

Hilton controversy obscures pressing case

By Richard Prince

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"I'm livid," Miami Herald reporter David Ovalle wrote June 8 on his work blog. "I agreed to conduct a last-minute interview with MSNBC about the case of missing Stepha Henry, the 22-year-old college grad who went missing May 29 from Miami-Dade. I rushed to MSNBC's studio, but a few minutes before the interview, I was told that it was off —

Paris Hilton coverage was more important.

"Turns out, I'm not the only one. Miami-Dade police lead spokeswoman Linda O'Brien was canceled by MSNBC the hour before me. She tells me:

"I am upset because MSNBC called me and asked me to go to their studio in Broward County, 30 miles away from my office. I was there for a total of 45 minutes, was already seated and

had the mic ready for the interview. As I waiting to be interviewed, I was listening to the Paris Hilton coverage to include discussion to the effect if anybody had seen or knew the whereabouts of her Chihuahua.

"Then they tell me they have to cut the piece, cut my interview because they're doing constant coverage of Paris Hilton. I'm appalled that a missing woman cannot get even 60 seconds of air

time because the priorities of MSNBC was to have footage of the front gates of Paris Hilton's house. They asked me to come to the interview, and I'm going out of my way to do every interview to keep in the public eye that Stepha Henry, a bright beautiful woman, is missing and we need help in this case."

"I'm through with cable TV news. It's a joke.

The Saturday "Today" show did indeed do a seg-

ment on Henry. But as with other missing women of color, Henry's case has received relatively little national attention, especially compared to the soap opera of the arrest and release of Hilton.

Jeremy Gaines, a spokesman for MSNBC, said June 12 of the Henry disappearance, "We covered the story extensively over the weekend and on Monday. On Friday, we changed our cover-

age plan due to breaking news."

As Yamiche Alcindor explained in the Herald on Thursday, Henry, 22, was last seen partying at Peppers Cafe in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., at 1 a.m. May 29.

"Henry, a recent graduate of John Jay College of Criminal Justice, flew down from New York for Memorial Day weekend to celebrate her sister's 16th birthday. The (See Missing, Page 11)

Children

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for the children and, hopefully, some pajamas too."

The children at the facility are between the ages of three days to 17 years old. So we are looking for a variety of undergarment sizes for boys and girls, ranging from sizes 2T to an adult large. Cash donations will also be accepted and used to purchase underwear items.

The Clark County-run facility houses upwards of 200 to 300 displaced children at any given time due to a variety of reasons. Children are put in protective custody due to their parents being incarcerated or drug-addicted, removal from physically abusive environ-

ments, and rescue from unfit living conditions.

The children are temporarily housed at Child Haven until they can be placed back into their homes or be placed with a foster family.

"The children there always seem to be happy," said Morris, "but I know that they'd rather be home with their families.

"Child Haven just helps to give them a safe place when there is no other place for them to go.

"And by donating these goods to them, maybe we can help them feel a little more at ease, make them feel a little more at home."

impressed with the work and efforts of the club.

"I didn't know they would get as involved with this issue as they have. But they are all professional women, so there was never really any doubt in my mind that they would handle their business. They even reached out to other motorcycle clubs and respective organizations."

According to Young, the MSMC, who range in age from 26 to 59, has invited several other motorcycle clubs to the day's events, all of which are members of the 702 Riders Alliance, which are largely African-American

male and female riders located in Las Vegas. The MSMC, which is also predominantly African-American, has been involved with other notable charities and fundraisers, including feeding the homeless in various public parks every Thanksgiving (before Mayor Oscar Goodman prohibited any further community involvement enforced by legal penalties).

The women said when they heard Morris' plea for help on the radio, "We knew we had to champion the cause."

Pacman

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Jones, 23, of Franklin, Tenn., faces two counts of felony coercion stemming from allegations he bit a bar bouncer on the ankle and threatened to kill club employees, according to a criminal complaint filed in Las Vegas Justice Court.

Reid, 37, who police identify as Jones' bodyguard, faces one felony coercion charge alleging he attacked a bouncer who tried to restrain Jones.

Morrison, 25, faces charges including coercion, felony assault with a deadly weapon and battery stemming from allegations that she hit a bouncer in the head with a champagne bottle and attacked several other club employees with a chair and a stanchion.

Coercion is the act of threatening or physically interfering with a person trying to do something that he or she has a right and responsibility to do.

If convicted, Jones faces up to six years in prison and a \$5,000 fine on each charge.

The charges are slightly different from those police sought in March against Jones, Reid and Morrison. Clark County District Attorney David Roger declined to file those charges, asking police for more information and to identify a shooter.

"The investigation continued and additional evidence was gathered, that's why it's different," Dillon said. "These are complicated acts and charges. We've worked closely with the district attorney."

A Las Vegas lawyer representing the three was expected to contact police to arrange their surrender, the aide to Roger said.

The lawyer, Robert Langford, did not immediately respond to messages seeking comment.

Police earlier called Jones "an inciter" of the Feb. 19 fracas that caused employees to usher people out of the club, several blocks off the Las Vegas Strip near the end of NBA All-Star weekend. The police report says Jones showered dancers on stage with money from a black plastic trash bag — an act of tipping known as "making it rain." When two dancers began fighting over the money, Jones allegedly grabbed one by the hair and punched her. Jones is accused of swinging his fists and threatening the life of club employees who police said tried to intervene, and is seen on videotape punching a man who police identify as his own business manager.

A police report says Jones was seen walking away from the strip club with a man wearing a baggy black T-shirt and blue jeans. Minutes later, police say a similarly dressed man standing next to a palm tree fired five or six shots toward people at the front of the club.

A bouncer who Jones fought with was wounded in the chest and left forearm. Another bouncer, Thomas Urbanski, was shot in the left hand and the torso, and was left paralyzed from the waist down. A female club patron was wounded in the head, police said.

Langford has called the melee "a glorified bar fight," and said nothing linked Jones with the shooting outside. He said Jones cooperated with police on DNA comparisons that failed to show the NFL star was responsible for a bite injury reported by a bouncer.



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