



Dawn Turner Trice

Film's hustle doesn't flow well for readers

Last week's column on the movie "Hustle & Flow," rap music and its misogynistic themes stirred a lot of discussion. Here are some of your insights, with minor editing from me.

Ray C. of Chicago says that as a liberal, he's against censorship: But as an African-American, I am beyond tired of this glorification of street life. A movie about a pimp who wants to be a rapper sounds like the beginning of a joke told in a Klan meeting.

Where are our stories of heroism? Enough with the pimps and prostitutes, let's make real cinema and not this junk that promotes anti-social behavior and anti-intellectualism. We have (hopefully) more stories to tell than Hustle & Flow.

Janet J. of Chicago writes: After hearing from friends whose opinions I respected, I went to see "Hustle & Flow." It did have more depth than I expected, and the lead character is talented.

But I have five grandsons ranging in age from 19 to 6 and I worry that their ideas about women and beauty are distorted by rap music. Being a "pimp" has become a slang term for anything good. I won't blame rap for all of this, but it has been a large contributor.

Arlene K. of Wauconda adds: The routine denigration of women and the extent to which it goes unchallenged even by "liberals" are an outrage. The same men (and sadly, some women) who wouldn't dream of using the "N-word," heap on (or at least tolerate) the kind of gender slurs commonplace in films like "Hustle & Flow."

Michael R. has another take: As the father of two young girls, I fully understand the challenges and negative images facing our young women. "Hustle & Flow" is just a movie that depicts a subculture of our African-American community. Just 30 years ago, we were just happy to see a black face on the movie screen that was not too subservient. Please take a look at some of those early '70s black exploitation movies. While "Hustle & Flow" does perpetuate some of stereotypes, it is only a small segment of our community and you may not be giving enough credit to the intelligence of our sisters.

From Donald R. of Chicago: In the '60s, author Iceberg Slim's "Pimp: The Story of My Life" captured the minds of young black men. In the '80s, this same book resurfaced and became popular again. Now movies like "Hustle & Flow" keep the minds of the young black males on the same corner and drug dealers now join them.

Marty B. from Oak Park reminds us that the movie's theme of using music as a way out of poverty is not new. Blues and jazz singers did it way back when. In the 1950s and 1960s, Motown and independent music labels made it even more attractive. It's too bad that basic education and realistic social values aren't emphasized as a means to that end. Or maybe they are, but are just shouted down by the seemingly ever-present, ear-splitting tunes. One can hope anyway.

Suggestive lyrics go beyond rap music, says John J. of Chicago: I could go on about the garbage sold by a lot of the white bands. Ever listen to a country/western song? Drinking and sleeping around are still very prevalent there, too. I'm beginning to think that our music says a lot about us as a civilization and it ain't good."

Joyce H. from Dallas has a word about rap's influence on girls' clothing: Our daughter now is 26, married and has a toddler daughter of her own. So once again we are shopping for a little girl. And we can't believe the tacky (rap video-style) outfits you see out there for babies! Sigh. . . I guess this is a battle that astute mothers of all ethnic groups just will have to fight, one household at a time.

Pier S. of Chicago writes: I am entering my senior year as a Comparative Women's Studies major at Spelman College. Rapper Nelly's foundation approached Spelman with putting together a bone marrow drive, and when a few students saw one of his recent videos with him swiping a credit card down the backside of a woman, we told him not to come to our school.

Someone told me that I was wasting my time and energy speaking out on these matters. It feels good to know that women are taking this seriously enough to think of their daughters and question the appropriateness of these images. I hope you continue to speak out regarding the current state of not only African-American women, but all women in America. I know I will.

Thanks so much for reading.

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Neighbors gather Sunday near the burned-out shell of a car in the 3100 block of North Lawndale Avenue. Two teenage boys were inside the car when it was allegedly set on fire. One boy died of burns and an accelerant was found, police said.

Car fire that kills teen called homicidal arson

2 boys, on fire, ran screaming for help

By Dave Wischnowsky
Tribune staff reporter

The shouts of an argument that awoke Carol Padilla and her family early Sunday suddenly turned to screams when two 17-year-old boys were caught in a fire that started in a car parked near Padilla's Northwest Side home.

"They were screaming," Padilla said about the boys. "It wasn't words. It was a primal scream."

The teenagers fled the burning car and ran down the street—on fire themselves—before they collapsed in front of a nearby home.

The fire started at 4:58 a.m. Sunday in a 1990 Cadillac Sedan DeVille parked in the 3100 block of North Lawndale Avenue, Chicago police said.



Police examine the charred 1990 Cadillac Sedan DeVille Sunday for evidence. The incident is being investigated as a homicide and arson, police said.

The boys were taken to Loyola University Medical Center in Maywood in critical condition, one with burns to more than 50 percent of his body and the other with about 90 percent of his body burned, police spokeswoman Laura

West said. One of the boys, Jesus Samano, of the 3600 block of West 58th Place, later died of his injuries at 2:27 p.m. Sunday, the Cook County medical examiner's office said. An accelerant was found in

the car, but Police Sgt. Robert Cargie said he didn't know what it was.

The incident is being investigated as a homicide and arson, Cargie said.

The other teen's identity was not released.

Samano's brother-in-law, Jesus Esquivel, said the Cadillac belonged to Samano and that his friend in the car lives in the Avondale neighborhood around North Lawndale Avenue.

Padilla said when she, her husband and 23-year-old son heard the screams they looked out the front window and saw a car on fire in the street.

"We heard arguing . . . and heard people running down the gangway next to our house," Padilla said. "We tried to look out the window, and then saw flames were shooting out of the car 15 feet in the air."

Padilla dialed 911, and the

PLEASE SEE CAR, PAGE 4

GETTING AROUND
WITH JON HILKEVITCH

Archer Bridge to be rebuilt

Ashland intersection will be reconfigured

At 42 years old, the Archer Avenue Bridge over the Chicago River is a mere youngster when compared to street drawbridges and swing bridges in Chicago that are up to three times its age.

Yet the Archer Bridge will be rebuilt from top to bottom due to rust and changing traffic patterns.

In addition, the Archer Avenue overpass above Ashland Avenue will be permanently removed.

Preliminary work begins Monday to rebuild the busy bridge over the South Fork of the river's South Branch. The bridge will remain open to traffic but on Aug. 15 it will be reduced to one lane in each direction.

It is part of a major project redesigning the intersection of Archer and Ashland Avenues to improve safety and reduce traffic congestion in response to growing commercial and residential development. The plan also involves providing more direct access for traffic bound for the Stevenson Expressway (Interstate Highway 55).

One of the primary goals of removing the Archer overpass is improving the unsafe conditions at the intersection below.

"Obstructed sight lines for drivers have contributed to a high number of sideswipe accidents and red-light-running problems at the intersection," said Johnny Morcos, a project manager in the Chicago Department of Transportation.

The removal of the overpass "will improve visibility and safety, as well as end the maintenance headache of making repairs to a deteriorating

PLEASE SEE AROUND, PAGE 4



Nathaniel Garcia, 14, of the Shore Crew team, roots for racers Sunday during the Chicago River Flatwater Classic. About 800 people in canoes and kayaks took to the 7¼-mile course.

Murky city river hosts good, clean fun

Annual race focuses on waterway's plight

By Michael Hawthorne
Tribune staff reporter

Getting up early to race through treated sewage must have a certain appeal.

More than 800 seemingly happy and definitely determined souls lined up Sunday morning with canoes and kayaks for a 7¼-mile voyage down the Chicago River, the city's stagnant but steadily improving second waterfront.

First organized six years ago to build support for cleaning up the waterway, the Chicago River Flatwater Classic is a mix of good-natured competition and free-flowing reminders that dramatic improvements in water quality still aren't good enough.

"The Chicago River has a lot of charm, but don't fall in!" advised a sign posted near the starting launch at Clark Park in the North Center neighborhood.

Indeed, the river is clean enough today to support 60 types of fish, up from five in 1970. But about 60 percent of

the murky flow is treated sewage that isn't disinfected to remove disease-causing bacteria, a reminder that until recently the river essentially was off-limits to people.

This year's canoe and kayak race came as federal, state and local officials debate whether the river should be cleaner, a goal that likely would require billions of dollars to eliminate sewage overflows and improve the treatment of human and industrial waste.

"We need to take care of our urban rivers," said Chris Van

PLEASE SEE RIVER, PAGE 4

Closure, WW II sub found under the sea

Family finally has place to put flowers

By Kelly Kennedy
Tribune staff reporter

In the ghostly blue lights of a video camera, sea snakes, squids and schools of blue and yellow fish swirl past five-inch battle guns of a World War II submarine 200 feet beneath the South China Sea.

"With all the fish and the coral covering the Lagarto, it's almost like someone put flowers on a grave," said Elizabeth Kenney-Augustine, whose grandfather, Bill Mabin of La Grange, was on the vessel.

For decades, no human knew where to put flowers for the 86 men who disappeared with the USS Lagarto somewhere between Thailand and Australia shortly before World War II ended.

In May, a diving team, following the hints of fishermen telling tales of snagged nets, discovered the Lagarto in the Gulf of Thailand.



Tribune photo by Charles Osgood
Bill Mabin of La Grange was one of 86 men lost in 1945 on the USS Lagarto.

Experts say this is the missing boat because it is believed to be the only American Balao class submarine sunk in the Gulf of Thailand during the war, and because Japanese records released after the war show Japanese sailors sank a submarine in the area where the Lagarto disappeared.

"We believe the wreck to be the Lagarto," said Jamie Macleod, who, with the U.S. Navy's permission, dove down to look at the outside of the vessel.

Macleod and Stewart Oehl of the MV Trident dive

PLEASE SEE LAGARTO, PAGE 4

INSIDE

Raccoons raiding towns

The drought and a late freeze send them digging for food in unusual places. PAGE 5

