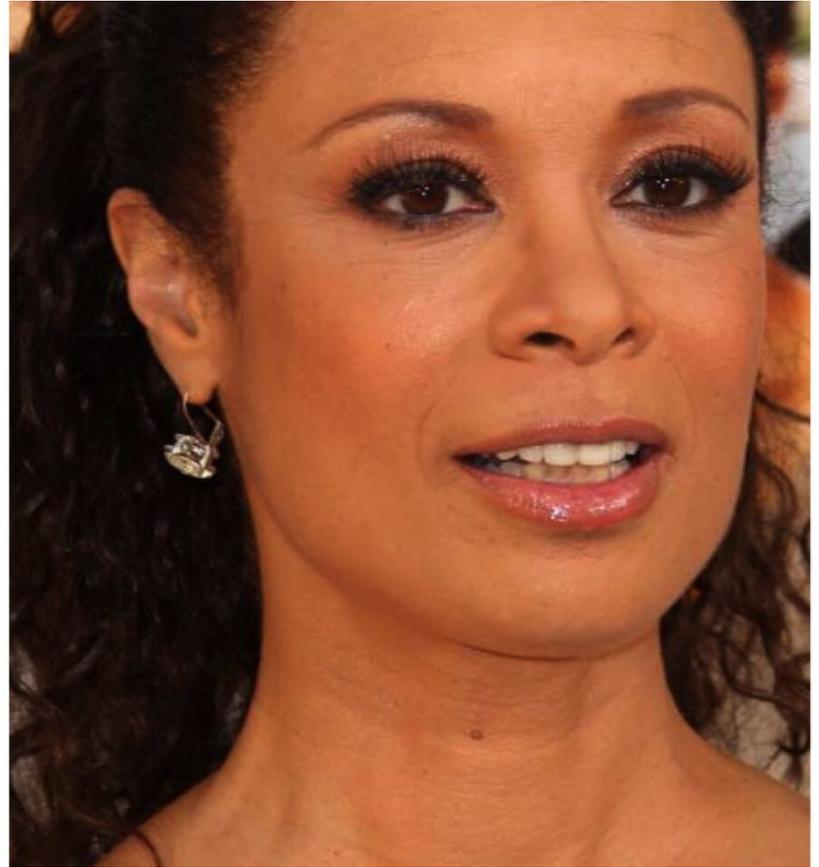


Being Mary Jane Returns: Support or Sabotage



Fans have long awaited the return of *Being Mary Jane* after last season's ending, referencing the volatile traffic stops of African Americans by police.

We find Mary Jane in New York following the loss of her job at Talk Back after she used her platform to openly express her feelings of police brutality due to Niecy's arrest, which her family is still struggling to deal with.

Transitioning from night-time to daytime news on Great Day USA, the ever-ambitious Mary Jane is already working on rising through the ranks to become lead anchor. She finds common ground with current anchor and idol, Ronda (Valerie Pettiford), but as most may have expected, tension between the two women immediately rose when Ronda informed Mary Jane of the network simply wanting to create a rivalry between the two women at the office to increase ratings.

Ronda and Mary Jane are exemplifying the phenomenon of women not supporting other women in the workplace.

Michelle Duguid, an Olin Business School professor, conducted studies on women and processes that contribute to the minimal number of women in high status work groups. She believes this is due to what she calls collective threat and competitive threat.

“Competitive threat is the fear that a highly qualified female candidate might be more qualified, competent or accepted than you are,” Duguid wrote in a release. She classifies collective threat as women who are more concerned about bringing in other women who could possibly reinforce negative stereotypes about women.

It's safe to assume Ronda is struggling to decide what type of threat Mary Jane will be to her at Great Day USA. Duguid's studies found that organization leaders should do more to encourage female interaction, which would ultimately lead to better work relationships.

This fictional rivalry exemplifies the continued struggle women face in corporate settings, rather than reach back and teach a rising star the ropes, women maintain poker faces with their cards close to chest.

The constant need to be better than male counterparts and secure your position outweighs potential opportunities to collaborate and even forge friendships with female coworkers. Particularly, black women face differing challenges from their white counterparts, often combating feelings of being invisible amongst other issues as reported by [Fortune](#).

In previews for episode two Ronda brings in a new character played by Michael Ealy, who is responsible for getting Mary Jane fired from Talk Back.

Who's to blame, Ronda for wanting to secure her position as lead anchor? Or Mary Jane for wanting to move up the ranks too quickly?

Could this rivalry turn into a heated catfight or (hopefully) a celebration of Black Girl Magic?

Stay tuned this season, as we keep up with *Being Mary Jane*.

(Visited 16 times, 1 visits today)

Congratulations Mary Jane, You Played Yourself



This week's episode of *Being Mary Jane* found Black women at the center of a conversation fighting to be taken seriously in the workplace and in relationships.

The episode began with the continued conflict between Ronda (Valerie Pettiford) and Mary Jane. Let's not forget the added pressure of the new senior producer, Justin (played by Michael Ealy), who is allegedly responsible for Mary Jane being fired from SMC in Atlanta.

In a morning meeting, Mary Jane pitched a story idea, and although it was accepted, the producers felt that she didn't have an interesting enough "interview style," that could appeal to a younger demographic. The story was passed on to another young-looking reporter, who already had four other running segments. Ronda and Justin agree, giving Mary Jane lots of side eye action along the way.

A man giving side-eye, now that's sexy.

Feeling stifled in her position, Mary Jane went to Garrett (Ashton Holmes) in hopes of understanding what was wrong with her interview style. Rather than assuming the role of the angry Black woman as many expected, she calmly asked, "Why?"

Garrett clearly did not want to address the issue so he called in wingman Justin to do his dirty work. "Cold, judgmental and haughty" Justin called her interview style. Justin also lets her know about recent evaluations that have taken place, which seem to be focused on Mary Jane solely. He showed her footage from an interview she did on SMC's Talk Back.

In other words, he's not really feeling Mary Jane. Two can play that game. But someone always plays it better.

Mary Jane and Kara came up with a plan inspired by Lee's interest in American reality television to pitch a story idea that only she could and would do. But of course, they have to play it cool.

At the next pitch meeting, Kara suggested interviewing ratchet reality TV star Mercedes Wilkerson played by social media sensation and rapper Cardi B, about being on TV and her new swim line.

No one wants to take it except Mary Jane, only there's one roadblock: Justin as the producer.

"Transforming a hoodrat into respectable morning TV," he says. I'm still not sure what his beef is with Mary Jane, it seems rather personal. Under Justin's strict instruction, Mary Jane was only to ask about her swim and not about Black womanhood.

Guess the topic is too tough for daytime TV.

It's the day of the show and Mercedes has arrived with her hoodrats, wigs

and ratchetness. The two had quite the exchange on air ending with Mary Jane, "For those of you looking to find Mercedes' fashions, you can find them being sold out of the trunk of her car in the parking lot of a strip club."

Ouch Mary Jane. I was anxiously waiting for Cardi B's comeback, but it came later off-camera in a dressing room between the two, recorded over social media.

Once again, Mary Jane went viral. Melissa Harris-Perry even wants to interview her. Yesssssssssss. You know you've made it when someone like her is calling for you, or so she thought.

Her rant got her a special meeting with Garrett about an idea that Ronda had to capitalize on Mary Jane's new found attention by becoming resident web correspondent.

From on-camera to on-web. In Journalism, some consider that going backward.

It appears the staff at Great Day USA are trying to make Mary Jane almost invisible, which is an issue Black women face in corporate America. A [report](#) by the Center for Talent Innovation examine this issue and many others finding that the opportunities for Black women remain constrained in several ways:

Black women's contributions go unrecognized. The report notes that 26% of black women feel their talents aren't recognized by their superiors. We saw Mary Jane being engaged in the morning segment meetings, coming up with ideas only for her idea to be shot down or passed on to someone, whom Justin and Ronda felt better suited. Her ideas were recognized but her efforts for doing so were not.

Black women lack sponsors. Initially, Mary Jane felt she had Ronda in her corner wanting both Black women to succeed at Great Day USA. She found

out quickly, that was not the case. Mary Jane's only sponsor is Kara, but it appears now that Lee is stepping up as her support system as well.

Black women are likely to "put their heads down." The old Mary Jane before the car crash probably would have put her head down and simply go along with whatever changes to her position. However, being at a new station in a new city, she's in some aspect starting over. Yet, she has not put her head down.

She's just been strategic about how she handles certain situations. Mary Jane is not putting her head down, but more so keeping her head up in a company that could possibly stifle her career.

In other news, her relationship with Lee is beginning to flourish, so much so that she was ready to purchase a home for them to live together. I thought it's only been a few weeks? Because he declined to move in so fast, she questioned his seriousness about their relationship, scared of turning 40 and not having been in a "real" relationship.

Slow down, Mary Jane, slow down.

(Visited 36 times, 1 visits today)

Being Mary Jane Episode 4: Getting Schooled



This week, Being Mary Jane touched on a subject that has gotten – and perhaps always will – mixed reviews.

We've come a long way from men being in baggy jeans and women being told it isn't lady like to wear pants. Now, men wear skirts, blurring the lines of what traditional gender norms outline.

Mary Jane, in this case, you can say airs on the traditional sense. Tasked with creating a story despite the pushback from Ronda and Justin, our girl created a video package about a teenage boy, named Calhoun, "assaulted" by his father for wearing a kilt.

Of course her hardwork brought in the necessary numbers for her to make evening news, interviewing a rapper named D-Razor charged with starting the kilt trend. While this story opened the door to discussing gender bullying and the changing tides, Mary Jane's mindset wasn't necessarily changed until her discussion with bae Lee.

He most definitely schooled her on questioning black masculinity based on clothing and mannerisms after she commented on the crossing of his legs, not leaving room for his “junk,” and admitting he had worn a kilt. She said Black men don’t do that.



Fashion is subjective. It’s an expression of that person, male or female. The industry is ever-changing and has adopted new elements to rebel against gender norms for decades, but most prevalent in this current generation.

In the 1920’s, [Coco Chanel](#) borrowed the men’s suit look; John Lennon wore high heels in the 60s and David Bowie in the 70s. Women wore oversized sweatshirts and jeans in the 80s, similar to the boyfriend jeans now.

Mary Jane – and plenty of men and women – have a lot to learn about gender norms, specifically towards masculinity. In the UK, where Lee’s character is from, boys wear kilts and skirts to school, similar to the ones A\$AP Rocky, Young Thug,, and Jaden Smith have worn in the past few years – subsequently receiving plenty of social media taunts.

In 2015, Smith wore dresses as the face of the Louis Vitton women’s wear. He [defended](#) his wardrobe choice asserting his belief that clothing does not need to be artificially assigned to certain genders.

Young Thug wore a dress on the cover of his [JEFFERY](#) album in 2016. He

also breaks down the spectrum of gender by wearing women's jeans. He told [GQ Magazine](#) that he wears women's clothes simply because they fit him better.



Designers have muddled the lines between men's and women's clothing for years, which is partly why millennials today are not so hung up on gender norms, labels or stereotypes.

According to [San Francisco University Clinical Social Worker Caitlin Ryan](#), "This generation views gender as a mark of self-expression — they view it as a way of displaying their full sense of self."

So for Calhoun, he was simply expressing himself and wearing clothing similar to his idol, rapper D-Razor.

"Why should my sexual orientation be questioned because of what I wear"

"Why do you even care?"

Guess Mary Jane and the world has a lot to learn, but it seems as though Lee will be sticking around so she has time.

"Self-knowledge is the first step to enlightenment."

(Visited 34 times, 1 visits today)

Being Mary Jane Episode 6: Black Family Values



Ain't nothing like family.

This week's episode, boring as it was, placed the focus on the importance of family values -through the good, bad, and downright ugly.

At the top of the hour, Niecey gets into a hood rat fight with a local hater and winds up in another lawsuit. Ultimately, her fight went viral and she fought back with words on social media, violating the terms of her agreement with the Fulton County Police department after she was tased last season.

#WhyTheBitchGotTased

As a result of her in-the-moment judgment, she had to return the \$150K she received in the settlement. Her desire for a father for both of her children outweighed common sense, like buying Dante a car.

Naturally, her family flipped out. Ladies, when your friends and family warn you about a man, sometimes, its best to listen. In Niecey's case, she should

have.

The gravity of Niecey's poor decision making goes beyond the scope of her own life. The recent fight spilled into the life of her little sister Deja, who was rejected from a traditional family organization for women, Jack and Jane.

The organization leaders did not want to be associated with the Patterson family values of drugs and drama.

Enter the Patterson Matriarch, Helen Patterson.

Upon discovering her granddaughter would not be accepted into the organization due to the current smears on her family's reputation – Niecey raising two children by two different men, Patrick and his past drug abuse – momma Patterson wasn't having it.

It's rare for the media and television to correctly depict the the modern day Black Family in America and the hardships they face, such as being ridiculed by their own. Television shows like *The Cosby Show* and *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* depicted black families in a progressive light – who didn't want to live with Uncle Phil?

What those shows didn't dig into is that within any society, any neighborhood, families face classism. We all hear the whispers of so-and-sos sister doing what behind the high school with so-and-so.

Stepping up, like momma Patterson did, to defend her family and remind each person that we all carry some bones in our closet is a reality we need to be constantly reminded of. We all live in a glass house, no one bears the rights to throw stones.

It's nice to finally see this family supporting one another, now they are not the Huxtable family, but I think they'll be just fine.

(Visited 22 times, 1 visits today)

Being Mary Jane, Episode 7: Black Mental Health



She can have it all. A promising career, a great family, and love. Ladies and gentlemen, Mary Jane is in love.

Last week, the Patterson family showcased the importance of [family values](#) and helping each other, even Mary Jane was a bit home sick. This week, though, Mary Jane's love fest shed light on an all too important – yet often swept under the rug – topic: mental health.

This episode, she got smacked with a snowball and a trip back home to Atlanta to cover an event. She was greeted by her family with open arms, even her babe, Lee, surprised her.

The way he says babe mixed with that accent just melts my heart.

He met the family and got to spend some quality time with them while Mary Jane stepped out to take care of business. Mama Patterson seemed very fond of him but certainly not his "package," which she got a glance at. Lock

those doors next time, Lee.

Lee bonded with her father while learning the Patterson dinner tradition (hog head cheese), as well as the family history that started this tradition. The meal was created based on the leftover food given to slaves, "The resilience of our people in this country."

To keep the drama rolling, Lee also got into a bar fight with a rival reporter of Mary Jane for being quite the salty player. That's right, Lee! Defend your woman. They ended the night going at it like two high schoolers in the back of her dad's truck with Johnny Gill's "There you Go" in the background.

But Mary Jane and her father weren't the only ones he got personal with on this trip to Atlanta.

An unlikely duo, Lee also bonded with Niecey over her son Treyvion's mental health. Her son has been having nightmares ever since she was pulled over and tased by the police, with her children in the back seat. The nightmares have now escalated to his disruptive and abusive behavior in the classroom, putting him at risk of being kicked out of school.

Mary Jane stamped this unfortunate situation as a case of white privilege because of another child behaving the same way, who is not receiving the same consequences; however, Lee suggested therapy for the young lad.

"Black families don't do the whole therapy thing." Well, why not Mary Jane?

Why doesn't the Black community encourage each other, particularly, black men, to take care of their mental health or take it seriously?

There's a stigma when it comes to talking about black men and their mental health. Black men are expected to be strong, the provider, the head of household, anything but weak.

Mental health is one issue, amongst others, the black community is seemingly ashamed to talk about. However, over the last few years, black men have opened up a space on social media to discuss mental health via the hashtag, #YoGoodMan.

Rapper [Kid Cudi](#) shared his battles with anxiety and depression last year via Twitter, sparking social media users to discuss the importance of mental health. #BlackMentalHealthMatters followed Kanye West's hospitalization after some sort of breakdown, although he has yet to acknowledge it.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services of Minority Health, black people are 10 percent more likely than white people to report having serious [psychological distress](#).

The NBC show, *This Is Us*, also addressed mental health last week, as lead character Randall, played by [Sterling K. Brown](#), dealt with [anxiety](#), leading to a nervous breakdown due to stress from work and home. His family came to his rescue.

Nothing is more important right now. Share this moment of brotherly love, presented by [@Chevrolet](#). [#ThisIsUs](#)

— This Is Us (@NBCThisIsUs) [10:00 PM - 14 Feb 2017](#)

The Black community needs to open up our conversations in regards to mental health, the stigmas, ways to treat, and talk about it. We should not be ashamed to talk about this.

We need to continue having conversations about mental health but in a broader spectrum beyond social media and the broad strokes of self-care.

To end things on a more positive note, Lee said the L-word once again and I think he meant it this time, uttering the same lines he used from the first episode. Mary Jane agrees.

Lee: "Tell me what you want?"

Mary Jane: "Tell me you love me"

Lee: "I love you."

Mary Jane: "I love you too."

OMG! I'm just waiting on the marriage proposal already. Her mother already suggested it and I agree. Come on, Mary Jane, settle down for us please, permanently.

(Visited 34 times, 2 visits today)