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SERVING THE BLACK COMMUNITY WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR SINCE 1947

December 22 - 28, 2022

The South Oak Cliff Golden Bears are UIL State Champions again



By THE HUD

After a season full of grit, heart, and determination, the South Oak Cliff Golden Bears are the UIL 5A, Division II Football State Champions for the second consecutive year. This win marks Dallas ISD history as the Golden Bears are the first to

win consecutive championships. “Most people want to make it to college and the NFL. Not me, I have always wanted to win a state championship in Texas,” said Head Coach Jason Todd. Coach Todd and the Golden Bears have done just that and

will be forever etched in the record books. The Golden Bears had a tough start to the season, but ultimately made it to the state championship to be crowned two-time 5A Division II UIL State Champions.

Dallas ISD, the city of Dallas, and surrounding districts are proud of their accomplishments, and can't wait to celebrate the team accordingly. Stay tuned for a recap of the season, along with more information on the celebration.

Officer gets nearly 12 years for killing Atatiana Jefferson

By JAMIE STENGLE



Ashley Carr, Atatiana Jefferson's sister, leaves Tarrant County's 396th District Court in Fort Worth, Texas. (Amanda McCoy/Star-Telegram via AP, Pool)

A former Texas police officer who fatally shot Atatiana Jefferson through a rear window of her home in 2019 was sentenced Tuesday to nearly 12 years in prison for his manslaughter conviction.

Aaron Dean, 38, had faced up to 20 years in prison, but jurors also had the option of sentencing him to

probation. The same jury that convicted him of manslaughter Thursday also determined the sentence — 11 years, 10 months and 12 days.

The white Fort Worth officer shot the 28-year-old Black woman while responding to a call about an open front door. His guilty verdict was a rare conviction of an officer for killing someone who was also armed with a gun.

During the trial, the primary dispute was whether Dean knew Jefferson was armed. Dean testified that he saw her weapon; prosecutors claimed the evidence showed otherwise.

Dean shot Jefferson on Oct. 12, 2019, after a neighbor called a nonemergency police line to report that the front door to Jefferson's home was open. She had been playing video games that night with her 8-year-old nephew, Zion Carr,

and it emerged at trial that they left the doors open to vent smoke from hamburgers the boy burnt. Zion, now 11, was in the room with his aunt when she was shot and testified during the trial.

After the sentence was pronounced, one of Jefferson's sisters, Ashley Carr, read a statement in court from herself and another sister, Amber Carr, who is Zion's mother.

Amber Carr, said Jefferson, who planned to go to medical school, “had big dreams and goals” and that her son “feels he is responsible to fill the whole role of his aunt, and he has the weight of the world on his shoulders.”

Ashley Carr called her sister “a beautiful ray of sunshine.”

“She was in her home, which should have been the safest

Continue *Atatiana* Page 5



Children's medicine shortage hits as flu season starts fast

By TOM MURPHY

Caring for sick children has become extra stressful recently for many U.S. parents due to shortages of Children's Tylenol and other medicines.

Doctors and other experts say the problem could persist through the winter cold-and-flu season but should not last as long as other recent shortages of baby formula or prescription drugs.

They also say parents have alternatives if they encounter empty store shelves.

Here's a closer look: **WHAT'S HAPPENING**

An unusually fast start to the annual U.S. flu season, plus a spike in other respiratory illnesses, created a surge in demand for fever relievers and other products people can buy without a prescription.

Continue *Flu* Page 4



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EDITORIAL PAGE

Why are pregnancy and childbirth killing so many Black women in Texas?

A decade ago, Black women in Texas were twice as likely as white women to die from pregnancy and childbirth. Today, not much has changed.

BY ELEANOR KLIBANOFF/Texas Tribune



Given the well-documented pattern, researchers asserted that it's imperative to identify and implement needed changes in policy and practice to eliminate the systematically worse treatment that Black patients and other people who frequently experience discrimination receive.
(Photo: iStockphoto / NNPA)

Nakeenya Wilson was at a meeting of Texas' maternal mortality review committee when she got the call: Her sister, who had recently had a baby, was having a stroke.

Wilson raced to the hospital, leaving behind a stack of files documenting the stories of women who had died from pregnancy and childbirth complications. Many of the women in those files were Black, just like Wilson, who experienced a traumatic delivery herself.

"The whole thing just reminded me, if you change the name on those files, it could be me. It could be my sister," said Wilson, who serves as the committee's community representative.

A decade ago, when Texas first formed the Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee, Black women were twice as likely as white women, and four times as likely as Hispanic women, to die from pregnancy and childbirth.

Those disparities haven't improved, according to the committee's latest report, published Thursday.

In 2020, pregnant Black women were twice as likely to experience critical health issues like hemorrhage, preeclampsia and sepsis. While complications from obstetric hemorrhage declined overall in Texas in recent years, Black women saw an increase of nearly 10%.

Wilson said these statistics show the impact of a health care system that is biased against Black women.

"We're still dying and being disproportionately impacted by hemorrhage when everybody else is getting better," Wilson said. "Not only did it not improve, it didn't stay the same — it got worse."

The causes of these dis-

parities aren't always simple to identify, and they're even harder to fix. It's a combination of diminished health care access, systemic racism, and the impact of "social determinants of health" — the conditions in which someone is born, lives, works and grows up.

Wilson said she and her sister are prime examples. They grew up in poverty, without health insurance, routine doctor's visits or consistent access to healthy food.

"We started behind the ball," she said. "We've had so many hard things happen to us that have contributed to our health by the time we're of childbearing age."

Maternal health advocates in Texas say addressing these disparities will take more than fixing labor and delivery practices. It will require building a comprehensive health care system that addresses a community's needs across the board, starting long before pregnancy.

In the end, Wilson's sister survived her postpartum health scare. But the experience reminded Wilson why she volunteers her time to read, review and analyze stories of women who have died from pregnancy and childbirth.

"When you look at the work marginalized people do, they do it because they don't feel like they have any choice," she said. "If we want to see things change, and we want to be safe, we have to advocate for our own safety."

Implicit bias

For more than three months, D'Andra Willis had been waiting for the release of the state's maternal mortality report. As a doula with The Afya Center, a Black-led reproductive rights organization in North Texas, Willis has been a vocal advocate for Black maternal

health. Doulas are trained professionals who assist pregnant women, physically and emotionally, during childbirth.

But when the report was finally released Thursday, Willis didn't rush to read it. She was busy trying to convince one of her pregnant clients to go to the hospital, and she didn't need any more evidence that the health care system was stacked against Black women, she said.

Her client had other kids to juggle and, after previous experiences, was worried about how she'd be treated at the emergency room.

"She's scared to go, and she needs to go," Willis said. "She's fighting for her life. ... I see how this happens."

For the first time, the review committee considered discrimination as a contributing factor to maternal death, finding it played a role in 12% of deaths in 2019. Wilson said that's likely just the tip of the iceberg.

"That's 12% as definable by the system we currently use," she said. "Does that capture everything? Probably not."

Dr. Rakhi Dimino, an OB-GYN in Houston, said discrimination often shows up in subtle ways that may not be apparent to a health care provider — but make a huge impact on the patient.

"If you asked a hospital, 'Do you have an employee on staff who is racist?' they would say, 'No, we would never allow that,'" she said. "But it's not always those obvious situations. It's in the smaller conversations, in the notes, in the chart, and that can be just as dangerous."

She said patients are sometimes recorded as non-compliant, or leaving against medical advice. But when doctors take time to talk with them, they learn that they have to be home to meet the school bus, or can't get transportation to a specialist's office across town.

"These are barriers we can solve for, if we are open to doing so," she said.

One of the committee's recommendations was to diversify the state's maternal health workforce. Willis also wants to see more Black women using doulas, who can advocate for a pregnant patient who may be experiencing discrimination.

State Rep. Shawn Thierry, D-Houston, has introduced a bill for the

upcoming legislative session that would require health care providers and medical students to be trained in cultural competence and implicit biases.

"In practice, much of this is happening on the unconscious, on the subconscious level," Thierry said. "We're never going to be able to correct it until we begin to identify it. It's the elephant in the room."

Health care access

Almost two-thirds of Black women are on Medicaid when they give birth, compared with less than a third of white women. The report found women without private-pay health insurance were at a particularly elevated risk for severe maternal morbidity.

Women without consistent health insurance are less likely to access timely prenatal care, contributing to pregnancy and childbirth complications, and more likely to have other health complications, including obesity and gestational diabetes.

Until recently, women who delivered on Medicaid in Texas lost their health insurance after two months. The report found that 15% of maternal deaths happened more than 43 days after childbirth.

In 2021, the Texas House voted to expand postpartum Medicaid for 12 months, the maternal mortality committee's top recommendation. The Senate knocked it down to six months; the federal government has said that proposal is "not approvable" in its current form.

Currently, no one is being moved off of Medicaid due to the pandemic public health emergency, giving lawmakers a second chance at passing 12 months of postpartum Medicaid before anyone loses coverage.

Thierry said this proposal should be an easy win for lawmakers and Black women alike.

"However, our work does not stop there," she said. "It is incredibly important that the Texas Legislature understand that that is not enough."

Thierry is preparing what she's calling the "Momnibus" — a package of bills aimed at expanding health care access, gathering better information and strengthening the maternal mortality review process. The bills are aimed at improving maternal health across the board, but with -

Continue **Black** Page 4

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I CORINTHIANS STUDY

I CORINTHIANS 9:1-27

PAUL'S DEFENSE OF HIS APOSTLESHIP

By Rev. Johnny Calvin Smith



Having dealt with the subject of Christian Liberty with reference to eating meat in Chapter 8, Paul will discuss his right as an Apostle in Chapter 9. He defends his Apostleship because it was often challenged! From verses 1-2, the Apostle Paul was qualified to be an Apostle and the Corinthians were evidence of his Apostleship. He did not have to defend his Apostleship among the Corinthians. In defending his Apostleship, Paul had the right to eat meat and to drink. However, in exercising his right, he would not use his liberty to cause a brother to stumble (vv. 3-4). Referring to verse 5, Paul indicated that he had chosen to surrender many of his own rights – which he might have demanded on biblical grounds – for the sake of others. Paul was not alone in refusing this right but had an ally in Barnabas (v. 6). Commitment to this practice may have marked their first missionary journey together (Acts 13:1-14:28) and apparently continued to characterize their separate ministries. In verses 7-15, Paul gave up the right to be financially supported by those he ministered to. In verses 16-19, Paul maintained a strong desire to preach the gospel; however, Paul did not preach the gospel for an ulterior motive. Paul, in verses 20-23, had even given up his right to freedom from the Mosaic law when he was with the Jews, so as not to offend them. He had done this, to “make himself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible.” Paul concludes this chapter by pointing out that only by setting a goal and working toward it can an athlete win the prize (vv. 24-27). As a Christian, Paul has the goal of ministry; he will sacrifice everything to achieve it. Paul was not just preaching self-sacrifice to the Corinthians. He lived a self-sacrificial life for their sake!

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HEALTH

Flu season began in the fall and lasts through winter

The best way to prevent flu is by receiving an annual flu shot. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends everyone ages 6 months and older receive a flu shot. Getting the flu shot helps prevent you from getting sick and protect the people you love who may have a harder time if they were to get sick. Parkland Health officials offer these tips to keep you and your family healthy:

- Keep your distance from others who are sick or showing symptoms.
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- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Practice good health habits. Get plenty of sleep, exercise, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids and maintain a balanced diet that includes fruits and vegetables.

To learn more about the flu and where to get the flu shot visit <https://www.parklandhealth.org/flu>

Why are pregnancy and childbirth killing so many Black women in Texas?

special attention to the experiences of Black women.

“Black women should not be a footnote in this report,” she said. “We are the report. That’s my takeaway.”

Thierry, who is Black, has firsthand experience with these issues. While she was undergoing an emergency C-section, a doctor placed the epidural too high. She knew something wasn’t right and begged to be put under anesthesia, which likely saved her life, she said.

For years, she blamed herself and kept quiet about her experience. It wasn’t until she was elected to the Texas Legislature in 2017 and read the maternal mortality report that she started to put her experiences in a larger context.

“I almost died. I was treated terribly. No one saw me,” she said. “I don’t think a woman should have to be a sitting member of the Texas Legislature to feel comfortable sharing their story.”

Post-Roe legislation

The data in the latest maternal mortality report is from 2019, almost three years before Texas became the largest state in the nation to ban nearly all abortions. These bans are expected to have a disproportionate impact on Black women, who nationally account for about 40% of all abortions.

One study from the University of Colorado Boulder estimates that a national abortion ban would lead to a 24% increase in maternal mortality, with Black women experiencing the sharpest increase, at 39%.

A particular concern is the treatment of ectopic pregnancies, which occur when a fertilized egg implants outside the uterus and are life-threatening if left untreated. Ruptured ectopic pregnancies were the leading cause of obstetric hemorrhage deaths in Texas in 2019, the report found.

While ectopic pregnancies are specifically exempt from Texas’s abortion laws, doctors are reportedly delaying care of these nonviable pregnancies due to confusion and fear. According to a letter from the Texas Medical Association, one Central Texas physician was instructed by their hospital to not treat an ectopic pregnancy until a rupture occurred.

Dimino, the Houston OB-GYN, said the new laws are making doctors extra cautious, which inevitably leads to delays.

“We’re taking these further out than we used to, instead of providing treatment based on the best evidence that we have,” she said. “If a woman is at home, over a week’s time, this pregnancy can grow and burst open, and you end up with a life-threatening or life-ending situation.”

Qiana Arnold, a doula with The Afiya Center, said she’s particularly anxious, in light of the new abortion bans, to see what happens to the number of women who die due to homicide or suicide. In 2019, violence accounted for 27% of pregnancy-related deaths.

“People are going to kill themselves,” she said. “People will kill themselves because they did not want to have that child.”

In the first post-Roe legislative session, which starts Jan. 9, Democrats are hopeful that proposals to improve maternal health will get more traction than before.

“It is my hope that all of my colleagues in the Legislature will stand and say it is time to prioritize Black mothers,” Thierry said. “These are the women that are bearing life, but they should not have to do so in exchange for their own.”

This article originally appeared in The Texas Tribune at <https://www.texastribune.org/2022/12/17/texas-maternal-mortality-black-women/>.

NEWS

Continued Page 1

Children’s medicine shortage hits as Flu season starts fast

“There are more sick kids at this time of year than we have seen in the past couple years,” said Dr. Shannon Dillon, a pediatrician at Riley Children’s Health in Indianapolis.

Experts say that’s the main factor behind the shortages, which vary around the country and even within communities.

“At this point, it’s more like toilet paper at the beginning of the (COVID-19) pandemic,” Dillon said “You just have to look in the right place at the right time.”

Drugmaker Johnson & Johnson says it is not experiencing widespread shortages of Children’s Tylenol, but the product may be “less readily available” at some stores. The company said it is running its production lines around the clock.

In the meantime, CVS Health has placed a two-product limit on all children’s pain relief products bought through its pharmacies or online.

Walgreens is limiting customers online to six purchases of children’s over-the-counter fever reducing products. That limit doesn’t apply in stores.

Aside from over-the-counter products, the prescription antibiotic amoxicillin also is in short supply due to increased demand, according to the Food and Drug Administration. The drug is often used to treat nose and throat infections in children.

WHAT TO DO

Check first for alternatives in the store if some products aren’t available. Generic versions of brand-name products are “perfectly safe and

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SPORTS/NEWS PAGE

Day Weather Forecast for DFW

Thursday, Dec. 22



H - 41°
L - 13°

Friday, Dec. 23



H - 24°
L - 22°

Saturday, Dec. 24



H - 32°
L - 23°

Sunday, Dec. 25



H - 42°
L - 34°

Monday, Dec. 26



H - 50°
L - 32°

Tuesday, Dec. 27



H - 50°
L - 41°

Wednesday, Dec. 28



H - 57°
L - 54°

Black head coaches in FBS drop slightly heading into 2023

By PAUL NEWBERRY



Jackson State head coach Deion Sanders, left, and his son quarterback Shedeur Sanders sing the school's alma mater after the Celebration Bowl NCAA college football game at North Carolina Central, Saturday, Dec. 17, 2022, in Atlanta. (AP Photo/Hakim Wright Sr.)

Deion Sanders was the star attraction in this year's class of new Black coaches taking over major college programs.

Of course, he didn't have a lot of competition.

Sanders, who left Jackson State for Colorado of the Pac-12 Conference, was one of just three Black head coaches hired by Football Bowl Subdivision schools in the recently completed cycle for the 2023-24 season.

Barring any additional changes, there will be 14 Black coaches at 133 FBS teams next season — roughly 10.5% of overall coaches and a drop from 15 at the start of this season, even as the FBS division adds two new schools in 2023.

The lack of diversity remains striking in a sport where more than half the players identify as Black.

Sanders was joined by two other Black head coaching hires. Purdue picked Ryan Walters, the defensive

coordinator at fellow Big Ten school Illinois, to replace Jeff Brohm. And Kent State went with Minnesota assistant coach Kenni Burns to lead its program after Sean Lewis left to become Sanders' offensive coordinator at Colorado.

Also, Zach Arnett appears to be the first Latino to lead a Southeastern Conference program, promoted from defensive coordinator at Mississippi State after the death of Mike Leach. And Lance Taylor, who is of Choctaw heritage, landed the top job at Western Michigan after serving as Louisville's offensive coordinator.

The remaining 19 openings — including Georgia Tech sticking with interim coach Brent Key for the full-time job — were claimed by white candidates.

Sanders posted a 27-6 record and created plenty of headlines during his three

years at Jackson State, a historically Black university in Mississippi. Now, "Coach Prime" will take over a Colorado program coming off a dismal 1-11 season. He said part of the reason he accepted the job at a school where wins have been scarce was to open doors for more Black coaches.

"It's about an opportunity," Sanders said.

The Big Ten has the most diverse lineup among Power Five leagues with four Black coaches among 14 member schools — Walters, Michigan State's Mel Tucker, Penn State's James Franklin and Maryland's Mike Locksley.

The 14-team Atlantic Coast Conference remains at two Black coaches with Syracuse's Dino Babers and Virginia's Tony Elliott. The only other Black coaches at Power Five schools are Sanders and Marcus Freeman at independent Notre Dame.

The Southeastern Conference and the Big 12, both set to have 14 teams in 2023, have no Black coaches.

The numbers are even punier in the Group of Five leagues: The Mid-American Conference, located largely in the same Midwest region as the Big Ten, has three Black coaches at its 12 schools: Burns, Thomas Hammock at Northern Illinois and Maurice Linguist at Buffalo.

Three other conferences have one Black coach each: Jay Norvell at Colorado State (Mountain West), Stan Drayton at Temple (American) and Charles Huff at Marshall (Sun Belt).

There are no Black coaches in Conference USA or the handful of other schools without a league affiliation.

The lack of diversity in the FBS ranks led Locksley to form the National Coalition of Minority Football Coaches two years ago. In a recent interview with The Associated Press, he said he's not discouraged by numbers that show little progress and insisted that more schools are reaching out to his organization in the search for candidates of color, which he expects to eventually pay dividends.

Locksley said he doesn't favor offering incentives — such as extra scholarships or bigger bowl payouts — to schools that hire minority coaches.

"That, to me, is kind of working backward," he said. "The only reason you're doing it is to gain a reward, whereas it should be in the fabric of the hiring process."

Continued **Atatiana** Page 1

place for her to be, and yet turned out to be the most dangerous," she said.

At a news conference held later Tuesday outside of the home where Jefferson was killed, Ashley Carr said the family wanted Dean sentenced to more time, but saw symbolism in the sentence chosen by the jury.

"Eleven years, that's the same age as Zion," she said. "Ten months, 12 days, that's the day that it happened. It's a message in this. It might not be the message that we wanted and the whole dream, but it's some of it."

Attorneys for Dean did not immediately respond to a request for comment from The Associated Press following the sentencing.

The case was unusual for the relative speed with which, amid public outrage, the Fort Worth Police Department released video of the shooting and arrested Dean. He'd completed the police academy the year before and quit the force without speaking to investigators.

Since then, the case was repeatedly postponed amid lawyerly wrangling, the terminal illness of Dean's lead attorney and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Body camera footage showed that Dean and a second officer who responded to the call didn't identify themselves as police at the house. Dean and Officer Carol Darch testified that they thought the house might have been burglarized

and quietly moved into the fenced-off backyard looking for signs of forced entry.

There, Dean, whose gun was drawn, fired a single shot through the window a split-second after shouting at Jefferson, who was inside, to show her hands.

Dean testified that he had no choice when he saw Jefferson pointing the barrel of a gun directly at him. But under questioning from prosecutors he acknowledged numerous errors, repeatedly conceding that actions he took before and after the shooting were "more bad police work."

Darch's back was to the window when Dean shot, but she testified that he never mentioned seeing a gun before he pulled the trigger and didn't say any-

thing about the weapon as they rushed in to search the house.

Dean acknowledged on the witness stand that he said something about the gun only after seeing it on the floor inside the house and that he never gave Jefferson first aid.

Zion testified that Jefferson took out her gun believing there was an intruder in the backyard, but he offered contradictory accounts of whether she pointed the pistol out the window. On the trial's opening day, he testified that Jefferson always had the gun pointed down, but in an interview that was recorded soon after the shooting and played in court, Zion said she had pointed the weapon at the window.

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Continued **Flu** Page 4

often a much more affordable option," Dillon said.

Other stores nearby also may have better options. Manufacturers say there are no widespread national shortages of these medications, according to the Consumer Healthcare Products Association.

A family doctor may know which stores have decent supplies.

A doctor also may be able to tell parents whether they can try alternatives like crushing the proper dose of a pill version and mixing it with food or chocolate syrup. Doctors say parents or caregivers should not try this on their own, because determining proper doses for children can be tricky.

"You don't need to experiment at home," said Dr. Sarah Nosal, a South Bronx family physician. "Your family doctor wants to talk to you and see you."

GOING WITHOUT

Doctors also caution that fevers don't always have to be treated. They are a body's natural defense against infection, and they make it hard for a virus to replicate.

Dillon noted, for instance, that a fever may not be intrinsically harmful to older children. However, parents should take a newborn under 2 months old to the doctor if the child has a fever of 100.4 degrees or

more. And doctors say any child with a fever should be monitored for behavior changes.

Instead of medicine, consider giving the child a bath in lukewarm water. Cold water makes the body shiver, which can actually raise the temperature.

Put fans in the child's room or set up a cool mist humidifier to help their lungs.

Nosal also said two teaspoons of honey can help control coughs in children older than a year. Avoid using honey for young children because it carries a risk of infant botulism.

WHEN WILL SUPPLIES GET BETTER?

Shortages might last in some communities until early next year.

Resolving them can depend on whether there are enough workers at warehouses and stores to deliver the product and stock the shelves, noted Erin Fox. She researches drug shortages and is the senior pharmacy director at University of Utah Health, which runs five hospitals.

Fox said there are no problems at factories or a lack of ingredients contributing to current shortages. Those obstacles can lead to long supply disruptions.

"I don't expect this to last a year or more like some of our other shortages do," she said.



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Q&A: Naomi Ackie, Kasi Lemmons tell Whitney Houston's story

By LINDSEY BAHR



This image released by Sony Pictures shows Naomi Ackie in Tristar's "Whitney Houston: I Wanna Dance with Somebody." (Emily Aragones/Sony Pictures via AP)

Naomi Ackie, who plays Whitney Houston in the new biopic "I Wanna Dance With Somebody," is the first to admit that she is not a doppelganger for the pop star. In fact, she'll go so far as to say she doesn't look like her at all.

"I was like, are you guys sure? Are you absolutely sure?" Ackie said in a recent interview with The Associated Press.

But the people who really knew Houston, her family and record producer Clive Davis among them, were all convinced that the rising British actor was right for the

film, meant to be a music-filled celebration and a kind of corrective to other projects that took a more salacious treatment.

The film, written by "Bohemian Rhapsody" scribe Anthony McCarten, shows Houston's ascent from New Jersey choir girl to global superstar, with a focus on the woman behind the icon, troubles, triumphs and all, up until her death in 2012 at age 48. It opens in theaters nationwide Friday.

"It's a study on the essence of Whitney and not the image of Whitney," Ackie said. "I thought, if I'm

going to do this, I'm going to speak on Whitney's internal world, and everything else is completely out of my control."

An important part of that journey was finding the right director to help hold her hand and challenge her when needed. Kasi Lemmons was a stranger to Ackie when they met, but they developed a quick, deep bond on a soul level.

They spoke to the AP about Houston, society's complicated relationship with icons and telling the truth while keeping her dignity intact. Remarks have

been edited for brevity and clarity.

AP: Kasi, what was your relationship to Whitney and how did that inform your approach?

LEMMONS: I watched her rise to fame as a young actress in New York City who was part of the Black dance world. I can remember the first moment I saw her, like who is this beautiful creature with this voice? But we also had ownership of her. We were all up in her business and it was all speculation, right? We didn't really know her. Then 10 years later, at the height of her career, I ended up writing two scripts for her. So I got to see her as a woman. Like she's sitting on a chair in front of me in her sweats and she's tired and she's high and she's got stuff on her mind. In that same experience, I got to meet (her father and manager) John Houston and he's talking about the brand, the image. That was the experience that stayed with me that I wanted to bring to the movie.

ACKIE: And that was exactly what I needed. Someone who had direct contact and had an insight, especially to that relationship, because it was one of the ones that was most challenging to try and unpack. But you took me by the hand and just said, "I've got you."

The History of Christmas Trees



The history of Christmas trees goes back to the symbolic use of evergreens in ancient Egypt and Rome and continues with the German tradition of candlelit Christmas trees first brought to America in the 1800s.