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A fashion icon's remarkable story

"You can be aristocratic without having been born into an aristocratic family," remarks Andre-Leon Talley, reflecting on his life in the new documentary, *"The Gospel According to André."* Although he likely could not have articulated that perspective when he was a young child growing up in the Jim Crow South, one senses that he somehow knew it to be true from earliest childhood.

Talley's capacity to respond to the beat of his own heart's drum comes through as he and a variety of friends -- ranging from his former classmates and a teacher in Durham, N. C. to fashion greats like Marc Jacobs, Tom Ford, and Anna Wintour -- reflect on the particularity of his voice and on his remarkable life.

The arc of Talley's story could hardly be more dramatic and unpredictable. At the age of 9 or 10, he discovered Vogue magazine at the public library, and its world of style and elegance became his escape from the less idyllic world of

OPINIONATED JUDGE

BY DARLEEN ORTEGA



PHOTO COURTESY MAGNOLIA PICTURES

The life and career of André Leon Talley, a fashion icon who grew up reaching for his own expressions of style even when it got him bullied, is dramatically profiled in the new documentary, *'The Gospel According to André.'*

segregated North Carolina in the late 1950s. Inspired by the magazine pages that he would tack up on his bedroom walls, Talley reached for his own expressions of style even when it got him bullied.

After attending segregated schools in the South, Talley won a scholarship to Brown University for a graduate degree in French literature. Brown exposed him to an effete world more tolerant of his penchant for experimentation,

and boosted his prospects enough to support his subsequent move to New York City in the early 1970s. There he began working as an aide to Andy Warhol and Diana Vreeland, the venerable former editor-in-chief at Vogue, and made himself indispensable in the New York fashion scene. Eventually he became not only the right hand to Vogue editor Anna Wintour (who acknowledges that he knows more about fashion history than she

does) but a person whose opinion appears to matter to virtually everyone.

As improbable as his story seems, Talley sees the threads to his early life, and is that rare person whose early ties still bind. He speaks reverently and specifically of his relationship with the grandmother who raised him, who kept a spotless house filled with the smells of her baking and who loved him unconditionally. While Talley has said that they did not speak of how he was bullied, he conveys how profoundly his grandmother's acceptance affected him. He also speaks ardently of the lessons of style he learned from the denizens of the black church in Durham that he attended while growing up, who often shed their daily uniforms as maids and servants to come dressed on Sunday in carefully assembled suits, dresses, gloves, and elaborate hats.

Talley's mind and heart clearly were primed for beauty and artistic expression, and the capacity to spot those things where they would otherwise be missed. The grandson of a sharecropper, he speaks, though only in passing, of the impact of slavery and lynching on his childhood, and of painful manifestations of racism he has experienced in his profes-

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The Week in Review

First Transgender Captain

Portland Police Chief Danielle Outlaw has promoted Lt. Stephanie Lurenco to captain, the first transgender officer to hold the position in the bureau's history, citing exceptional leadership skills. The Friday announcement came just prior to Saturday's Pride Parade, in which Outlaw and other police officers participated, and squelched unverified claims that Pride events would be disrupted by a right wing groups.



Renamed Harvey Milk Street

Pride Week in the LGBTQ community saw the renaming of a 13-block stretch of Southwest Stark Street in honor of civil rights pioneer Harvey Milk, when the Portland City Council voted unanimously Thursday to honor the late San Franciscan, who was one of the first openly gay elected officials before being assassinated in 1978.

Immigration Detainees Visited

U.S. Sens. Jeff Merkely and Ron Wyden, and Reps. Suzanne Bonamici and Earl Blumenau-

er met with male immigrants being held by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) at the Sheridan federal prison Saturday. The Democratic lawmakers and the ACLU claim the 123 detainees were being held in violation of their rights under Trump's "zero tolerance" immigration policy.

Shot Dead at School Track

A man who was found deceased from a gunshot wound Sunday morning on the track of the temporary site of Grant High School on Southeast 91st Avenue has been identified as 30-year-old Barak Rosen. There are no suspects in custody. The state medical examiner determined Rosen died of "homicidal violence" from multiple gunshot wounds.

Civil Rights Champion Dies

A close confidante to the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Dorothy Cotton, passed away last week in her Ithaca, N.Y. retirement home at the age of 88. Cotton was the only woman in King's inner circle of aides, marched tirelessly in civil rights demonstrations, typed King's "I Have a Dream speech," and was a major player in securing Southern black people the right to vote.