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# Justice or Just Us?

*The Death of Tyre Nichols by Police Causes Outrage and Calls for Justice*



The death of Tyre Nichols by police in Memphis have caused outrage, as protests are taking place all over America demanding justice.

**Benjamin Bates**  
Data News Weekly Contributor

## Black and Blue

The fatal police beating of Tyre Nichols, 29, have caused outrage and calls for justice. It is another example in the lives of Black people in which a routine

encounter with police can turn deadly.

According to family attorney Ben Crump, Nichols was returning from Shelby Farms, a large parkland east of Memphis where he was taking photos of the sunset. Then the unimaginable happened, where he was stopped by Memphis police officers, and the five officers savagely beat him, and three days later he died from his injuries.

## The Fallout and Charges of Murder

This has again made the country revisit and question how those who are charged with protecting and serving abuse their power by using excessive force.

While this is not a new phenomenon questions are beginning to arise around the issue of police reform.

The fallout after this horrendous occurrence continues where the Memphis Police Department said a

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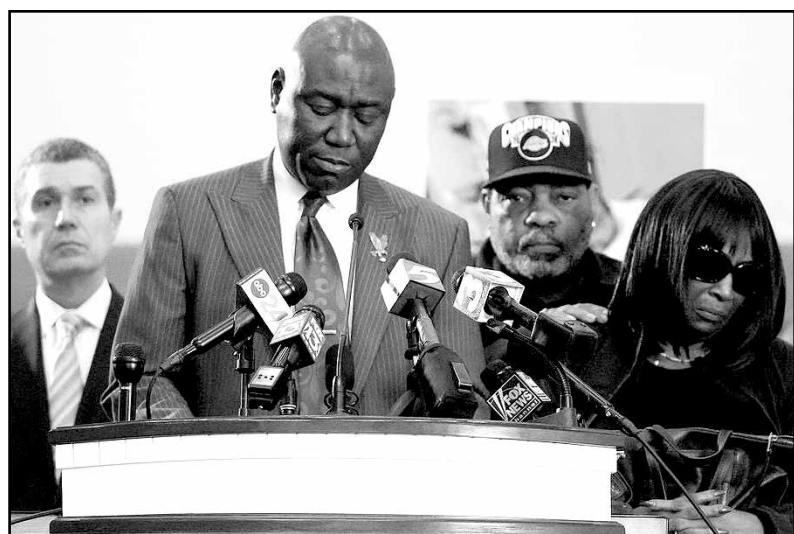
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Cover Story, Continued from page 2.



The killing of unarmed Blacks are a part of systemic racism in policing. Civil Rights Leaders are asking lawmakers to consider police reform measures.



Tyre Nichols is the latest victim of police using excessive force.



seventh police officer who responded was relieved of duty. Also, three members of the EMT have been relieved or dismissed surrounding the part they played in Nichols death.

### Leaders Call for Police Reform

This case is one that revisits the worse of police behavior with people on both sides of the political spectrum calling the actions of the officers excessive and unnecessary. Additionally, there have been louder calls for police reform measures to stop this from occurring in

the future.

Leaders from the civil rights as well as elected leaders are demanding that it becomes a high priority of President Biden and his administration.

President Joe Biden spoke with the family to give his condolences, and said it is time for the nation to do everything to ensure that the Criminal Justice System give equal protection to all.

"I spoke with the family of Tyre Nichols on behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus to extend our condolences to them, and to let them know that we stand with them

to honor their son's legacy and extend them an invitation to be our guest at the State of the Union on February 7th so that we can make sure that this issue of police culture has now contributed to countless deaths" said Steve Horsford, Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Marc Morial, President & CEO of the National Urban League says he was sickened by the footage of Tyre Nichols. In a statement he said, "Excessive force doesn't begin to describe the inhumane violence these officers inflicted on a terrified and defenseless young man who posed no apparent threat to anyone.

My heart goes out to Tyre Nichols family, whose grief and trauma at this moment are hard to imagine."

### A Call for Justice

Police violence against unarmed Black men that are not an imminent threat is not new. It is part of a history of the police where the rights and humanity of Blacks are not considered.

From the NAACP that fought to stop lynchings of Blacks, today groups are letting their voices be heard about the atrocities of police violence on a local, state and national level.

Melanie Campbell, President & CEO of the National Coalition of Black Civic Participation (NCB-CP) and Convener of the Black Women's Roundtable issues the following statement following her seeing the Memphis Police video footage.

"I stand with the Black community as we once again bear witness to yet another police killing of an unarmed Black man. Tyre Nichols' death is a tragic reminder of the systemic racism and violence Black men and women face every day. We pray for his family and stand with them in their fight for justice."



# Dillard University Investiture Weekend Celebration to Install Dr. Rochelle L. Ford, APR, As Its Eighth President

Photos by Bernie Saul and Peter Forest

Dillard University held several events this past weekend to install Dr. Rochelle L. Ford, APR, as the eighth President of the school. Dr. Ford's vision is to improve campus facilities, enhance faculty and staff recruitment and retention and booster fundraisers to support student degree completion. She is also seeking to leverage Dillard's academic programs and centers to address health disparities.

The new President, Dr. Ford exemplifies Dillard's mission to 'cultivate leaders who live ethically.' She will carry on the legacy of past leadership of the Historically Black University, by making the world a better place, uplifting others through a high sense of self, and offering students a greater sense of belonging.

Dr. Ford has earned a reputation as a hard-working transformative leader. Previously, she served as the Dean of the School of Communications at Elon University, the second to serve in that position in the university's history.

On hand were education, business, and civic communities along with students to celebrate the next chapter in the rich legacy of Dillard University.



Dr. Rochelle L. Ford, APR, the eighth President of Dillard University, delivers her official inauguration address in Lawless Memorial Chapel January 27th.

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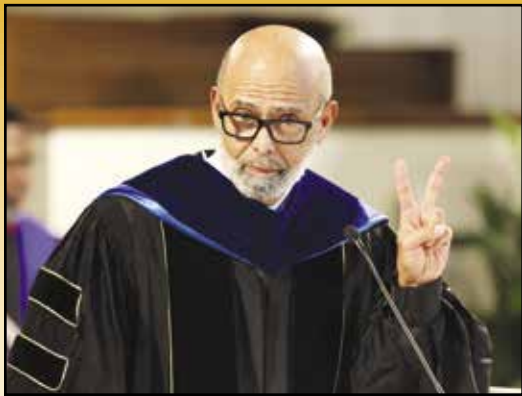
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Dr. Michael Lomax, President and CEO of UNCF and former Dillard President, delivers remarks at Dr. Rochelle Ford's investiture ceremony on January 27.



Aetna presents a \$10,000 gift to Ford at the Celebration at the Oaks Bleu & White Reception on January 27.



Zeta President (Blue Dress): Dr. Rochelle Ford accepts a gift from Zeta Phi Beta international president, Dr. Stacie N.C. Grant.



SGA President: Marissa Pittman, Dillard University's Student Government Association president, delivers remarks at the investiture ceremony on January 27.



Ford, Banks and Verret: Dr. Rochelle Ford poses with Dr. Crystal E. Banks, Executive Director of the Black College Fund and Ethnic Concerns, General Board of Higher Education & Ministry of the United Methodist Church and Dr. C. Reynold Verret, President of Xavier University of Louisiana after her investiture.



Ford and Zeta Past President: Ford poses with former Zeta Phi Beta international president Valerie Hollingsworth Baker at the Dillard University Inauguration Weekend VIP reception at Galeriè de Galatoire on January 26.



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# Audubon 2023 Zoo-To-Do Events



## Data News Staff Edited Report

The 45th Annual Hancock Whitney Zoo-To-Do and 34th Annual Zoo-To-Do for Kids presented by Children's Hospital New Orleans will celebrate the expansion of the popular spider monkey exhibit and conservation efforts at Audubon Zoo.

**The 2023 events are scheduled in April this year.**

Hancock Whitney Zoo-To-Do will be Friday, April 28th, and Zoo-To-Do for Kids presented by Children's Hospital New Orleans will be Friday, April 21st. Sponsors, Patrons and general admission tickets for both events are on sale now.

Spider monkeys are an important part of the tropical rainforest ecosystem. Usually found in the rainforest canopy, they play key roles in spreading seeds around the

forest keeping it alive and flourishing. Habitat loss is the major threat to spider monkeys in the wild, and they are listed as an endangered species by the International Union of Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species which means there is a very high chance, they could go extinct in the near future. In just the past 45 years, their numbers in the wild have dropped by 50%.

"The spider monkey troop at Audubon Zoo is a long-time favorite for our guests. "Expanding their habitat gives them more room to explore and provides guests more opportunities to learn about these endangered animals," said Audubon Nature Institute President and CEO Ron Forman. "As part of our mission to inspire making a positive impact on nature and wildlife, Audubon educates millions of people annually about endan-

gered species like spider monkeys, their importance in the wild, and how each of us can take steps in our own lives to make a positive impact to help the environment. Your support of our Zoo-To-Do events will help safeguard the future of these vital species."

"We are thrilled to continue our partnership with Audubon Nature Institute for the Annual Hancock Whitney Zoo-To-Do. Our work with Audubon for this premiere event not only supports conservation efforts, but also benefits the entire community," said Hancock Whitney Senior Regional President Gary Lorio. "This year, celebrating the expansion of the spider monkey habitat showcases the need to protect endangered species and the outstanding care they receive at Audubon."

Sponsors and Patrons admission for Hancock Whitney Zoo-To-Do

begins at 7:00 p.m., General admission begins at 8:00 p.m., and the party goes until 11:00 p.m. Hancock Whitney is once again the Title Sponsor for the adults-only fundraiser that features delectable cuisine and premium cocktails from local restaurants and bars as well as Audubon Catering. The headline entertainment for this year's event is the popular party band The Phunky Monkeys, they will perform on the Capital One Bank Stage, with Vivaz as the opening act. Other performers include Jose and Merengue4-FOUR at Cooper Plaza and Geovane Santos Duo performing at the entrance to the event.

Hancock Whitney Zoo-To-Do guests can take a chance on the 2023 Zoo-To-Do Luxury Vehicle Raffle, which features a 2023 LEXUS NX 250, worth \$40,315.00 that

was generously donated by LEXUS of New Orleans. Tickets are \$100 each, and a limit of 1,000 tickets will be sold. One lucky winner-who will be announced from the stage at the event-is guaranteed and the ticketholder need not be present to win. Raffle chances can be purchased at the event, provided they have not yet sold out, over the phone by calling (504) 861-5107, and online at ZooToDo.org until 5:00 p.m. CST on April 28, 2023.

The 34th Annual Zoo-To-Do for Kids presented by Children's Hospital New Orleans will take place a week before Hancock Whitney Zoo-To-Do with VIP and early admission starting at 5:00 p.m. and general admission starting at 6:00 p.m. Guests at this fun family evening event will enjoy tasty sips and snacks, arcade games, giant inflatables, and arts and crafts. The event ends at 9:00 p.m.

## State & Local News

# Councilmember Moreno Proposes New Nuisance Law Seeking to Empower the City to Directly Address Businesses Harboring Violent Crime

## Data News Staff Edited Report

Councilmember Helena Moreno presented a new proposed law that would give the City and Police Chief new authorities to address chronic nuisance businesses that harbor violent and serious crime. The proposal is patterned after a similar law in Baltimore and allows the City's legal department, in concert with the Police Superintendent, to suspend operational licenses of chronic nuisance businesses for up to two years.

"I want to make sure we're providing the city every tool available to address safety in our neighborhoods and across New Orleans.



City Councilmember-at-Large Helena Moreno

People are tired of chronic neighborhood public safety issues, and we need to be able to address these challenges head-on," said Councilmember Moreno. "Importantly, we've carefully crafted this new law with protections in mind to ensure it is used objectively and contains

clear notice and due process. Enforcement must come hand-in-hand with clear guardrails to maintain public integrity and secure the rights of all.

"This ordinance cuts out some of the red tape that allows us to get a handle on the situation, including talking with the business directly about remediation. If all else fails, we can shut the businesses down to help stop the crime in our city. This is going to be a great tool for NOPD," said Interim Superintendent Michelle Woodfork.

The proposed law would allow the Police Superintendent to put commercial properties on notice and to work with them on tangible steps to address those issues. If

the establishment fails to do so, or refuses, the City's law department can begin an expedited court process to suspend that establishment's license to do business for up to two years and set civil penalties.

A chronic nuisance would be defined as a business that fails to address three or more violent or serious crimes on their property within one year. Those crimes include:

- 1) distributing, storing, or manufacturing controlled substances,
- 2) storage or possession of stolen property or unregistered firearms,
- 3) the furtherance of a crime of violence as defined in La R.S. 14:2

Any business so accused would be given appropriate notice, an opportunity to provide a plan to rem-

edy the issues, and, if unsuccessful, due process, including their day in court. However, if the business is declared a chronic nuisance, penalties can include suspension of licensing for up to two years and the assessment of the costs incurred by the City. Amendments will guarantee this law may not be used against residential properties, nor allow owners to simply sell the property to defeat the City's attempts at enforcement.

The ordinance will now be heard at the full Council meeting on Thursday at Council.Nola.Gov/Live at 10 AM. Submit virtual public comment on Council.Nola.Gov or attend in person in City Council Chambers.

# Report Reveals Police Issued 71 Conflicting Commands and Impossible Orders to Tyre Nichols in 13 Minutes

Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Newswire Senior  
National Correspondent

Footage from Tyre Nichols' fatal traffic stop found that police officers issued a barrage of confusing, conflicting, and sometimes impossible to obey commands.

If Nichols did not comply, or even if he did, the police would respond with increasing force.

According to the footage analyzed by the New York Times, police officers shouted a total of at least 71 orders in the roughly 13 minutes before they radioed in that Nichols was in custody.

The orders were given in two separate places: one near Nichols' vehicle, and another where he had run to avoid being beaten severely.

The video revealed that often the officers shouted conflicting orders, making it difficult for Nichols to understand and obey.

Nichols was ordered by officers to display his hand, even as officers held the young man's hands.

At one point, they shouted for him to get down on the ground while he was already on the ground.

And when they had his body under their control, the officers still made him change positions.

The experts agree that the actions of the Memphis police officers were a blatant illustration of a widespread problem in policing, in which officers physically punish civilians for perceived disrespect or disobedience, a phenomenon known as "contempt of cop," the Times reported.

Professor of criminology and criminal justice at the University of South Carolina Geoffrey Alpert said, "It was far more rampant in the '80s when I started doing police work than in the '90s or 2000s."

Before body cameras, police officers were becoming more professional and less likely to take things personally, as appeared to have happened with Nichols, Alpert stated.

Because of the potential for escalation and confusion during police encounters, modern police training typically calls for a single officer to be present at the scene to issue clear and specific commands.

It also necessitates that police



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officers respond professionally and proportionally to any perceived act of defiance.

The review by the Times, however, shows that the Memphis officers consistently did the opposite.

There is no evidence in the footage that the present officers did anything to prevent the excessive use of force. Actually, it seems to prove the opposite.

After Nichols attempted to flee the scene, an officer can be heard on camera saying, "I hope they stomp his ass."

The Times noted four "crucial instances" in which police officers reprimanded Nichols for disobeying incorrect orders.

An officer is seen pulling up to the intersection where Nichols' car was trapped between two unmarked police cars at the start of the footage.

The cop springs out of the car, gun drawn, to join two others who are racing toward Nichols.

When one of the officers pulls Nichols out of the car, the other two immediately begin shouting, "On the ground!"

These are the initial instructions in a series of contradictory directives that throw Nichols off.

Nichols notes that the police officers have ordered him to sit on the ground.

However, several officers can be heard yelling the same order with growing anger and threats of violence.

One shouts, "Get down on the ground! I am going to tase your ass."

It appears that the officers' tension rises when Nichols repositions himself, yet still assures the officers that he's no threat.

"You guys are really doing a lot right now," Nichols says. "I'm just trying to go home."

Nichols then protests, "I am on the ground!" as officers pinned his arms down, pressed a Taser against his leg, and barked increasingly threatening words at him.

Now one of the officers gives more detailed instructions: "On your stomach."

Nichols is hit in the face with pepper spray three seconds later by one of the officers.

Nichols is now surrounded by officers who demand to see his hands.

However, one of them has a hold on his left arm, while another cop has a hold on his right. The police still hadn't made it clear how they wanted Nichols to behave.

A third officer rushes up with pepper spray.

Then he warns, "You're about to get sprayed good."

The other officers began punching Nichols in the face.

Nichols reacts by pulling his hands back to cover his face. As the punching gets more intense, the pepper spray is released.

Nichols again tries to reassure the officers that he is attempting

to cooperate, all the while he attempts to wipe the pepper spray from his eyes.

"OK," Nichols pleads. "All right. All right."

While one of the officers has a firm grip on Nichols, a second officer arrives and makes the same demand: that he show his hands.

Once again, Nichols appears confused by the competing instructions.

As he flails about, the police officers issue even more conflicting commands and apply more physical punishment. Again, he is hit with pepper spray.

After being pepper-sprayed three more times, Nichols is lying on his side and rubbing his eyes as two officers stand over him.

An officer then kicks Nichols in the face.

At this point, Nichols is barely conscious or coherent, but the police are treating him as though he is actively resisting them.

"Lay flat, goddamn it," one officer yells.

As he lies there, Nichols groans and writhes in pain, having repeatedly been tased, kicked in the head, punched, and pepper sprayed.

When another officer yells, "Lay flat!" they behave as if Nichols is refusing to comply.

One officer lifts Nichols off the ground and forces him to kneel by grabbing his handcuffed arm. Another officer then repeatedly hits him with a baton while demanding, "Give us your hands!"

He tries to avoid being hit with the baton as he is surrounded by four police officers.

"Give me your [bleeping] hands!" another officer demands.

But Nichols, because of having an officer pin his arms behind his back, another grip his handcuffed wrist, and a third punch him in the face, simply cannot comply.

He collapses to the ground and cries for his mom, but the brutality continued.

In total, six officers have been dismissed and five stand accused of second-degree murder. In a press conference last week, attorneys for two of them said their clients would be entering not guilty pleas.

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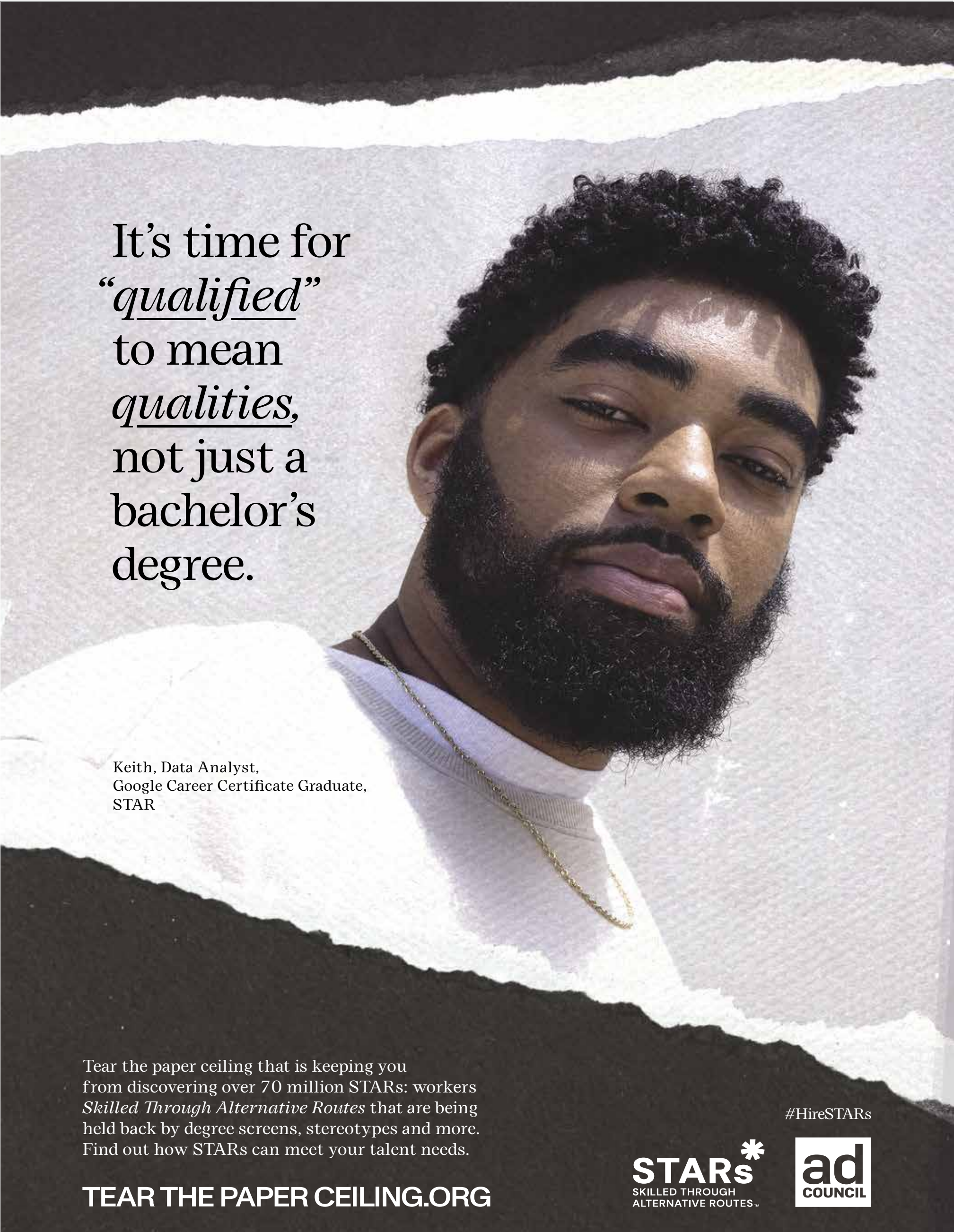
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