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City Forced to Pay Contractor That Piccirillo Ignored



(Cont. on pgs. 2)

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HAMILTON: The "Price" of History Is Not Lost

By: Ken Hamilton

Internet Movie Database (IMDb)'s plot summary of Black History: Lost, Stolen or Strayed says that the plot of the 1968 TV movie "... reviews the numerous contributions of African-Americans to the development of the United States. From

(Cont. on pg. 3)

Is Pelosi's Island a Sequel to Gilligan's Island? The 2020 Democratic Campaign for the Presidency.

By: Ken Hamilton

As I read through the profiles and saw the images of the Democrats running for the presidency of the United States, I couldn't help but to notice a resemblance between them and the 1964-1967 television series about a shipwreck and the lost

(Cont. on pg. 7)

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NIAGARA FALLS

City Forced to Pay Contractor That Piccirillo Ignored Cont. from Cover

Tony Farina

The Niagara Falls City Council last week almost quietly approved a \$76,000 payment to Wendel Engineering for work on the Highland Ave. Fire House that was long overdue from the previous administration despite numerous attempts from the contractor to get paid by the city.

Mayor Robert Restaino submitted a request to the council on Feb. 7, essentially asking that they make good on the contract that had not been honored by the city and former Community Development Director Seth Piccirillo who during the 2018-2019 period in question was clearly considering his political future, eventually losing his bid for the mayor's office.

According to the communication from Mayor Restaino to the council to get the contract paid, he said Wendel had fulfilled their work requirements on the fire house during 2018 and issued three invoices to Community Development that, unfortunately, "were apparent-

ly disregarded by the department's former director, Seth Piccirillo."

Restaino said Wendel made several more attempts during 2019 (the year of the bitter race for mayor) to collect their money but were unsuccessful.

Apparently, according to the Restaino message to the council, the new administration found that Wendel had not been paid because the New York State Development grant which Piccirillo had told the council would cover the work would not cover the cost and so he ignored the problem, perhaps hoping it would go away.

Given that the council was "misinformed" relative to funding, Restaino said the city was obligated to compensate Wendel not only because it is obligated to do so, but also to preserve the city's reputation with the business community.

"In order to move this city forward, the community must know that we have the ability and integrity to fulfill our contractual obligations," Restaino told the council in his memorandum.

Council Members:

At your meeting on December 11, 2017, the Niagara Falls City Council approved a professional services agreement for \$76,000 with Wendel WD Architecture, Engineering, Surveying, and Landscape Architecture, P.C. ("Wendel") relative to the Fire House at 3721 Highland Avenue. Funding for this contract was designated to come from a New York State Empire State Development grant that was secured by the Community Development Department in 2014 through the consolidated funding application process.

On January 18, 2018, the City entered into a professional services contract with Wendel where they would develop and provide construction documents for bidding and all bidding services up to contract award which would allow for the execution of all remaining work at the site. Wendel fulfilled their requirements under this contract during 2018 and issued three invoices for the services it performed; unfortunately, those invoices, which were submitted to Community Development for payment, were apparently disregarded by the department's former director, Seth Piccirillo. Throughout 2019, Wendel made several more attempts to collect on the invoices without success.

Subsequently, my administration has discovered that the reason Wendel was not paid resulted from the funding being eligible only if the entire renovation of the Highland Avenue Fire House was completed. It was apparent then that the New York State Empire State Development grant which Mr. Piccirillo led this Council to believe would pay for the contract was clearly not as the former Community Development director advised this Council. Without the funding source, Mr. Piccirillo then essentially ignored Wendel's numerous requests for payment. However, ignoring the problem will not allow the City's contractual responsibilities to just go away.

As the City Council was misinformed relative to funding of the professional services contract, the City is now obligated to compensate Wendel for services rendered pursuant to the agreement. This Administration therefore requests that the City Council approve payment of \$76,000 to Wendel WDAE SLA, P.C., for the work that it undertook relative to the Highland Avenue Fire Station. This payment is requested not only because the City is legally obligated to do so, but because it is also necessary to preserve our reputation with the business community. In order to move this city forward, the community must know that we have the ability and integrity to fulfill our contractual obligations.

City Hall sources hint there may be more surprises still to come, adding to the already severe financial problems the administration inherited when the new mayor took office on Jan. 1.

Since losing his bid for mayor in

a bitter primary battle with Restaino last June, Piccirillo seemed to disappear from city government in the last half of the year and he has since moved on to the private sector.

NIAGARA

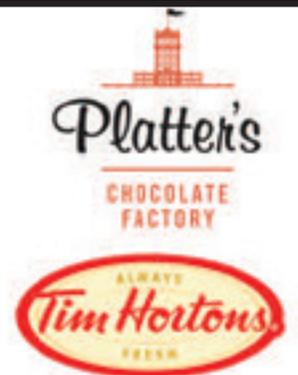


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Wilson: Lakeside Market

Youngstown: Anchor Spirits & Wines, Bandanas Bar & Grill, Public Library, Rite Aid, Village Diner

HAMILTON: The "Price" of History Is Not Lost Cont. from Cover



Ken Hamilton

the perspective of the turbulent late 1960s, the fact that their positive roles had not generally been taught as part of American history." It is sometimes as if the movie was never made.

But even so, as the basis of American history is largely a conglomeration of white-European history, it is a disservice to black children to not be facilitated in the unlimited study of their own roots, but subliminally to just focus on the slavery within the confines of America's borders. Our fellow Americans of European extraction often dismiss the woes of African-Americans fixation on the effects of former servitude by citing that virtually every group of human beings had been subjected to such, but they fail to name a single ancestor of theirs who were so enslaved, or even unknown white masses who were subjected as such under the thumb of a black master.

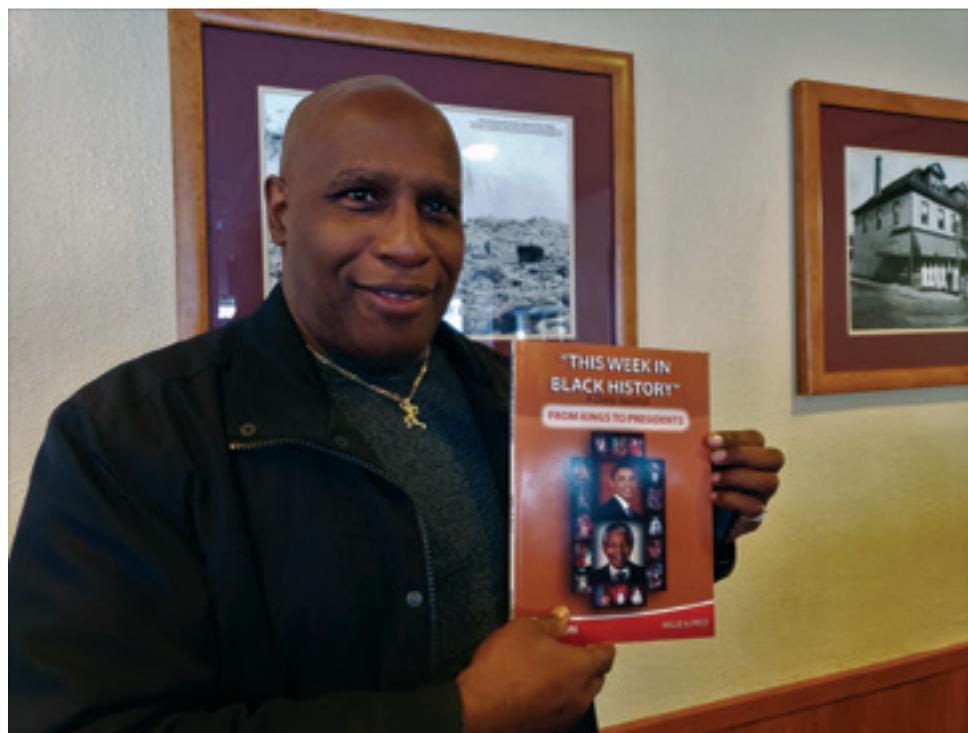
Little wonder why after 400-years on American soil, blacks are still at the bottom of the socio-economic scale, and will remain so until they know, as European-Amer-

icans know, the geographic heights, depths, breadths and summation of their history here and abroad. There is a price, and African-American activist and author Willie A. Price has the answer.

Price was writing for the Buffalo Challenger back when I was writing for the Buffalo Criterion; but we had not yet then met each other. Earlier this week, he and I sat down for breakfast at Denny's to discuss such issues.

Price and I agreed that Martin Luther King was not the breadth, depth and summation of history for Americans of African descent. To make the historically pivotal King the central character in the eyes of 'black' children is - in words that former President George W. Bush might use - a misundereestimation of what has been poorly-labeled as "Black History." As American and European history is intractably woven together so much so that they are literally one, the black child's development is stunted by detachment from their roots in Africa; such roots that are distorted on the continent by the white commercialization of Tarzan and other "jungle" movies, and in America by the blaxploitationist of early movies like Birth of a Nation and mischaracterization of abolitionist Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin.

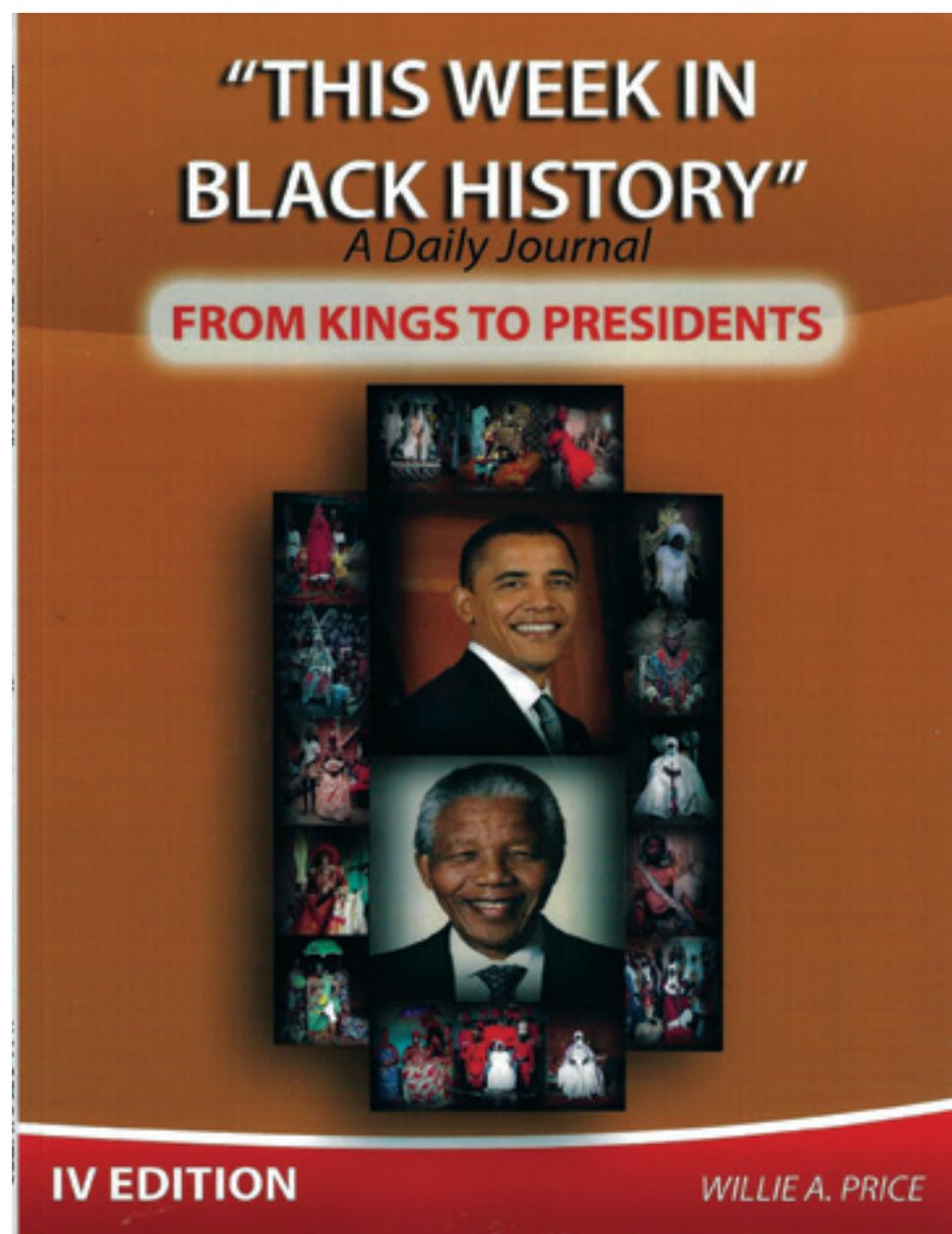
Price's ambition in his so far 4-editions of his "This Week in Black History" workbooks is, "... to create a tool that each day the reader will learn something about Black History, and to do so in such



a way that it creates conversations between both black children and white children so that children -- especially black children -- will realize that they can do anything that they make up their mind to do."

"Ultimately", Price says, as does his workbook, "History is not what makes you. You are what makes history."

Price hopes to one day have his publications sold in places where youths with an interest in history may purchase it, such as in the Underground Railroad Interpretative Center at the Amtrak Station. But in the meantime, to order the book, drop a line to WillieAPrice@aol.com.



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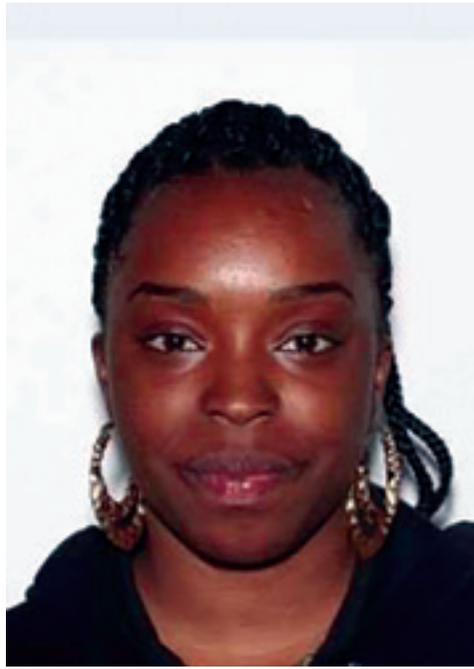
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THE CRIME

WEEKLY HEADLINES

-Niagara Falls Police have asked for public assistance in finding the person photographed to the right. Police are looking to locate the mother of an infant that was left next to an ice machine at the Seneca Niagara Casino Hotel on January 31st, 2020. The suspect's name is Sherone Littleton, 28, from Niagara Falls. Police have reason to believe she might be on the run.



-Niagara Falls Police responded to Rapids Bowling Alley in the early morning hours of Saturday, February 15th, 2020, after reports of a large fight. This is the second time in two weeks that a heavy police response has been needed at Rapids Bowling Alley due to brawls. Police are reviewing video footage.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 1200 block of 91st Street in LaSalle on Saturday, February 15th, 2020, after reports of an armed robbery. According to reports, a 17-year-old and two of his friends were robbed at gunpoint in the morning hours while attempting to find a friend's house. The victim, who lives on 70th Street in LaSalle, told police that he stopped his car to check his GPS around the 1200 block of 91st Street at around 1:00



am and while parked there was approached by a teenager who knocked on the car window. Not thinking anything of it, the victim told police that he rolled down the window. It was at this time that a gun was pointed up against his head. The victim stated that the gunman said to turn the vehicle off and take the keys out of the ignition. Police say that the suspect then had the driver get out of the vehicle and patted him down to make sure he was not armed. The suspect took money and other valuables from the vehicle before taking out a knife, slashing the front two tires, and then fled in his own vehicle. Police believe that the suspect is a 17-year-old Niagara Falls resident and are continuing to investigate the incident.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 2400 block of Orleans Avenue in the early morning hours of Sunday, February 16th, 2020, after reports of criminal mischief. According to police, the 911-caller stated that an individual threw a large rock through a window in the home and also smashed the back window of a vehicle. Police are continuing to investigate.

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Libertarian Candidate Addresses Legal Baggage

Tony Farina

Many of the names battling to replace Chris Collins in the 27th Congressional District are well known to the public, names like Jacobs, McMurrery and Parlato to name a few.

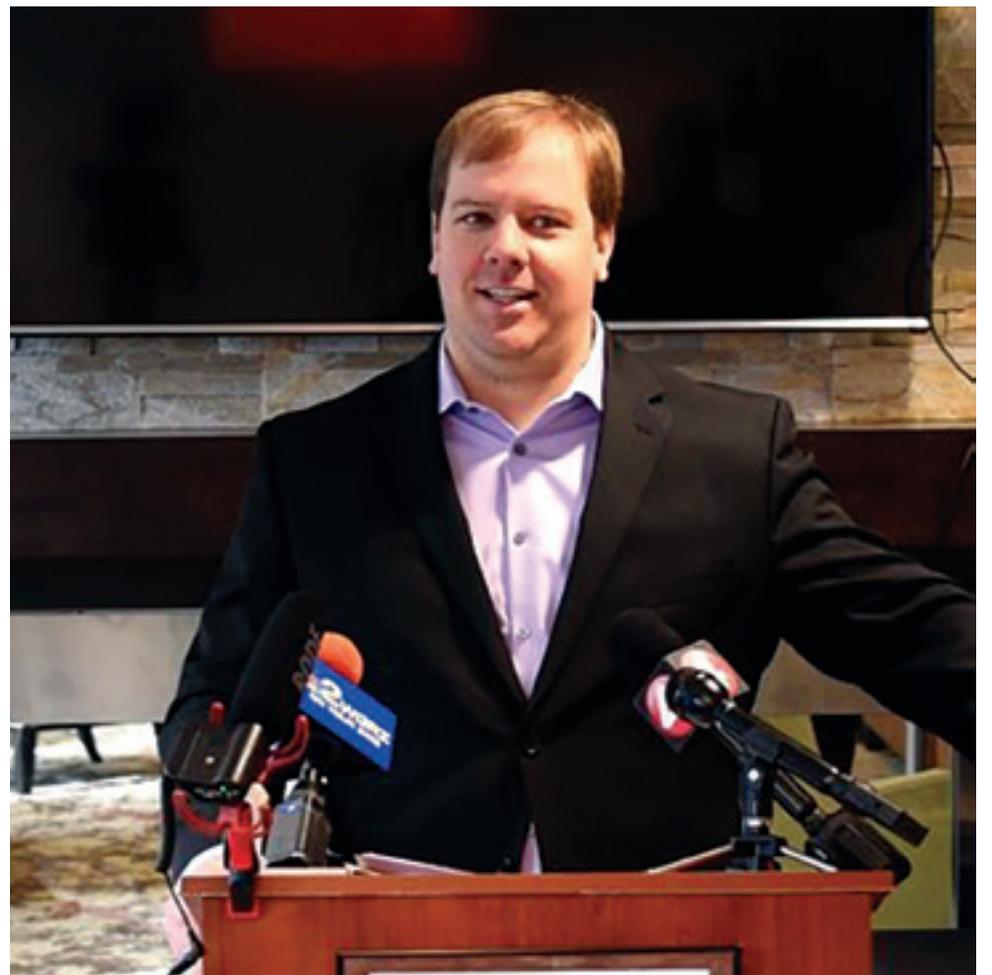
But a new name has entered the contest and while he may be the longest of long shots and carries some legal baggage, Duane Whitmer, the Erie County Libertarian Party chairman, has been endorsed by party leaders in the district for the special election April 28.

We asked Whitmer about that legal baggage this week and he said all of it has been taken care of,

including a tax foreclosure notice on a piece of Hamburg property and a state tax warrant for \$566.33 filed against him nine years ago.

Whitmer, who owns an accounting business, said he settled the tax warrant within a year of its filing and downplayed the tax foreclosure notice he received in 2016 from Wells Fargo Bank, saying he still lives in the house in the foreclosure filing.

He attributed his legal problems and complaints from officials of Erie County Scope about statement he made on a podcast to youthful mistakes and said all is well now and he is focused on the campaign



for congress.

There are slightly less than

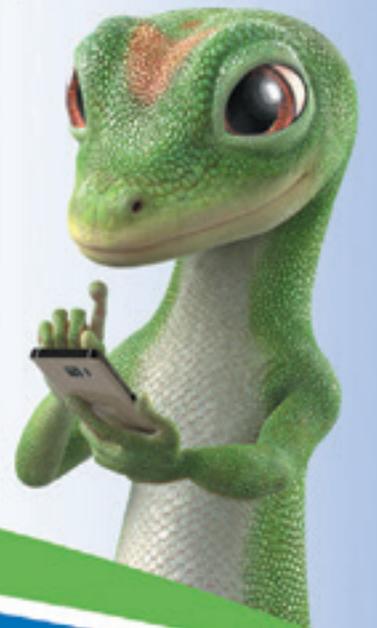
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Is Pelosi's Island a Sequel to Gilligan's Island? The 2020 Democratic Campaign for the Presidency Cont. from Cover

several castaways on a tropical isle.

Like the actually short-lived sitcom, though having a very long afterlife in reruns, Gilligan's Island was about several people, all with different characters, who were on a 3-hour tour that was shipwrecked on a tropical island and they waited for some outside force to rescue them.

All of the characters that appeared on the series were there; but for some reason, the youngest of the crew, 38-year old Pete Buttigieg (as *vogue.com* cites him – "... the Gay Millennial Mayor the Democrats Didn't See Coming... [hic]") reminds me of Bob Denver's role as Gilligan, if Gilligan was born in 1982 instead of 46-years earlier. Mayor Pete's "out of the societal norm" character can be found in both of Denver's most famous characterizations of Gilligan and in the 1959-1963 *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis* where he played a counter-culture beatnik named Maynard G. Krebs. While heavily criticized for his inexperience as only having been a mayor of a medium-sized city, ironically, medium-sized cities is what America is; likewise, Buttigieg is what millennial America is likely to become.

I suppose that the Skipper would be ole' Joe Biden, whom held the helm when the Minnow, er, the Donkey ran aground on the uncharted desert isles of Iowa and New Hampshire where, as it turns out, Gilligan, er, Buttigieg was the star of the show!

Whereas Gilligan's Island had a single millionaire, Pelosi's Island has two billionaires – Tom Steyer and Michael Bloomberg (so much of the DEMS being the party of the

poor?).

As for the characters of the billionaire's wives? Well there's Senators Elizabeth Warren and Amy Klobuchar.

Sen. Bernie Sanders would likely be the high school science teacher character of the Professor, who thinks up the most bizarre solutions to their problems; and each solution, though profound, still leaves them lost on the island.

As for Maryann and Ginger, I suppose that 38-year old Tulsi Gabbard would be Mary Ann, and NY Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand as her understudy. But, hands-down, the 55-year-old drop-dead gorgeous Sen. Kamala Harris would play the Ginger role, with 67-year old Marianne Williamson being her understudy.

As it was in the original series, there were those who played the minor roles; the one-on characters and extras who appeared on the island, but despite the main characters' best efforts, the one-ons and extras did find their way off. There were Bennet, Booker, Bullock, DeBlasio, Delaney, Hickenlooper, Inslee, Moulton, Ojeda, O'Rourke, Ryan, Sestak, and Swalwell – poof, gone and forgotten.

But, as the 1st year of Gilligan's Island was filmed in black and white, and as it was in movies and television series of those days, where characters disappeared for dramatic effects, Cory Booker, Julian Castro, Wayne Messam, Deval Patrick and Andrew Yang were among the first to be dropped. The minorities are usually the 1st to go; which should be surprising in Democratic circles; the circles like Iowa



and New Hampshire, from where former black-and-white President Barack Obama was juiced up to win – and win big! It all makes me wonder about the Skippers, er, Biden's exuberance in getting to South Carolina where two-thirds of all Democrats are black, and as he put it, the most loyal of the Democratic base (despite no black candidates). Nonetheless, it appears that the Skipper, er, Biden has shipwrecked his black SC base as well, as half of them has abandoned him.

But, as it was with NYS State Senator Antoine Thompson in his crushing loss for reelection -- be-

cause of his vote for gay marriage, the normally left-wing black Christian voters who were against such marriages abandoned him and he lost – so I wonder how South Carolina bodes for Gilligan, er Buttigieg, whose voters who are most likely to come out to vote are like the ones that caused Thompson's loss, and may actually vote much differently than the white Democrats who pushed Obama.

Stay tuned for next week's Gilligan's, er, Pelosi's Island.

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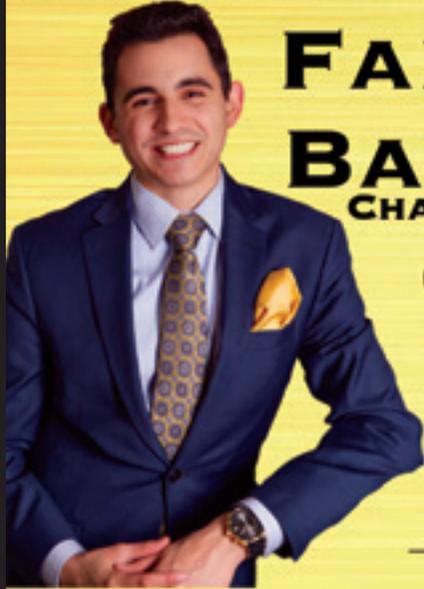
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