

Vanessa Williams Returns With (Legs) Keep Dancing

Vanessa Williams returns to music after 15 years with the single “Legs (Keep Dancing).” Williams’ music in the ’80s and ’90s produced classic stuff like “Dreamin’” “Save The Best For Last” and the sexy swag of “The Comfort Zone.” It was 2009 when she released her last album, *The Real Thing*. Fans have kept track of her television, theatre and film roles and have missed her from music. “Legs (Keep Dancing)” is inspired by Diahann Carroll’s book, *The Legs Are Last To Go*. Songwriter Kipper Jones, who wrote her debut single “The Right Stuff,” Chantry Johnson and Kjersti Long wrote the single which is on Williams’ Mellian Music label. In the video, Williams dances with her crew at a studio, warehouse and the club. She also hangs out with people in her car after a night of fun.

Williams told the [New York Times](#) that her several changes of clothing were inspired by various characters from her long acting career. The shots of her in the Adrienne Landau matching green colored cargo pants and shiny bodice are a tribute to her days as Wilhemina Slater on the TV show *Ugly Betty*. The looks she put together with stylist Alison Hernon also served the purpose of the song’s title to show off her legs. Williams plans on releasing a full-length album in 2024 and is producing a musical about jazz pioneer Louis Armstrong that will open on Broadway in the fall at the same time she will be in London performing *The Devil Wears Prada*.

Throwback: Vanessa Williams- Work To Do



Vanessa Williams's cover of The Isley Brothers' "Work To Do" was the fifth single from her sophomore album *The Comfort Zone*. Williams's conviction made her version a motivator for many of her women listeners. They were able to relate to the message of striking a balance between career work and home obligations. Rapper Dres of Black Sheep added his verses which offered the perspective of Williams' partner who respectfully waits for her to come home after completing her job. The video for "Work To Do" had some of the best choreography featured in all of Williams's visuals. There was no doubt that she made The Isleys proud with her passionate rendition of their 1972 song by making it a Top 5 hit in 1992 without losing any of the soul from the original. *The Comfort Zone* received five Grammy nominations and has gone down as one of the must-have albums from the '90s. Williams's videos for

“Save The Best For Last,” “The Sweetest Day” and “Dreamin’” have been newly remastered.

Multi-Faceted Entertainer Vanessa Williams Spotlights New American Founding Figure Slave Heroine with Foreword in Creative Nonfiction Release, “Espionage and Enslavement in the Revolution: The True Story of Robert Townsend and Elizabeth”

New York, New York – Multi-award-winning entertainer Vanessa Williams has penned a moving book foreword that shines the spotlight on an amazing tale of spying and slavery during the Revolutionary War while unveiling an unlikely heroine. “Espionage and Enslavement in the Revolution: The True Story of Robert Townsend and Elizabeth” by Claire Bellerjeau and Tiffany Yecke Brooks, published by Lyons Press, is a fascinating historical narrative that takes place in the North during the 18th century and the intertwining of

two lives, a Revolutionary War spy, Robert Townsend and an enslaved woman, known only as Elizabeth or Liss. Robert Townsend, one of America's first spies, is credited with being instrumental in the colonies' victory in the Revolutionary War. Liss' life travails, as laid out in this riveting creative nonfiction, coupled with her intelligence, beauty and prowess, position her as a new figure in the founding story of America.

Bellerjeau, an acclaimed historian and the Director of Education at Raynham Hall Museum, the former home of the Townsend family in Oyster Bay, New York, has researched the Townsend family and those they enslaved for over sixteen years. Her discovery of Liss lends important credence to not only the experience of a woman of color during America's founding period, but also contributes valuable insight into the extent of slavery in the North, long before the Civil War.

Slavery was not just a 19th-century issue. In fact, there were 244 years between the arrival of the first African slaves to the colony of Virginia in 1619 to the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. By contrast, there have only been 158 years between 1863 and 2021, with the United States having a longer history as a nation *with* slavery than *without* it. American history is grossly misrepresented when slavery is only acknowledged as an occurrence in the middle of the 19th century.

In "Espionage and Enslavement in the Revolution," we learn that Liss was first enslaved in Oyster Bay on Long Island, NY in the 1770s during the Revolutionary War by Robert Townsend's family. Townsend became a spy for George Washington and a key member of the legendary Culper Spy Ring. She escaped with a British commander named Col. Simcoe, later was re-enslaved in New York City, and after the war was separated from her toddler son and transported to Charleston, South Carolina where she was enslaved yet again. Robert's

persistent efforts to bring her back to New York and reunite her with her child are the second half of this amazing narrative.



Vanessa Williams's own ancestral ties to Oyster Bay, which also date back to the early 1800s, endeared her personally to the tale of a woman that history overlooked. "Claire was able to trace my lineage back to the 1820s, all the way back to a time when slaves did not have a last name. I found her research about Liss captivating and intriguing. Here was a brave Black woman from Oyster Bay who started life as a slave, became involved with the spy Robert Townsend, and may have been a spy herself. She finally achieved her freedom all in the same area where my roots as an American go back hundreds of years. Historically marginalized stories are at last being brought to the forefront and Liss rises like a phoenix among them. Claire's Bellerjeau's collaborative effort with Tiffany Brooks brings history to life and reveals a new African American female hero, Liss!" cites Vanessa Williams.

"When I first uncovered Liss's story, not only was she completely invisible, but the very idea that there was slavery in New York during the Revolution was completely foreign to almost everyone," notes Bellerjeau. "In popular culture, we are generally given broad brush-stroke tropes about heroic figures like George Washington, Paul Revere, and the Sons of Liberty, and significant events like the Boston Massacre. For several years I resisted connecting Liss to the Townsend spy story, but as my research continued, the two stories merged. To me, what makes her so important in American history is we haven't had a person of color to focus on, to see the Revolution through their eyes. Our story, while unfolding among the well-known people and places of the Revolution, gives the reader a rare glimpse of what life was really like

for enslaved people struggling through the upheaval of the time.â€ â€œThe book is of interest for many reasons,â€ adds Tiffany Yecke Brooks, â€œnot the least of which is that Lissâ€™ story touched so many different headlines from early American history. Our book gives America a way of seeing the northern theater of the war, which is part of our cultural legacy but also opens our eyes to northern slavery. To see how deeply slavery was ingrained in New York is shocking. But to acknowledge the many roles and dynamics that everyone played, and not a select view, is critical to the true telling of history.â€

â€œMy continuing focus is going to be to bring this story to a national audience,â€ says Bellerjeau. â€œIâ€™m grateful for the interest shown by Vanessa Williams and hoping her connection to the story will raise even more awareness. Liss is symbolic of so many unheralded voices and stories from our collective past. Sheâ€™s a national founding figure.â€

Further immerse yourself in American â€˜herstoryâ€™ at <https://www.espionageandenslavement.com/> and follow â€œEspionage and Enslavement in the Revolutionâ€ on [Facebook](#). Â Â

Purchase the book at Barnes & Noble, on [Amazon.com](#) and wherever books are sold.

Throwback: Vanessa Williams- The Comfort Zone



[youtube id="NByBW3tId0I"]“The Comfort Zone” was the second

single from Vanessa Williams' second album of the same title. Williams's style was a combination of R&B, pop and hip-hop elements that blended into the mix of the whole album. "The Comfort Zone" single was mature and sexy and one of Williams's most inspired moments as a singer. "Save The Best For Last" was the number one pop-oriented hit from the collection but "The Comfort Zone" sounded more like her natural artistic self. Frankie Knuckles remixed the song for club rotation and it became another addition to her dance music repertoire that had a life of its own. The video was one of the best displays of a glamorous Black woman in the '90s. *The Comfort Zone* album was a platinum success and sealed in Williams's stature as one of the more underrated women singers of the time period.Â Â