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Tell us about your background.

I am a first generation American born to Jamaican parents and was raised in New York. I was born in Flatbush Brooklyn, younger years in Queens Village, Queens but most of my years were in Uniondale, Long Island. I have a big, loving, passionate, outspoken family that is a part of my daily life and still is, so family and relationships naturally became a major part of my identity. My siblings and cousins are my best friends and my aunts and uncles are basically second parents to me. My mom has always been the natural creative who desired stability and my father has always been the business minded dreamer. I absorbed a lot from being around them and it influenced the direction I took in my career by mixing the both parts plus adding a little of my own "curry" to the mix.

I attended Howard University with the mindset of becoming an entertainment attorney but quickly switched to wanting to become a catering hall owner after experiencing my Sweet 16 party my mother threw for me. I loved the art of celebration and wanted to be a part of that industry. I later realized that to reach this ideal I would first venture into the event planning and special event industry which turned into a rollercoaster ride I did not expect. Many learning lessons, setbacks and rewarding moments. One party changed the course of my life and it is beautiful.

What encouraged you to pursue to wedding planner industry?

While at Howard, I began taking classes in my area of focus which was hospitality management. There, I had to take a class that focused on events and conferences. At the time I thought owning a catering hall was the way I wanted to go; I figured getting into event planning wouldn't be a bad segue. I later realized that this was the area of the industry I was attracted to vs the catering hall that I thought I wanted. I saw a movie, THE WEDDING PLANNER (thank you J.Lo!) and said to myself "that's it! I will be the best wedding planner.....no event planner in the world! I will not limit myself to any culture, tradition or event type and I will master them all! I will be the go-to planner for the world!"

Yes, from even back then I had big goals and didn't ever think for a moment that someone could tell me no I can't do it. I thought I could do everything!

So, from there I became obsessed with all things event related. I watched every show, read every magazine and book, and studied the top planners and designers in the world. I studied my craft. I needed to know it all, so I began the quest of getting it all!

Tell us about PopBliss' business model.

PopBliss is so incredibly special to me. It was an idea that was sparked from a dream I had one night after having thoughts of leaving the industry. I absolutely loved creating incredible moments for couples but also felt that I didn't gain the gratification I desired from doing it and sometimes the lack of appreciation from the couples amplified it. This event kept me in love with the art of celebration.

PopBliss is about freedom, love, lifestyle and adventure. This is the wedding of your dreams! A \$250,000+ weeklong SECRET experience with celebrity guest appearances, industry leading professionals, luxury gifts, surprises and excitement around every corner! We create an incredible customized itinerary with over 6 events, including the bridal brunch, cocktail parties, glam and dapper suites, tons of elite services plus a live-streamed wedding seen across the country keeping you front and center while highlighting the best of our host city. The best part is it is a surprise to the couples and their guests! Our couples and their guests are unaware of the details, all they know is the city and the date, that's it! The uniqueness of this style of celebrating allows for our couples to cherish this milestone in their lives, allowing them to focus on developing a strong union and starting their new journey in the best and most loving place possible.

We created an unbiased community of couples who align with our core values that become a part of the longevity of their relationship even after wedding week. PopBliss is a lifestyle celebrations brand that grows with our couples, our community, our followers and fans through the evolving stages of this amazing lives.

Tell us your best and worst previous experiences as a planner/producer.

Best:

Hands down it was PopBliss New York 2016. After many years of working endlessly, tons of money, lots of risks, sleepless nights, never giving up...there was a moment at our welcome party when I saw all the couples excited and dancing as they await their wedding day. I had a moment (that was actually captured by photo) when I realized it was

really happening! I really did this and it's amazing and everyone else thought so too! It was a dream come true...literally and I was so proud and humbled by it all. "I created this; I did this". It was surreal for me in that moment and the absolute best moment of not only my event planning career but also my entrepreneurial, "little girl that wants to show all she can do" moment of my life to date.

Worst:

I will never forget it. I was planning a well know popup dinner party with over 700 guests and ...well let's say Murphy's Law didn't play nice that day. Everything that can go wrong, did go wrong! Here is the highlight reel: I had thousands of dollars in an account I could not gain access to in order to pay day of vendors, our outdoor event site got rained on the night before and wasn't sprayed for insects for the next day, the caterer was 5 hours late and the food portions was the size of a kindergarteners day time snack and ran out of food, the crown segregated themselves having one race on the left and the other on the right, a bus drove into our event site and let passengers off in the middle of the event, we lost sound, our liquor license was threatened to being pulled the morning of, an ambulance had to take someone to the hospital, a team member of mine found out she had a terminal disease the day of the event (she is ok now), and the list goes on and on...

I thought Ashton Kutcher was about to jump out and tell me I was Punk'd! Needless to say, we got our butts handed to us but it taught us all about crisis management and ultimately prepared us for all that could happen for the PopBliss event I had a few months later!

Tell us a funny story about a couple or event.

"Two newlyweds walk into a bar...", that's all I got!! Ha, ha!

Actually, we have a lot more drama than we do funny unfortunately. We are ideal for a hit TV show with multiple seasons. You never know what will happen, but it is promised that something WILL happen.

What obligation do you feel you have to black marriages?

I feel the obligation I have is to normalize the mindset of love in its true form. Love without prejudice, without boundaries, rules, restrictions. Love that is filled with freedom which is what we all desire and truly want regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or lifestyle. We all want to be loved for who we are and to love another just the same. To me that needs to be celebrated just as much as our individualities and far more than our differences.

How do you protect your energy in judgmental spaces? Professional spaces?

After being an active participant in the "cool kids club", saying I do not judge but truly judging all to my standard; I went through my own journey of self-awareness, acceptance and reflection. Through that I became a version of myself that was much more pure, focused and free. What helps me to keep this energy and vibration is to only participate in activities, relationships and businesses that make me happy. I learned to trust my judgment system that is based on how I feel and that little voice inside of me to make the best choices for myself. I also create routines that allow for me to set time in my day for myself, my work, my family, friends and relaxation. I am intentional about my time and all that I am involved in, so it helps keep a better handle on what I welcome in my space both professional and personal. Once that becomes your standard way of living, whatever does not serve you or aligns with you will disappear therefore there is not additional effort needed to keep your energy protected by judgmental space. You can control yourself, not others.

What is the most significant thing you've learned about women who believe in non-traditional weddings?

I have learned that they are sure about what works for them and what doesn't. They truly are in search of all things causing the reaction of "that is so me" or "that is so us". They love celebrating who they are, and they want their style, their house, their partner and their wedding to reflect that as well!

What made you decide to brand yourself? What was the deciding factor?

Through my grassroots style of business development, my education within the industry and my natural personality; I feel I am an asset to my brand but also to other brands as well. Branding myself as a Hospitality Specialist and an Event Concept Producer is both a natural fit and celebrates the parts of myself that can benefit others as well. The deciding factor in branding myself was wanting to create something no one can ever take away from me, and that happens to be ME! So, making me a part of my brand is an insurance policy that is worth the investment.

What/who has been your biggest supporter?

My family has been my greatest supporters, all my family. I have continuous discussions on business ideas, investments and disciplines with my dad. My mom is at all of my events helping me out, so are my cousins and aunts and my uncle builds sets for me. They brag about me, they show up for me, they even ask me to teach them skills they can use for their own ventures. They truly have been the greatest gift to my success.

What is one of your pet peeves about the wedding industry?

Many people are inspired to enter the industry but choose to take the short cut. I do believe in working smarter than harder but there are somethings that can hurt you more than help you if you do not take the natural route. For me, it's

investing in yourself and your craft as a professional in creative industries. We are an industry built on feelings and the people who process those feelings. Therefore, we must handle everyone with care, so I would hope my wedding professional cared about themselves and their business enough to spend some time and effort in perfecting it because if you don't care about yourself, then you can't possibly care about me or my wedding.

What has this industry and entrepreneurship taught you about yourself?

I am very persistent, tunnel vision and determined to make what I believe reality. Many would have left this idea as an idea from the moment it was conceived. For me, regardless of how difficult it got...and it has gotten difficult many times, I wake up and do it again and again until what I envision has come to fruition. I am a true go-getter.

What stigmas or stereotypes do you hate most? How do you combat them?

There is a stigma attached to group weddings with the assumption that they are cheap and not personal. Before looking deeper into PopBliss, some may think it is a crowd-funding style celebration or a fancy alternative to a courthouse wedding or elopements. For us, we focus on the full experience of celebrating your union in a new, creative, individualized celebration that encompasses all that couples find important in their marriage and phase of life. We would never be described as "cheap" which implies lack of quality; because the investment of couples, and all others involved create a celebration with a value is supreme to most.

What's the most significant thing you've changed your mind about since becoming owner/operator of PopBliss?

My isolated version of what love looks like and the rules that go along with it has changed. I realized that your true love, your soulmate, your twin flame can be impossible to find, unavailable or right in front of you and you never knew it. I realized that life gives you what you ask for and in no particular order. It is not always the "first come loves, then comes marriage, then comes baby in the baby carriage". Regardless of what your ideal love story looks like, the goal is to have healthy, happy, withstanding love and that is what I have seen through our couples and our story.

What do you do when you're overwhelmed? How do you put yourself first? How do you relax or practice self-care?

When I am overwhelmed, I walk away from that ever or whoever it is and take a moment for myself. Then I do something that makes me happy that I enjoy. It can be as simple as drinking my favorite soda or watching a tv show I love or sitting outside in the sun. Anything that I enjoy so I can get my breath back and think through whatever is upsetting me. Water is my secret hiding spot. Anything I seek clarity; I take a shower or go swimming. My favorite place is the beach, where one world touches another by God. Putting myself first involves being self-aware of the good and the not so good things about myself and consciously improving the parts of me that I choose. I listen to many speakers on YouTube daily, I read at least one book a month (hoping to increase to two), I have a gratitude journal I write into daily and practice exercises like morning papers to clear my mind as well as meditate and daily exercise. To relax, I cuddle in my oversized bed with 10 pillows watch Million Dollar Listing or Scandal re-runs and burn a candle. The computer is not allowed into my room, my room is for relaxation only.

When do you feel most beautiful?

I feel most beautiful when dressed in a beautiful gown. My posture changes, I exude grace and I am most poised. I feel very feminine in those moments and most beautiful.

What do you hope your ultimate message would be? What is cultural impact?

PopBliss is a celebration lifestyle brand that embraces the evolving climate of our global culture by taking the traditions of hospitality and rearranging it to fit modern day lifestyles. Through demographic focused partnerships, social interaction and innovative event concepts; PopBliss focuses on the communal growth of nurturing health relationships, marriages, families and self-esteem. We strive on true human connections to break down barriers as our motto is 'There is one thing the world has in common; we all have a reason to celebrate'.

What's next?

We are excited and ready for PopBliss 2021! We are now accepting application from couples who want to tie the knot or renew vows in the most lavish and adventurous of ways! We also have some exciting developments of the PopBliss lifestyle coming later this year which includes the official launch of our non-profit couples' club, products and in true PopBliss style...a few secrets and surprises. This is the time to get in on PopBliss!

Visit www.PopBliss.co for more information.

Instagram and Facebook: @Pop.Bliss