

Belize's leading newspaper

Father charged with grievous harm after newborn hospitalized

Banner, a resident of Camalote Village, was previously charged with manslaughter in 2019 for the death of his two-month-old child, Trevane Banner, and was also accused of abusing another child of his.

by Khaila Gentle

CAMALOTE VILLAGE, Cayo District, Mon. Aug. 8, 2022

A newborn baby was hospitalized over the weekend after sustaining injuries to the arm, mouth, and back that were allegedly caused by his father. The father, Troy Banner, who claimed that the 15-day-old baby had fallen from a bed, has since been arrested and charged with grievous harm.

ASP Alfonso Aban, Officer Commanding the Criminal Investigations Branch, said that the charges against Banner were made following the statement given by the mother of the newborn child.

Of note is that in June 2019, Banner, a resident of Camalote Village, was



Troy Banner, charged with grievous harm

arrested and charged with manslaughter for the death of his two month-old child, Thevane Banner. He claimed that

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Ladyville bar owner shot dead by minor

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Aug. 8, 2022

Vanessa Acevedo, 35, the owner of "Cocktail Bar" on Perez Road in Ladyville, was shot dead by a 17-year-old robber in the pre-dawn hours of Saturday, August 6, while closing her establishment. The minor allegedly shot her point blank in the chest before escaping with some of her belongings.

At around 12:15 a.m. Saturday, Acevedo was in the company of a 19-year-old security guard who was



Vanessa Acevedo, deceased

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Soldier's death sparks discussion on abuse/ misconduct within BDF

by Khaila Gentle

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Aug. 8, 2022

The death of 23-year-old Micah Miguel, a Belize Defence Force soldier, has left her family reeling and has once again sparked calls for investigations into the culture of abuse, bullying, and subsequent silencing of victims that is

There have been numerous petitions demanding that the culture of abuse and violence in the Belize Defence Force be investigated, most of which have fallen on deaf ears.

reportedly pervasive in the military.

Miguel died of suicide, and the matter of her death was brought to the attention of the media by her grieving family after they were forced to bury her

prematurely due to what they allege was mishandling of her body by the Police Department. Miguel's relatives also spoke of the abuse and mistreatment she received at the hands of her own

colleagues, which they believe pushed her to her death.

This is not the first time that

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Vulcan Materials Co. creeping into Belize?

by Marco Lopez

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Aug. 8, 2022

Aquatic ecologist, Dr. Ed Boles has drafted a 31-page document sounding the alarm on a potential threat to the environment that could affect the Jewel for generations to come – the proposal of Vulcan Materials Company, the largest construction aggregate firm in the US, to set up shop in Belize and mine limestone from a mineral formation located at the White Ridge Farm, a private property near Gales Point, Manatee

in the Stann Creek District.

The company has expressed an interest in purchasing the property but has not finalized the acquisition, according to recent reports. They are, however, now seeking an audience with government officials and the people of Gales Point, a large number of whom have passionately opposed the project, which they believe could disrupt their way of life.

In a recent interview, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Natural

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(Photo by REUTERS Paola Chiomante)

General view of the limestone mining operation of Vulcan Material in Calica, Quintana Roo State, Mexico, May 6, 2022.

No charges for Michael Meighan

by Charles Gladden

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Aug. 8, 2022

No charges have been brought against Michael Morris Meighan, a National Sports Council employee who turned himself in to police last Tuesday after a wanted poster was issued for his arrest in connection with the July 25 murder of 42-year-old former PIV Bloods leader, Darren Banks on Monday of the previous week.

Banks was gunned down at the corner of Ebony Street and Amandala Drive in the Lake Independence area while walking to the store, and police had pinpointed Meighan as the likely triggerman after he was seen driving a National Sports Council vehicle at high speed near the scene of the shooting. Meighan had reportedly been carrying out his duties as a messenger of the council on that day.

In reference to the possible involvement of Meighan in the shooting, Commissioner of Police Chester Williams told local reporters last week, “We have video footages that showed that vehicle near the murder scene. We have video footages that show after the murder took place, the vehicle raced down from there and went over a bridge, and went to Roger’s Stadium. If he was so innocent, police went to look for him the next day at his workplace; he was a no-show ... And it showed also at the Sports Council that he was the one who signed out for the vehicle; he was the one in the vehicle.”

In response to those statements, however, Meighan, in defense of his innocence, explained to 7News, “Me racing off the scene, I can’t say I was racing off of the scene, because I just naturally drive—I was an office assistant on the compound, I drive round all day, so technically he probably looked at it as if I was driving off hard, but that video they spoke about that I was driving off, that isn’t even the scene. That was like way by the roundabout side, so still you can’t say I was driving off the scene.”

Meighan’s attorney, Norman Rodriguez, also questioned the Commissioner of Police’s reference to the footage of Meighan speeding away



Michael Meighan

in a vehicle as possible proof that he shot Darren Banks. “As it relates to the comment that the vehicle was seen speeding off, I have one question to ask: If you are at a crime scene and you hear gunshots, do you drive away slowly? Do you walk away or [do] you speed away from that spot? Nobody wants to get shot. So, what would you have expected of any person who would have been where those gunshots were fired?”

Police Commissioner Williams, as previously mentioned, had also, while talking to reporters last week, pointed to the fact that police officers had gone to Meighan’s workplace at the National Sports Council to question him but he had not been there—implying that Meighan had not reported to work because of his involvement in the shooting.

In addressing those assertions, Meighan said, “They have a punch-in system, whereby when we go to work we have to punch, so the Tuesday I did punch into work. Technically, the police can’t say they went to look for me the Tuesday, because they didn’t know who was in that vehicle. They were looking for the vehicle, because the vehicle was in the area, so they wanted to follow leads.”

Meighan lamented to reporters last week that he lost his job and suffered irreparable damage to his reputation due to the accusations against him.

CARICOM holds consultations on Gender Equality Strategy

The CARICOM Secretariat is holding a series of consultations with member states on the Regional Gender Equality Strategy, which seeks to achieve and safeguard gender equality in the region

by Khaila Gentle

BELIZE CITY, Fri. Aug. 5, 2022

Consultations on the CARICOM Regional Gender Equality Strategy began in July of this year, and this past Friday, the CARICOM Secretariat began its consultations in Belize. The strategy is being developed with the aim of providing a cohesive framework of actionable steps that the region must take to achieve gender equality across the community.

Friday’s consultation took the form of a workshop, during which participants reviewed the strategy’s seven areas of focus: gender equality and social inclusion; freedom from violence; economic empowerment; good governance; access to health services; inclusive quality education and sustainable natural resource management.

According to the CARICOM Secretariat, those seven areas align with several international frameworks, including the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, and the Sustainable

Development 2030 Agenda.

The consultations will help to ensure that the process of developing and finalizing the strategy is as inclusive as possible and that it “reflects the input of the wider Caribbean Community.”

Ann-Marie Williams is the Deputy Programme Manager for Gender and Development within the CARICOM Secretariat. She has stated that the engagement with key stakeholders through the consultations will help to address not only the challenges and opportunities identified in each of the seven priority areas but also new and emerging issues.

When it comes to gender equality in the Caribbean—as well as in Latin America—there is still much work to be done. This was highlighted by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) earlier this year, when a report by the United Nations organization revealed that labor gaps between men and women had widened in 2021.

When it comes to CARICOM, the participation of women in the labor force is lacking in seven member states, including Belize.

Proceedings against Sharon Pitts conclude; Hubert Elrington calls the UDP a “bunch of crooks”



Hubert Elrington, attorney-at-law

He said that the \$400,000 lawsuit was simply a way for the former Barrow administration to “throw dirt” on Sharon Pitts’ name.

The land adjoined a parcel sold to Andre Vega, son of former Lands Minister Gaspar Vega. He too was compensated upward of \$400,000 for his parcel of land in what turned out to be a scandal that led to the older Vega’s resignation from the UDP Cabinet during the Barrow administration.

In December of 2016 the Solicitor General had filed a lawsuit against the duo. While Vega had been initially ordered by the Supreme Court to repay the \$400,000, but appealed that ruling, which was overturned by the Court of Appeal earlier this year, the case against Pitts has just reached its conclusion, and judgment, which will be handed down by Justice Lisa Shoman, has been reserved for a later date.

In defence of his client, Pitts’ attorney, Hubert Elrington, told local reporters that the Attorney General’s office produced no evidence that Pitts behaved improperly at any point in the process: “Where is the evidence? I was here to see the evidence. I know evidence when I see it, but there was

BELIZE CITY, Fri. Aug. 8, 2022

The proceedings of GoB’s lawsuit against attorney Sharon Pitts (who, along with Andre Vega, son of former Minister of Lands, Gaspar Vega, had been ordered in 2016 by the Office of the Solicitor General to repay \$400,000 of compensation awarded to each of them for privately owned lands that had been sold to them in a shady transaction) came to an end last week when final arguments and submissions were made to the trial judge, Justice Lisa Shoman.

Pitts is being sued by the government of Belize for compensation that she received from government for over 1.5 acres of property near the Haulover Bridge that she had bought from GoB for \$10,569 but that was allegedly already owned by one Miguel Valencia.

National Energy Policy to be revised



CEO in the Ministry of Public Utilities & Energy, Jose Urbina

by Khaila Gentle

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Aug. 8, 2022

The Energy Unit in the Ministry of

Public Utilities, Energy, Logistics, and E-Governance held a National Stakeholder Consultation on Thursday at the Belize Best Western Biltmore Plaza in Belize City. There, eighty persons from across various Ministries, regulatory bodies, and private sector entities met to review the country’s existing National Energy Policy.

The consultation event was aimed at contributing to the Energy Ministry’s goal of developing a National Energy Plan that will promote the use of efficient and sustainable energy in the country.

The CEO in the Ministry of Public Utilities, Energy, Logistics, and E-Governance, Jose Urbina, spoke with the media about the importance of energy independence.

“What we are looking at now is how

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No overnight solution to crime in Lake I—DPM Hyde



Deputy Prime Minister Cordel Hyde

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Aug. 8, 2022

The Deputy Prime Minister, and area representative for the Lake Independence division, Hon. Cordel Hyde, believes that the State of Emergency in his constituency, instead of being a means of preventing further bloodshed, is stigmatizing and isolating the people whom the police need to work with to fight crime in the area. Innocent residents of the community are inevitably rounded up by police during their raids, Hyde said, and he noted that such unfair targeting causes the families and friends of those detainees to feel “pissed” and to believe that they are being stereotyped. While he admits that the crime situation in Lake Independence has been brewing for over 30 years, he maintains that many members of that community are not involved in a life of crime and violence, and thus much more deliberation should precede the rollout of an SOE in the area, which, he said, should never be a knee-jerk response.

“You can’t just willy-nilly decide, ‘okay we’re tired of this, these guys are not listening and we have to have a state of emergency’. It has to be a last resort.” Hyde said, while speaking to local reporters last week.

According to Commissioner of Police, Chester Williams, however, the SOE is put in place as a preventative measure, not a last resort, and that view was echoed by the Prime Minister, Hon. John Briceño. Their view of the SOE—as a preventative tool—hinges on the belief (based on past incidents) that

whenever high-profile criminals are killed, uncontrollable retaliation in the streets of Belize usually follows. Rounding up the would-be perpetrators of acts of retaliation, according to PM Briceño, is thus the best option to prevent the fallout.

“I believe that we rather err on the judgment of being extremely cautious and declaring a state of emergency, and holding things down until things have calmed down than to not do anything. So, I understand his [DPM Hyde’s] frustration; he lives in that area. But we have to look at the big picture. Historically, whenever any kind of shooting like that happens, you have these guys shooting up one another, and too many innocent people have been murdered,” PM Briceño said.

Hon. Hyde, however, noted while speaking to reporters that the crime situation, like many other challenges in our communities, can be solved through ensuring access to education, and he said that he and his government colleagues have to pool resources to ensure that youths are positively impacted.

“We have to get back to an aggressive campaign where we make sure that the truancy program is active; make sure that all over the streets school-aged kids are not roaming; are in school when they should be in school. It is really that simple,” Hyde told local media.

He added, “Ultimately, we have to do a better job as a government of pooling our resources, integrating our efforts, unifying our efforts across the ministries that can positively impact our youths—whether it is to make sure they go to school, make sure they can get a piece of land, make sure they can get a decent house, make sure they can get a little job, make sure they can have access to proper healthcare. That’s all our people want. Our people from the Southside aren’t different from other people from across the country. It’s a fundamental lack of understanding of what our people have been through. And when you begin to understand what our people have been through, then you will understand that people want the same things.”

GoB launches National Roadshow to support micro, small, & medium enterprises

by Khaila Gentle

BELIZE CITY, Fri. Aug. 5, 2022

This past Friday, the Government of Belize held the launch of its first ever MSME roadshow, which is aimed at supporting the growth of small businesses in the country, and is a part of the Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (MSME) Policy and Strategy 2022-2025, recently approved by Cabinet.

The MSME Roadshow comes as part of the Government’s recognition of the large role that small and medium enterprises play in the building of the economy. Through it, the Government, in partnership with BELTRAIDE and

with the support of the United Nations Development Program, hopes to provide the nation’s small business owners with the necessary resources and capacity-building tools for growth and success.

For the next three months, the roadshow will be making stops countrywide, including on the cayes, to raise public awareness of Belizean goods and services in an effort to promote local buying, which will in turn contribute to economic recovery.

Local MSMEs will also be granted better access to financing and will benefit from linkages with agencies such

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CCJ issues reasons for ordering Hillaire Sears’ release

The Court found that Sears’ constitutional rights had been breached by Belize’s parole board.

by Khaila Gentle

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad & Tobago, Mon. Aug. 8, 2022

The Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) on Friday issued its reasons for quashing the decision of Belize’s upper courts to revoke the parole of Hillaire Sears. Sears, who was set to serve 25 years in prison for a charge of manslaughter (reduced from murder after an appeal) was granted parole in December 2012 after serving ten years. His parole was revoked, however, in April 2014, when he was detained on the suspicion that he had violated one of his parole conditions by using cannabis.

Sears was never granted the chance to plead his case and was detained for fifty-five days before the Parole Board informed him—after tests done on a urine sample confirmed his use of cannabis—that his parole had been revoked.

In 2018, Sears brought a case against the Board, claiming that his detention and the revocation of his parole were unlawful and that his constitutional rights had been violated. The Supreme Court dismissed his claim and the Court of Appeal indicated agreement with that decision.

The Supreme Court’s argument was that Sears had used the wrong procedure in bringing his claim to court—that it was to be brought as a judicial review application, rather than a breach of constitutional rights claim. The CCJ, however, disagreed.

“Mr. Sears had alleged the arbitrary use of state power, incarceration without legal authority, and the revocation of his parole without due



Hillaire Sears

process. These were genuine claims of infringements of his fundamental rights,” said the CCJ.

According to the CCJ, when Sears was re-incarcerated on April 3, 2014, he was not afforded any of the constitutional safeguards that the Belize Central Prison has in place for parolees suspected of having breached the conditions of their parole.

“The Court was, therefore, satisfied that Mr. Sears’ arrest and detention on 3 April 2014 was arbitrary, without any legal authority and without due process. Accordingly, he was deprived of his fundamental right to personal liberty for those 55 days from 3 April until 28 May 2014, when the Parole Board revoked his parole,” the CCJ stated.

The CCJ also noted that the Parole Board’s decision breached Sears’ constitutional rights to personal liberty and equal protection of the law, as he was not afforded the opportunity to make “written or oral representations” to the Board.

Fatal RTA in Cotton Tree



Vehicles in the accident at Cotton Tree (Photo by BBN)

COTTON TREE, Mon. Aug. 8, 2022

A 27-year-old man from Franks Eddy Village lost his life in a fatal road traffic accident that occurred last night between Miles 43 and 44 of the George Price Highway in Cotton Tree Village. He has been identified as Max Samuel Pop.

Reports are that a red Toyota pickup

being driven by Jermano Bol, 55, collided with Pop’s pickup, a black Toyota, and caused Pop’s fatal injuries. Bol, a resident of Roaring Creek Village, was traveling toward Belmopan from Belize City, and the victim, Pop, was traveling in the opposite direction.

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BSCFA and BSI/ASR “joined at the hip,” says PM

Sugarcane farmers are asking for government intervention, while ASR/BSI is of the view that the two entities should resolve their differences and reach an agreement on their own.

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Aug. 8, 2022

The sugar crop for this year is being viewed as a success by both ASR/BSI, the company which mills the cane, and the government, although a delay in the start of the season due to the absence of a commercial agreement between the company and the Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association (BSCFA) had resulted in a couple of thousand tons of cane being left in the fields, undelivered and un-milled. Now, an interim agreement signed between the Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association (BSCFA) and the Belize Sugar Industries (BSI) at the beginning of this year, which made the start of the crop possible, has come to an end, and the parties are now locked once again in an impasse due to their inability to agree on how revenues and costs should be shared.

The BSI says that the proposals the BSCFA has made (including a request for the payment of a larger amount for the bagasse that is sold to BELCOGEN; a reduction of costs shouldered by the farmers; and an increased share of revenue derived from value-added sugar) would result in a transfer of over 20 million dollars from the company to the farmers and is something the company cannot afford. The cane farmers have said that they simply need more money to cover the expenses they incur to produce the sugar cane used by the mill. (At least 50% of the sugar cane processed by the mill is obtained from the BSCFA farmers.)

Prime Minister John Briceno said, when interviewed by reporters last week, that these two entities have to work out their difference and start to create some trust between each other.

The PM said that he met with the BSCFA just before last Friday’s interview, and in the previous week he had met with the millers, BSI. He said, in regard to those discussions, that some decisions were made, but he commented that the government can only put the parties around the table but cannot solve the problems with a stroke of a pen.

The BSCFA, whose membership includes 5 members of the current Briceno administration, including the PM himself, wants the government to intervene in the negotiations, since they say that no good faith is being shown by ASR/BSI. Top officials from BSI/ASR, however, are wary of government intervention in the process.

When interviewed at an event last week marking the end of the sugar season, Director of Finance for BSI/ASR, Shawn Chavarria said that he does not think the government needs to step in, “The mill is private. The BSCFA is a private entity. I think both organizations are more than capable of managing these negotiations. If you look at it, we’ve signed long-term agreements with three of four associations without government



Andy Westby, chairman of BSCFA

intervention. So, it shows that we can get it done. They have 50% of the cane we have contracted with a long-term agreement.”

The BSCFA at the start of last season’s sugar crop, had demanded that a new agreement be entered into between the parties. Their proposals, however, were rejected by the company, which pointed to \$60 million dollars in debt that has been incurred by the company as part of its effort to modernize the facilities and increase the efficiency of the operation. Many of the farmers, however, have also gotten loans from lending institutions and have been forced to refinance their facilities each year in order to prepare their equipment and fertilize their field — expenses that they say are becoming increasingly unbearable.

The last commercial agreement between BSCFA and ASR/BSI expired on January 19 of this year, and the BSCFA farmers are now looking to renegotiate a higher payout to cover their increasing cost of production. The PM, who had personally mediated the last negotiations that led to an interim agreement which brought an end to an impasse between the two entities and a subsequent blockade at the Tower Hill, may thus once again have to enter the process to ensure the early signing of a new agreement.

When questioned by local reporters, he said that the two parties need to find some middle ground, since they are joined at the hip.

“The BSCFA needs to also understand that the government cannot solve their problems with the stroke of a pen, because it is two private entities that are operating. We can only intervene and try to put them around the table for us to be able to find a way where it can be a win-win for everyone. We all understand, and we always tell both sides: BSI can’t do without fifty-one percent of the cane or six hundred thousand tons of sugar cane that the members of the BSCFA have. But at the same time, the members of the BSCFA cannot do without B.S.I./A.S.R. We have to find a middle ground. We are hooked at the hip, we are partners, so we have to try to sit down with both parties and try to work a way forward. I’m optimistic by nature so I do believe that we will be able to

PM says mass shooting “unBelizean”



Wabinaha Night Club, Hopkins Village

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Aug. 8, 2022

The Prime Minister, Hon. John Briceño, while speaking to local reporters last week, commented on last Sunday’s mass shooting at Wabinaha Night Club in Hopkins that claimed the lives of 2 persons and left 8 others with gunshot injuries. He stated, while attempting to describe his response to the shooting, that he was at a loss for words, and he ultimately referred to the firing of shots at a crowd in the Hopkins nightclub, which is only the second such incident to have taken place in the country, as “unBelizean”.

“I don’t think we could really find the adequate words to express just the horror of what happened in Hopkins. It is something that is so unBelizean; in our mind that just doesn’t happen,” PM Briceño said.

He then speculated that the exposure of Belizeans to media coverage of mass shootings in the United States might have possibly influenced the mindset of the shooters.

The four men—the three Belizean gunmen (Brian Andrews, 28; Kenyon Moore, 25; and Sherwin Moore, 35) and the Canadian military veteran who served as their driver—were arraigned in the Dangriga Magistrate’s court last Thursday and remanded to the Belize Central Prison until November 9. They had all been residing in Sittee River.

“The police moved very quickly. They managed to get the person who was driving the getaway car, and it seems, based on evidence, that they managed to find the three persons that committed the crime, it seems,” PM Briceño said.

Hon. Briceño went on to note that he wants the country’s best prosecutors to be assigned to put together a case in court against the men to ensure they receive the maximum possible sentence.

“I want to make sure that we get the best prosecutors to go after them, and if it’s left up to me, they should not see

the light of day. They should be locked up for the rest of their lives, to point to other criminals that we will go after them,” the PM said. He also pointed out that his administration is making an effort to equip law enforcement personnel with more technology and more advanced security equipment through funding obtained via a loan from CABEL.

“We’re starting to work on putting up more cameras. We have a loan with CABEL that will allow us to put more cameras in the hotspots, especially in Belize City. We’re getting body cameras for the police also ... officers, when they are out there, they could know that ... (a) they can’t misbehave, and (b), if people are misbehaving that we can capture that,” the PM said.

He additionally made reference to a new intake of police officers who will have to be capable and receive proper training so that they can perform effectively as soon as they are deployed. He noted, however, that shoring up the security forces is only addressing one aspect of the ongoing crime issue within the country, and pointed to what appears to be a breakdown of the moral fiber within young persons.

“But that is only one part of the equation,” he said... “The [other] part is the social aspect of it, that there seems, especially in some of our young people, a total breakdown in the social fabric, in the way they think and they behave, and that is why we are saying that we have to invest in education,” he further remarked.

He said that the launch of a free education program within four schools on the Southside of Belize City is a first step to ensure that students have access to schooling, and the support they need in order to remain in the classroom.

According to Hon. Briceño, his government is doing everything possible to address crime from both the angles he mentioned.

find an agreement before the start of the next crop,” he said.

The PM also noted, in reference to a push by the BSCFA cane farmers to get a chance to look at BSI’s expenses linked with the net sugar value, “... what the farmers are saying now is ‘let’s look at the expenses.’ They have what you call a net sugar value. That is the money that is used to pay expenses to produce the sugar at the top, and that number has been increasing over the years, and now farmers are saying ‘take a look at how it is that we get to that number. Or let’s see if there can be any other

byproducts that can be used.’ So, there are many moving parts that it will be difficult for me to sit down and go through the entire thing. What’s important is that we need to find a way how we can get both sides to sit down and to rationally go through the issues one by one and to find some sort of middle ground. When you’re negotiating, you have to be prepared to give up something; and both sides have to be prepared to give up something so that we can have a middle ground, a common ground for us to have a successful cane season next year.”



Our Hopkins dilemma

lawyers, human rights, national security, and justice

Monday, Aug. 8, 2022

As a people faced with a major national crime problem, a number of citizens are battling with the dilemma of how to uphold two foundational principles that have been a priority for us – human rights and justice. And in our desperate search for answers, some are often tempted to sacrifice the human rights of individuals in search of justice.

A big problem in Belize for the past three decades is that, where the crime of murder is concerned, there are hundreds of families still grieving for lost loved ones with little solace from a justice system that seems to have fallen flat, with a conviction rate of less than ten percent. In a fit of anger, some are inclined to call for capital punishment, “vigilante justice”, and even more drastic approaches to try and remove the apparent sense of impunity with which murders are committed. On the other hand, every accused person also has relatives and friends, and is supposed to be considered innocent unless proven guilty in a court of law. But with the current track record of our courts, it is a given that many “guilty” individuals are walking free in our streets, to possibly kill again. Some innocent individuals have at times been “fingered” by their devious rivals to lead police investigators off the track in their pursuit of the culprit who committed a particular crime. So the crime situation is very complicated, and when sobriety sets in, we all must acknowledge that however we go about solving this problem, the human rights of every individual should be respected as our Constitution dictates. But there is still this dilemma, and it begs the question if our approach to laws and the legal profession needs a second look in certain situations, as in the

recent incident in Hopkins.

When a prominent attorney was shot just over a decade ago, the young accused was not able to find a lawyer to defend him; perhaps he couldn’t afford one. In fact, he was found guilty of attempted murder following a trial in which he was undefended, and only in his appeal, where the verdict was confirmed, did the court insist that legal representation be secured pro-bono for his defense. That was a case of one individual who almost lost his life. The accused was a minor at the time of the incident, and, while denying he actually pulled the trigger, he maintained that his older accomplice had threatened his life. Perhaps, if an attorney was at the youth’s side from the moment he was declared a suspect, it might have been more difficult during the trial for the prosecution to erase “reasonable doubt” from the mind of the presiding judge.

The first thought of every individual, each one of us, if ever circumstances place us in a heap of trouble, however

innocent we may be, will be to try and get a lawyer to defend us, to be sure the system does not take advantage of our ignorance, and make us out to be guilty. The lawyer is then looked upon as our potential savior; and so it should be, according to their profession. It is their job to defend, while other lawyers prosecute; and the lofty principle is that out of that balanced scale should come justice, and the innocent will “walk”, while the “guilty” will pay the penalty for their crime. That is the way it should be.

Unfortunately, in Belize today, many citizens do not have faith in our justice system, especially when it comes to murder. The track record is too poor. And blaming the police will get us nowhere. They are human, just like all the rest of citizens. A major problem, as the Police Commissioner has said a number of times, is that citizen witnesses are needed to give evidence to make prosecution successful, so that murderers are found guilty of their crimes. The debate about the pros and cons of capital punishment is mute, if convictions are so hard to come by. So, the ball is in the citizens’ court. But they will be quick to note how many “witnesses” over the years have also been murdered, so people tend to turn away when a major crime is being committed. Seeing is dangerous; and so, murderers appear to carry out their evil deeds with impunity. Murderers rule the land, it seems sometimes.

Part of the problem there, as the Commissioner himself has admitted, is that widespread corruption in the country has also infiltrated the ranks of the Police Department, no doubt partly due to the drug trafficking situation. In the mid-1980s when the crack cocaine epidemic was being unleashed in Belize City, it was often observed how much havoc could be created in a neighborhood by only one “crack head”, who would steal anything, even clothes on the line, in order to feed his addiction. As demanding as the job is for an officer of the law, and with such meticulous effort being required during evidence gathering and recording, it should be no surprise to anyone that one “bad cop” can mess up a case, intentionally, and even put people’s lives in danger, by leaking witnesses’ identity to an accused person. Indeed, only one “bad cop” could spoil the effectiveness of the whole department, especially in these dangerous times, as people lose confidence in all the good police officers, due to one or two crooks in police uniform.

But that is a topic for another time. Right now, we want to consider Hopkins, and Belize. Because this could be a turning point, for better or for worse. There are some worrisome parallels with the Belmopan case a few years ago, where a foreign “businessman” had a group of young Belizeans committing the most heinous crime to date in Belize—the gruesome murder of one man, for which they are all currently spending life sentences. Now these three Belizeans in Hopkins are in the company of another foreigner, and something just doesn’t seem right. These brothers did not just conspire to seek revenge upon one or two individuals for whatever “beef” they had between them. This was in a way an attack against all of us, Belizeans of all walks of life, together having fun, and the casualties could have been much worse. But the question is, to what end? The Prime Minister has said it is simply “un-Belizean” to do something like that. We get angry, drunk maybe, we lash out, we take revenge sometimes; but looking to unload your weapons on a mass of your fellow Belizeans trapped in a closed building? We’re talking mass murder and terrorism, with implications for our whole national tourism industry.

This cannot be “just like that.” If there is any bad cop around to find a way to botch this investigation, it will be a very sad day indeed. **Please turn to** **Page 6**



(estb. 1969)

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Vulcan

Vulcan is the Roman god of fire and metalworking. It's also the name of a company presently trying to disrupt the lives of a peaceful village, and its surrounding areas, with a very pristine environment, Gales Point, Manatee! I really hope and pray that this time David wins, instead of Goliath. Vulcan Materials Company is a behemoth! Its reach is worldwide, powerful, and mostly unstoppable! The Deputy Prime Minister, hopefully with the support of the full Cabinet, has slowed their attempts to destroy a fragile ecosystem in one of the most beautiful areas in Belize. I used the word "slowed", because these corporations aren't used to pushback; they just keep coming at you, with money and promises of a better life for the residents of the area, and the country. Promises that usually begin to fade once they are given permission to carry out their agendas!

In a time when the environment is at the forefront of the fight for the survival of this little 3rd rock from the sun, earth, when we see the devastation caused by deforestation, mining, drilling, in mostly third and fourth world countries, this latest venture should give us pause. People will say, well, Belize is poor and needs investments and jobs, to give everyone a fair chance to survive and prosper. They are absolutely right, but at what cost? Destroying one of the most diverse ecosystems in the world? Yes, Belize for its size, has one of the most diverse ecosystems in the world! There are safer and more profitable investments, that can help alleviate the pressures on a government that is desperately seeking

to improve the lives of its citizens, while at the same time preserving the integrity of our rivers and streams and sea, and our forests.

The company in question has already had problems in Mexico. That should serve as a warning to us. The DPM has to be commended for his opposition to their coming in and shattering the peace and comfort of the area residents, changing their perfect landscape into a valley of desolation and who knows what other environment casualties this venture might bring—not to mention the overcrowding, life-changing way of life it could cause. The Cockscomb Basin is already being ravaged by mining, for the benefit of a few, and not for the nation as a whole!

Belize has to be wise in whom it lets in to share in its many bounties. Promises of schools and hospitals aren't enough! The benefits have to outweigh whatever negative impacts these investments bring! We need jobs, yes, but not at any cost! Look at places like Bangladesh, suffering from flash floods constantly, because of deforestation! Look at parts of Africa, that have let the Chinese in, to take their natural resources and leave them worse off. In debt, and indebted to their economic colonizers!

No, man! This little Jewel is too precious to be lost to those who can never appreciate how special it is, how special its people are, how much nature has blessed us, "with wealth untold!" We need investments, we need jobs, we need prosperity, but again, not if the price is too high!

Glen

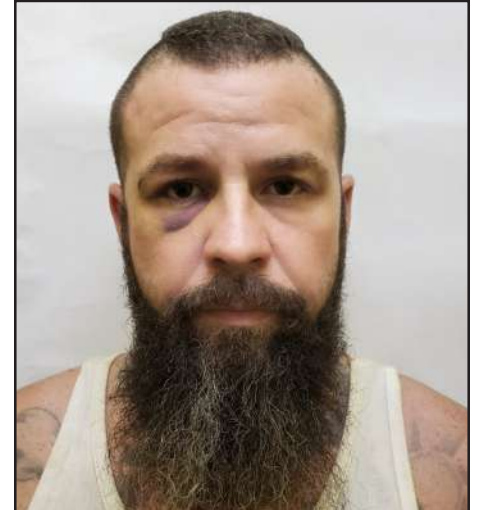
Who's JR Smith?

Accomplice in a joint enterprise—or mastermind?

by Marco Lopez

The mass shooting in Hopkins village over the weekend, which caused two deaths and injuries to eight others, has hit home for many of us. The Wabinaha nightclub shooting has given us a bitter taste of what was before only seen on newsreels from the United States—where indiscriminate shooters have caused multiple fatalities and injuries in schools and at shopping malls. In Belize, early on Sunday morning, three men opened fire on patrons of the nightclub—their target being (according to police), Noah Moro, who got into an argument with the men over a girl and was fatally shot by them. The shooters, all from Sittee River, were accompanied by one John Roy Smith, 43, a former soldier of the Canadian Army, and the driver of the getaway vehicle. He was formally charged by police on Wednesday with two counts of abetment to commit murder in connection with the mass shooting, but those charges were subsequently upgraded to murder.

Smith, who has been in Belize for just 6 months, was extensively interviewed before arriving in the country, and in a video of that interview, which was posted on YouTube, he chronicled his time in the army and its effect on him as a person. He spoke about his struggle with addiction, the loss of comrades in battle and by suicide, and his battles with night terrors and suicidal thoughts. He currently lives in Sittee River, where he seemingly forged a friendship with the three men accused of the shooting, as can be seen in the photo of the group on his Facebook profile.



John Roy Smith – Canadian war veteran involved in the mass shooting in Hopkins

he was forced to leave Canada, in essence, and decided to come to a country where he was owed nothing – Belize. Here he bought a piece of land and was planning to construct a new house.

Just 6 months in, however, after what some reports say was an uncontrolled binge with cocaine and alcohol, following a breakup with his Belizean girlfriend, Smith is facing charges for a double murder after allegedly driving the vehicle that took the three accused gunmen to and from the Wabinaha nightclub to carry out the second mass shooting in this country's history.

"I was a soldier, and doing soldier [expletive], wake up to explosions, to go sleep to explosions, people shooting at you, you shoot back ... to me because I trained for it, I enjoyed being a soldier," Smith said during the interview. He was one of the Canadian soldiers involved in Operation Medusa



Our Hopkins dilemma lawyers, human rights, national security, and justice

Continued from Page 5 Because, as night follows day, if justice is not served effectively in this case, and a strong message sent to any would-be maniac considering his day of fame, it will happen again, and the weapons may then be of a heavier caliber.

Members of the legal profession are called upon to provide representation to anyone who finds himself in trouble because of bad judgement or letting his emotions overcome him. But this is different. This was in a sense a calculated, armed attack against the people and nation of Belize. And we still don't know who or what is really behind it all. Criminal lawyers are supposed to be champions of human rights, and feel duty-bound to defend the indefensible in search of justice. But when our national security is at stake, and an emboldened criminal element could take us to another level, they may need to take a serious, second look at their legal obligations. They did, when one of their own was the victim. When our nation is under attack, we should be Belizeans first, and defending the nation should be priority number one. It is often difficult for poor people to defend their rights due to the high cost of legal representation. However, the Hopkins invasion crew, which included three Belizeans, seems to have had no problem securing the services of a Belizean attorney.

Between our national security and the legal profession, where is human rights on the scales of justice?



(L-R) Kenyon Moore, 25; Brian Andrews, 28; JR Smith, 43; and Sherwin Moore, 35 charged for two counts of murder

This has prompted questions about how much of an influence could the former soldier (trained in military tactics and scarred by war, and battling ongoing internal issues, and perhaps mental conditions) have had on the three men's out-of-the-ordinary modus operandi—one of unrestrained violence—seen early Sunday morning inside the nightclub.

Smith said during the interview that he came to Belize after closing the doors of an organization he created named Frontline Cabinetry due to Covid-19 restrictions in his home country of Canada. That business enabled veterans who were finding it difficult to adjust to civilian life after returning from the battlefield, to earn a living while being supported by other veterans. He said during the extended interview that

in Afghanistan. That op was a Canadian-led offensive during the second Battle of Panjawii in 2006.

"They take away your rifle, they take away your rights to be able to defend yourself," Smith said, adding this is something that stuck with him.

"There wasn't a second of my existence during that time, that rifle was not laid in the exact spot that I needed to use it along with my load-bearing vest and my kevlar and, you know my body armor, everything laid out in a certain order, and then all of a sudden you wake up in the middle of the night and the package is not there; you don't know where it is, cause you don't have it no more. That was back then, and now I'm in the same pit, now I'm in the same

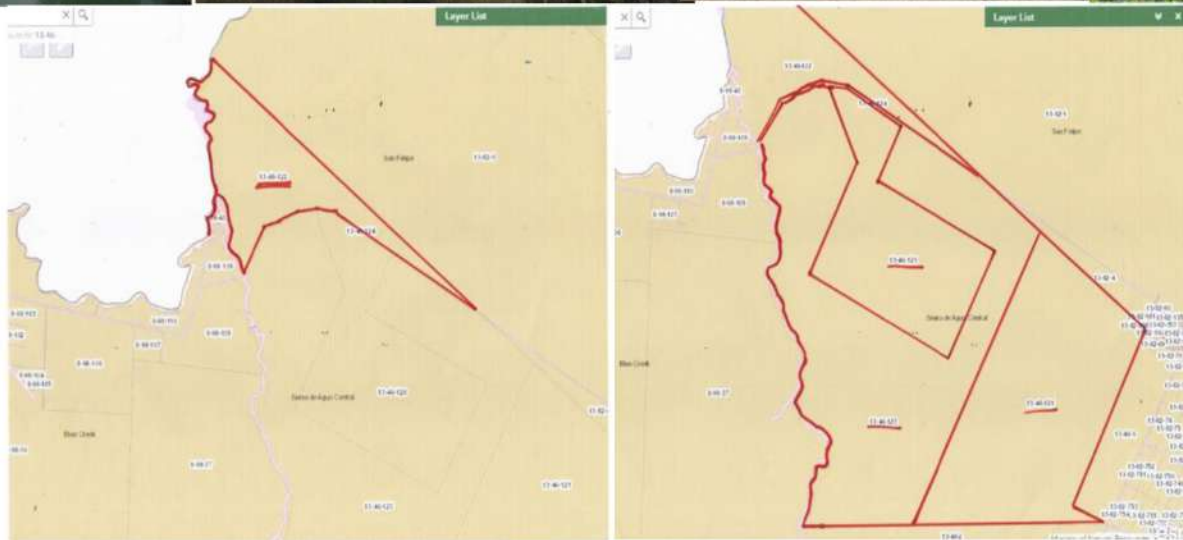
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Nuestro dilema de Hopkins

abogados, derechos humanos, seguridad nacional y justicia

Lunes, 8 de Agosto de 2022

Como pueblo que enfrenta un importante problema nacional de delincuencia, varios ciudadanos se enfrentan al dilema de cómo defender dos principios fundamentales que han sido una prioridad para nosotros: los derechos humanos y la justicia. Y en nuestra búsqueda desesperada de respuestas, algunos a menudo se ven tentados a sacrificar los derechos humanos de las personas en busca de justicia.

Un gran problema en Belize durante las últimas tres décadas es que, en lo que respecta al delito de asesinato, hay cientos de familias que aún lloran por la pérdida de sus seres queridos con poco consuelo de un sistema de justicia que parece haberse derrumbado, con una tasa de condena de menos del diez por ciento. En un ataque de ira, algunos se inclinan a exigir la pena capital, la "justicia por mano propia" e incluso enfoques más drásticos para tratar de eliminar la aparente sensación de impunidad con la que se cometen los asesinatos. Por otro lado, toda persona acusada también tiene familiares y amigos, y se supone que debe ser considerada inocente a menos que se pruebe su culpabilidad en un tribunal de justicia. Pero con el historial actual de nuestros tribunales, es un hecho que muchas personas "culpables" están caminando libres en nuestras calles, para posiblemente volver a matar. Algunos individuos inocentes a veces han sido "denunciados" por sus tortuosos rivales para desviar a los investigadores de la policía en su búsqueda del culpable que cometió un crimen en particular. Entonces, la situación de la delincuencia es muy complicada, y cuando se asienta la sobriedad, todos debemos reconocer que, independientemente de cómo solucionemos este problema, los derechos humanos de cada individuo deben respetarse como dicta nuestra Constitución. Pero todavía existe este dilema, y plantea la pregunta de si nuestro enfoque de las leyes y la profesión legal necesita una segunda mirada en ciertas situaciones, como en el reciente incidente en Hopkins.

Cuando un destacado abogado recibió un disparo hace poco más de una década, el joven acusado no pudo encontrar un abogado que lo defendiera; tal vez no podía permitirse uno. De hecho, fue declarado culpable de tentativa de asesinato tras un juicio en el que no estuvo defendido, y solo en su apelación, donde se confirmó el veredicto, el tribunal insistió en que se asegurara representación legal gratuita para su defensa. Ese fue el caso de un individuo que casi pierde la vida. El acusado era menor de edad en el momento del incidente y, aunque negó haber apretado el gatillo, sostuvo que su cómplice mayor lo había amenazado de muerte. Tal vez, si un abogado hubiera estado del lado del joven desde el momento en que fue declarado sospechoso, podría haber sido más difícil para la acusación durante el juicio borrar la "duda razonable" de la mente del juez que presidía.

El primer pensamiento de cada individuo, de cada uno de nosotros, si alguna vez las circunstancias nos meten en un montón de problemas, por muy inocentes que seamos, será tratar de conseguir un abogado que nos defienda, para asegurarnos de que el sistema no se aproveche de nuestra ignorancia, y hacernos aparecer culpables. El abogado entonces es visto como nuestro salvador potencial; y así debe ser, según su profesión. Es su trabajo defender, mientras otros abogados procesan; y el principio sublime es que de esa balanza equilibrada debe salir la justicia, y los inocentes "caminarán", mientras que los "culpables" pagarán la pena de su crimen. Esa es la forma en que debe ser.

Desafortunadamente, hoy en Belize, muchos ciudadanos no tienen fe en nuestro sistema de justicia, especialmente cuando se trata de asesinatos. El historial es demasiado pobre. Y culpar a la policía no nos llevará a ninguna parte. Son humanos, como el resto de ciudadanos. Un problema importante, como ha dicho el Comisionado de Policía en varias ocasiones, es que se necesitan testigos ciudadanos para que presten testimonio para que el enjuiciamiento tenga éxito, de modo que los asesinos sean declarados culpables de sus crímenes. El debate sobre los pros y los contras de la pena capital es mudo, si las condenas son tan difíciles de conseguir. Entonces, la pelota está en la cancha de los ciudadanos. Pero ellos se apresurarán a notar cuántos "testigos" a lo largo de los años también han sido asesinados, por lo que la

gente tiende a alejarse cuando se está cometiendo un delito grave. Ver es peligroso; y así, los asesinos parecen llevar a cabo sus malas acciones con impunidad. Los asesinos gobiernan la tierra, parece a veces.

Parte del problema allí, como ha admitido el propio Comisionado, es que la corrupción generalizada en el país también se ha infiltrado en las filas del Departamento de Policía, sin duda en parte debido a la situación del narcotráfico. A mediados de la década de 1980, cuando se desataba la epidemia de crack en la Ciudad de Belize, a menudo se observaba cuánto estrago podía causar en un vecindario un solo "coquero", que robaba cualquier cosa, incluso ropa en la línea, para alimentar su adicción. A pesar de lo exigente que es el trabajo para un oficial de la ley, y con un esfuerzo tan meticuloso que se requiere durante la recopilación y el registro de pruebas, no debería sorprender a nadie que un "policia malo" pueda estropear un caso, intencionalmente, e incluso poner en peligro la vida de personas, al filtrar la identidad de testigos a una persona acusada. De hecho, un solo "policia malo" podría arruinar la eficacia de todo el departamento, especialmente en estos tiempos peligrosos, a medida que la gente pierde confianza en todos los buenos policías debido a uno o dos bandidos con uniforme de policía.

Pero ese es un tema para otro momento. En este momento, queremos considerar Hopkins y Belize. Porque esto podría ser un punto de inflexión, para bien o para mal. Hay algunos paralelos preocupantes con el caso de Belmopán hace unos años, donde un "hombre de negocios" extranjero hizo que un grupo de jóvenes beliceños cometieran el crimen más atroz hasta la fecha en Belize: el espantoso asesinato de un hombre, por el cual todos están actualmente bajo cadena perpetua. Ahora estos tres beliceños en Hopkins están en compañía de otro extranjero, y algo no parece estar bien. Estos hermanos no solo conspiraron para vengarse de uno o dos individuos por cualquier "desacuerdo" que tuvieran entre ellos. En cierto modo, esto fue un ataque contra todos nosotros, beliceños de todos los ámbitos de la vida, divirtiendonos juntos, y las bajas podrían haber sido mucho peores. Pero la pregunta es, ¿con qué fin? El Primer Ministro ha dicho que es simplemente "no beliceño" hacer algo así. Nos enfadamos, tal vez nos emborrachamos, arremetemos, a veces nos vengamos; pero ¿buscar descargar sus armas sobre una masa de sus compatriotas beliceños atrapados en un edificio cerrado? Estamos hablando de asesinatos en masa y terrorismo, con implicaciones para toda nuestra industria turística nacional.

Esto no puede ser "así como así". Si hay algún policia malo para encontrar una manera de estropear esta investigación, será un día muy triste. Porque, como la noche sigue al día, si no se hace justicia de manera efectiva en este caso, y si no se envía un mensaje contundente a cualquier aspirante a maniaco que esté considerando su día de fama, volverá a suceder, y las armas pueden ser de un calibre más pesado.

Los miembros de la profesión legal están llamados a brindar representación a cualquier persona que se encuentre en problemas debido a un mal juicio o por dejar que sus emociones lo superen. Pero esto es diferente. En cierto sentido, esto fue un ataque armado calculado contra el pueblo y la nación de Belize. Y todavía no sabemos quién o qué está realmente detrás de todo esto. Se supone que los abogados penalistas son defensores de los derechos humanos y se sienten obligados a defender lo indefendible en busca de justicia. Pero cuando nuestra seguridad nacional está en juego, y un elemento criminal envalentonado podría llevarnos a otro nivel, es posible que deban analizar seriamente sus obligaciones legales. Lo hicieron, cuando uno de los suyos fue la víctima. Cuando nuestra nación está bajo ataque, debemos ser beliceños primero, y defender la nación debe ser la prioridad número uno. A menudo es difícil para las personas pobres defender sus derechos debido al alto costo de la representación legal. Sin embargo, el equipo de invasión de Hopkins, que incluía a tres beliceños, parece no haber tenido problemas para obtener los servicios de un abogado beliceño.

Entre nuestra seguridad nacional y la profesión legal, ¿dónde están los derechos humanos en la balanza de la justicia?

From the Publisher



Evan X Hyde

There was a time when Belizeans of African descent were the clear majority in this 8,867. This was under British rule, and there was heavy law-and-order in the settlement/colony.

Since Belize achieved political independence, law-and-order has broken down, defence attorneys rule, and our Jewel has become wild, especially at night and especially on weekends.

Wilfred “Sedi” Elrington was Foreign Minister in the Dean Barrow UDP Cabinets from February 2008 to November 2020. But if you read his columns in THE REPORTER, it’s as if he were talking about total strangers when he discusses such as his former Cabinet colleagues.

Here is what Mr. Elrington wrote on Friday: “It is patently unjust, scandalous, shameful and disgraceful that politicians who are the servants of these said people, and their relatives and cronies, are enriched to the point where they become millionaires in only a few five-year terms in office while the constituents who elected them to office and whose interest they swore

to serve, wallow in poverty and misery in hellish shelters for in excess of forty continuous years.”

That very same Friday the newspaper was published, Sedi’s older brother, Hubert, who was a Cabinet minister in the UDP governments of 1984-1989 and 1993-1998, told KREM Radio’s Marisol Amaya, apparently with reference to the three UDP governments in which Sedi served from 2008 to 2020, “They are a bunch of crooks.”

Both Hubert and Sedi are attorneys, and the Elrington family success must be given respect, because they are not brown Belizeans who benefited from any kind of white paternity. As Afro Belizeans, they are the real deal, but it doesn’t matter to me what kind of Belizean you are: if you are exonerating yourself from Cabinet issues when you were sitting at the same Cabinet table, then you must be taken to task.

Before I continue, let me tell you that a source this week told me that Sedi had put the Samuel Haynes Institute (corner Mahogany and Oleander Streets) into a trust, so that he could remain in charge after the

PUP ousted the UDP in 2020. He had funded that school immediately after being elected as Pickstock area representative in 2008 with \$200,000 Lord Michael Ashcroft handed him. We will be watching to see what his position is on Waterloo.

I am in possession of a copy of a check made out to Hubert Eric Elrington for \$10,000 on June 7, 2019 from Pickstock Development Association funds. Hubert is not from Sedi’s Pickstock constituency. He lives in Caribbean Shores. So this was a questionable transaction. If anyone asked, the story would have been that the check was for Hubert to supply plywood.

When I was appointed to the Senate by then Governor-General, the late Dame Minita Gordon, my term of office was from 1993 to 1998. The UDP’s Leader of Government

Business in the Senate during that period was Sedi Elrington.

In my speech on one of the budgets presented by Dr. Manuel Esquivel’s administration during that period, I brought up the matter of African and Mayan history, which I had been calling for from late 1969. Sedi’s reply was: “The people don’t want it.”

Well, no institution has done more than Kremandala to promote African and Mayan history, and no one has created more jobs in the old capital ghetto than Kremandala. Straight like that. Sedi is a multimillionaire who hoards his money: he does not create jobs. I don’t believe he is in a position to preach to anyone about the Afro-Belizean crisis in The Jewel.

I give respect to his personal success, but in Sedi Elrington’s case, I would say: talk is cheap.

FROM THE PUBLISHER en Español

Hubo un tiempo en que los beliceños afrodescendientes eran la clara mayoría en este 8.867. Esto fue bajo el dominio británico, y había mucha ley y orden en el asentamiento/colonia.

Desde que Belize logró la independencia política, la ley y el orden se han roto, los abogados defensores gobiernan y nuestra Joya se ha vuelto salvaje, especialmente por la noche y especialmente los fines de semana.

Wilfred “Sedi” Elrington fue ministro de Relaciones Exteriores en los gabinetes UDP de Dean Barrow desde febrero de 2008 hasta noviembre de 2020. Pero si leen sus columnas en THE REPORTER, es como si estuviera hablando de completos extraños cuando discute sus ex colegas del gabinete.

Esto es lo que el Sr. Elrington escribió el viernes: “Es evidentemente injusto, escandaloso, vergonzoso y deshonoroso que los políticos que son los sirvientes de esta misma gente, y sus parientes y compinches, se enriquezcan hasta el punto de convertirse en millonarios en solo unos cuantos períodos de cinco años en el cargo, mientras que los electores que los eligieron para el cargo y cuyos intereses juraron servir, se revuelcan en la pobreza y la miseria en refugios infernales durante más de cuarenta años continuos”.

Ese mismo viernes que se publicó el periódico, el hermano mayor de Sedi, Hubert, quien fue ministro del

Gabinete en los gobiernos UDP de 1984-1989 y 1993-1998, le dijo a Marisol Amaya de Radio KREM, aparentemente en referencia a los tres gobiernos UDP en los que Sedi sirvió de 2008 a 2020, “Son un montón de bandidos”.

Tanto Hubert como Sedi son abogados, y se debe respetar el éxito de la familia Elrington, porque no son beliceños morenos que se beneficiaron de ningún tipo de paternidad blanca. Como afrobeliceños, son el verdadero negocio, pero no me importa qué tipo de beliceño sea usted: si se está exonerando de los asuntos del Gabinete cuando estaba sentado en la misma mesa del Gabinete, entonces debe ser reprendido.

Antes de continuar, déjenme decirles que una fuente me dijo esta semana que Sedi había puesto el Instituto Samuel Haynes (esquina de las calles Mahogany y Oleander) en un fideicomiso, para que pudiera permanecer a cargo después de que el PUP le ganara al UDP en las urnas en 2020. Había financiado esa escuela inmediatamente después de ser elegido como representante de área de Pickstock en 2008 con \$200,000 que Lord Michael Ashcroft le entregó. Estaremos atentos para ver cuál es su posición sobre Waterloo.

Tengo en mi poder una copia de un cheque a nombre de Hubert Eric Elrington por \$10,000 el 7 de junio

➔ **Vea página 14**



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The “neocons” — Part 1



by Clinton Canul Luna

Permit me, our dear readers of this column, to present to you Part 1 of the following analysis which I find to be of much interest, posted on Youtube in Spanish by Diario Público under the heading “**Los ‘neocons’: ¿quienes son y que tienen que ver con las guerras recientes? - Inna Afinogenova**” (*The ‘neocons’: who are they and what do they have to do with recent wars? - Inna Afinogenova*) on July 29, 2022. It is as follows:

There is a movement that spans the last four decades of US administrations, regardless of the ruling party. An ideological current that has defined the country’s foreign policy with both Republicans and Democrats. The one that establishes, among other things, that the United States must maintain military predominance without anyone overshadowing them. Surely many of you have heard of the ‘neocons’. What you may not be so clear about is who we specifically refer to when we talk about the neocons and, above all, because they are so relevant. In this video we will talk about its founders, its disciples and their theses that have had a decisive importance in the construction of recent history. Before watching it, don’t forget to subscribe and activate the bell. Why have the neocons called our attention this time? Basically, because a week ago an article written by the American economist Jeffrey Sachs went viral in several languages in which he concludes that the war in Ukraine is the culmination of three decades of a neoconservative project. A risky and controversial conclusion in these times,

whose author can be branded pro-Russian before even being read.

Without delving too deeply into his biography, we will only clarify that if he has something pro-Russian, he has been hiding it very well throughout his career. He is a professor at Columbia University who has been an advisor to the UN on the millennium goals, included twice in *Times* magazine’s list of the world’s most influential people, and was also an economic advisor to the government of Boris Yeltsin in the Russia of the 90s, although it is not something that one could be very proud of, but, well, that is another topic. According to Sachs, the US, led by the neocons, is leading Europe into a new geopolitical disaster from which the ‘old continent’, if it were a little perceptive, should move away as soon as possible. Basically, he maintains that the current US administration is dominated by the same neoconservatives that promoted the so-called wars of choice in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Syria and Libya, which are the same ones that have been pushing Russia to invade Ukraine, and here I imagine that many will lie down hands to the head: but how can we remove the responsibility from Russia for the invasion?

Calm down, you can denounce this war and be clear about who started it and at the same time analyze the reasons that triggered it and those that have led us to where we are, which is with one foot on the edge of the abyss. According to Sachs, the US sought to break out the war in Ukraine to expand its hegemony, and Russia entered it partly to stop that advance and partly

for its own imperial pretensions, but what interests us in his analysis is the role played by neoconservatives in all of it. Let’s see. The origins of the neoconservative movement can be traced back to the 1970s, and in particular to two academics: University of Chicago political scientist Leo Strauss and Yale University historian Donald Kagan. His thesis is not complicated at all and can be reduced to the idea that the United States must exercise global, political and military dominance, and for this, it is worth everything to plant military bases on the planet, it will stop emerging powers and even start any war of choice that it considers necessary, and by war of choice they mean any war they choose to start without needing to be provoked by objective reasons beyond their own convenience as leader of the free world, even if those wars lead the rest of the world to not be so free, as usually ends up happening.

In the 1990s, the then US Secretary of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz, captured all these ideas in a document entitled “Defense Policy Guidance,” also known as the Gulf-Based Doctrine. At first it was a confidential document, but it was leaked to the American press, and from there we learned of the predominant role of the United States in the new world order [as part] of its objective of retaining its status as the only power of unilateralism, or in other words its *carte blanche* to move international organizations in their resolutions and preventive interventions.

The document also advised expanding US influence in Central Europe and Eastern Europe. In fact, already in April 2006, Robert Kagan, son of Donald Kagan, remember: one of the intellectual fathers of the neocon doctrine, explained in an article the advisability of incorporating Ukraine into NATO and the European Union as a way to achieve expansion of Western liberal hegemony. It may seem like the opinion of any individual, but at the same time his wife, Victoria Nuland, was the US ambassador to NATO under the George Bush administration. Nuland later became famous for her remembered “f**k the EU” in a leaked audio in the middle of the Maidan revolt while organizing the composition of what would have to be, in her opinion, the future government of Ukraine. At the same time, she was also handing out buns to protesters in central Kyiv. At that time she was already working for another administration, this time one of the Democratic Party. She was Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian affairs from 2013 to 2017 under the Obama administration.

(To Be Continued)
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 August 7, 2022
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 Corozal Town

Latin American lithium—a US concern

CLINTON CANUL LUNA

Permit me, our dear readers of this column, to share with you the following analysis which was presented by **Inna Afinogenova** in Spanish in a Youtube video dated July 22, 2022 under the heading, “**El litio latinoamericano ‘preocupa’ a EE.UU. ¿Por qué y qué esperar?**”

What is the main wealth of Latin America? Its people, its biodiversity, the mountains, the birds, the culture. Yes, yes, all of that, but also what the Chief of the US Southern Command, Laura Richardson, says, “This region is so rich in resources, rare earth minerals—lithium, the lithium triangles in this region. There are a lot of things that this region has to offer...”. I’m sure she’s going to say something about democracies: “But I get to see what our competitors are doing, and I see that it is a threat to democracy. I think they are playing chess. Russia is also present in this region, and I think they are playing checkers. I think they are there to undermine the United States. They are there to undermine democracies. But we need to have a strategy. We can’t just be here and there. We have a lot of

important elections coming up or just happened, and we have to continue to stay engaged and concerned in this region so...”

If I have understood correctly, in Latin America there is a lot of lithium, many resources, but at the same time there are external actors who want to undermine democracy, and that is why the US needs a special strategy and to keep an eye on those countries. What does that speech sound like to me? I don’t know, no idea. Let’s keep going. The moment for this declaration could not be more suitable. The price of lithium increased by more than 400 percent last year and remains there. Bolivia has the largest lithium reserves in the world, with more than 21 million tons concentrated mainly in the Salar de Uyuni area. Bolivia is followed by Argentina and Chile, so that between the 3 countries they make up the so-called lithium triangle that represents more than 60 percent of all the proven reserves of this element on the planet, and, moreover, Peru and Mexico add another 3 million tons, and it is estimated that in Mexico it is greater than what we currently take as a reference.

But why does this mineral attract

so much to the big capitals? Go to the head of the Southern Command of the United States, because it is already called “white gold” or “white oil”. Well, it turns out that lithium is essential to produce batteries for mobile phones, solar panels, electric cars. Those batteries will enable the world to wean itself off fossil fuels and move to cleaner energy. Tech companies led by Tesla are desperate to secure a stable supply of lithium for their batteries. Demand is so high that the World Bank estimates that lithium production will need to increase 500 percent by 2050 to meet it. Faced with this lithium BOOM that is coming, some Latin American governments are betting on a greater participation of the state in the exploitation of that mineral. Last April, the Mexican Senate approved a reform to the mining law that allowed the nationalization of lithium, so that private industry will not be able to participate in the market for this element. “It has already been decided that lithium is going to be exploited for the benefit of Mexicans, for Mexicans. In addition, I advance, we are going to create a company from Mexico, from the nation, for lithium...” [Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador declared]

It is curious that at the same time that the Southern Command expressed its concerns about democracy in the region and about Chinese participation in some lithium exploitation projects, the large media outlets warned that Mexico does not have any capacity to extract lithium on its own. No, no, no. Apparently, this can only be done with private companies and only with their technologies. Curiously, there are already a few articles and experts who talk about the same thing. If it is not with private means, it is not possible. “It’s a bit like what happened when the oil expropriation was condemned by the foreign companies saying that we weren’t going to be able to move the oil industry forward and that we were going to go look for them because we’re not going to have the technology and the oil workers, the technicians, the Mexican oil tankers got ahead. Learn. They don’t say anything, but they know very well what lithium means...” [said Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador].

They know very well what lithium means. They also know it in Bolivia, where lithium was nationalized in 2008. The volume of reserves in Bolivia is

Please turn to **Page 14**

40 years ends statute of limitations on public secrets

by Colin Hyde

I saw the news about public road signs and essential temporary speed bumps being stolen, and I'm daam sure it's not UDP people at the bottom of those dishonest deeds that could cause big problems for drivers, and will add expenditure to the already strained budget of our Ministry of Infrastructure Development & Housing. It's dirty political activity alright, but it's not the kind of thing members of the Red family would do. That UDP crowd most disappointingly picked up on many terrible PUP criminalities, graft and nepotism and such, but re: the low scraping-the-barrel activities being reported, the robbery of small public property, I say that's still 100% Blue behavior.

Bah, I remember the PUP made Miss Emma get really hot after a municipal election in Belize City, the one that saw Lady Zenaida emerge as that city's first female mayor. Miss Emma is one of our nicest people, but she can get angry when people do wrong to our country. Our PSWG really made a great choice when he asked her to be by his side in the battle to save Belize.

I was fortunate to get the welcome mat from Miss Emma, to visit on occasion for a little chat or a brush-

up on unpublished history, and one day when I stopped by she wasn't in a good mood. When I asked Miss Emma why she wasn't happy, she asked me if I had noticed the amount of garbage piling up on the street side when I was coming by her. I told her yes. It's the PUP, she said. She said the PUP scoundrels were saving their garbage until after the sanitation trucks passed, and then they came out in their droves and dumped their waste on the street side. Despite being in possession of some damning dirt about PUP modus operandi, I was still surprised by this low, unhealthy business. It's only for the statutes thing why I didn't out what I knew to Miss Emma. You bet I was eeching to.

It's the law that you have to be silent forever on private things told you in confidence, and for public things you got in confidence you have to wait 40 years. Four or so decades ago, a young PUP operative told me — if you're the innocent type you won't believe this — that whenever they needed money they went out in the night and defaced public signs. Then those wicked PUP boys went to the Ministry of Works and got jobs to repaint them. Hmm, these daam PUP, I hear they have a song titled, "Cut me een or cut it out". Well, I am cutting out, before I get into trouble with them.

Mainland China "personal" with Taiwan

Ever since I learned that the Chinese taught hygiene to the Europeans, they've had a special place with me. Of all the advances of human beings, bathing regularly is number one. I bet you've heard the saying, *Cleanliness is next to Godliness!* I have great difficulty watching these old European movies which feature their royal types. No matter how they have the heroines all dolled up, I know that in that era the Chinese hadn't yet taught them to bathe. While others are titillated by these movies, I cringe because I know if the ladies smell sweet it's all perfume, and no soap.

Ugh, the Chinese have done a lot of things to erode their points, like eating dogs and cats, and trying to eat out all the fish, and this belligerence on their part with Taiwan is threatening to wipe away all their gains, relegate them to the ranks of the boors. Understandably, Mainland China would want to have more influence in Taiwan than the Americans; well, it's Chinese aggression that is pushing Taiwan into the bosom of Abraham, Lincoln.

I respect, admire Chairman Mao and the communists, even though the primary school books taught me to only respect and admire General Chiang Kai-shek and the nationalists/capitalists. It is good to understand the past before deciding on the present and the path for the future, and a few excerpts from the piece, "The Chinese Revolution of 1949", from the US's "Office of the Historian", at the website history.state.gov, should help.

"The Chinese Communist Party, founded in 1921 in Shanghai, originally existed as a study group working within the confines of the First United Front with the Nationalist Party. Chinese Communists joined with the Nationalist Army in the Northern Expedition of 1926–27 to rid the nation of the warlords that prevented the formation of a strong central government. This collaboration lasted until the 'White Terror' of 1927, when the Nationalists turned on the Communists, killing them or purging them from the party."

An invasion from Japan followed, in 1931, and the two groups weren't together in addressing it. The popularity of the communists increased during WWII. The US supported the Nationalist Government of Chiang Kai-shek. Chiang and Mao tried at forming an alliance after the war, but it didn't work. By 1946 China was in an all-out civil war, and "in October of 1949, after a string of military victories, Mao Zedong proclaimed the establishment of the PRC; Chiang and his forces fled to Taiwan to regroup and plan for their efforts to retake the mainland."

Today, 2022, the communist victory

in Mainland China is complete. All that Island Taiwan aspires for now is to stay out of Mainland China's bed. I'm watching the war games the Chinese are putting on because Ms. Pelosi visited. They have a special beef with her because she visited Tiananmen Square a couple years after the Chinese government got rough with pro-democracy elements, and while there she and her crowd unfurled a banner in honor of those who were slain or wounded.

The Americans are crazy to be trying to promote democracy in China. In the US they have trouble handling 300 million people, while China has a population 5 times that. Mainland China can't seriously be afraid that Island Taiwan will export democracy to their people. If democracy is their worry, their eyes should be on Japan, South Korea, and The Philippines.

Bah, the real deal is that Mainland China's business with Taiwan is mostly personal. And their war games make them look like rotten bullies.

Some cases should be private business

The recent case between an actress, Amber Heard, and a famous movie actor named Johnny Depp, I don't know why all that was played out in public. It's bad enough for people to be having issues; there's no reason to make the world know all the explicit details of lives gone wrong. The reason I know things is because I get Yahoo News, and that private matter is on front page, in bold, so I can't escape.

I think it's sick, uncivilized of the courts to turn people's private lives into public theater. Depp and Heard did nothing to you and me. If they want to bring their dirty linen for washing out here, only then should we be allowed to feed our appetites for ugly things.

Staying with business from foreign that should be private, I don't know why Jane Fonda doesn't rest herself. It's embarrassing to hear octogenarians giving sex lessons when properly they should be talking about their latest doily. And Fonda was never a sex symbol. As movie girls go, I don't think many dreamt of her slipping out of her clothes. I rate her just a little higher than Sissy Spacek. Okay, we all have our preferences.

Somebody has to explain the simple facts of life to these Americans. If you've lived anything close to a Christian life, you'll have your share of regrets when you grow old. Get over it, dear.

Sedi — after 13 years firing blanks, now we get buckshot

Aha, this is a story that'll have to wait until Friday.

STATUTORY NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE ESTATE of GERALDINE ROSALIND HARRIS deceased of 5532 Corner Leslie Street and Meighan Avenue, King's Park Area, Belize City, Belize.

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to Section 36 of the Administration of Estates Act, Chapter 197 of the Laws of Belize that all creditors and other persons having any claims and demands upon or against the Estate of GERALDINE ROSALIND HARRIS, deceased, late of 5532 Corner Leslie Street and Meighan Avenue, King's Park Area, Belize City, Belize, who died on the 17th day of December, 2021 and in whose estate Grant of Probate has been granted to ELAINE ADELIA JENKINS of 5532 Cor. Leslie Street and Meighan Avenue, King's Park Area, Belize City, Belize, should lodge claims or demands with the said GERALDINE ROSALIND HARRIS c/o Balderamos Arthurs LLP, Charter House, Suite 6, 3 ½ Miles Philip Goldson Highway, P.O. Box 486, Belize City, Belize on or before the expiration of three months from the first publication hereof AND NOTICE IS ALSO HEREBY GIVEN that at the expiration of the said three months the said GERALDINE ROSALIND HARRIS shall proceed to distribute the assets of the said GERALDINE ROSALIND HARRIS, deceased, amongst the beneficiaries entitled thereto, having regard only to claims and demands of which she shall then have had notice.

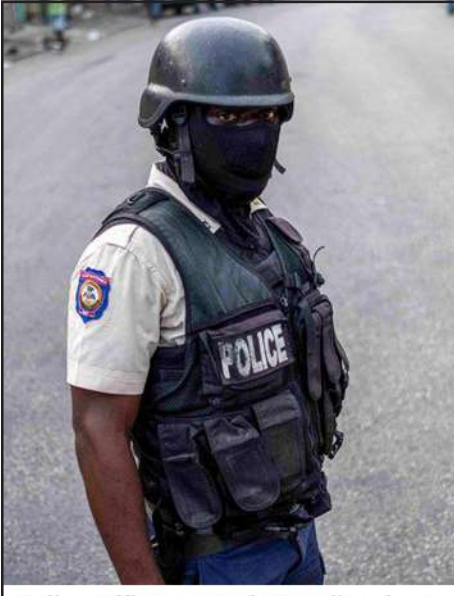
DATED this 25th day of July, 2022



BALDERAMOS ARTHURS LLP
Attorneys-at-Law for the Estate of
GERALDINE ROSALIND HARRIS

Our email address for business & advertising is
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It's like a warzone - Haitians surrounded by turf wars



Police officers are demanding better equipment to combat the gangs

by *Efrem Gebreab* BBC News in London & Harold Isaac in Port-au-Prince

Packed with close to 400 parishioners, Sunday mass on 24 July was like any other at the Assembly of God on the outskirts of Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, Pastor Samuel Lucien says.

Warning: This article contains descriptions from the beginning which some readers may find upsetting.

All until, just after midday, a group of balaclava-wearing armed men entered the church and killed Police Inspector Réginald Laleau.

The 45-year-old led a unit which regularly patrols territory controlled by one of the capital's most feared gangs, called 400 Mawozo.

"I tried to seek cover but there were so many bullets, such heavy fire. I've never heard anything like it before in my life. It was like a warzone," recalls Pastor Lucien.

After murdering Inspector Laleau, the gunmen left the church, taking his body with them.

Later that evening, 400 Mawozo shared a video showing the gang's leader next to Laleau's tortured body, threatening to kill everyone in his policing unit.

National Energy Policy to be revised

Continued from Page 2

do we modernize—how do we move forward the energy sector into the next ten years. And, of course, my recommendation is to review every quarter, every two and a half years, so that we are able to adjust," he said.

The revision of the National Energy Policy is expected to come with a shift in focus to renewable sources of energy, which, according to Urbina, will allow a reduction in the cost of power and will allow the country's energy sector to become more self-sustainable. It will also help the Government to meet the international agreements signed regarding the reduction of carbon emissions and pollution in the environment.

Outgunned

Even before 400 Mawozo had posted its gruesome warning, police officers knew they had become targets.

"It hurts us to see how they are treating police officers, how they are killing policemen," says Lionel Lazzarre, head of the police union.

Outmanned and outgunned by the well-armed gangs, officers, who earn less than \$100 (£82) a month on average, are demanding the government do more to back them up.

"We need more support and more equipment urgently," insists Mr Lazzarre. "We urgently need the government to make this their priority."

While Mr Lazzarre says he still believes that the Haitian police can solve the current security crisis, murders like that of Inspector Laleau are a brutal sign of the control that gangs now exert in Haiti's capital.

Ghost town

An estimated 60% of Port-au-Prince is now classed as "lawless" by human rights groups.

The city, similar in size to sprawling Los Angeles, has been paralyzed by a battle for power and territory between dozens of gangs.

Once buzzing with nightlife, the city centre now looks and feels like a ghost town. The shops are shut and many

residents have abandoned their homes out of fear of being caught in the crossfire.

On the outskirts, huge swathes of the community are living hand to mouth, without electricity or access to clean water.

Bloody July

While gang related violence had been on the rise since **the assassination in July 2021 of President Jovenel Moïse** by mercenaries, it has reached shocking new levels in recent weeks.

The BBC has mapped five major incidents which illustrate the levels of violence residents faced all in the space of one month this year.

8 July: A 10-day long turf war erupted between the G9 and G-Pèp gangs in the residential neighbourhood of Cité Soleil. According to UN figures, 209 people died, of which 114 were gang members. More than 3,000 residents were forced to flee their homes.

24 July: The killing of Police Inspector Réginald Laleau during Sunday Mass. His death has taken the number of officers killed in the first six months of 2022 to more than 30.

26 July: A brutal kidnapping by armed men in balaclavas is captured on CCTV. Locals can be seen running from the scene which took place right outside a school in which more than 300

displaced children and adults were sheltering from the ongoing turf war in Cité Soleil.

27 July: G9 launch an assault on G-Pèp in Port-au-Prince's city centre, close to the presidential palace. **A turf war over the Bel Air neighbourhood ensues.**

27 July: During the turf war, the city's temporary cathedral is set ablaze. The original cathedral was destroyed in 2010 during an earthquake.

A city wracked by violence

The BBC has also mapped which gangs control which parts of the city, as of July 2022.

Relentless turf wars between the groups mean many of the boundaries are in constant flux.

The G9, an alliance made up of nine gangs, controls the city's major coastal ports and oil terminals, giving it a stranglehold over much of the city's economy. It may not be the gang to command the most territory, but it arguably is the one with the biggest economic power.

Led by former police officer Jimmy "Barbecue" Chérisier, the G9 is notorious for seizing lorries transporting goods and extorting businesses.

US officials allege that Barbecue and the G9 were behind a brutal massacre in 2018, in which at least 71 people were killed in the La Saline neighbourhood of the capital.

The gang which commands the biggest swathe of territory is 400 Mawozo.

Last year, it became infamous for **kidnapping 17 North American missionaries**, including children.

The influence of 400 Mawozo is not limited to the capital either. It controls the road to the Haiti's border with the Dominican Republic as well as access to the north of the country.

Access to Haiti's south is in the hands of 5 Segonn (5 Seconds), a gang which has boasted on social media of seizing entire buses full of people travelling out of Port-au-Prince.

A community in shock

Since the murder of Inspector Laleau, no church service has been held in the Assembly of God.

Pastor Lucien says the community is still in shock: "People are still too scared to attend church."

"Everybody knows the risks, that something could happen," he says. "But we never imagined it would happen in a church, let alone our church."

"I believe Haiti must and can change."

- First published by BBC Latin America

Proceedings against Sharon Pitts conclude..

Continued from Page 2

no evidence here today, so I feel very confident that this was only throwing dirt at Ms. Pitts," he said.

Elrington further asserted that Pitts behaved with "rectitude and honesty from the very beginning to the very end."

During a Friday afternoon interview following the proceedings, he said, "In my view, the claimant, the Attorney General, had to prove certain facts, and he fell far short of proving the facts."

He went on to refer to members of the previous UDP administration, who he said brought this lawsuit against Pitts just to "throw dirt" on his client's name, as "a bunch of crooks."

According to a senior lands officer, however, Pitts had foreknowledge that the land was owned and went ahead with the purchase. Jerrett Gutierrez testified that a letter informing Pitts that the land was owned was sent by the Minister at the time — but Pitts has denied ever receiving such a letter.

"The trial judge said to the surveyor, 'Would you say that you have abdicated your responsibility in that you had not found out the truth? So you can advise your client what the truth was, and he said 'No, I had not abdicated my responsibility. I had been told by the landowner that they would go and make sure themselves. They were not even going to depend on me to go and make sure; they themselves were going to make sure, and they came back themselves and said the land is available; see it here, Ms. Pitts, we can give it to you.' That's the case." Elrington argued.

In addition to his claim that the UDP had brought the lawsuit in an attempt to besmirch Pitts' reputation, Elrington further remarked, in regard to the UDP, "You should not, especially the UDP, for all that Pitts has done for them, they should not be quick to try and destroy or damage her reputation, but that's their nature, nuh..."

He then added, "I am saying that they are a bunch of crooks is what I'm saying. You can't say it more than me, because I was there; I was there with them, and I will say it."

In 2016, the AMANDALA had received leaked documents from the Department of Lands which revealed that Vega and Pitts had received privately-owned land at Mile 5 on the Philip Goldson Highway, near the Haulover Bridge, and the newspaper had gone public with that story. A subsequent AMANDALA article had noted something else that had been revealed in the documents — "that on at least two occasions, public officers pointed out to higher-ups in the Ministry that the said land was already privately owned, and in fact, the Lands Commissioner had given instructions to revoke Pitts' permission to survey the land."

Pitts subsequently received her title, and a title for an adjoining parcel of land (1,124 acres) was sold to Gaspar Vega's campaign manager, Hilmar Alamilla (who is now jailed on a charge of murder) at a reported price of \$2,500. Alamilla then sold his parcel to Vega's son, Andre Vega, for \$15,000.

The Government of Belize then had to re-repurchase these privately-owned plots of land from Vega and Pitts at a price of \$400,000 each.

Fatal RTA in Cotton Tree

Continued from Page 3

Pop received severe head and body injuries and reportedly died on the spot before his body was transported to the morgue. Bol was transported to the Western Regional Hospital for medical treatment.

Police have not yet issued a report to indicate whether Bol was given a notice of intended prosecution, but reports are that a blood sample was taken from him while he was at the hospital.



Griga Conquerors are National Bank of Belize Amateur Interdistrict Champions 2022

BELIZE CITY, Mon. Aug. 8, 2022

Reminiscent of their dominance in Interdistrict football with Queenspark Rangers of the 1960s and Stann Creek Selection of the 1970s, the Stann Creek District's Griga Conquerors FC emerged as National Bank of Belize Interdistrict Champions (NBBAIC) 2022 on Saturday, August 6, at the FFB Stadium where they prevailed, 3-1, in the championship match against Atletico FC of Belmopan.

A good turnout of fans braved intermittent showers in a match dominated by the aggressive attacking play of Griga Conquerors who were led by two national team veterans, Harrison "Cafu" Roches in the forward line, and Evan Mariano anchoring the defense. Cafu slammed in the first goal off a centering pass at the 36th minute, and young midfielder Curtis Valerio (47' & 67') added two more to make it a commanding 3-nil lead, before Atletico's Sean Caliz' (90+)' goal in injury time avoided the shutout. The game was shown live on TNC 10.

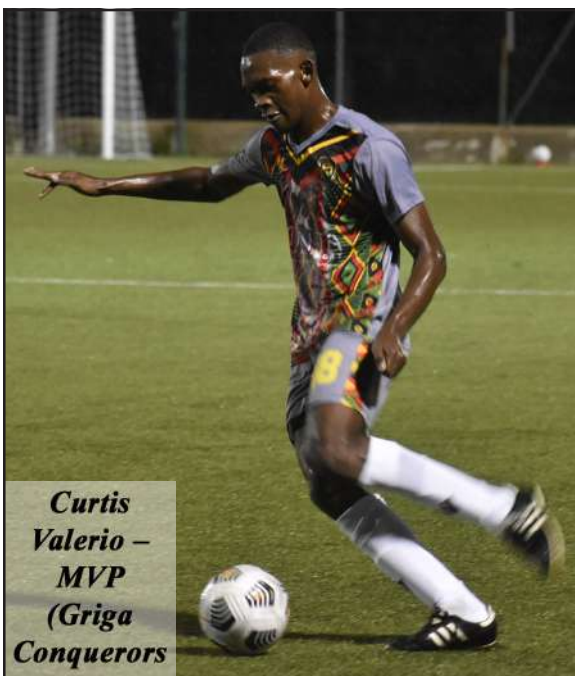
Congratulations to NBBAIC 2022 Champions, Griga Conquerors FC; and Sub-Champions, Atletico FC.

In the trophy ceremony following the match, individual awards for the tournament were also announced.

Individual Awards: Best Coach – Kareem Haylock (Griga Conquerors); Fair Play Award – Progreso FC; Best



Griga Conquerors FC – NBBA Interdistrict Champions 2022



Curtis Valerio – MVP (Griga Conquerors)



Atletico FC – NBBA Interdistrict Sub-Champions 2022

Goalkeeper – Ryan Saravia (Griga Conquerors); Best Defense – Evan Mariano (Griga Conquerors); Most

Goals – Wilfredo Galvez (Atletico FC); MVP – Curtis Valerio (Griga Conquerors); Best Forward –

Harrison Roches (Griga Conquerors); and Best Midfielder – Clint Logan (Griga Conquerors).



Wilfredo Galvez – Most Goals (Atletico FC)

Verdes advances to Concacaf League Round of 16, hosts Alianza on August 17

BELIZE CITY, Sun. Aug. 7, 2022

A Concacaf release on Friday, August 5, provides the home-and-away schedule for the Round of 16 in the 2022 Scotiabank Concacaf League (SCL).

Belize's national champs, Verdes FC survived their

Preliminary Round series against Platense FC of El Salvador in recording two draws, 0-0 at home at the FFB Stadium and 2-2 at the Estadio Cuscatlan in San Salvador, by virtue of the away-goal rule.

Though fielding a majority of foreign based players to start each match, Verdes FC has made a major step for Belize after a couple decades of

disappointment, being the first Belize club in the new millennium to play successfully through a round of Concacaf competition. Coke Milpros FC did it with an all-Belizean lineup in 1989; and Juventus FC had one, maybe two foreigners when they advanced in the latter 1990s (1997?).

Who's JR Smith?

Continued from ▶ Page 6

position fast forward 10 years later," Smith expressed.

He went on to say that the decision to close the organization he had founded, where he and other Canadian army veterans gathered to help each other in a healing process, is what led to his move from Canada to Belize, where he was planning on building a similar facility. He expressed a feeling of betrayal by his home country.

When asked if he was diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), he said, "I was diagnosed more or less, because I did not have remorse, how I felt when I had to take lives. There's just a big difference between going and hurting the innocent; in our case we fought Medusa ... it was simple, black and white," Smith said.

He said that in the past he had battled with depression, but said that he did not believe that he was still afflicted with the mental condition—further noting that the night terrors he experienced were linked to recollections of friends who committed suicide. Smith, who retired from the Canadian Army ten years ago, further revealed during the interview that he has also had bouts of addiction, and acknowledged battling an addiction to cocaine. This YouTube

interview was dated March 2022, approximately 6 months ago—just before he left for Belize.

When asked if he had thoughts of healing, Smith replied, "constantly, always trying."

He was asked if he struggles with anger management, and replied, "I'll always get anger. It will always be a part of me, it's my strongest emotion, it's easy to resort to anger. It's intense, you know. That violence can get you in a lot of trouble. You're out of control of the repercussions, so the anger can be your enemy."

The retired Master Corporal served during 2 tours in Afghanistan and during Operation Medusa, during which 12 of his comrades were killed and 40 wounded, and which is further linked to 70 suicides committed by soldiers who were involved in that op.

Coconut Outpost, a non-profit organization that has directed veterans to Belize as a vacation destination, hosted Smith for a short stay at their facilities, they said.

"We have heard about the shootings and do not condone this type of activity. Our hearts are saddened over the needless loss of life and our thoughts and prayers go out to the families of the deceased and injured," the organization stated.

GoB launches National Roadshow to support micro, small...

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as the Social Security Board, Belize Tax Services, BELIPO, the Belize Companies and Corporate Affairs Registry, and numerous financial institutions.

According to CEO in the Office of the Prime Minister, Narda Garcia, in addition to featuring pop-up shops that showcase a variety of Belizean businesses and their products, the roadshow will include a number of activities, including an MSME Bootcamp (which will provide business development training) and MSME Town Hall meetings.

The first stop of the Roadshow will be the Corozal District, from August 24-26. A launch ceremony was held at the Belize Best Western Biltmore Plaza and featured a keynote address by Prime Minister Hon. John Briceño as well as a speech by the Minister of Tourism, Hon. Anthony Mahler. It additionally featured a panel discussion on access to finance and had the participation of representatives from the Development Finance Corporation, Central Bank of

Belize, the Belize Credit Union League, and the National Bank of Belize.

Guest speaker at the launch ceremony was business owner Sheena Smith, founder of the skin care enterprise Nari Self Care. Smith shared the story of her journey into entrepreneurship, explaining how she started on her kitchen table, creating skin care products as a form of respite from the stresses of her day job. She also touched on the struggle of operating a small business during a pandemic, something which most, if not all, entrepreneurs in the country have had to contend with.

During his keynote address, the Prime Minister acknowledged the fact that MSMEs continue to face many economic challenges, especially those brought on by COVID-19.

"To combat these challenges, we must work together, to provide the enabling environment so that MSMEs can innovate and so that they can pivot where necessary to meet the needs of an ever transitioning Belize," he said.

Father charged with grievous harm

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the child had choked while being fed, but an autopsy report revealed soon after that baby Thevane had died from multiple skull fractures and head trauma consistent with Battered Child Syndrome.

Banner pleaded not guilty to the charge and was offered bail of \$10,000 plus a surety of the same amount, which he was able to meet.

Before being charged, he had accused the nurses at the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital of causing the two-

month-old's death, claiming that they gave him too much adrenaline and that they were trying to make it appear as if he had abused his child.

Also in June of that year, Banner's ex-common-law wife came forward to accuse him of child abuse as well, noting that, seven years before, her child had suffered bruises and a fractured skull—similar to that of baby Thevane—after being in Banner's care.

According to ASP Aban, the police will be looking into Banner's "pattern of behavior" and his history of abuse.

Latin American lithium...

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not comparable to that of any other country, so the mineral has already been the cause of a few controversies, to put it mildly. The country's former president, Evo Morales, maintains that the coup against his government in 2019 was mainly due to lithium. "Humanity's struggle is always for natural resources. Of the peoples under the administration of their state or of private (interests) under the plunder of the transnationals. And the transnationals, as the owner of Tesla, from the United States, confesses, because where the peoples are owners, there they prepare military bases, military interventions or coups d'état..." And it might have sounded implausible if it weren't for a tweet from him, in which he answered a user who reproached him for the overthrow of Evo Morales on the issue of lithium. He said that the US would carry out coups in any country it wanted and that they accept it once and for all, and nothing that was not true. On the other hand, or anything that we all didn't know for decades, the tweet had such an impact that it was removed by its author or by his advisers. You can't know, but the newspaper archives and hackers keep everything.

Bolivia is currently working on establishing an alliance with foreign companies for the industrialization of

its lithium, mainly from China but also from Russia, the US and Argentina. In Chile, known as the neoliberal oasis of Latin America, it has traditionally been private companies that have extracted the mineral for export. Something that the recently inaugurated president Gabriel Boric branded as a historic mistake during his electoral campaign, promising to create a national lithium company. Since a few years ago, several international magazines such as *Forbes* or *Fortune* coined the concept of the lithium triangle in reference to Chile, Argentina and Bolivia. Some Latin American leaders have come to suggest the creation of a supranational body that brings together the countries by largest reserves. A kind of OPEC of lithium, and although this hypothetical union has not yet materialized, there are more and more voices that insist that lithium cannot remain in private hands. So remember those statements from the US Southern Command with which we began the video. Go up to the eccentric tweets of the masses and stay tuned. It is not that the democracies in the Triangle Zone begin to falter, and we see a resurgence of the color revolutions in another zone of the planet.

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July 31, 2022

Finca Solana

Corozal Town

FROM THE PUBLISHER en Español

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de 2019 de los fondos de la Asociación de Desarrollo de Pickstock. Hubert no pertenece al distrito electoral Pickstock de Sedi. Vive en Caribbean Shores. Así que esta fue una transacción cuestionable. Si alguien preguntaba, la historia habría sido que el cheque era para que Hubert suministrara madera contrachapada.

Cuando fui nombrado para el Senado por la entonces gobernadora general, la difunta Dama Minita Gordon, mi mandato fue de 1993 a 1998. El líder de Asuntos Gubernamentales del UDP en el Senado durante ese período fue Sedi Elrington.

En mi discurso sobre uno de los

presupuestos presentados por la administración del Dr. Manuel Esquivel en ese período, saqué a colación el tema de la historia africana y maya, que venía reclamando desde fines de 1969. La respuesta de Sedi fue: "El pueblo no lo quiere."

Bueno, ninguna institución ha hecho más que Kremandala para promover la historia africana y maya, y nadie ha creado más puestos de trabajo en el gueto de la antigua capital que Kremandala. Así de directo. Sedi es un multimillonario que amasa su dinero: no crea puestos de trabajo. No creo que esté en condiciones de predicarle a nadie sobre la crisis afrobeliceña en La joya.

Respeto su éxito personal, pero en el caso de Sedi Elrington, diría: hablar es barato.

Verdes advances to Concacaf League Round of 16...

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The caliber of opponent gets higher as the competition progresses. As the Concacaf release explains, "Six Preliminary Round winners have advanced to the second round, joining the 10 best ranked seeded clubs." And, "The eight matchups, between the six Preliminary Round winners and 10 clubs

seeded into the second round, will take place August 16-18 (first legs) and August 23-25 (second legs)."

In the upcoming Round of 16, Verdes FC will again host the first leg, this time against El Salvador's national champions, Alianza FC, and that match will be at the FFB Stadium on Wednesday, August 17, kickoff time 8:00 p.m.

Vulcan Materials Co. creeping into Belize?

The company, which is the largest producer of construction aggregates in the United States, has recently been booted from its Playa Del Carmen mines after the Mexican government shut down operations within two of their locations, citing effects on the local environment and water table. The company has opted to sue the Mexican government for \$1.5 billion. In Belize, Deputy Prime Minister, Hon. Cordel Hyde has rejected the company's overtures.

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Resources, Petroleum and Mining, Hon. Cordel Hyde, told local media that the company's proposal is a "no-go".

"The residents from Gales Point Manatee have made it absolutely clear to the government, that they don't want that kind of activity in their neck of the woods, absolutely clear for the longest time—at least I can remember since we've been in government, and I can imagine it even from before, they've been clamoring and making that statement, and if we're a government of the people, by the people, for the people, then we have to listen to our people, so that's a no-go for us really," Hon. Hyde told local media.

We've been informed that the company is seeking environmental clearance for mining operations that, according to Boles, could potentially disrupt local hydrological systems in the Southern Lagoon and threaten flora and fauna in the area. This Alabama-based company has been in a long-standing dispute with the Mexican government over its method of extracting limestone—methods that President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador says amount to "ecological catastrophe."

They have since been ordered to stop their mining operation in two locations in Quintana Roo, Mexico, and have subsequently brought a lawsuit against the Mexican government for \$1.5 billion. (We understand that this is just one of a number of lawsuits the company has brought against the Mexican government.)

The company, which is operating in Belize under the name, "The White Ridge Project", has said that they are in the process of exploring the geologic and economic feasibility of embarking on a mining operation in Belize. But by all indications, it seems that they already have their sights set on the Sugar Hill limestone formation located at the White Ridge Farm. Reports are that the company has been operating in Belize under the

name Caracol Holdings Limited and received an exploration license as far back as 2019 to search for limestone in the country. They are now planning a trip to Belize, during which they plan to conduct information sessions seemingly geared at securing the buy-in of the residents of Gales Point, a community already affected by and battling the effects of erosion.

Despite DPM Hyde's apparent stance in support of the community's opposition to the proposed mining operation, the company's VP of External Affairs and Corporate Communication, Janet Kavinoky, says the company wants to start a dialogue. They are looking for an opportunity to convince the government and the community that their project is environmentally and socially feasible.

"There is a process by which Belize and the government offer companies to go through where we say we want to go through that process. We want to ask and answer any question. We want people in the community, people with interest to ask and answer questions," Kavinoky told 7News' Jules Vasquez in a recent interview.

The company has a long history of contentious litigation over its operation within areas of the United States and now in Mexico. Boles fears that Belize could fall into its corporate web and be subject to destructive practices and lawsuits of crippling proportions if the company is allowed to operate within the country.

Among some of the glaring environmental concerns listed in the study, is the fact that the company intends to blast and pulverize the limestone material and use a conveyor bridge to carry the material to waiting cargo ships in a dredged-out center on the inner channel behind the Barrier Reef. This would involve transporting such material over both land and sea. His study says that the government has banned strip mining in the area, but the company wants to push forward and get environmental clearance to start work in Belize.

"Belize has increased in importance to Vulcan because the Mexican Government shut down the Calica

Mine on May 5, 2022, due to the extensive amount of environmental damage the mining operation was causing. In response, Vulcan has a lawsuit against the Mexican Government for \$1.5 billion USD, and the International Center for Investment Disputes shall be issuing a decision," Dr. Boles stated.

As mentioned, the Mexican government cited concerns over the impact of limestone extraction on the local environment and water table and called Vulcan's method "destructive". "What is very clear is that we're not permitting any more extraction of the material," President Obrador Lopez said in a press conference in late May, and he added that the operations will remain suspended until the parties agree on what to do with the site.

The US-based company has operated through the Calica unit in Mexico and has several concessions in Quintana Roo that have enabled it to crush limestone in mines in that area and ship it to the United States. The area, which occupies around 10,400 acres, resembles a wasteland, and the Mexican president has threatened to submit a complaint to the United Nations about the destruction of the area, but later toned down his remarks.

The company's website for the White Ridge Project says that they are looking into creating an "environmentally and socially sustainable limestone quarry," but Boles's report highlights, for example, that methods such as strip mining—which involves removing the top foliage and soil of an area to expose the limestone deposit—are the most commonly used and oftentimes cause permanent destruction. This method renders the area a wasteland before making pockets of sinkholes, from which the limestone is extracted. Kavinoky has since said that the company does not intend to carry out a strip mining operation but will instead do aggregate quarrying.

In terms of how limestone mining

can affect ground water, the report states, "Limestone mining has significant effects on groundwater resources, through the removal of the aquifer deposit or a large part of that deposit. As limestone mining progresses, there is less water storage space available, the intricate structure of the aquifer is destroyed, and eventually, the water table is left exposed, becoming a surface water body."

Boles is calling on Belizeans to urge the government to not sign any agreement with the company, known for its strong-arm legal approach and destructive practices.

"I think that this would probably hurt our reputation in the world as a country that is putting our natural resources on high priority. Allowing these kinds of development to come into the country is really counter to many of the projects that have been done so far to conserve those resources," he said.

Dr. Boles added, "We can't replace the ecological services that ecosystems provide us and that includes all of the organisms living in the ecosystem that are providing the nurturant and other resources that keep life viable on earth, and a healthy civilization requires a healthy ecosystem. I think that there is growing support amount Belizeans to not accept these kinds of development schemes...I think we are beginning to understand that we need to be very careful of the kinds of development that we engage with and select those development strategies that best fit our small country that focus on conserving the incredibly rich natural resources that we have, those resources that really define us."

Vulcan Materials Company is located at 1200 Urban Center Dr., Birmingham, Alabama, and is currently headed by J. Thomas Hill, Chairman of the Board. As mentioned, the company is the largest supplier of construction aggregates across the United States.

Ladyville bar owner shot dead...

Continued from Page 1

assisting her in closing her establishment, and while they were standing at the back of the property, a young man entered through a side gate, approached Acevedo, and demanded that she pass over her belongings—presumably her money and jewelry—to him.

Moments later, the robber pulled out a firearm and fired a single shot at point blank range at Acevedo, which seemingly killed her on the spot. The robber then quickly took whatever valuables Acevedo had in her possession and fled.

Over the weekend, Commissioner of Police, Chester Williams, informed

members of the local media that a suspect was taken into custody by police in connection with the death of Vanessa Acevedo and is awaiting charges.

On Monday, during the weekly police press briefing, ASP Alfonso Aban, Officer Commanding the Crime Investigating Branch (CIB), told local reporters that a 17-year-old minor from the Stann Creek District was charged in the presence of his mother for murder. Acevedo's belongings were later recovered in an area where her attacker fled.

ASP Aban further informed reporters that they are seeking a second assailant in connection with this crime.

Soldier's death sparks discussion on abuse/ misconduct within BDF

Continued from Page 1

individuals have attempted to sound the alarm on the toxic environment that has been reported to exist within the Belize Defence Force.

In January of 2020, following allegations of sexual violence and misconduct in the BDF, a petition calling for transparency within the Belize Defence Force was launched. The goal was to reach a mere 7,500 signatures. At present, two years later, only a total of 5,032 persons have signed.

A similar petition was launched in that same year by retired BDF captain Derricia Castillo-Salazar. The purpose of her petition was to urge the Human Rights Commission of Belize to

conduct a full investigation into "human rights violations" in the military.

"Numerous times, the persons reporting being assaulted while on the Belize Defence Force's numerous camps and training grounds, were labeled 'troublemakers' by their fellow military officers and forced to endure severe retaliation and harassment," wrote Salazar in the description of her Change.org petition.

Several pleas have been made to the administration at the Belize Defence Force to apply greater pressure when it comes to sexual misconduct investigations, and investigations regarding abuse, bullying, and victimization, but those pleas ultimately have fallen on deaf ears.

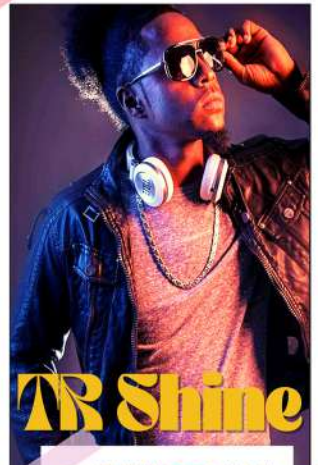
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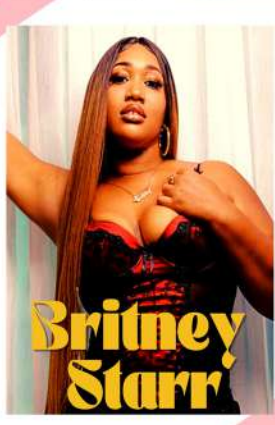
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Britney Starr



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King Rome



MARTINS FEST

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 11TH

MAHOGANY STREET

STARTING FROM 10 IN THE MORNING

★ Sweet Pain Band 3.0 Chico Ramos ★

★ PAPA JOHN ★ YG ★ J MONEY ★ XKLUSIVE Soundz ★

★ BLUE
★ STEEL

THERE IS GOING TO BE A KIDS ZONE WITH RIDES, BOOTHS FROM VARIOUS BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS. FOOD WILL BE ON HAND ALL DAY MAHOGANY STREETS FLAVORS AND QUALITY.