives. I think audiences can feel when an actor isn't faking it, and I refuse to fake it. I take nothing for granted, and I over-prepare, just as if it were for a client's once-in-a-lifetime trial. That's the standard I hold myself to, and I think people notice that.

VIBRANT: I agree, and it seems that so do your fans.

JACK: One thing about Jack Berner fans, they are incredibly intelligent, unreasonably attractive, and just discerning enough to keep me on my toes. Basically, people who get the good stuff (Lo!!)

VIBRANT: You've worked with some big name actors, such as Eric Roberts and Felissa Rose, and seem to be on track to very big things. Does Seattle offer you enough of a stage to shine at the level you're on track to attain?

JACK: Regarding Eric Roberts, he's legendary, and watching him work was a masterclass in staying relaxed, grounded, and professional no matter how wild the set gets. But the most memorable celebrity collaborator I've had would be Felissa Rose. She's a horror icon for a reason, but she also brings this electric, joyful energy that lifts everyone around her. She's fearless on camera, wildly supportive off camera, and is honestly one of the most generous actors I've ever shared a set with. I learned a lot just watching how (continued next page)

(continued...) she treats the crew, the fans, the process, all with total respect and zero ego. Beyond that, she's become family. We've worked on multiple projects together, and she played my mother in the first film we did... just months after I had lost my own mom. That role, and her presence, became unexpectedly cathartic. The resemblance between Felissa and my mom was uncanny, and we bonded deeply over that grief. She helped me process something incredibly personal through the work, and I'll always be grateful for that.

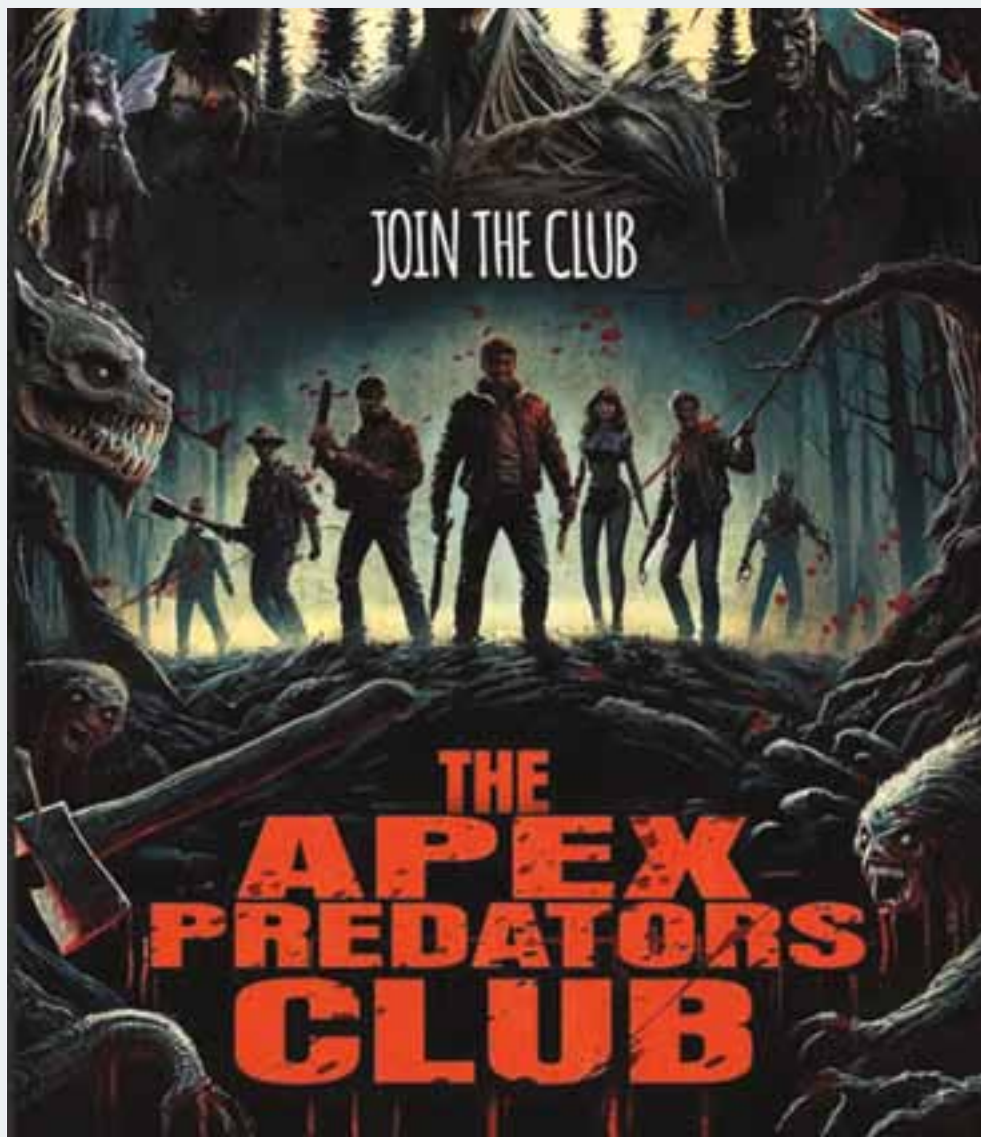
VIBRANT: How about the opportunities in Seattle? One of the biggest hurdles to success in Seattle's film industry is the limited scale compared to bigger hubs like L.A. or New York. The market here is smaller, which means fewer big-budget productions and less visibility for local talent. The challenge is to leverage Seattle's unique spirit and creativity while finding ways to connect with larger audiences and opportunities beyond the region. While most of my producing work has been outside Seattle, I've acted in films here and have always admired the city's unique creative energy. Seattle's community of filmmakers and artists is incredibly passionate and collaborative. I'm excited to be more involved in Seattle's film scene moving forward because it's a place that fosters real creativity and bold storytelling, and is in my own backyard, after all.

VIBRANT: What's next?

JACK: I usually have multiple irons in the fire. I thrive on staying busy and challenged, and I wouldn't have it any other way. Next up, I'm diving into *Vampire Penance: The Atonement of John Wolf*, the first film in a vampire trilogy directed by award-winning filmmaker John Reign. I'm playing Niles, the lead vampire. This time, I'm "the monster"!

VIBRANT: Where can new fans find you?

JACK: At the moment, my socials do the job. You can find me on Facebook under Yevgeny (Jack) Berner, and on Instagram as [@TheJackBerner](#). Between behind-the-scenes shots, project updates, and the occasional glimpse into my process, it's all there—raw, real, and current.



# MOVIE MAKING 101 KIT WILSON

## A Twist of Time Productions LLC

MOVIES



In the last few years, Seattle has begun fully embracing the movie making business, with the introduction of the Seattle Film Commission and the launch of Harbor Island Studios. Actions that Writer/Producer/Director Kit Wilson is fully taking advantage of. Wilson and his company, *A Twist of Time Productions LLC*, are setting the standard for high-quality, high-volume content creators. Wilson, along with his assistant Dave Patterson, is the standard-bearer for industry level shorts for film festival audiences, providing award winning releases such as *Fragile Ghost*, *Something Behind the Walls*, *Taxi Ride*, and *Missing Hearts*.

*A Twist of Time Productions LLC* is currently gearing up to shoot its next film, *Asleep at the Wheel*. Wilson describes this surreal suspense-thriller as his personal “twist” on the iconic *Eagles* tune, *Hotel California*. The story stars *Death of Snow White* stand-out, Lydia Pentz, as a rebellious college girl who embarks on a journey of personal discovery, which takes her deep into the desert, and eventually, to a mysterious hotel where she might find exactly what she’s looking for. *But at what cost?*

Sitting down with Wilson was a great experience. We not only talked about his new film, but he was very open and willing to share what it takes to survive & thrive in Seattle’s movie-making business.

Kit Wilson’s specialty is the short-film festival circuit. Traditionally, accepted films are restricted to 15 minutes. Although Wilson does admit to stretching some of his movies up to 21 minutes, although he has had luck with foreign film festivals, he warns that some local festivals will deny entry for anything exceeding the allotted 15-minute mark. Generally, Wilson will allow his films to participate in festivals for up to one year after their initial release, after which the films are put on the shelf until they are released as part of a film-collection distribution deal. According to Wilson, he is currently acting as his own agent and is open to conversations with potential distribution partners.

When I asked Kit if he had a favorite film in his collection, he said, “*They are all my babies, and all hold special memories. But I did recently release my first Sci Fi (Missing Hearts), which I would say is currently one of my favorites because it’s new and different.*”

What about talent? As far as using artists from the Seattle area, I wondered if he has a favorite actor, a DeNiro to his Scorsese? “*There are a few actors whom I’ve had the privilege of working with on multiple occasions. Like Ben Affleck says, if you have your talent locked down, (continued...)*



## MOVIE MAKING 101 (continued)

... you have half your movie done!” He goes on to say, “I’ve had great success using several of the local talent houses, including Big Fish, Topo Swoop, and AKA Talent. There are rare occasions that I bring in actors from outside of the northwest, but for the most part, I use local artists.”

Wilson expressed his confidence in local talent and confidence in northwest moviemaking as a whole, thanks to the recent investments by the city and county. “I’ve been shooting quite a bit at Harbor Island Studios. The location is perfect. It is very quiet, very spacious, with around-the-clock access and lots of parking. They also have a wide selection of old backdrops that are available for use, along with vintage furniture and a green screen.

I asked what it takes to make a movie possible. What sort of funding is required, and where does it come from? “That’s a timely question, he responded. “I was recently on the Joe Downing Cut (Pod-cast), talking about Asleep at the Wheel. We actually have opportunities for investors to help support transportation, costumes, and other needs. We have 5 shooting days scheduled in Seattle, and 2 more days in California. If you ever wanted to get involved with the business side of the industry, now is your chance.”

Continuing on, Kit explained, “There are multiple ways to fund a movie. Crowdfunding has always been a go-to, but as more and more films are shot in Seattle, the competition on those sites will become fiercer. Other options are continued partnerships with local producers, who are interested in being a continued part of this business. There are also businesses or organizations that may have a direct connection or personal interest in a specific film. Take for instance, our new film, *Asleep Behind the Wheel*. This is a story about a person overcoming adversity and moving into personal empowerment. If an organization saw this as part of their mission, they might be willing to partner. Investing in films is always a way for advertisers to get long-term return on investment. Of course, the product placement has to make sense. We wouldn’t have a Coke bottle on the space module control panel.”

“That makes sense!” I chimed in. 40 years after its release, and I still watch *Back to the Future*, and I still see Marty ordering a Pepsi in the diner.

I asked Kit if he would ever consider shooting a script written by someone else (nonchalantly acting as though I wasn’t asking about the script I wrote when I was in high school). Surprisingly, Wilson said that he is not opposed to working with other writers, but clearly stating that there are certain rules in place. “I would first have to read the script to be sure it’s something that I would be passionate about filming. As I mentioned, every movie I release is my baby. I wouldn’t want to release anything that I am not proud of.”



To connect with Kit Wilson and A Twist of Time Productions LLC, visit [IMDB/KitWilson](https://www.imdb.com/name/nm1045744/) or [Facebook/WkitWizard](https://www.facebook.com/WkitWizard).



# King Leez: Building a Legacy Brick by Brick

In the heart of the Pacific Northwest, where rain-soaked streets reflect the grit of the grind, one artist is turning pain into purpose, and hustle into heritage. Meet King Leez — a Tacoma-born creative force who's reshaping what it means to be self-made in both music and fashion. With a mic in one hand and a blueprint in the other, King Leez isn't just building a brand — he's fulfilling a vision.

**From Street Soul to Center Stage-** At the core of King Leez's artistry is a style he calls "street soul" — a fusion of raw hip-hop, heartfelt storytelling, and live instrumentation that speaks directly to the spirit. *"It's hip-hop with heart,"* he explains. *"I've been doing this for over a decade, but the sound keeps evolving with me."* Joined by DJ Semaj and videographer YG Preach, the trio forms a tight-knit creative unit rooted in the vibrant music scene of Seattle and Tacoma. *"We all came up in the same Northwest music circuit — open mics, studio sessions, shows. The chemistry was natural,"* Leez says. That chemistry shines through in fan favorites like "Playa" and his powerful album "Year of the 9," which captures themes of pain, power, and perseverance. His most unforgettable moment? *"Opening for Nipsey Hussle. That was deep — two independent artists preaching ownership and elevation. The crowd felt it in their chest."*

But beyond the accolades and shows, it's the impact that matters most. *"When someone tells me a song helped them through something — that's what it's all about. Turning pain into power."*

**The Rain, the Grind, the City-** While King Leez's sound resonates globally, his inspiration remains deeply local. *"The city itself inspires me — the rain, the grind, the quiet nights driving through Tacoma or Seattle. Every brick I've laid motivates the next one."* Still, Seattle's creative scene presents its challenges. *"The talent is undeniable, but the unity and industry support can be stronger. Sometimes it feels like artists are fighting for the same space, but there's room for all of us if we build together."*

**YOT9: More Than Merch-** Music may have been the starting point, but King Leez's vision expanded into the world of fashion with YOT9 (Year of the 9) — a lifestyle brand that merges streetwear with meaning. *"It started as merch for my music when I was 17, but it grew into something bigger. I wanted to wear clothes that actually stood for something."* YOT9's top line, "Year of the 9," represents rebirth, power, and legacy. *"It's street luxury — bold statements, clean cuts, and meaningful design. Everything has a message."*

And Leez is a one-man army in the fashion lane, designing every piece himself. *"I'm hands-on from concept to fabric. No assistants, just me and the vision."* His most memorable fashion moment? A packed-out pop-up in Tacoma. *"The line was around the block. Seeing people rock my designs — from the city to LA — that was a moment I'll never forget."*

**Identity in Every Thread-** What sets YOT9 apart in a sea of streetwear brands is its authenticity. *"YOT9 isn't built on trends — it's built on truth. Every drop connects to my music, my life, and my city. It's more than clothes — it's identity."* From fans in the Northwest to artists like Mozzy, who wore a YOT9 hoodie on stage, the support is real. *"That meant a lot — real recognize real."* King Leez dreams of seeing artists like Kendrick Lamar, Lil Baby, and (in spirit) Nipsey Hussle in his gear. *"They stand on purpose — just like we do."* Ownership, Legacy, and the Road Ahead In both fashion and music, King Leez's mission is rooted in something deeper: ownership and legacy. *"Everything I design, rap, or create is part of the story — brick by brick. I want the youth to see that you can come from struggle and still build something powerful."* He's already laying the foundation for the future, with big goals for the next five years: *"I see YOT9 as a global brand — stores in Seattle, LA, and even overseas. A space where music, film, and fashion all come together."* And with new projects on the horizon, including the upcoming single "Brick by Brick", King Leez shows no signs of slowing. *"This song is about rebuilding your empire — one step at a time. The visuals are straight Northwest pride."*

**For the Culture, From the City-** Whether he's performing on stage, dropping new music, or designing streetwear that tells a story, King Leez is staying true to his roots — and his mission. *"King Leez isn't just an artist. It's a movement. It's about loyalty, leadership, and legacy."* From the soul of Tacoma to the streets of the world, King Leez is proving that real art doesn't just entertain — it empowers.

Article by Bella Goode

# BELLE SHIM and Kiss of Life



Have you heard the new Kiss of Life song, *Lips Hips Kiss*? Wow! If you're looking for something to lip-sync to while jumping up and down on your bed, this is it! A super fun song and guess what? It features Seattle resident, Shim Hye-Won, better known by her stage name Belle Shim!

That's right! Belle Shim was born in Seattle, Washington, on March 20, 2004, and is following in her father's footsteps. Her dad, Shim Shin, is a very popular musician from Korea, best known for his song *You Are the Only One*.

Belle started her musical career at twelve years old, penning songs and engaging in songwriting camps. Then after living in Seattle for 8 years, she and her family moved back to Korea. Where she made appearances on television alongside her father, including the Special Broadcasting Service *Global Junior Show* in 2012, and *Channel A's Star Family* in 2013. Then, at seventeen, she began composing her own music and doing background vocals for established artists, composing, and writing songs for viral songs like *Unforgiven* and *Purple Kiss*. Belle's been with *Kiss of Life* since 2023. The group officially made their debut with the release of their self-titled EP which included a Belle solo song titled "Countdown".

A year of big successes, she then received the "Proud Korean Grand Prize" composer award at the Korea Best Brand Awards. Most of this information is available at [Wikipedia](#), which is a great resource.

My favorite 3 songs featuring Belle are *Igloo*, *Midas touch*, and *Sticky*. All three of those songs have a nice tune in my opinion. Most of them are upbeat and help me feel great. Are you looking for something to put you in a dancing mood? I recommend you listen to one of these songs! [By Lexi Van](#)

# DJ ROB STREETS

Robert Stone Jr., better known in the music scene as *DJ Rob Streets*, is more than just a DJ—he's a cultural connector and community builder. Born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, Rob moved to Seattle in 1998, bringing with him the soulful heartbeat of East Coast hip hop. Today, he's using that spirit to help revive Everett nightlife, one weekend at a time. Currently, you can catch DJ Rob Streets live every Friday and Saturday night, spinning at Everett's top local spots, including Monte Showbar. Friday nights are all about Old School and R&B, while Saturdays heat up with Hip Hop from around the globe, with a special focus on local talent.

"I'm really trying to shine a light on the Northwest music scene," Rob says. "Seattle, Tacoma, Everett, Bellingham—we've got some amazing artists out here. People just need the chance to experience it."

His journey behind the decks began at just nine years old, but it was a surprise fill-in gig at 14-years old that sealed his fate. "It was only for a minute until the real DJ showed up, but from that moment on, I knew this was what I wanted to do."

Over the years, DJ Rob Streets has shared stages with names like Swisher Sleep and even hip hop legend *Redman*, proving his talent runs with the best. Still, he counts a private party that he did at the request of his friend April King, honoring Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell, as one of his most memorable events. Looking ahead, he and his brother, Anthony, are focused on launching a radio show or podcast to showcase local artists. "Music is more than sound—it's community, it's culture. And I'm here to help people feel that." Follow DJ Rob Streets on Instagram and Facebook to stay in tune with the movement.



# FAZT NEW ALBUM "Still Here"



At 14 years of age, Fazt (formerly *Young Fast*), joined Fatal Lucciauno on stage at Seattle's historic Umoja Fest, our local African Heritage Festival. Since then, he's made a name for himself with an unmistakable style of rap that showcases a mix of grit, pain, and a hustler's motivation.

A prodigy of *Penny Pinchin' Records* CEO, Rob Ross, Fazt continues the legacy of high-quality music, stage presence, confidence and charisma. Fazt has toured with Mr. Benjamin, Young Dolph, Lil Peanut, and more. His new release, ***Still Here***, gives listeners a glimpse into who Fazt is. Where he comes from, the life he's living, and the blessings and baggage that come with it. The video is currently streaming on all platforms, produced by Clive Xavier and directed & edited by Ivan Shoots.

Like his mentor, Fazt is connected to the community. Sharing that he's inspired to write from events happening in his city, and loves the process of distilling the lessons of daily life into the end product, his music.

*"I love getting my message out to people who can relate, to people who go through what I go through, that they aren't alone."*

His new project, *Take Me as I Am*, is available on all music platforms. Fazt also appears as a featured vocalist on *Anthony Danza's* latest album, along with New York's Conway the Machine. Fazt has a vision, a wish that everyone could come together to create something bigger for the city. Believing that if we all come together, we all shine together.

*"My passion for music comes from my loved ones who have passed. It drives me to keep doing music. It drives me to get the message out because I know I'm not the only one who's suffering from losses. The pain of being stuck between living and dying. Live life to the fullest, take flight, and reach for anything you want in sight. Forever Malijha, Laura (mom), Royale, and the rest of my loved ones that push me to be great."*



**FAZT**

chopping it up with

Article by Abdisolem Abes

# SOUNDCHAMBA WEST



As fans of Sean Danaher, aka **Soul the Interrogator**, we're always anxious to see (and hear) what sort of ear-candy he has been cooking up in the studio. For over a decade, we've enjoyed a diverse mix of both individual and group releases, such as our favorite partnership between Soul and Prawphit On Point, which blessed Seattle with the *Sabre* album.

We're excited to hear that Soul is back, as part of Soundchamba West. Recruited by Soundchamba Productions frontman, Seven Da Pantha, and joined by Monster Elicit and Mojo Barnes, the new cabal brings a dark and melancholy energy to their music.

For *Soul the Interrogator* fans, you already know the history of one of Seattle's longest performing artists ~ whose story is told in the must read, do not miss, Novocain132 book, *the Birth of Seattle Rap*. From his humble origins, bullied and struggling to find his place, to a top-tier performer and Seattle icon. Soul the Interrogator's resume starts with a historic musical performance in the 1991 Garfield High School talent show, followed by 11 solo albums, and huge connections to major promoters like Lady Scribe, and legendary northwest musicians such as Vitamin D and Ghetto Children.

The founder, **Seven Da Pantha** – At eleven years of age, Seven Da Pantha started DJ'ing, before transitioning to the microphone shortly after. It was the right decision, which led to tours with KRS1, The Roots, Jay Z, and Busta Rhymes. With a stage presence that boasts over 320 shows per year for 3 years in a row, he's at home in the live-performance setting. No surprise, he brings a huge catalog of music, with 22 projects since 1997. Formerly of the groups "*The Nobodies*" and "*Soundchamba Productions*", Seven Da Pantha moved to Seattle in 2016, where he embedded himself in the music scene, and shortly after connected with Soul the Interrogator and Mojo Barnes. You can also catch Seven Da Pantha on the tv screen, appearing in films such as *The Piano Lesson*, *The Blue Corner*, and *Justice for All*.

# SOUNDCHAMBA WEST



**Mojo Barnes** – Like *Seven Da Pantha*, Mojo was drawn to hip hop at an early age. When at just 13 years old, he found spoken word and rap music as a weapon against the spirit of depression, rooted in an inability to speak out against societal injustices that he saw happening around him. Mojo is clear that this lifestyle is not a costume, worn for stage performances, and retired at the end of the show. His music represents his generative force and inner nature, a culmination of depression and despair, wide open and on display. And yet, even in the darkness, there is a spark. A motivation, a spirit of mirth that drives Mojo towards creation, and a hunger to produce, as exemplified by his rapid-fire release of *Signs*, and its follow-up, *Son of the Morning*, is expected to be released in the coming months.



Mojo's brother in taming the darkness is **Monster Elicit**. Who first established himself as a street poet, before taking his message to digital audiences across the country. "Monster Elicit was created to bring balance." He says. "You can call me the beast of balance, and beside me sit the Kings of the Underground, ready to shake up a world full of comfort and apathy."

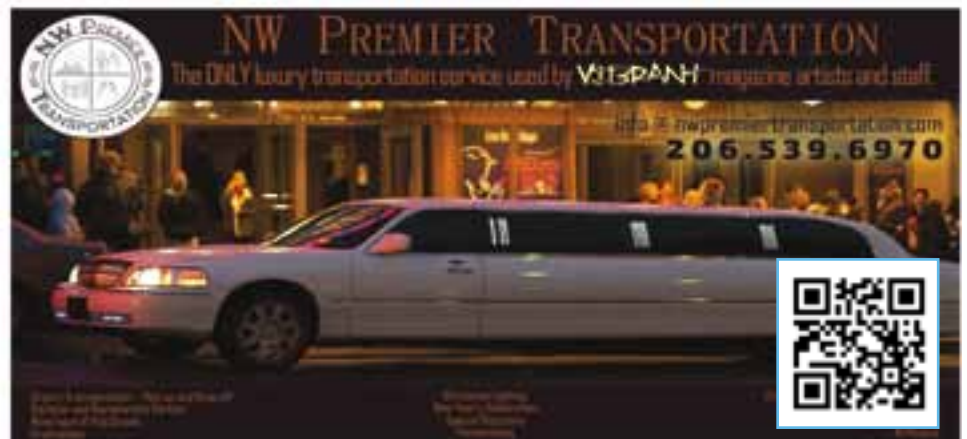


About the group dynamics, Soul says that each member brings a unique identity and sound to the mix. Yet, when they come together, they mesh and gel perfectly. The music is very cohesive, with member vocals easily moving in, out, and across the groove. And adding another exciting component to the story, is the news that in addition to coming together as a rap supergroup, each member of the clique has also released an individual album to coincide with the Soundchamba West drop and tour.



Finally, if you can't get enough of Soundchamba West you can find individual members on the following podcasts; Mojo Barnes on "High Notes", Seven Da Pantha and Monster Elicit on Pantha Politics and All Purpose Sports, and Soul the Interrogator on Interrogation Room. All podcasts are available on YouTube, Instagram, and Spotify.

## What Limo Service do Vibrant Stars use?



# Industry Titan **FUNK DADDY**

**MUSIC**



Photo by CONVERGE MEDIA

I still can't believe how lucky I was to sit down with a true Seattle legend. If you have been involved in the Seattle music scene in any way at all over the past quarter-century, you know about *Funk Daddy*. We're talking about a top-tier DJ and Producer that shares the highest plature with Seattle legends Ryan Lewis, Mr. Supreme, Nyice Guy, and Kun Luv. Funk Daddy is the truth! Here's how it went...

**Vibrant:** Let's get right to it. What is Funk Daddy doing right now?

**FD:** Right now, I just released 2 albums pretty much at the same time. The first is an instrumental album called **Chill Hop Vol 4**. On this

album, everything is done by just me. The other album is called **Underground Gold** and it features sooo many artists. DMS, Candidt, Francci, Ready&Willin', Money B (Digital Underground), E-Dawg, Boogie Brow, Silver Shadow D, Mr. Rossi, Big Ice, King Wojack and more. Almost all of these artists are town legends from the 90's era (except for Big Ice from Norway and Money B from the Bay Area). *Underground Gold* was supposed to come out on Dog Day Records in the 90's but the label folded before it could be released. Since there seems to be a demand for 90's funk music, my homie Big Ice from Norway convinced me to put it out now! Both of these albums are available on ALL streaming platforms everywhere.

**VIBRANT:** That's wild! Yes, there is a huge demand for local music releases. *Novocaine132* and *Ever Rap Records* have been at the forefront of that. They've released some vintage Incredicrew stuff, Brothers of the Same Mind, PD-2, Chilly Uptown...

**FD:** Chilly Uptown! My first show was in Sunnyside, opening for him. A block-long line and it was packed. I think everyone was there thinking they were gonna see *Salt N Pepa* though, but that's a long story, hahaha!

**VIBRANT:** Nice! Any other memorable shows or artists you've worked with?

**FD:** My biggest show was DJing for Sir Mixalot and Kid Sensation at Bumpershoot, and scratching on Sir Mixalot's "My Bad Side" and Sensations "Back to Boom" songs. But I've provided beats for and produced some major players, including E-40, Mac Dre, Spice 1, B-Legit, D12. I've been the House DJ for New Year's at MOPOP, MLB All-Star Game, and for the *Seattle Super Sonics*, not to mention artists such as Jon B, Genuine, 112, some big names.

**VIBRANT:** I bet you have some backstage antics and after-party stories. What's your favorite memory?

**FD:** Actually, my favorite memory goes back to 1989, when *DJ Mr. Supreme* and *Monqui Productions* launched Seattle's first major DJ and Rap contest. I won the contest, and the opportunity to open for *Joe Cooley*. This was major, as I was crowned Seattle's Best DJ, narrowly beating out hugely talented and extremely popular competition such as DJ Ace, Lavoris Hollingsworth, and even Mr. Supreme himself.

**VIBRANT:** You definitely have deep Seattle roots. Who are some of your favorite local groups?

**FD:** I've been blessed to work with and be a part of many talented groups. M.I.C., Ready & Willin', 2 Crafty, Kid Sensation, Crooked Path, Livio and the Pak Pros. Met most of them at school or in the hip hop streets.

**VIBRANT:** What's next?

**FD:** I got some joints with *Suga-T* from the Bay, Day Day, Sos Dior, 20Sic'em from the town, Spoon The Don, Shorty, Maribased1, *Ro'nae*, White Boy Will, and a few others coming down the pipeline.

Follow Funk Daddy at [www.funkdaddy.com](http://www.funkdaddy.com) and [FunkDaddyOfficial](#) on Instagram and Tik Tok.



DJ FUNK DJ

PIONEER

# The Next Big Thing

## TYRONE *the Working Class Hero*

By Sadio Ahmed & DavidT



*Tyrone the Working Class Hero* was born and raised in South Seattle, and is known throughout the region as a multi-faceted artist. In the hip hop community, he's described as possessing the true *Five Elements*; which means he is a DJ, a rapper, a visual artist, a Bboy, and a historian. From a family of musicians, including his younger brother, the award-winning jazz musician leading the *Delvon Lamarr Organ Trio*, to his son, rapper *BTBully*, he knows exactly what moves the crowd.

Tyrone himself is intense, with a demeanor that is quietly menacing, with formidable talent and intimidating intelligence he uses music to grab you in a way that almost says "you will listen" to what I have to say. Even in a feel-good video such as *Coollest Bruva* the driving beat and intricate lyrics seem to conceal a deeper emotion. Once outside of the studio, you will find *Tyrone the family man*. God-loving, family focused. Tyrone is quick to crack jokes and loves to laugh. A man of integrity, he's loved by friends, family, and business partners alike.

**...In the hip hop community, Tyrone is known as a master of the "5-Elements"**



Tyrone brings a special type of talent to the table. He is a complete storyteller, from the initial script and story itself, to the music, shooting of the video and final editing. With each story told with an observant type of everyday realism. Tyrone has a special talent for creating short-story video characters that take on a life of their own. His directors-eye for camera angles and cuts is top notch and provides the viewer a complete package of entertainment nirvana.

*Tyrone's catalog of music can be downloaded from a variety of sources such as Apple, Google Play, Amazon, and Spotify. The Album, "Heavy Labor, No Breaks".*

In this article we're taking a look at some of our favorite *Tyrone the Working Class Hero* videos. We'll start with our absolute favorite, *Coollest Bruva*. This video combines live-action with cartoon animation, and the results are amazing. The remix version features platinum selling artist, Edawg, as well as a bevy of recognizable musicians and actors cartoonified for your viewing pleasure. We love it! Read about it on the next page!



## The Coolest Bruva

*Coolest Bruva* is a live-action/animation combination that takes you on a 4-minute musical adventure, mixing video flashbacks of Tyrone's youth with super-cool animated cartoon clips.

Tyrone connects with the audience through use of his everyman quality, so we get drawn into the characters as much as we enjoy the music.

The cartoon animations in *Coolest Bruva* feature an eclectic range of characters who bear startling resemblances to entertainment icon's Bruce Lee, Jay Z, Lil Wayne, and Redd Fox to name a few. Additionally, live-action flashbacks of Tyrone and his family, including the hilarious "Uncle Junior" had me watching this video over and over again.



## The Bug (feat. Delvon Lamarr)

From the beginning of the video, *The Bug* pulls you in with a mystery-building storyline and intense drama lead by actress Earlene Blake. Blake brings sexy-swg and confidence to her role as the supervisor of an unnamed branch of the federal government, fully focused on catching and eliminating *Tyrone* and his crew. Joined by fellow actors Dean Hulett and Paul Rodriguez, this video could easily spin-off into a life of its own, as a television or a website series.



And the music? Whoa! With contributions from the world renown jazz musician, Delvon Lamarr, the song has bounce like you wouldn't believe!

As one online fan commented, "this one slaps!"

The storyline continues in Tyrone's follow-up video, "*La Cucaracha*".





## Work Boots

After the success of Tyrone's chart-topping, "Paradise", the artist dubbed *the Working Class Hero*, decided to show his diversity by releasing a song that moves in an entirely different direction, "Work Boots".

The hardcore beat with the chain-gang-chanting, drives the lyricist to a delivery that is unique and melodic. A nod to hard work, consistency and ethics, Tyrone lets the listener understand that he's from the same circumstances as the "coke", "thug", and "gangsta" rapper, but the willingness to make different choices changed the environment and outlook of the artist.

The piano riff welcomes the hook; "fresh to death, right down to my work boots", while the gangsta attitude is an honest and bold approach to inner city living without using the tired product of my environment cliché.



Tyrone appears in the video with his longtime music partner and hype-man, Gerald "Fiddy" Cormier.

I have to say that this is my favorite song & video, behind *Coollest Bruva!*



## La Cucaracha (featuring Jonnie Storm & Lady Dot)

In Tyrone's follow up to "The Bug", he's joined by vocalists *Jonnie Storm* and *Lady Dot* from the musical group *Saturday Morning Cartoons*. For the video, Tyrone takes the storyline outdoors, and flips the script, literally, as federal agents go from hunter to hunted when a mysterious mountain-man, *Mack Johansen*, gets involved.

According to Tyrone, the song is an ode to surviving in the underground as independent artists; the video depicts Tyrone and Jonnie "surviving" in the mountains as fugitives, while federal agents attempt to pursue them. With the creative storyline and beautiful scenery the video is sure to keep fans captivated.

The video features the return of actors Paul Rodriguez and Dean Hulett reprise their "The Bug" roles as federal agents.



**Tyrone**





# THE COLOSSAL LIFE OF ROB ROSS

Years ago, I was invited by local celebrity and platinum selling artist, *Edawg* (from the Mixalot Posse), for a night of bbq and bones at his place in Federal Way (we're talking the late 1990s). It was a packed house, full of Seattle music professionals, which gave me the opportunity to sit down with a well-known east coast rapper who was in Seattle for a performance at the Paramount Theater. I won't name-drop, but I can assure you that if I did, you'd sit up in your seat. During the conversation, he made it clear that before he committed to playing at the Paramount, that he was sure to touch base with all of the cats who run things around town. And one of the names he mentioned reaching out to was Rob Ross and Penny Pinchin' Records.

**"You don't come to Seattle without first talking to Rob Ross"** he said.

Today, Vibrant Magazine had the opportunity to sit down with one of Seattle's most established hip hop figures, the immortal *Rob Ross*.

VIBRANT: You've been a fixture in Seattle for decades. What was the earliest memory/defining moment that put you on the path of who Rob Ross is today?

ROB: So, what experiences created Rob Ross? Well definitely the streets were a big influence on my movement, but I would say my grandfather, *Bill Jimerson*, showed me that you should not be ashamed to work. He had a job and owned several businesses. Being a part of that allowed me an opportunity to understand and know business and know that I cannot worry about what other people think of me, and to be who I am. Also, watching my mom as she was raising us, she always had a job. And she, even though we were poor, made sure we had some of the best things as far as game consoles and things like that.

VIBRANT: I dig it. A strong family foundation makes all the difference. But let's talk about Rob Ross, the artist, entrepreneur, and icon. Your history includes Penny Pinchin' Records, Colossal Life, and your community outreach projects, to name just a few. Can we talk about these?

ROB: I started Penny Pinchin' in 1995. My brother *Suade Dogg* came up with the name. But let me back up a little. My cousin, Mr. Benjamin, had an opportunity to do a project called "*We've Got Something for You*", for the Best of the Northwest survey. Although I was an established bboy, with a high profile in the CD and South End, this was the first time I was able to add my input into something city-wide, so I guess that might be the defining moment you asked about. That project pushed me to get my business license and establish Penny Pinchin' Records. The early days were hard. We fell into the same traps that so many musicians have throughout history. Complications due to egos, hierarchies, ownership, and so on. At this point, my brother Butchie let me hear him rap and I knew that if we were going to be successful, he was the one to get behind. His project was called "*Nutcase: The Unforgiven, Curb Serving*". That was the album that put Penny Pinchin' on the map and established us in the northwest.

VIBRANT: I like to think of myself as a hip hop historian of sorts. I definitely knew about you even before you founded Penny Pinchin' Records. I attended Garfield High School, and I definitely heard about Rob Ross. But moving on. Can you share a little about *Colossal Life*?

ROB: Colossal Life Clothing is something that I started around 2016. Around December, it started as my affirmation, "*Dream big, live colossal*". I then turned it into a clothing brand.

VIBRANT: Which has blown up to include clothing, magazines, events, and more. Very impressive!

ROB: The events part of Colossal has really begun to shine as an opportunity to support small businesses and to build community in Seattle's underserved areas. Although it is under the *Colossal Life* umbrella, the vendor event leg is called *United Business Connection*. It's also important to mention the Colossal Life mentoring programs. This includes *Guy Talk Interactive Workshop* (initially called Guy Talk Healing Circle) founded at Benu Community Home in February of 2023. The program is still running at Benu, but I've also expanded to the interactive workshops. I wanted more, so that is why I put together *Guy Talk* (*continued*)

(continued...) *Interactive Workshop* curriculum which combines healing circles and mentorship for youth and adults, which offers programs at the skyway Library every 1st, 2nd and 4th Thursday, 4pm-6pm, as well as the King County Juvenile Detention Center.

VIBRANT: What is the driving force behind Rob Ross?

ROB: The driving force behind Rob Ross is I always want better. I also understand that I am being watched, and what I mean by that is, if someone is watching me, I have to be careful how I tread, because with that power comes major responsibility. I understood that at a young age, because I had two younger brothers that I knew I was setting an example for. When I was young, I used to do a lot of odd jobs to make money. I was always the friend with resources, because I would work, so the go-getter mentality stays with me to this day.

VIBRANT: Yes, you are definitely known as a mover and shaker. Someone who follows through on your promises and gets things done.

ROB: My proudest accomplishment to date is raising my kids. Having children gave me something extra in my life. What my kids did for me was allow me to care for someone that was here because of a choice that I made in life. I didn't have the greatest relationship with my first child, but we definitely spent some time together and he definitely knows who I am. I love him as if I were around him my whole life. My second two boys, I actually raised them from a certain age and watched them finish high school. And then, ta-da, I had another baby at 50! I want one more.

VIBRANT: That's wonderful. Where do you want to be professionally in 5 years? What accomplishments are you working towards?

ROB: My heart is really in growing and establishing my mentoring programs. It is a crowded field, with many small organizations competing for the few grants that are available. I need more grant funding for my projects, so they can grow. We need a community center.

VIBRANT: What's been the most fulfilling thing about your work?

ROB: The truth is that I haven't always been a contributor to the health of my community. I've stood by, missed opportunities, and allowed things in the neighborhood that I could have stopped. I feel that now I have a chance to use all the power that I was honing for good, because I used it for so many years for selfish gain. I was allowing people I cared about to take the wrong path. When I began giving back, when I began to genuinely care. It became a need in my life. A need to help people get through trauma, to heal, to succeed.

VIBRANT: Is there anything disappointing about Seattle's artistic scene?

(Continued On Next Page...)



# THE COLOSSAL LIFE OF ROB ROSS (continued)

ROB: What is disappointing about today's scene? For me, I would say, not enough togetherness, I feel that people here (Seattle) don't realize that every artist they listen to is from a neighborhood where someone called them local, and it took their city to back them. If the police department, the mayor's office, and some of these organizations we have out here would utilize their strengths, we could bring back our night life. That would be a start.

VIBRANT: Are you inspired by any other artists, creators, community leaders? Who and why?

ROB: I am definitely enthused by a few artists, a couple of young and older artists out here. Fazt, Mafi D, Zaina the Phenom, Elis Prescott, Prince Jay, Tokara, Pierre PS Suggs, to name a few that I deal with on a regular basis. I'm proud to say I have a few Kings and Queens on my side in the fight to save our youth as well. This includes Wyking Garrett, Dominique Davis, Avon Curtis, Franklyn Smith, Cleanna Brooks-Pope of Benu, and of course your own Edward Dumas and April King of the highly esteemed Unified Outreach/Vibrant Magazine. When I call they answer with solutions. And honestly, there are many more I could name. There are just too many to be mentioned in this article, but trust and believe if you are a part of my life, you are appreciated.

VIBRANT: Do you have any exciting projects coming up soon?

ROB: I have the *Music is Life Project* coming up soon. Where individuals from 7 years old to 70 years old are going to have a space. We will also be working on a project called *Vibrant Voices* which will be starting here shortly with the guys in our group. We have a few individuals who are already interested in it, a soft start to see how it works. It will be a pilot program through the *Guy Talk Interactive Workshop* every Thursday from 4-6pm at the Skyway Library.

Also, if you are looking to get out of the house and be part of something fun and positive, join us for Thursday night Karaoke at the *Red Lounge* on 12th and Jefferson. Live that colossal life!

Follow Rob Ross at [instagram.com/206robross](https://www.instagram.com/206robross)



# Pure Elegance

Founded in 2012, *The Elegance Drill Team* flourished for six years, creating a powerful community legacy. As a founding director, LaShaye Stanton and her team orchestrated performances at nursing homes, churches, and major parades, while also providing essential resources to over 200 families. The program was more than performance; it instilled courage, confidence, and a commitment to education. Its success is echoed by alumni who now return to mentor new generations.

In 2025, the team was joyfully reborn, finding a new home at *Woodmont Elementary* for weekly practices. This new chapter was tested by challenges - uniform shortages, logistical hurdles, and dozens of new families learning the ropes. Yet, the season culminated in a stunning victory, with the Princess Team winning first place at the Ocean Shores Flag Day Parade. *"Not one of them had previous parade experience,"* LaShaye shares. *"Yet they brought an energy and undeniable star power that captured the crowd's heart."*

This rebirth was sparked by a deeply personal inspiration. Two years prior, LaShaye's cousin, a former Princess, was diagnosed with bone cancer. After her remission, she told LaShaye, *"When you start your team again, I'm going to march for you."* Her words lit the spark, fueled further by LaShaye's desire to create a program reflecting her family's values for her own children.

Driven by the motto *"Build it, and they will come,"* LaShaye assembled a dedicated support system, including Assistant Director Syria Banks and her partner, Ed Dumas. Their efforts created a unique, family-centric community where nearly 90% of members are related, turning weekly practice into a purposeful family reunion. Families demonstrate incredible commitment, with some traveling over two hours from Everett to participate.

The team is structured into 3 dynamic divisions:

- \* The Princesses (5–12)
- \* The Ladies (13–18)
- \* The Drumline (10–18)

The Drumline's story is one of perseverance. With minimal experience, but guided by alumni and dedicated parents, young leaders like MyKhai Stanton and Anthony "Trey" Watson Jr. stepped up, and created powerful music within weeks.



For more information about the Elegance Drill Team, contact LaShaye Stanton at [Lashaye@VibrantDoula.com](mailto:Lashaye@VibrantDoula.com)

# ZAINA

THE PHENOM



**Wow!** I recently picked up a copy of the *Garfield Messenger* and came across an article by *Dahlia Huang*, praising a performance by nine-year-old Zaina Brooks, better known as *Zaina the Phenom*. I had heard of Zaina before, but this article was the push that finally got me over to *YouTube* in order to check out her music. **Wow! Wow! Wow!** And she's only 9 years old? With a catalog of songs that would make seasoned musicians jealous! *Watch Your Mouth*, *Children Are the Future*, *Do It Big (yea yea yea)*, and more. She has really inspired and motivated me! Why wasn't I on the grind like this at 9 years old? Oh, by the way, she also plays the piano. Ummm, and also, she's been doing this since she was 4-years old.

But we have to also give credit where it's due. As talented as she is, she wouldn't be where she is now without the help of her father. Parent involvement is so valuable, and Zaina's rise to success is a great example of parents believing in their children, instilling confidence, and helping to lay the foundation of success for their kids. As you can imagine, it's not easy for a 4 year old to book studio time on their own.

Lewis Brooks, dad/manager and agent, helps with the administrative side, helps write lyrics, and was instrumental in connecting Zaina with her DJ and Producer, *Funk Daddy*, who has provided music for some of Seattle's biggest rappers, including Sir Mixalot, Maclemore, and Edawg. Further reading of the Dahlia Huang article alerted us to the fact that Zaina has several projects cooking up outside of music, including a new television show called *The Rogers*, as well as an original story book called *Zaina the Mermaid*. With all that is happening, we had to get an interview into *Vibrant Magazine* before she's out of reach. Here's our Q & A...

**VIBRANT:** What's your earliest memory of artistic inspiration?

**ZAINA:** I heard my dad rapping when I was 4 years old and I asked him if he would teach me how to rap and write a song for me. He said yes and wrote *Watch Yo Mouth*, which went viral overnight. That's a good memory.

**VIBRANT:** What were your first and your favorite performances?

**ZAINA:** My first performance was at Federal Way Performing Arts Center, and my proudest show was in front of over a thousand students at Garfield High School.

**VIBRANT:** What's the best part of being a musician?

**ZAINA:** The most fulfilling thing about my work is seeing the looks on kids faces when I perform, and watching them sing the lyrics to my songs.

**VIBRANT:** What major projects do you have in the works for 2026?

**ZAINA:** Yes, I have my new single "Stay Humble," set for release, my new book "*Zaina the Mermaid, or Not*". Then I release another single called "Smile", which will be available in time for my grandma Sadie's birthday.

**VIBRANT:** And I understand you're shooting a movie?

**ZAINA:** Yes, it's called *The Rogers*, and I play Tiffany. I'm very excited, this is my first time being a real actress on TV.

**VIBRANT:** Where do new fans find you?

**ZAINA:** Find me at GETAWAYCLEAN MANAGEMENT. Zaina-THEphenom.com, Admin@ZainaTHEphenom.com. All my social medias are Zainatvofficial. Thank you so much for having me!



# GAME 365

FASHION

Streetwear with a Hustler's Heart and a Vision for the Future

In the heart of Seattle's historic Central District, a cultural revolution is quietly growing - one born from a relentless drive for elevation. **GAME 365, LLC** - an acronym for Growth, Ambition, Motivation, and Excellence - is more than just a streetwear brand. It's a multifaceted lifestyle, media, and financial literacy company that's redefining what it means to build from the ground up.

Founded in July 2018 by Seattle native Terrell Hill, **GAME 365** has steadily carved out its own lane in the streetwear and urban entrepreneurial scene. Hill, who also authored the book *"Can You Take Game to the Bank?"*, brings a unique blend of street-savvy wisdom and business acumen that fuels the brand's vision. *"I started GAME 365 because I didn't see enough authentic urban companies merging fashion, media, entertainment, and financial literacy,"* says Hill. *"It's like a pot of gumbo - rich with flavor, culture, and substance."*

The brand's breakthrough moment came during the 2018 *Umoja Fest*, Seattle's vibrant celebration of African-American culture. For Hill, participating in the event was more than business - it was a full-circle dream realized. *"Since youth, I wanted to be part of Umoja in some way,"* he reflects. *"To represent my brand there was powerful. It made everything feel real."*

GAME 365's core audience is as bold and driven as the brand itself. *"Our average customer loves streetwear, hip hop, and standing out in a crowd,"* says Hill. *"But more than that, they have a progressive mindset. They're hustlers, go-getters, people who want more for themselves and their communities."*

What truly separates GAME 365 from other streetwear brands is its intentionality. Every product, idea, and campaign is rooted in the ideology of prosperity and self-motivation. *"We create from scratch, from the soul,"* says Hill. *"This isn't just about looking fly - it's about wearing something that represents your grind, your growth, and your greatness."*



LOVE and COMEDY, the hilarious duo of Tawana B and That Guy Rajah

Looking ahead, Hill envisions GAME 365 apparel featured in boutiques across the U.S., stocked alongside top-tier fashion names, but always rooted in the culture that birthed it. *"We want to design for anyone who supports Seattle's streetwear scene - not just celebrities, but real people who believe in real brands with a message."*

Despite its growth, the journey hasn't been without hurdles. The biggest challenge? Breaking through Seattle's sometimes rigid fashion and media circles. *"There's a tendency to box us in as 'just a street brand,'"* Hill explains. *"But we're so much more. Street doesn't mean lesser—it means rooted, real, and resilient."*

Being based in Seattle also brings its advantages. *"There's real power in being able to connect with the community from a grounded place,"* says Hill. *"We're not untouchable. We're reachable, relatable, and real."*

GAME 365 isn't just a brand. It's making a change - one stitch, beat, and principle at a time.

Article by Abdisolem Abes



Owner Terrell Hill on the left, Models Tawana B and That Guy Rajah on the right.



Seattle-based fashion label YAHUDAH has a story that sets them apart from most in the game. Founded officially in 2020 by head designer Sean Eliyahu and co-owner Kirston, the brand emerged from years of grassroots community work, where the team served as front-line outreach workers. For five years leading up to YAHUDAH's inception, they provided clothing, blankets, and essentials to the unhoused and under-served every Friday—rain or shine.



When COVID-19 forced the world into lockdown, Eliyahu pivoted. What started as a simple logo design during isolation quickly evolved into custom shirts for



YAHUDAH founders Kirston & Sean Eliyahu

churches and nonprofit organizations. Then one day, he wore a shirt featuring their own brand. “Everyone didn’t just like it—they loved it,” says Eliyahu. That moment planted the seed for something bigger.

In 2023, YAHUDAH stepped into the production game, sourcing exclusive pieces from trusted manufacturers. A little travel, a lot of learning, and a love for semi-urban fashion led to their first line: The Senate Collection. With Seattle’s climate in mind, hoodies led the charge—functional, fly, and easy to transition from day to night.

September 2025 marked their soft website launch, opening the doors for a broader audience to experience the craftsmanship behind the brand. “We keep our drops small and intentional,” says Kirston. “It’s about quality, not quantity.”

YAHUDAH is a declaration! Meaning “Judah” in Hebrew, it refers to one of the 12 tribes of Israel, a lineage rich in divine purpose and ancestral strength. “I once read on a shirt: ‘I am my ancestors’ wildest dreams.’ That stuck with me,” Eliyahu reflects. “That’s exactly what we’re doing here—building on hidden histories to create something lasting.”

Though Seattle is still “virgin territory” in the fashion world, YAHUDAH sees that as an opportunity. “The worst part is the lack of fashion exposure,” admits Eliyahu, “but that just means we get to be the ones to shape it.”

From custom prints to bespoke streetwear, YAHUDAH is carving out a lane all its own. Small-batch, exclusive, and rooted in purpose—this is more than fashion. This is praise through design.

Visit: [yahudahcollections.com](http://yahudahcollections.com)

Connect: [yahudah2017@gmail.com](mailto:yahudah2017@gmail.com) | Instagram: @yahudah2017



# Rob "Pie Flippa" Perez *Dealing Diamonds, Designs, and Dreams*

FASHION

In the shiny streets of Tacoma, Washington—where hustle is a language and survival is an art—there's a name that rings out like a chain hitting the floor: Rob "Pie Flippa" Perez. From the East Side of Tacoma to the jewelry counters of TRAXNW, PF's journey ain't your everyday come-up. It's street saga meets sparkle, comedy show meets cautionary tale—and he's still flipping pages in real time.

Known for his razor-sharp wit and a mouth that'd make your auntie clutch her pearls, Pie Flippa isn't your typical jeweler. The man blends inappropriate humor with high-end hustle like Hov blended crack sales with platinum plaques. One minute he's cracking off-color jokes, the next he's lacing you with a custom diamond pendant that hits harder than a 90s beat drop.



**Before the Ice, Came the Fire** - Rewind the tape—Perez was knee-deep in the streets. Hustling, gang life, lockups—you name it. But fate spun the block in 2007, when a trip to NYC introduced him to Maksud A., aka TRAXNYC, the famed jeweler to the stars. That meeting flipped his script. Instead of bagging weight, he started pushing clarity—VVS only. Together they built TRAXNW, a Northwest jewel in the crown of hip-hop's icy empire.

But PF didn't stop at diamonds. His roots in Tac Town run deep. He's organized underground concerts, ran a dispensary (before zoning politics clipped its wings), and put on *Dope Fest 2017* at the Tacoma Dome—proof he's more than just a seller of shine; he's a connector of people.

**Setbacks Ain't Stop Signs** - 2019 dealt another blow—legal heat, debt stacking high, and another stint behind bars. Over \$200K in the hole and left hangin' by many, PF came home in 2022 to a familiar face still holding him down—Max. Loyalty never sleeps. Max doubled down, and together they turned TRAXNW into a Northwest juggernaut, tossing out gold chains in parking lots like Christmas candy canes during their Trivia Giveaways.

**From Sole to Soul**- After linking briefly with *Grailfinders*, Pie Flippa planted his own flag at The Commons in Federal Way, teaming up with Sole Street Sneakers & Apparel. Their boutique is more than a store—it's a cultural hub, a safe zone neutral ground for the streets, where customers cop exclusive kicks and custom ice under one roof.

**Still For The People**- But the chain swing doesn't hide the heart. PF stays giving back—hosting back-to-school drives, autism awareness events, and youth programs. It's deeper than diamonds. He's building futures, not just flex.

**Rob "Pie Flippa" Perez** ain't just slinging shine—he's the proof that redemption's always on the table. From Hilltop to headliner, his hustle, heart, and humor keep the whole city laughing—and laced up. IG: @traxnorthwest TikTok: @traxnw Jewelry: traxnyc.com TikTok: @traxnw



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Where VIBRANT models shop



## Between the Lines

# LORA PROCTOR

### BOOKS

I was first introduced to author Lora Proctor through the pages of her thriller, *Deserved Vengeance*. The novel follows Lorna Brown, a Domestic Violence Advocate who runs a shelter called the *Freedom House*. After the death of Lorna's best friend Donna, Lorna's life begins to spiral completely out of control.

Michael Thompson, the man Lorna believes is responsible for Donna's death, turns up dead, as do several other men over the course of a few weeks. And now, Lorna has been named the prime suspect in all of the murders, as all of the men have one thing in common; the women in their lives had all gone to Lorna for help. While struggling to deal with Donna's death, Lorna finds herself ensnared in a roller coaster ride involving love, lust, and murder... all the while trying to prove her innocence.

### &

Filled with twists, turns, steamy romantic encounters and raw conversations, *Deserved Vengeance* will keep you interested, entertained and on the edge of your seat!

### AUTHORS

Sounds exciting, right? YES!!! I know! Anxiously, waited for the next installment of the promised trilogy, and was not disappointed when "*Witness To An Accident: A Bad Day For A Good Samaritan*," was released. IT - IS - SO- GOOD! If you like strong, character-driven books, full of suspense and unexpected twists, along with a dash of sensual situations and seduction, you'll love this series.

And now, there have been whispers of a possible timeline for the release of the final chapter in the Lorna Brown saga, and WE CAN'T WAIT! So, I put it upon myself to reach out to the author of the *Lorna Brown* trilogy, the incredibly talented, Mrs. Lora Proctor, and she agreed to an interview!

**VIBRANT:** It goes without saying that I'm a fan of your writing style. What's your story? How'd you start?

**LORA PROCTOR:** I started writing my first story, *Deer Run Mission*, a murder mystery about a homeless shelter, when I was around 13 years old. Being an only child for the first 13 years of my life, my imagination was one of the things that kept me entertained. Every other summer, I would visit my grandparents, Louis Sr & Lula Cooper, who lived on the South Side of Chicago. My grandparents were very protective of me and rarely allowed me to leave the fenced yard. My grandfather had a tailoring business with an office set up in the back of their Brownstone and to entertain myself I would use grandpa Cooper's typewriter to write and let my imagination run wild.

My husband, Anthony Proctor, came across the draft for my first book, saved on a USB drive. He had the book printed and bound at a local Kinkos, and he surprised me on Valentine's Day with the printed and bound version of *Deserved Vengeance*. Although it looked more like an encyclopedia, it ignited a fire in me to see my book in print. This passion brought me to William Lee of Lee's Press who was responsible for helping me get my first book, *Deserved Vengeance*, published. I self-published *Witness To An Accident* through Amazon and the process was absolutely phenomenal. I also have to acknowledge my mom Veronica Galloway, who assisted in editing it.

**VIBRANT:** How would you describe your books to new readers?

**LORA PROCTOR:** I would describe my books as adult murder mysteries with a splash of erotica. I wouldn't let me daughter read *Deserved Vengeance* until she was 18, just to give you an idea as to the content. My average reader would be described as grown, open-minded and not easily offended.

**VIBRANT:** I definitely enjoy using my imagination when reading your books. I'm curious how the characters might be portrayed on the big screen. Do you have any desire to have your stories made into movies?

**LORA PROCTOR:** I would absolutely LOVE to see my books turned into movies, that is my ultimate goal once I have completed the third novel in the series. Each book would be a season and each chapter would be an episode. I would love to see them make it to the big screen and/or the flat screen.

**VIBRANT:** Do you have actors in mind to play your characters? If so, who?

(continued on page 36)



# *Between the Lines* LORA PROCTOR

(continued...)

**LORA PROCTOR:** I thought it would be a cool idea to reunite some of the cast from *The Game*. Including Wendy Raquel Robinson, Rockmond Dunbar, Pooch Hall, Tia Mowry and Hosea Sanchez. I would also love to have Curtiss Cook (Douda from *The Chi*) and Steven Bishop (*Fatal Affair* & *Til Death Do Us Part*). Wendy's role as Tasha Mack reminds me of myself; classy, smart but can get gully at the drop of a hat. The relationship between Tasha Mack and Pookie in *The Game* is very similar to Lorna's relationship with one of her love interests, Brian, who is in all three books.

**VIBRANT:** I would love to see it. Are movies part of your 5-year plan?

**LORA PROCTOR:** In five years, I want to be a best-selling author and see my books make it to television/movies and would love to have a literary agent to assist me in elevating my writing career. I am currently the anchor for a local news program called *Tacoma Report*. I want to continue my role on television and hope to have a talent agent to help me propel my TV skills to the next level, as I would love to get into doing commercials. In addition, I want to get involved in public speaking, talking to domestic violence survivors, young mothers and anyone who might benefit from hearing my backstory and knowing that you can turn your struggle into success.

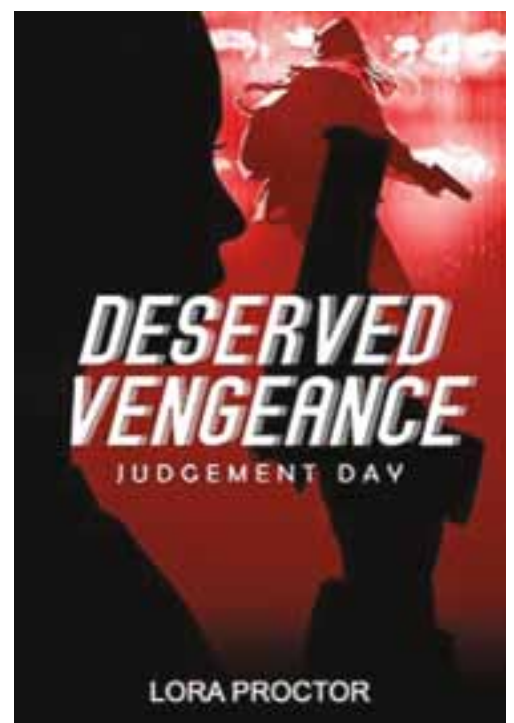
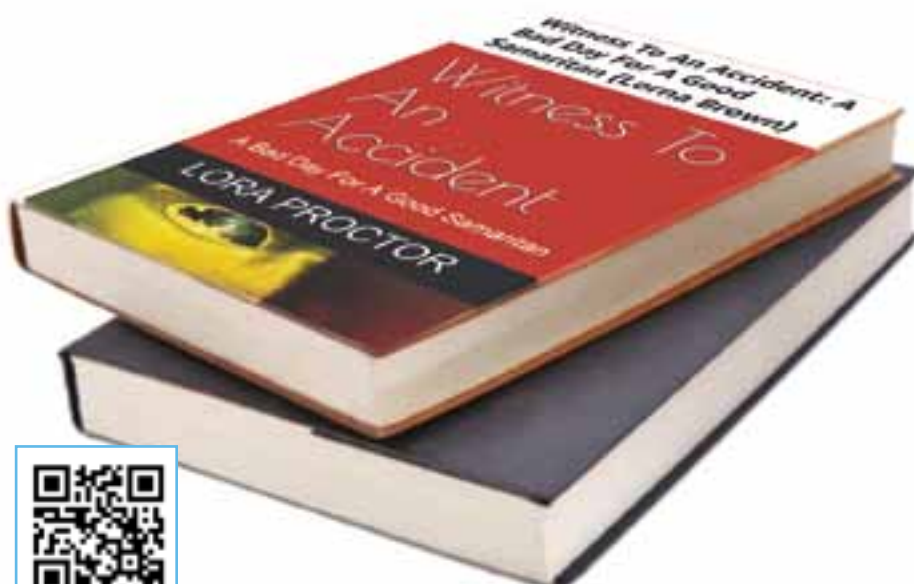
**VIBRANT:** Thank you Lora for sitting down with us. Now let's get straight to the point. When can I get my hands on the final chapter in the adventures of Lorna Brown? I need it!!!

**LORA PROCTOR:** Lol! Thank you. Well yes, I am currently working on the third book in the series, titled *Busy Body*. That's all I can say right now. All I can say is, soon.

**VIBRANT:** I guess that will have to do (disappointed sigh...). Is there anything you'd like to say in closing?

**LORA PROCTOR:** "From struggle to success but I'm not done yet." That is my badge. What it means is this ~ My backstory is one that speaks to lived experiences and the struggles of being a 16-year-old mom and domestic violence survivor to feeling a sense of success as a TV personality and published author, "but I'm not done yet." I want to mention Todd Howard, Lei Perkins-Muse, Shapree Johnson and Jamie Strayer, all of whom have read my work, their words giving me an extra boost of confidence in knowing this is what I am meant to do.

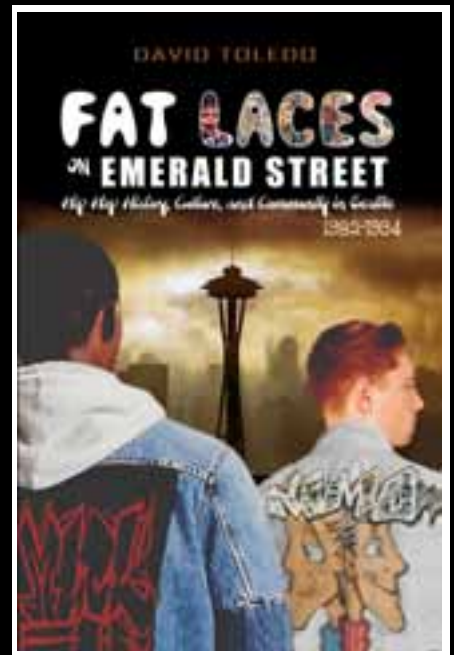
**DESERVED VENGEANCE (Judgement Day) and WITNESS TO AN ACCIDENT available at AMAZON.COM**



# FAT LACES ON EMERALD STREET

*Breakdancer, DJ, MC, Graff Artist, Historian.*

**A look back at the golden era of Northwest Hip Hop through the eyes of Seattle's freshest five-element B-Boy, David Toledo.**



*FAT LACES on EMERALD STREET - Hip Hop History, Culture, and Community in Seattle 1982-1994*, is an eye-witness account of the who-what-where that happened on the Northwest Hip Hop scene from 1982-1994. The historic Dance Clubs, iconic Breakdance Crews, seminal Graffiti Artists, legendary Dj's, and platinum-selling Rappers are all waiting inside.

Seattle's very first Bboy? Sir Mixalot's early job as an arcade vendor? The New York City Breakers defeat at the hands of Seattle's High Performance crew? The stories are finally being told in the extremely detailed book about the golden age of Seattle hip hop by acclaimed Seattle artisan David Toledo.

*"I crouched down and tried to make myself as small as possible. Through the leaves, I could see the patrol car with its spotlight centered on my mural, framing my piece in such a way that it appeared to be breaking through the wall itself. Across the field, a second cruiser crept slowly down the street. Its spotlight panning left and right across the grass. I put my hand over my mouth to mute my heavy breathing, and waited nervously for what would happen next."*

David Toledo's writing embodies the genius of hip hop in all its chaotic beauty. The raw emotion of teen angst and first loves with the wisdom of an old soul. The hunger, passion, and wide-eyed optimism of youth tempered with a lifetime of loss and disappointment. His first-person writings of Seattle's hip hop history, iconic characters, and historic events take readers to a place of wonder and excitement as he jumps quickly from past to present and back again, from happening to happening, introducing multiple characters and conversations. Providing an emotional potpourri that perfectly fits the subject he is writing about. Hip Hop at its roots is contained-chaos; a whirlwind of emotion and art that somehow fit together like a hand in a fingerless glove.

Available at Amazon.com and BarnesAndNoble.com



# AROUND TOWN LOOKOUT!



## LENNY WILKINS STATUE

*Lenny Wilkins, player and then coach for the one-time Seattle basketball team, the Seattle Super Sonics, was honored with a statue outside the Climate Pledge Arena. Wilkins led the Super Sonics to a Basketball World Championship in 1979.*

*The Sonics moved to Oklahoma City in 2008, taking the name Oklahoma City Thunder. We miss them.*



## BIG DAY at DENNY

Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell visited the Unified Outreach Vibrant Journalism Club at Denny Middle School in West Seattle, where he fielded a variety of questions from students. I was lucky enough to be there with my iPhone and caught some great video, which you can find by following the QR code in this article!

The Mayor's visit, kept low-key and did not include any fanfare, no invitation to the media, and no special accolades, let the students and the Unified Outreach staff know that he was there for the students and not as a publicity stunt. A great event where the Mayor gave 100% of his attention to the students of the Vibrant Magazine Journalism Club, answering a wide range of student-written questions, from public safety to his favorite local artists, and inquiries about the economy as well as questions about local sports.

The stand-out moment of the day was an impromptu student vs Mayor push-up contest, highlighting the Mayor's genuine and honest demeanor, his spontaneous nature, and his ability to connect with people. We appreciate his heart for the kids and for allowing us to make mention of it in our magazine.



# THE BIG SEATTLE BOAT SHOW

By Ellis Whiniham



One of the best things about living in Seattle is that we're surrounded by water. A little chilly, it's true, not always the best choice for swimming, but to sit on top of the waves, casting a fishing line, or letting your feet dangle over the side to soak in the water... it can be very relaxing. And of course there's always the draw of the big boats, cruisers, and yachts. Boaters have long enjoyed coming to the Pacific Northwest for sailing because it has many navigable waterways, long boating seasons, and beautiful scenery. Nothing better than inviting friends on board on a summer day, or a cool evening under the stars.

For those who love life on the sea (or at least in our local lakes) and inlets, the Seattle Boat Show sails into town every January to celebrate the Pacific Northwest's nautical culture and history. This is the place for boat enthusiasts and manufacturers to connect! Manufacturers come from all over the country to showcase and sell their boats. Last year over 280 exhibitors showed up.

The Seattle Boat Show first launched in 1947 on Lake Union, intended to fight a proposed tax on boaters and promote a unified boating industry. The show has grown from being a small boat show in Lake Union to becoming one of the most important and popular boat shows in the country. Today, the show is held at the Bell Harbor Marina and at the Lumen Field Event Center.

The entertaining and informative exhibits at the Seattle boat show feature seminars guided by boating experts, including boat building tutorials, the latest marine accessories and technology, destination and service providers to talk with in-person, and fun and exciting attractions like kid's boat building where kids can put their creative side to use to build small wooden boats and add any accessories they'd like.

Want to see how the Rich & Famous live? Take a tour of the Nimbus Commuter 11, a 37-foot boat with a pilothouse, a double-bed in the front cabin, and swiveling cockpit chairs. You can also include your furry family members for "Dogs on Deck", where your pets can enjoy the sailboats with you and get a custom dog tag made to commemorate the occasion.

Boating enthusiasts agree that Washington is a great place for people with years of boating experience, or for people who have never boated before and want to give it a try. Boating can be a wonderful thing for anyone who loves to be outside and active, as well as quite relaxing if the current isn't too strong, and you have a good sailboat.

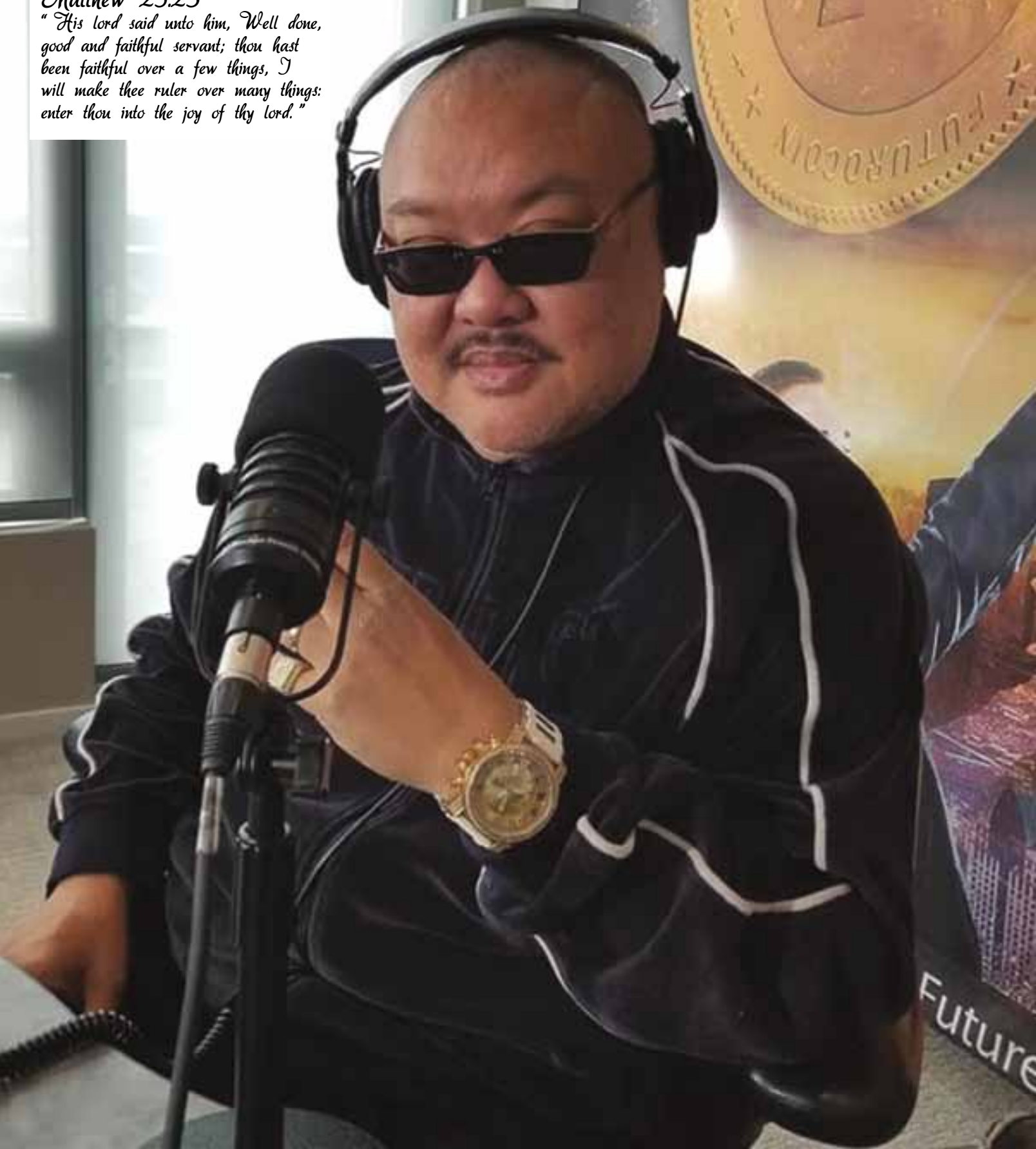
With nearly 300 exhibitors and over 800 boats on display, the Boat Show is a great place to go with family, friends, dogs, or alone for those looking to make new friends with similar interests.

Float on down!

# *Rest in Peace Nes Rodriguez*

*Matthew 25:23*

*"His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."*



*For people who lived in Seattle* during the 1980s—of a certain age and demographic—the name “Nasty” Nes Rodriguez holds especially profound significance. He DJ’d for some of Seattle’s first rappers, including the Emerald Street Boys, cofounded NastyMix Records, and, as a radio DJ, introduced some of the country’s best hip-hop to Pacific Northwest fans long before it hit the mainstream.

Nes died on Saturday, February 15. He was 63. His wife announced the news on Facebook on February 16. Nes, who immigrated from the Philippines to Seattle as a kid, graduated from Roosevelt High School in 1979 and studied media communications at Bellevue Community College. After visiting his sister in New York during the late 1970s, Nes requested she start recording local radio shows for him. The cassette tapes that arrived in the mail included pioneers like Jellybean Benitez and the Latin Rascals on WKTU, Frankie Crocker on WBLS, and the first rap radio show, Mr. Magic’s Rap Attack on WBHI.

Nes was an intern in the fall of 1979 as 1250AM KYAC became the first station to play “Rapper’s Delight” on Seattle radio. When the station transitioned to KKFY (KFOY) in 1981, Nasty Nes soon became the host of FreshTracks, the first rap radio show west of the Mississippi River.

Nasty Nes was also the DJ for the Emerald Street Boys, the first Seattle rappers to make a record. At live events, Rodriguez would play the instrumentals from popular 12-inch singles for the group to rhyme and dance to. The Emerald Street Boys also performed the theme song for FreshTracks. This early African American-Asian American collaboration helped set multiethnic collaborative work as part of the foundation of the Seattle hip-hop scene.



Sir Mixalot and Nasty Nes, 1983 and 2020

Speaking for myself, given the relatively slow drip of new hip-hop available during those times, the level of anticipation for FreshTracks on Sunday evenings cannot be overstated. From the beginning, FreshTracks was a game changer. Live mixing and scratching on two turntables was completely new to Seattle radio. This foreign sound of Nasty Nes “in the mix” along with the rapid rise in popularity of hip-hop created a diverse cross-section of listeners. While based primarily in rap, these mastermixes followed in the footsteps of Afrika Bambaataa and pulled music from an eclectic variety of genres and artists, including Kraftwerk, Hall and Oates, and Los Angeles-based Egyptian Lover.

In 1984, Nasty Nes heard about a series of parties being held at the Boys & Girls Club in the Central District and went to investigate. Every weekend, someone who called himself Sir Mix-a-Lot was packing the gym, and for a dollar per person, he gave the crowd a complete one-man show. Mix-a-Lot, who could cut, mix, and scratch records as well as rap, commanded the crowd. Thoroughly impressed by what he saw, Nes invited Mix-a-Lot onto KFOY to air his music. Mix’s underground material, which included songs like “7 Rainier,” “Square Dance Rap,” and “Let’s G,” now got wide airplay. Sir Mix-a-Lot became the most popular artist on KFOY, receiving more phone-in requests than even Michael Jackson and Prince. This exercise in musical democracy indicated Seattle pride in a local artist who seemed poised to take the baton from the Emerald Street Boys. Nes would go on to co-found NastyMix Records with Sir Mix-a-Lot, Greg Jones, and Sheila Locke in 1985, setting the stage for Mix-a-Lot’s landmark Seattle rap narrative “Posse on Broadway,” and eventually the Grammy-winning “Baby Got Back” (released on the Def American record label).

In 1988, Nes joined “Shockmaster” Glen Boyd as host of Rap Attack “Seattle’s-Only-All-Rap-Radio-Show-in-FM-Stereo” on 90.3 KCMU, and in 1997 he moved to Los Angeles to take a position with the music industry magazine Hits and pursue acting opportunities. Nes was always willing and excited to talk about hip-hop, specifically on the West Coast and even more specifically in Seattle. He was an invaluable resource for Emerald Street and recently wrote the foreword for the fantastic new book *The Birth of Seattle Rap* by Novocaine 132.

“Nasty” Nes Rodriguez, the “Crazy Pinoy” and lover of Taco Time: I looked up to you completely in my youth, and you became someone I got to know and appreciate as such a quality person. For that, I am forever grateful. Rest in Peace to the Godfather of Seattle hip-hop, see you at the Crossroads, my friend. - Daudi Abe

(article first appeared at [TheStranger.com](http://TheStranger.com))

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*Let us Teach our children to choose  
Communication over Conflict and  
to choose Dialogue over Destruction.*



*Remembering  
Charlie Kirk*



# EDITOLEDO-IN-CHIEF

Hey there!

Wow! 5-years and 25 issues of Vibrant Magazine! Thank you for taking this ride with us. Stick around, there is more to come...!

As always, I'd love to hear your thoughts on this issue... Write me @ VibrantArt206@gmail.com.

~ David



## VIBRANT Entertainment & Arts PARTNERSHIPS

Do you have a story idea,  
or just looking to partner with  
Unified Outreach?

Reach out to us at  
[VibrantArt206@gmail.com](mailto:VibrantArt206@gmail.com)



Big Thanks to  
*Travel Maven,  
Yolli B,*  
for your help with  
format and structure  
this issue!



Photo taken at the Mayor Bruce Harrell event, featuring DJ Rob Streets (page 29). Pictured here is Mayor Harrell with Vibrant Operations Director April King and her three daughters.

*In closing...*

Hear me out

You deserve friends  
who brag about you  
behind your back.

@Farrela Hobson Trilling

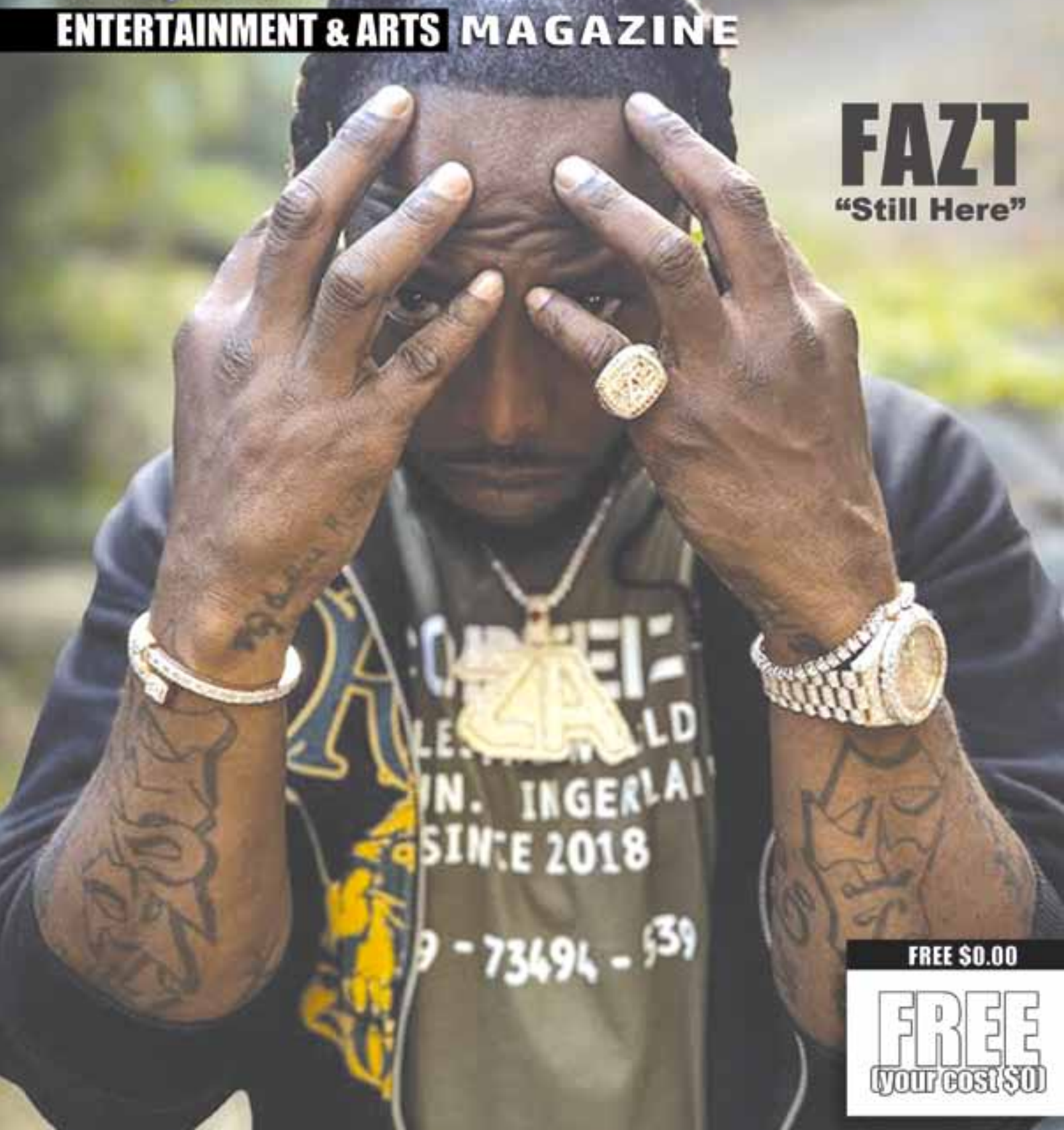
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