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# The Bahama Journal

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75 CENTS

# THREE CHILDREN ABDUCTED IN A WEEK

BY LEAH COOPER  
 Journal Staff Writer

Police are on the hunt of the alleged abductor of the capital's second and third alleged kidnapping in less than a week.

In the first incident, authorities indicated that a child was taken from a park on Emmanuel Dive off Soldier Road before 7:00pm on Wednesday.

It is said that a female, who was the lone occupant of a grey vehicle was spotted at the time.

Police told The Journal that the child was report-



▶ Police composite sketch provided by CDU of the person believed to be responsible for the abduction of an eight-year-old boy.

■ See page 4...

## Bishop Calls Policemen Retirement "Suspicious"

BY BERTHONY MCDERMOTT  
 Journal Staff Writer

The Bahamas Christian Council President Bishop Delton Fernander is calling the retirements of senior Police Officers suspicious.

He was responding to claims from the Opposition that the instructions to retire the three men were sent



▶ Bahamas Christian Council President, Bishop Delton Fernander

■ See page 3...

# AG CORRECTS EU MINISTER Calls MEP 'Utterly Ignorant'

BY DEANDRE WILLIAMSON  
 Journal Staff Writer

Attorney General Carl Bethel defending the government of the Bahamas says that money laundering convictions were made in The Bahamas. He has corrected comments made by European Union Member of Parliament (MEP) Sven Giegold.

"It is clear that the commentator was utterly ignorant of not only the changes we've made, but

■ See page 3...



▶ EU Member of Parliament (MEP), Sven Giegold



▶ Attorney General & Minister of Legal Affairs, Carl Bethel

## GG VISITS SCHOOLS AND SENIOR CITIZENS IN ELEUTHERA



▶ Students of the schools in North Eleuthera perform at the North Eleuthera High School during the official visit from Governor General, Her Excellency the Most Hon. Dame Marguerite Pindling, Tuesday, March 5, 2019.

## FAKE DENTIST PLEADS GUILTY

BY LEAH COOPER  
 Journal Staff Writer

A woman claiming to be a dentist yesterday shed tears before Magistrate Samuel Mckinney as she faced ten counts of fraud.

Its alleged that on Tuesday February 26th

27- year old Jamaican national and mother of two, Santini Kerr-Wilson, received \$510 from Marissa Coakley by means of false pretenses.

A day later, she used the very same means to obtain the same amount from Derricka Crossman.

The next day - February 28th - Wilson received another \$510 each from Ellyneice Nottage and Latesa Whymms.

Wilson allegedly pocketed another \$510

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ALL THE NEWS YOU NEED TO READ IN THE MORNING

# Fusion Will Succeed, Says Richards

BY BERTHONY MCDERMOTT  
Journal Staff Writer

Fusion Superplex Chief Operating Officer Dominic Richards is dismissing claims that the entertainment centre is too big of a dream and that the project will not succeed.

Mr. Richards said he can't convince people who don't understand the business model.

He added that he doesn't think Galleria Cinema isn't competition, but they just aren't

any competition for Fusion.

"What I'm trying to do is build a community; a big part of building a community is like how you build families. You give them someplace to go where they feel safe. You keep your price point on the ice cream and coffee as reasonable and if they go to a movie, I'm happy.

"If they go upstairs and eat to the restaurant that's great; but think about it from a different perspective.

"The average theatre is trying to get an occupancy rate of about seven to ten per cent to profit.

"I want to put that in perspective. If I have a theatre with 200 seats, I just need 20 people to be profitable; I think I've gotten more than 20 people in a theatre," he said.

There have been concerns about movie pricing at Fusion as some say seeing a movie there is pricey.

Mr. Richards added that the Fusion experi-

ence is not just about coming in to see a movie. He said it's about the experience.

"The movie is all about the experience; the number one experience we have right now in the country is VIP, followed very closely by 4DX and Imax and so in those experiences the price is higher, because that's what Bahamians actually want.

"We think that it's less about the price and more about the value that you provide to the client as

well," he said.

While many have praised Fusion filling its staff compliment with young people, the Fusion COO said with this comes a few challenges.

"When you target young people, you have issues with of course skill sets, and you have issue with temper management. How do you build someone who is less atoned to the business setting?

"So when you focus on that part of the business sector, you spend a

lot of time mentoring more than managing.

"You spend a lot of time listening to a lot of issues and I think that's been the second most powerful thing that we've been doing at Fusion since we've been open," he said.

Mr. Richards maintains that the entertainment centre has been very successful over the past four months.

He was speaking to the Rotary Club of West Nassau's weekly meeting.



► Fusion Superplex offers multiple viewing experiences including IMAX and 4DX, restaurant style dining and an outdoor bar and deck overlooking the island.

## Bishop Calls Policemen

Continued from / PAGE 1...

down from The Office of The Prime Minister.

National Security Minister Marvin Dames said there's nothing political about it. Bishop Fernander said he has to take the Minister's word, but stressed that the council is watching.

"From what the Minister has said, it doesn't give the evidence, because they are up for retirement, but if someone has three more years to go then why this pre retirement?"

"So it surely has some suspicious activity around it. We are watching, but we must accept what the Minister says, which is there is no political interference.

"This will be further watched to see how these matters are dealt with and really and truly, I believe the Police Force should be free of political interference," Bishop

Fernander said.

The Christian Council President added that the government should not have its hands in the RBPF and that there must come a day when the Commissioner of Police is in charge.

He said, "if we're going to manipulate the hierarchy of the Police Force to a place where they are political pundits, we're going to always be in the state we're in; where people are afraid to offer themselves to work, and some of the best minds will not rise to the top to do the job that we need them to do in our country."

The three officers expected to leave the Force are Deputy Commissioner of Police Emrick Seymour, Senior Assistant Commissioner Stephen Dean and Assistant Commissioner Clarence Reckley – husband of Former Deputy Director of Urban

Renewal Michelle Reckley. She along with three others were charged with 21 counts of fraud last month.

"It's concerning that you would do this during police month and one of the officers being let go, is in charge of police month.

"So it tells me that this was not prepared, it was not planned and if it was planned, it was really insensitive that you would let these three go during a time of celebration of the Royal Bahamas Police Force in The Commonwealth of The Bahamas," said Bishop Fernander.

The Christian Council leader is convinced the country is moving in the wrong direction, adding that if it maintains the image of political interference, then people will begin to think there is manipulation in every sector of society.

## FAKE DENTIST

Continued from / PAGE 1...

from Marienise Augustin.

She is also charged with using the title of orthodontist, advertising as a dentist, practicing as such and acquiring and possessing proceeds of crime.

According to the prosecution, Dr. Sparkman Ferguson, Registrar of the Bahamas Dental Council, received notice of an ad advertising cosmetic braces, teeth whitening, and filling under the name Nicole Wilson.

After checking, it was confirmed that there was no registered orthodontist operating in the country under that name, and police were subsequently contacted.

After a search at the Comfort Suites Hotel, Paradise Island; Police uncovered the proceeds from her services along with braces brackets.

She reportedly told the authorities that she was the owner of "Italian Braces", but wasn't qualified to install them.

In court, Wilson plead-

ed guilty to all charges and was subsequently ordered to compensate all complainants their money on the first five counts, pay a \$500 fine or face three months behind bars.

For counts six, seven and eight; she was fined \$1,000 each or 6 months in prison.

For counts nine and 10, she was slapped with a \$500 fine each or 3 months behind bars.

Wilson will remain at the Bahamas Department of Corrections until the fines are paid in full.



### PUBLIC NOTICE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL PLANNING

The public is hereby notified that a Site Plan Application (SPA/2/2019) on behalf of Tonel Investments Limited is being reviewed by the Department of Physical Planning for presentation to the Town Planning Committee.

The applicant proposes to construct a shopping plaza along with a storage facility on a 2.5 acre parcel located at the intersection of Carmichael Road and Stew Fish Road and immediately west of Cousin McPhee A.M.E. Church.

A public meeting will be held on March 18<sup>th</sup> 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at Sybil Strachan Primary School (Formerly Carmichael Primary School) located on Carmichael Road.

The preliminary site plan and file for the proposed development are available for viewing at the Department of Physical Planning, located in the Aventura Plaza on John F. Kennedy Drive, during normal working hours.

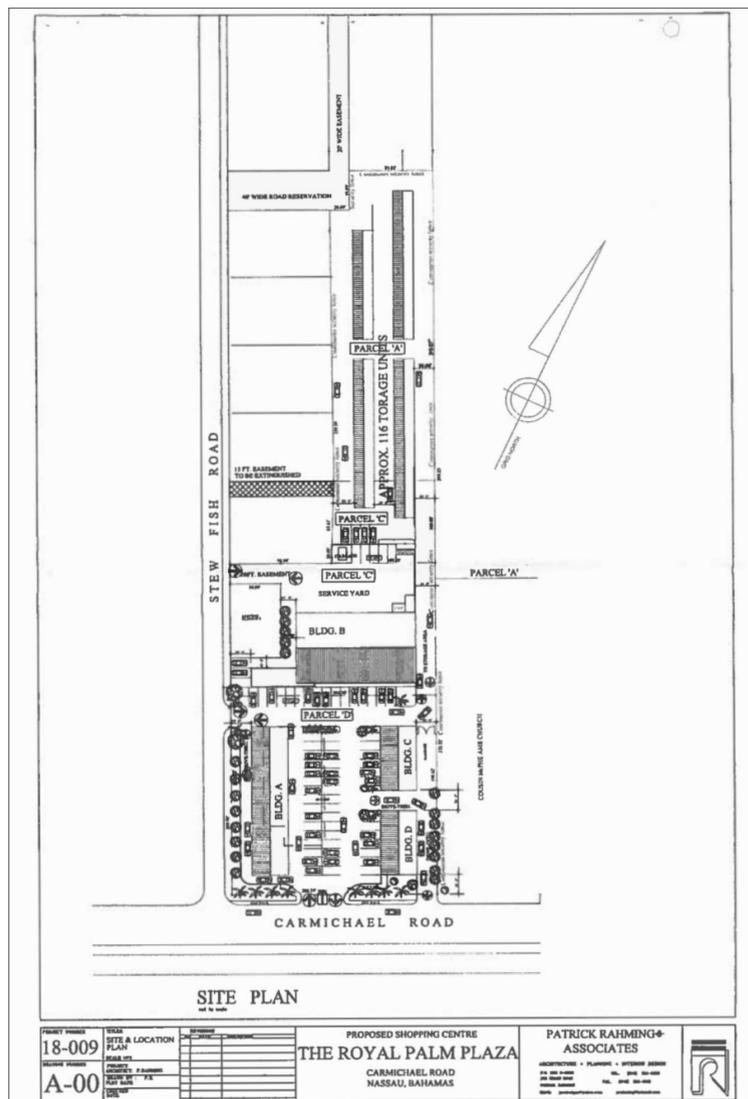
Interested persons and organisations are invited to review the information on file and provide written comments to the Acting Director of Physical Planning within twenty-one (21) days of the date of this notice.

Submissions should be made via P.O. Box N-1611 Nassau, Bahamas or fax (242) 328-3206.

Further inquiries should be made to the Acting Director via Tel: (242)322-7550/2 or (242)328-3202 or [CHARLESZONICLE@BAHAMAS.GOV.BS](mailto:CHARLESZONICLE@BAHAMAS.GOV.BS)

Signed

Charles B. Zonicle  
Acting Director of Physical Planning



# Campbell: Gender Equality is a Human Rights Issue that does not Advance the Cause of Women at the Expense of Men

The push towards gender equality for women in The Bahamas, and indeed around the globe, is not about advancing the causes of women and girls at the expense of men and boys, Minister of Social Services and Urban Development the Hon. Frankie A. Campbell said Thursday.

Minister Campbell called gender equality "a human rights issue".

Addressing a Pep Rally

held outdoors on the Campus of The University of The Bahamas (UB) Thursday (March 7) on the eve of the international observance of International Women's Day (commemorated annually on March 8), Minister Campbell said gender equality is also about ensuring that both sexes are sufficiently empowered so that they can be equally empowered.

"Gender equality is about economic empowerment. It is about balance. It is about ensuring that both genders are sufficiently empowered so that they can have that mutual respect one for the other; that they can treat each other equally; that they can both feel equally empowered," Minister Campbell said.

"The reality is that gender equality is a human rights issue. It is also

about mutual respect. And so if we put together the mutual respect and the human rights together, it becomes about more than just women.

"And so the Department of Gender and Family Affairs is about promoting the cause of the family. It is about promoting the partnerships that are necessary to ensure that our society is comprised of both men and women and boys and girls who respect each other; who have an appreciation for the value that each brings to the table sufficiently so, that we are able to speak love and not war, to speak peace and kindness, that we are able to speak inclusion of all."

Minister Campbell said organizers of the event decided to stage the rally outdoors because of the symbolism attached to being outdoors. The Rally was a collaborative effort between the Department of Gender and Family

Affairs, Ministry of Social Services and Urban Development and UB.

"We could have held the event indoors, but it is important for us to be out here in the open to express our sentiments openly with the hope and trust that they would become infectious and that those hearing what we had to say, having first been touched by the infectious spirit, would share one with the other, and that this infectious spirit would spread like wildfire," Minister Campbell said.

"It is also our hope that this infectious spirit would challenge us as teachers, students, mentors, to ensure that it is clearly articulated and understood, that this is not about a power struggle; that this is not about advancing the cause of women at the expense of men.

"I am the father of three beautiful girls who

are going to be looking for husbands in the future. It would be remiss of me, it would be foolish of me to promote the cause of women; leave all of the boys of young men and boys behind and then years from now when they are looking for husbands, they cannot find sensible, educated, productive young men to partner with.

"As we celebrate this International Women's Day. As we think equality, as we think of innovating change, let us begin to be the change that we want to see. Let us begin to ensure that in our lives and around us, there is equal room for all, despite our differences, and that there is a level of tolerance that will promote the kind of society where everyone will have equal opportunity for advancement while not impeding someone else's opportunity," Minister Campbell added.



## PUBLIC NOTICE

### MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL PLANNING

The public is hereby notified that an application for Site Plan Approval SPA/11/2018 on behalf of The Diocese of The Bahamas and Turks & Caicos Islands is presently being reviewed by The Department of Physical Planning for presentation to the Town Planning Committee.

A public meeting will be held on March 12, 2019 at 7pm at Sybil Strachan Primary School (Formerly Carmichael Primary)

The Diocese proposes to develop a portion of the land occupied by St. Gregory's Anglican Church, Carmichael Road and Golden Sun Way, as a burial ground and Columbarium. The project is proposed in two phases, with the in-ground precast vaults comprising the first phase. The construction of the Columbarium is a part of the second phase.

Preliminary plans for the proposed development are available for viewing at The Department of Physical Planning, located in the Aventura Plaza on John F. Kennedy Drive, during working hours of 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Interested persons and organizations are invited to review the information on file and provide written comments prior to the meeting. Comments should be directed to the Acting Director of Physical Planning within twenty-one (21) days of the date of this notice. Submissions can be made via P.O. Box N-1611, Nassau Bahamas or fax (242) 328-3206. Further inquiries can be made to the Acting Director via Tel. (242) 322-7550/1/1 OR (242) 328- 3202 or [CHARLESZONICLE@BAHAMAS.GOV.BS](mailto:CHARLESZONICLE@BAHAMAS.GOV.BS)

Signed  
Charles B. Zonicle  
Acting Director of Physical Planning

# AG CORRECTS EU MINISTER

Continued from / PAGE 1...

also of the fact that there have been money laundering convictions ever since the first Proceeds of Crime Act was passed in 1996 in The Bahamas," Bethel said in the Senate on Wednesday.

"For someone to state that The Bahamas does not prosecute money laundering is the height of ignorance."

In a recent interview with The Bahama Journal, Giegold called The Bahamas a "stubborn case" as it relates to its global financial obligations and insisted that the country must carry out money laundering convictions after being blacklisted by the European Union.

The EU labeled The Bahamas as a high risk jurisdiction for financial crime and Giegold believes The Bahamas has no convictions of money laundering.

"If in certain jurisdictions, although it has a larger financial place, a larger financial center, and nobody is convicted, that is a clear sign that your regime doesn't deliver," Giegold said. "That is the reason why The Bahamas was seen as a country that has not solved all the problems and this is not about destroying anyone's business."

According to the Attorney General, since the passage of laws in 2018, The Bahamas has increased the levels of money laundering charges and has increased the rate of conviction on money laundering offences.

"Forty offences were charged over the last year and a half and 19 resulted in convictions, netting roughly \$2.7 million that has gone into the

Confiscated Asset Fund," Bethel explained. "Let me say, I am in the process of drafting a response that will be sent to this Member of the European Parliament, but I won't sign the letter, the permanent secretary will sign that letter to him. But he will be thoroughly disabused of his ignorance."

"This is The Bahamas. We don't play fool. When we set our minds to perform a task, we do it."

The EU's decision to blacklist The Bahamas was based on an evaluation by the Financial Action Task Force and an additional evaluation by the EU.

At the time of the blacklisting, The Bahamas was compliant with most of FATF's required criteria.

But according to Giegold, more action was needed by the government.

"So the claim that the criteria were met, maybe, but at least you didn't convince FATF," Giegold said. "So your government didn't convince FATF and beyond that there are some straightforward issues."

During the Senate's meeting, the Attorney General indicated that the government is doing more to become fully compliant with international agencies, as senators agreed to the Anti-Terrorism Resolution.

Senator Bethel said the Anti-Terrorism Act 2018 is a cutting edge legislation that sets up a framework, which allows The Bahamas to be and remain fully compliant with all United Nations Security Council resolutions.

He explained that the Anti-Terrorism Act and other regulations would make The Bahamas fully

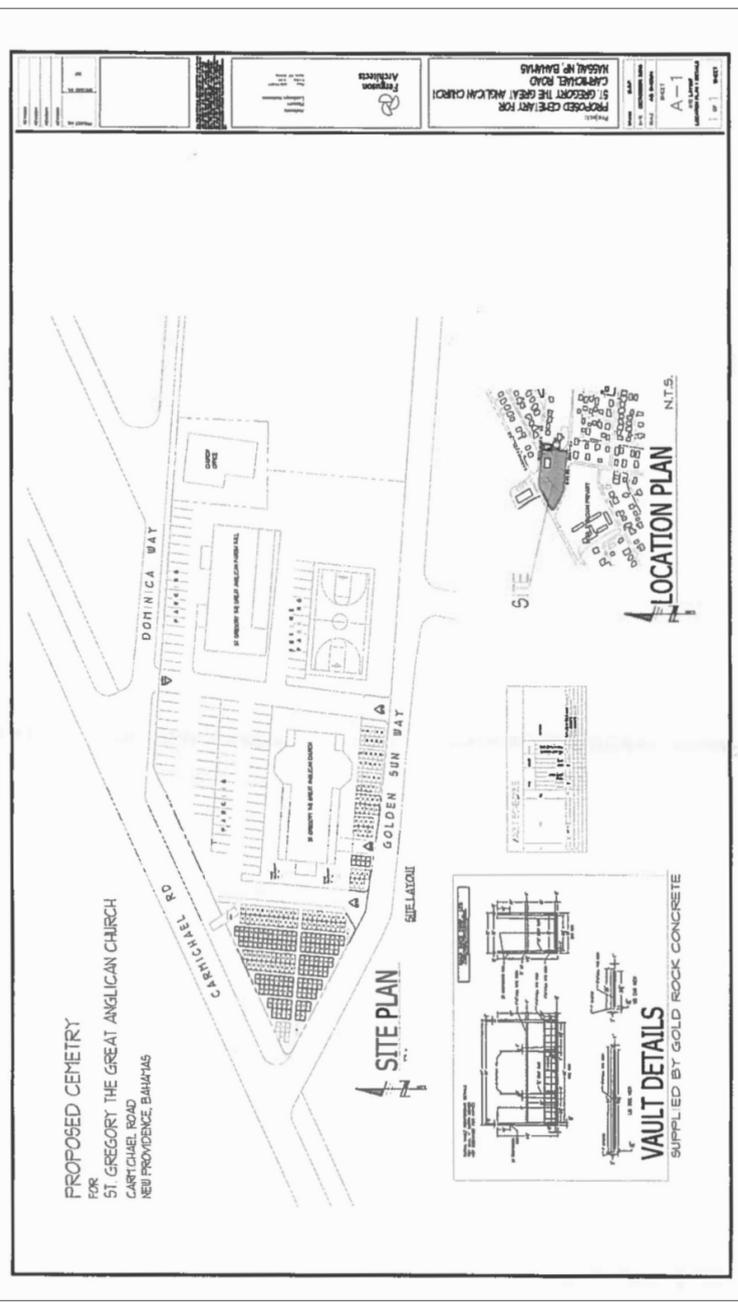
compliant not only in its antiterrorism regime, "but will close the circle of full compliance with all of the antimoney laundering, counter financing of initiatives of the international community, which initiatives are spearheaded by the Financial Action Task Force.

"It is therefore a critical step, a critical closing step in our full compliance and technical compliance with the FATF 40 recommendations. With the coming into force of these regulations, if we were to be reevaluated now, as if we were reevaluated in December of last year, we would probably go up by another three FATF recommendations to be not just fully compliant, but with not just with 30, with 33 recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force, which would truly place The Bahamas in the very front row of compliant countries," Bethel said.

He pointed out that government officials recently attended a FATF plenary meeting and the substantial progress The Bahamas has made was noted by assessors.

"It was acknowledged to us and to our team that The Bahamas in record time has thoroughly repositioned itself in the minds of the global community as now being a country that is on the verge of full compliance and that full compliance is on the verge of being recognized," Mr. Bethel said.

"There are still more things we need to do, but they are now in the realm of technical implementation. There is still some work to be done in showing the effectiveness of our implementation of all of the new laws in the new financial regime."



# COLONIAL GROUP INTERNATIONAL TO INVEST \$4 MILLION IN GRAND BAHAMA



► Proposed draft of the \$4 million dollar development scheduled for a 2020 opening in Grand Bahama.

Colonial Group International (CGI) the parent company of Atlantic Medical Insurance Co Limited, Security & General Insurance, Colonial Pensions Services (Bahamas) and the Nassau Insurance Brokers & Agency Limited – will invest \$4 Million in Grand Bahama through the construction of a state-of-the-art building to become its northern hub of operations.

Situated on 1.5 acres of prime Freeport real estate on The Mall, the 12,000-square foot building will be a fully integrated business campus. It will house the companies in the CGI group and offer 2,000 square feet of rental facilities for third-party tenants. The facility is set for completion in April 2020. At a recent groundbreaking ceremony, CGI showcased an architectural ren-

dering of the proposed facility which was created by The Architects Incorporated, a Freeport-based firm. Donald Dean, principal of the firm, said that the new facility will feature a modern design with traditional overtones. Painted Wedgewood blue and white, the structure will feature coral stone veneer and a Bermuda-style roof—making it easily distinguishable as a CGI property. The building will also be environmentally friendly, boasting state of the art green building technology with an emphasis on energy conservation and water consumption.

According to the Prime Minister The Most Honourable Dr Hubert A. Minnis, who gave the keynote address, CGI's headquarters will help to enhance the city's landscape and bring growth and improvement to

Freeport's real estate and construction industries.

Dr E. Grant Gibbons, CGI Chairman, told attendees that because of the Bahamian government's commitment to the uplift Grand Bahama, it was imperative for CGI to make a substantial contribution to the growth of the island's economic and social opportunities and facilities.

"The Colonial Group family is proud and privileged to have to make this new investment in The Bahamas. It is our expectation and commitment that this structure and the quality of our conduct of business will contribute much to the rejuvenation of this northernmost island. This complex, above all, signals our admiration for the resolve and continued optimism you Grand Bahamians have continued to show through the challenges of

the past decade. We are honoured that you have accepted us as partners," he added.

According to Dr. Gibbons, the investment in Grand Bahama is a natural progression, given the success that CGI's group of companies have been experiencing in Nassau for more than two decades. Atlantic Medical Insurance remains a leading provider of group health, life and individual insurance, while Security & General Insurance is top of mind for home, motor and business insurance. Colonial Pensions Services (Bahamas) offers full service pension plans

and specialized investment solutions for both groups and individuals. The youngest company in the CGI group, at 14 years old, is the Nassau Insurance Brokers & Agency Ltd. NIBA provides clients with competitive rates and first class products and benefits for various kinds of insurance.

Lynda Gibson, Executive Vice President and General Manager of Atlantic Medical Insurance said that the groundbreaking was both the fulfillment of CGI's goal to have its companies housed under one roof and the beginning of exciting

developments that CGI has planned to boost the Bahamian economy.

Said Mrs. Gibson: "You always hear about Freeport being in a state that it will not come back up. But our owners believe in coming into a community and changing things."

"When we put up Atlantic House in Nassau, The Bahamas was in a deep depression. Our owners said, "Ok, we're going to come in and make it work. That worked. So with that happening, we were able to convince our owners that Freeport will work too. So here we are today."

## THREE CHILDREN ABDUCTED IN A WEEK

Continued from / PAGE 1...

edly dropped off on Tonique Williams Darling Highway near the entrance to the city dump a short time later.

According to police, the child had no physical injuries. However, he was taken to hospital to be examined by a doctor, who indicated that they are in good health.

A wanted bulletin has been issued for a suspect shown wearing a sunglasses and satin cap.

Apart from this, nothing is known about the accused at this point, as there is no details on name, age, address, complexion, height or build.

Police are also investigating an alleged abduction of two juvenile males

which occurred yesterday shortly before 4pm.

According to reports, two boys, ten and eight years old, were walking on Kool Acres when they were picked up by a female who was the lone occupant of a dark colored vehicle.

A short time later, the 10-year-old was dropped back on Kool Acres and the 8-year child was dropped off at Tonique Williams Darling Highway near to the entrance of the City Dump.

The 8 year-old child is reportedly with police and has no physical injuries.

This past Sunday, another eight-year-old girl was abducted by a man from her

Culmersville home.

She was found a short time later in the area of Woodlawn Gardens on soldier road.

While police say otherwise, the child's mother claims she was sexually assaulted.

The incidents have driven police to issue a precautionary note to parents and guardians, urging them to talk to their children about communicating with strangers and to ensure that children are always in the company of a responsible adult.

Police also indicted that they are investigating each case separately at this time. However they are looking at similarities to determine whether these recent abductions are connected.

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# WARNING SHOT



By Jerry Hutchinson

## Dismissive Behaviour Towards the United States – Again!

“If history teaches anything, it teaches that self-delusion in the face of unpleasant facts is folly”

Ronald Reagan

Democratic nations have a moral obligation to protect their citizens. Sometimes this is achieved through diplomacy and moral suasion. In other cases, harsh sanctions, public shaming or war is the only solution. We are not yet at stage where the United States feel that we require heavier a hand but, we are certainly at the naming and shaming stage; moral suasion appears not to have worked. In any event, the dismissive and abrasive behaviour of our public officials towards our major source of tourism after the issuance of travel advisory's is troubling and dangerous.

America, like Canada and other nations have a moral obligation to warn its citizens of potential danger in places that they visit. For our officials to dismiss warnings of crimes and other criminal behaviour in the Bahamas especially Nassau, without it appears researching the complaints shows a level of immaturity and self-absorption which is becoming a hallmark of our country. Canada also issued an updated travel advisory on 28 February 2019. Canada's warning reads, “Exercise a high degree of caution in The Bahamas due to high rates of crime, especially in Freeport and Nassau.” Cruise Radio.net

Each travel advisory is met with a series of frantic, ill-advised and self-serving press statements which totally ignores the subject of the advisory and focuses on some supposed slight by the issuing country. How dare they make statements and assumptions on crime in the Bahamas? The most recent statements by our officials are real doozies.

Like this one reported in the Tribune on 26th February, 2019.

“Tourism Minister Dionisio D’Aguilar says he expects some level of “push back” from local officials to a recent US travel advisory, as he expressed dismay over the alert’s timing yesterday. Addressing the warning outside of Cabinet, Mr D’Aguilar said local officials believed US Embassy personnel would regard decreases in local crime as a step in the right direction. The Freeport MP, in noting his overall shock at issuance of the alert, said the use of exaggerated verbiage and the alignment of the Bahamas with countries like Mexico and Jamaica did give even more cause for concern”.

Wow! The last time I checked the US was not only the worlds only superpower but also a friend, ally and the source of our economic success. So, precisely what form the threatened “push back” will take is unclear; but remember words have consequences! As to the timing of the advisory, warnings are issued when they are issued. If the timing of the release is inopportune, then so be it; nations will protect their citizens as they feel fit. The US will certainly not be bullied like the cruise lines. Another unfortunate statement by the Minister was this one.

“I mean to lump us in the same category as Mexico and Jamaica; to us seems a little harsh and we thought a lot of the verbiage in the advisory was an exaggeration,” he added. Precisely what is meant by this assertion eludes me. Crime is crime wherever it occurs; crime proliferates in areas where there are “soft targets” such as naïve, vulnerable tourists and citizens. Unfortunately, tourists from many nations have been victims of assaults and worse in the Bahamas. The proximity of the Bahamas to the US makes it the destination of choice. For example, it is English speaking, has good communications, relatively short flight times, familiar foods and a historical US consular presence.

Not to put too fine a point on it, I really don't give a damn about another country's crime; I don't live there. I am more concerned with crime in the Bahamas and how we can mitigate its malign effects on visitors, our citizens, and by extension protect our “golden goose”. It should be readily apparent that the Bahamas tourist related crime rate would mirror that of other popular tourist destinations. So, there is nothing sinister here; we just happen to have the same crime problems as Jamaica and Mexico and, travel advisories are historically issued around the US Spring Break period which is taking place now.

Then, perhaps under the influence of multiple microphones and television lights the Minister doubled down and made this utterance.

“The Ministry of National Security is looking to see exactly how many foreign visitors experienced some sort of crime activity or crime incident. We feel that it is negligible, so we are going to push back a little bit. We are now dialoguing with the US Embassy and we are going to push back,” he said.

We think that even though there may be areas, pockets of crime; really the effect on foreign visitors to a country is so negligible that it doesn't warrant the very strong language that they said in that crime advisory. So, conversations will continue.”

Some thoughts here. We are complaining that tourists are assaulted but the numbers are negligible; what is the basis for this assertion? I would have thought that dialogue with the Embassy would have been the first option preferably before making statements to the media. But, that's just me, my logical mind and

sense of process. This sense of process leads me to my next statement. Shouldn't Bahamian diplomats who are versed in these matters been allowed to discuss the US security concerns with their counterparts?

Putting these aside lets drill down on other parts of the Ministers statements. Bahamians know and by extension visitors to our shores are aware that sexual assaults and robberies are of enormous and ongoing concern for US authorities. Recent reporting in the Nassau Guardian of December 20,2018 revealed that there were 55 rapes as at 18 December 2018, an increase of 12%. We know from international research that sexual assaults and rapes are underreported by victims. There are possibly hundreds of victims in our society and beyond who have not reported crime especially sexual assaults. Victims who urgently require our support and help and who if untreated may fall into despondency, shame, lack of self-esteem, depression and who may self-harm. These victims most likely include citizens of foreign countries as well given the millions of tourists who visit the Bahamas each year.

These statistics align with those of the Women's Crisis Centre which on Thursday 28th February 2019 stated: “The Bahamas has an “epidemic” of sexual violence, according to Director Sandra Dean-Patterson who made the remark as the organisation plans to launch a campaign, #SilentNoMore, to destigmatise sexual abuse and encourage victims to share their stories”.

The reality is that unless a crime is reported to and recorded by police there was statistically no crime committed. Indeed, police crime statistics are so suspect that many countries conduct independent crime surveys to confirm or refute them. The most notable is the British Crime Survey. We have no way of knowing what victims of crime in the Bahamas report when they return home. But their families and friends and US authorities do. As former US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld once said, “We Don't Know What We Don't Know”. It is however certain, that many of these are reported to consular officials located in the country in which their citizens were victimized; so, we must be careful with our words.

In the event, stating that the impact of crime on visitors is negligible is a hope not grounded on facts. Nothing positive will come from engaging in a public war of words with the US each time a travel advisory is issued. There is just too much that we don't know but, foreign law enforcement might. As an example, how do local hotels deal with crime reports especially allegations of sexual assault? Do they as a matter of business practice offer to refund the guests vacation expenses and, do they treat the report with the concern and compassion it deserves? How many victims of crime have left the Bahamas after making a report to private security; return home thinking that it would be forwarded to police and never hear from it again? How many properties, seeking to protect their brand give guests reports on crime short shrift? These are some of the matters unknown to local authorities which may be driving the increasingly strident travel advisories from the US and Canada.

Travel advisories will continue to be the bane of our existence until we correct the problem. Officials must accept that there are unacceptable levels of crime in the Bahamas whose many victims includes tourists; there is no getting around this fact. The United States have a solemn and moral obligation to ensure the health and safety of their citizens at home and abroad; just as we have one to ours. So, why pillory them if they take their obligations more seriously than we do?

What we are seeing being played out here in real time is driven by a fundamental misunderstanding of the United States and its people. Many Bahamians, including this writer attended university in the US. Alas, some did not learn much outside of the contours of their courses. They are informed by reality shows and the like which, are entertainment although part of American culture but, not really grounded in reality. I submit that it is not until you are associated and train with American icons like, Col. Jeff Cooper, Dr Richard Kobetz, G. Gordon Liddy, etc; spend weeks in their presence, engage in conversations, share MRE, s and hardship with other trainees in the field, that you truly begin to understand American culture. Consequently, Bahamians misunderstand and therefore underestimate just how tenacious Americans are. Unlike British Caribbean colonies, which got so-called freedom for the asking, Americans fought for their rights and freedoms. If they feel that their rights have been abridged or that their citizens are being victimized, the US will react and strongly. They are relentless; they will not stop until satisfaction is obtained and matters resolved. So, if we believe that bluster, ill-considered remarks and voluntarism ignorantism will dissuade the US State Department from issuing travel advisories on the Bahamas, we are wasting our time.

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Quo Vadis, Bahamas?

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## E D I T O R I A L

### WHO ARE WE?

In the book *The Growth of the Modern West Indies*, the author Gordon K. Lewis wrote: “From the earliest beginnings after 1620, the Bahamian development departed radically from those of the islands properly West Indian. The productive system, after a false start in tobacco growing, was essentially mercantile. The genesis of the New Providence colony, so deeply rooted as it was in the growth of its pirate economy, placed a maritime stamp upon the original settlers, not to mention a collective psychology of hardy individualism which remained with Bahamians, even after the famous gubernatorial regime of Woodes Rogers finally terminated the existence of the pirate base.

“The piratical outlook tended to remain, founded as it had been upon a succession of early Governors, before the reforming Rogers' period, who had openly profited from the reckless sale of privateering commissions. The art of piracy, even so, was merely followed by the art of wrecking, the organised depredation upon shipwrecked vessels which, from a moral viewpoint, was hardly an improvement.

“Both piracy and wrecking flourished on the geographical character of the Bahamian archipelago, with its hazardous sea passages and the virtual impossibility of imposing any kind of effective control over islands such as Grand Bahama and Inagua isolated, until the communications revolution of the twentieth century, from the capital centre.”

Lewis wrote that “The Atlantic West Indies entered the modern period (of the 20th century) politically antiquated, culturally depressed and psychologically retarded. The Bay Street Boys in Nassau, presided over a socio-economic power structure in which they controlled the economic-financial apparatus by means of family-type interlocking directorates, and the political apparatus by means of their personal occupation of the strategic members' seats in the House of Assembly.

“Their social climate was a Dickensian mixture of American crass acquisitiveness and

British snobbery, and not the least fascinating aspect for the social psychologist was the way in which, despite their efforts to draw social lines, the ‘best people’ finally accepted the newly-rich liquor families whose wealth they coveted as they despised their manners.”

The foregoing is published for our readers to gain an insight into the kind of Bahamas we had back then. Today, after 45 years of independence, Bahamians still have a psychological problem with respect to national development. Bahamians do not have a sense of self. They are still searching for a national identity and the vast majority still do not know what kind of Bahamas we want. Because we have lacked civics in our education curriculum, generations of Bahamians have not been formally taught about several important elements and/or factors that have influenced the social economic and political direction of our country, leading to the kind of Bahamas we have today.

The late Sir Winston Churchill, former Prime Minister of Great Britain once stated, “a country that does not know its history, does not know itself. Most Bahamians do not know our history, because we have been victims of a flawed public educational system which has failed to teach civics, hence we really do not know our national self.

The eras of Slavery and Colonialism have had the greatest effect on Bahamians as a people, because those periods impacted our psyche, our confidence and how we think of ourselves. Slavery and Colonialism have been the monkeys on our backs and have hindered the development of our sense of self, our national identity and who we are as Bahamians.

Today we call on the government of the Bahamas to insist that courses in Bahamian civics are taught in all of our schools beginning at the primary school level, with a subject in the Bahamas Junior Certificate examinations being mandatory.

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