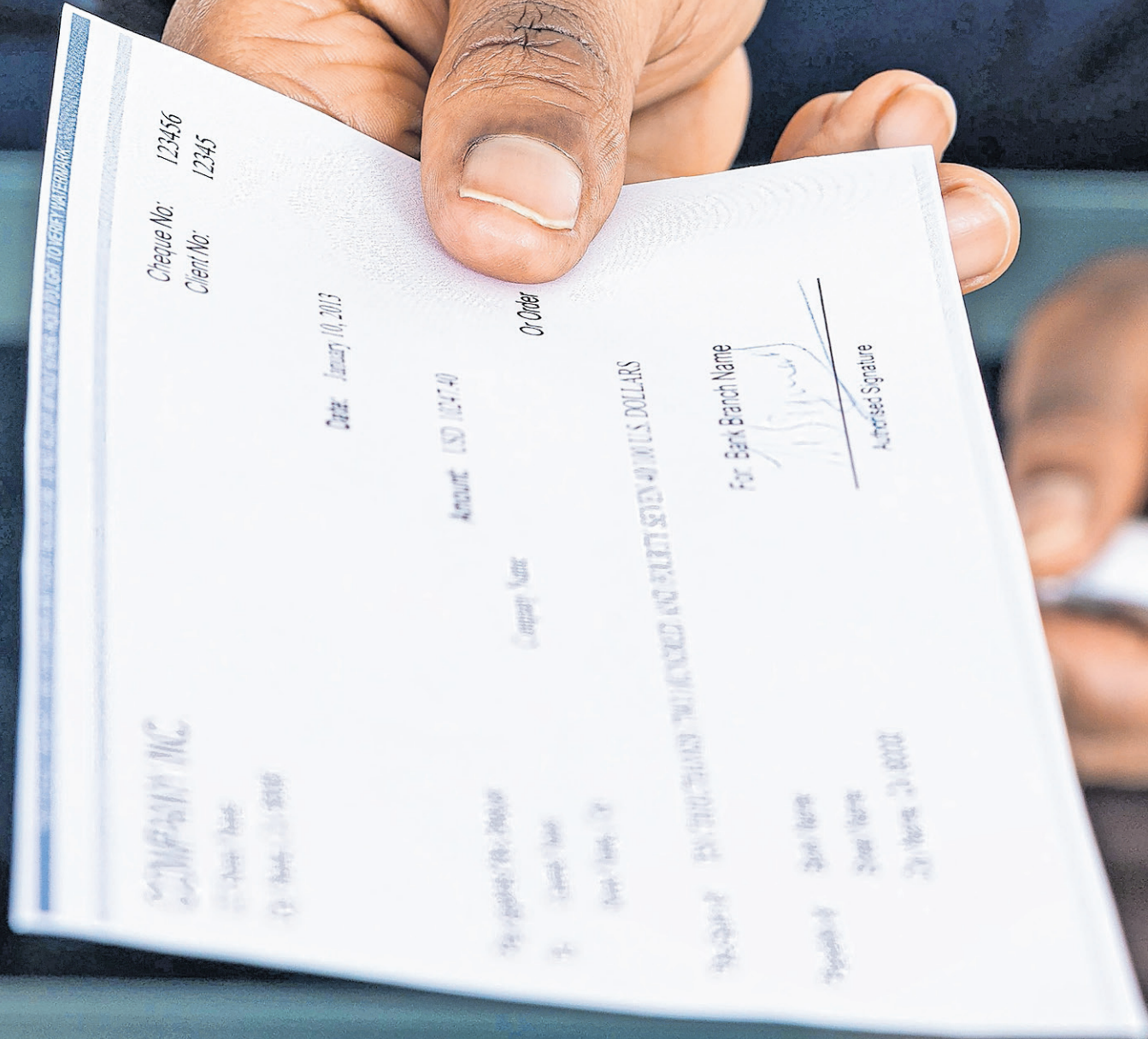


#2 MyNetwork



THE BIG SECRET

Honesty is fundamental to any healthy relationship, especially those with family members. So why do so many young professionals keep their salaries private? **P.4&5**

MyNetWork Show Biz

Elizabeth Ngigi

PODCAST REVIEW

The Chop Shop Podcast

<https://podcasts.apple.com/ke/podcast/the-chop-shop-podcast-ke/id1553144580>

Hosted by Andy and Neville, two millennials in the entertainment industry, The Chop Shop Podcast delves into their lives, the party scene, and the latest cultural trends. The podcast also explores music, and the duo boldly offers their unpopular opinions on songs, artists, and projects, which often spark engaging debates and conversations. They also invite guests who give their views on various topics.

Hotspot

25TH OF MAY
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OKELLO MAX | SANAPEI TANDE | NAMELESS | KING KANJA

HOSTS: KUI KAMBILA & FUNKE FRANK

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Popular American singer Bobby V, formerly known as Bobby Valentino, is set to serenade R&B fans tomorrow, May 25 at the We Love R&B Concert which will also feature American musician Horace Brown and several talented Kenyan acts including Sanapei Tande, Nameless, Okello Max and King Kanja. The concert will take place at The Dome, Nairobi Showground, and promises to be a celebration of RnB. This will be Bobby's second performance in the country following his maiden appearance back in August of 2018 alongside fellow American singer Keri Hilson.



Judith Nyambura, better known as Avril, has been a prominent figure in the music industry for nearly 20 years. She is also an actress best known for her role as Miss B'Have in *Shuga: Love, Sex, Money*

Formerly signed to Ogopa Deejays, one of Kenya's leading music production and record labels, Avril captivated audiences with singles such as *Mama*, *Kitu Kimoja*, *Chokoza*, and *Hakuna Yule*. The mother of one studied design at the University of Nairobi but shifted her focus to music during her second year when she recorded her debut single, *Mama*.

1. When did you discover your acting talent and how did the film industry receive you?

I stumbled into acting. So many years ago, producers of *Shuga* were

in Kenya doing auditions and my songs were topping the charts at that time. I approached them and asked if I could have my music in there. MTV's *Staying Alive* show was a hit at that time, and my dream was to have just one of my songs play on MTV.

I went to the auditions purely to market my music, but as I was auditioning, the producer said there was a musician's character in the script, and asked if I would like to audition for it. I did and got the role! That marked my entry into acting.

2. You have been absent from the music scene for a while, what have you been up to?

I have taken a backseat because of my company (My Everything) and other things that I am focusing on right now. It is like my small baby. I am nurturing it so I have to give it a lot of attention. My Everything is a company that sells organic cosmetics, which I started a few years ago. I started the company after facing challenges dealing with acne and many other skin conditions. When I started learning about skincare, I got fascinated and decided to explore the field. So far so good.

3. How has motherhood impacted your career? Why don't you post

pictures of your child online?

My son just turned six and motherhood is a very interesting balancing act. It is not easy. As a mother you are tasked with taking care of life and are responsible for how the child is going to turn out and how they are going to relate with other people. And, there is no manual so you have to learn on the job. My son does not like the limelight and even when you take a photo he will tell you not to post it on social media. I also do not want a conversation after 18 years where my child is asking me why I put his pictures online.

I want that to be his decision. That does not mean he is not on social media, he watches things on YouTube shorts and TikTok and he is living a full life the way he wants. I would love for him to enjoy his childhood like a normal child. If he wants to be in the limelight, I will support him in every way.

4. What achievements are you most proud of?

I am surprised by the things I have done in my music career. I have performed as far as Lodwar, Nigeria, and India. I have had such an amazing journey, to be honest. I get emotional thinking about the things I have been able to do, the people I have met, the doors that I have been able to open for myself and other people. Life has been beautiful and I love every bit of it. I chose this path and it has brought so much joy in my life right now and every experience has been so valuable in my life. I want to be remembered as a resilient person. When you are resilient, you know what you want in your life and so you will have the discipline to stay committed.

5. What did you study in school and how do you ensure your brand remains relevant?

I have a degree in Product Design from the University of Nairobi. I use it every day in my career as a musician and also for my company. You have to learn how to build your business and how to take your brand to the next level. I thank my parents for educating me because that is the most expensive thing you can ever give your child. I stay relevant by constantly rebranding.

I tell the younger generation to always look at trends, technology and what is happening in the industry they are in. Don't become too comfortable. Always know that there is someone who is looking to get that spot you occupy. If you are not constantly learning and re-learning the industry, you might end up fading. Like right now there is TikTok, do you have the app? We are in the age of AI, are you looking at how you can apply it in your industry? It is always an evolution game and you have to keep on evolving.

People

Mungai's lungs of steel that earn him a decent living

BY ELVIS ONDIEKI

To say Simon Mungai has lungs of steel would be to exaggerate the power he packs in his chest. However, that might be the best way to illustrate his prowess with an instrument capable of leaving anyone breathless — the trombone.

As illustrated recently in a video that went viral of a policeman passionately playing the brass instrument, operating a trombone is no child's play. But once one gets hooked, Simon says, it is a fun ride.

He is a third-year student of medicine at the University of Nairobi, and learnt to play the instrument at the Safaricom Youth Orchestra. He joined the orchestra in 2014 and graduated in 2020.

Today, Korogocho-born Simon juggles between studying, playing in church, performing, and teaching music. Teaching brings him an income while medicine, in his own words, is "delayed gratification" that will bring an income later.

The trombone instrument must require a lot of energy to play...

Yes. You have to eat well, exercise, and do lots of swimming to increase your lung capacity because you have to hold your breath for long periods.

Have you got your own trombone? I read that at some point you were getting one from Ghetto Classics...

Yes, I have one trombone currently. It's called a Holton. It is a privilege to have one because they are quite expensive. They cost about Sh100,000, so getting one is an achievement.

How are your studies going?

I am a third-year student at the University of Nairobi. I'm pursuing a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery degree.

That means you are putting in a lot of effort because medicine isn't easy...

I couldn't say it's hard. The only problem is that there is humongous content to be retained. But if you're a bookworm, it becomes quite easy and enjoyable too. You know, it's like solving puzzles. Sometimes it's so beautiful. But sometimes it can be, let's say, too much to handle, especially when you're also engaged in other extracurricular activities like music and other stuff like teaching. It can be a lot.

By the time you graduate, you will be a qualified trombonist with a degree in medicine, how do you plan to use the two skills?



Simon Mungai, a medicine student at the University of Nairobi who is also a trombone player and trainer, during an interview in Korogocho. PHOTO | ELVIS ONDIEKI



ing with Eddie Grey. I've worked with Sanaipei (Tande), and I'm also currently playing for Wyre.

Is it the training you got at the Safaricom Youth Orchestra that you are imparting on your learners?

Most of my foundation started at SYO (Safaricom Youth Orchestra). I learnt a lot of stuff. Apart from music, I also learnt a lot of leadership skills, because most of the time I was the section leader, and also the principal trombonist. In layman's terms, that means you're in charge of your section. You have to be a good leader to manage your section, to make sure everybody is up to speed with the music we are playing. So, SYO has really impacted me well, positively with leadership skills, with my playing, with all the knowledge I have.

You're also a conductor?

Yes, I do conduct at Ghetto Classics. I'm an assistant conductor. I usually help our music director, Mr Eric. I also take conducting classes online from The Juilliard School. Juilliard is like the Harvard of music. It is a number one musical school based in New York.

Can a trombone player perform solo or you have to be part of a band?

People are used to seeing trombones as a backup instrument, but it can actually be a solo instrument. It blends well with other instruments and it can also take the lead.

Kenyans are used to seeing brass instruments only with police bands and in some churches...

You know, it's a culture thing. Apart from police bands, things like orchestras are viewed as Western ideas. But with time, people have come to accept it as part of our culture. I have seen the emergence of such wonderful orchestras like the Ghetto Classic Orchestra, the Kenya National Youth Orchestra, and the mighty Nairobi Orchestra. The Nairobi Orchestra, for instance, sells out all its concerts, meaning it's a culture people are starting to adopt. However, we still have lots of myths, like the belief that orchestral music is only for the rich. Yes, the tickets are quite pricey, but the music is so enjoyable. It's something out of the ordinary... music you haven't ever heard. And I think it's so nice. I think with emerging orchestras and concerts every season, slowly by slowly people are coming to adapt to it. I think classical music is here to stay.

As a medicine student and a musician, what does your week look like?

I have a pretty ugly timetable. I usually have classes from Monday to Friday, from morning to evening. In the evenings, I sometimes have concerts or practice sessions. On weekends, I do music full-time. In the morning I go to Mukuru to teach music. I then rush from Mukuru to church, and do a quick sound check in preparation for Sunday service. Then I leave church and go to Ghetto Classics, Korogocho, do another session till 4pm and then I go home, and prepare for Sunday. On Sunday, I have to wake up really early, go to church and stay there until 2pm. Thereafter I go to Ghetto Classics, teach and conduct until 5pm, and then I go back home, then the cycle continues.

What does it take to be a good orchestra player and a trombonist?

You need to have the passion, and to enrol in a class to learn how to play. You also have to be a daring person because it is a very, very powerful instrument with a very, very brilliant, mellow, wonderful sound. It is not an instrument for many people, because it requires one to blow a lot of air. Some people see it as very heavy. Others think the sound is too loud for them, so to play it well you have to be daring.

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Movie Review

BY MICHAEL OCHIENG

CITY HUNTER

Where: Netflix

Genre: Action, Drama

In this eagerly anticipated live-action adaptation of the beloved manga *City Hunter*, director Yuichi Satoh brings modern-day Shinjuku, Tokyo, to life. The movie hits the mark with its blend of action, comedy, and nostalgia. Ryo Saeba (played by Ryohei Suzuki), an exceptional marksman and charming playboy, reluctantly teams up with his late partner's sister, Kaori Makimura (Misato Morita), to investigate his partner's death. Director Yūichi Satō captures the essence of the original material, balancing cool demeanor with fun personality.

Suzuki's portrayal of Ryo is both frantic and bold, delivering polished action sequences and great comedy. When Ryo and his partner receive a request to track down a young woman's missing sister, things take a dangerous turn. The movie captures the essence of the original source material while introducing fresh elements. Physically resembling the manga character, Suzuki portrays Ryo's eccentricities and sincerity effectively. His lewdness, whether ogling at clients' breasts or frequenting shady establishments, contrasts with his determination when dealing with enemies. Suzuki's marksmanship skills make Ryo a convincing shooter, and his chemistry with Kaori adds depth to the film.

It delivers nicely choreographed action sequences. Ryohei Suzuki's portrayal of Ryo as a top "sweeper" with impeccable marksmanship aligns with the original character. Kaori, his companion, joins him on a deadly mission, showcasing both clumsiness and determination. The film balances silliness, sincerity, and action, making it a worthwhile watch for fans and newcomers alike. *City Hunter* may not be flawless, but it hits the target for those seeking an electrifying adventure through the streets of Shinjuku. Whether you're a fan of the original manga or a first-timer, buckle up for this hard-boiled detective drama.



BY MICHAEL OCHIENG

**Mukumba Edouard, 25****Entrepreneur and Investor**

I keep my income private because I realised it influences how people perceive me. With parents, I demonstrate self-sufficiency without disclosing any specifics. Among friends, openness varies. Some respect privacy, others do not. I noticed that discussing your finances openly among friends can introduce competition and make others start comparing themselves with you. It is a delicate balance where you need to share just enough and tactfully withhold the nitty gritty. This helps maintain harmony in relationships.

When discussing money, I often tell people that my income levels fluctuate depending on the profits we make. This shows that even I can't predict my exact earnings. It's about being realistic and also preserving personal boundaries. The way we present ourselves influences how others perceive and interact with us.

Managing personal finances can be hard, especially if there are people who rely on you for support. If you're assisting someone financially, they might keep expecting that help with little regard for your budget. For example, if they know you earn Sh100,000 monthly, they may wonder why it is so hard for you to support them with Sh10,000 every month.

In business partnerships, if one partner finds out that the other earns more, it could affect their commitment and contribution to the venture. One has to balance between being generous and maintaining good financial health. I know of a friend who instantly became the breadwinner of his extended family the moment he got a job. They all depended on him for support and this really drained him.

I have set strict financial goals for myself. I make a budget monthly to ensure I take care of my expenses and save, without exceeding Sh40,000. It's not about the amount you earn but the discipline to manage it wisely. Without discipline, you can't attain financial stability and independence.

Why I don't reveal

In the world of finance, transparency is king. Yet, where family and friends are involved, full disclosure can sometimes breed tension, enmity and unrealistic expectations. Money, like a capricious spirit, can alter dynamics in the most unexpected ways. For this reason, some individuals keep their earnings tightly under wraps, a personal boundary set not out of deceit, but from the desire to preserve the authenticity of their relationships.

Jatoh Jemimah, 28**Data Analyst**

I can never reveal my actual income. Disclosing such sets high expectations regardless of your financial commitments. People may not understand that your budget is tight and will expect financial help at any time.

From my experience, family members always expect financial support. Most parents assume their children are obliged to give them money. To manage this, I usually quote a lower income than I earn. When asked for an amount I don't wish to part with, I usually say I need to check my finances first, even though I know very well how much money I have.

I had a friend who was always ready to lend money. However, when she began facing financial difficulties, none of those who had benefited from her generosity offered help. This experience taught me to always be cautious about who I assist financially. People often exploit generosity, so I avoid revealing my wealth to prevent being taken advantage of.

My parents don't ask too much about my earnings, they are content with whatever I say I make. They support me through their prayers and only inquire about my financial well-being when necessary. They trust that I will be honest with them and honour my obligations.

My advice to other young professionals is, whenever you're asked for assistance, offer a non-committal response like, "I'll try my best." Promising to send them a specific amount builds expectation. Keeping financial details private helps control expectations and ensures you don't get overwhelmed by requests or added responsibilities.

**Phancy Faisha, 24****Videographer at CARE Kenya**

Adulthood has its own challenges, especially when you attain some level of financial independence. My parents have always supported me financially, but now that I earn from temporary NGO contracts, I have learned to keep my finances private.

Since I live at home, I am expected to contribute to household expenses. My family believes that because I earn, I am obligated to share my income with them. Thankfully, I have learned to balance between contributing to my family and maintaining my financial independence.

I also know that finances can strain friendships, particularly when expectations around spending arise. For instance, a friend might invite you to a party on a Friday night and expect you to buy drinks or food for everyone.

Failure to do so often leads to misunderstandings. Your friends will label you 'stingy' or 'proud', especially if they themselves are yet to find jobs. They may feel neglected or say that you've changed. This can significantly affect friendships especially if they don't understand the boundaries and targets you've set.

When discussing salaries with friends, I prefer not to disclose exact figures. Sharing such information can lead to comparisons and potentially affect the mood and attitude in the group. I choose to keep the specifics of my earnings private to avoid unnecessary tension or jealousy.





my true income



Frankincense Wesley, 24

Administrative assistant at Kenya Film Classification Board

I once had this conversation with one of my parents. It was exactly a month after I had secured a contract. Requests for money followed and a friend explained that it is called black tax. I don't have many responsibilities, but I feel burdened with expectations simply because I am a man.

In my opinion, the decision to reveal one's earnings is largely influenced by cultural factors. Revealing such information can make one feel exposed and vulnerable. People may judge your spending habits. Conversely, if you earn well but choose to be frugal, you might face pressure to spend more than you want to. The only time I have disclosed my income was to individuals who I trusted. I shared the details knowing there would be no repercussions, and nothing more would be expected of me.

Some individuals can be quite intrusive and eager to put their noses in your financial matters. Balancing transparency with discretion is key. I am fortunate to have friends who rarely probe, but when financial topics arise, we discuss them in general terms, focusing on ranges or tax brackets rather than exact figures. Although a tax bracket can hint at one's income levels, it still maintains a level of ambiguity due to its broad range.

As a young adult, I am careful not to reveal too much because I don't want others to scrutinise my spending habits or financial decisions.

I believe there should be a balance that involves withholding some details. I wouldn't want everyone around me to know exactly how much I earn. So, I usually tell them a quarter of the actual amount to ensure I remain with enough to sustain myself and afford what I want.

This way, I balance the situation, knowing that the amount they will ask for won't put me in a difficult position. I call this amount a 'hustler fund.' It gives me some breathing room. It might seem like deception, but I'm confident they would understand the need for me to survive, despite their expectations.



Vivian Alusa, 25

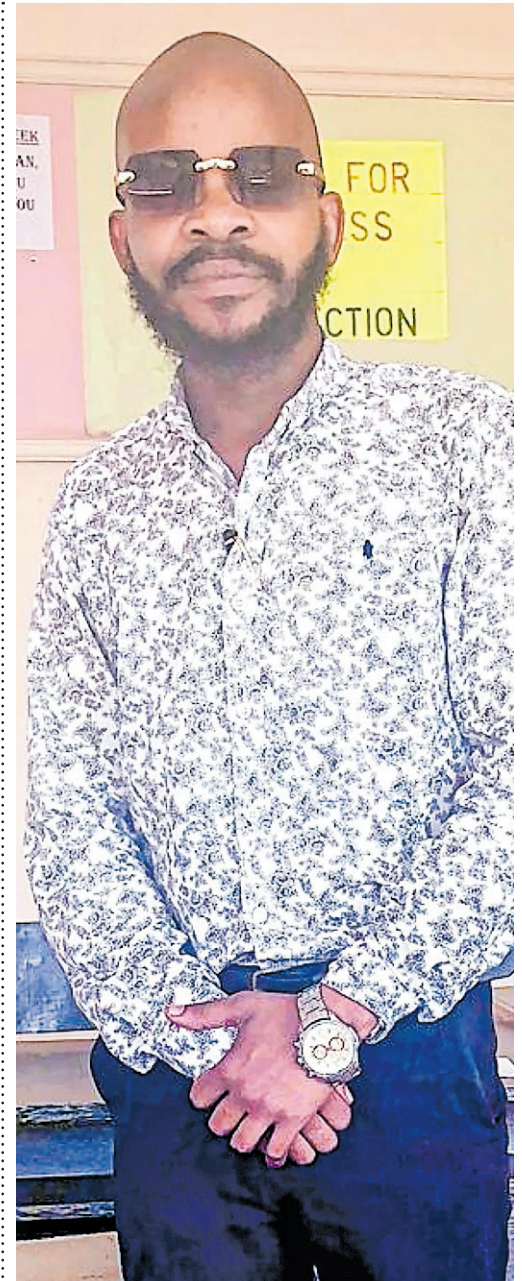
Businesswoman and Model

I prefer to keep my income levels and sources confidential. Many people are unaware of my profession, and I believe that before one can inquire about my earnings, they should understand what I do. I choose not to disclose where my income comes from because I consider it a personal matter.

Whether I am financially well-off or not, that's a private aspect of my life that doesn't need to be shared with everyone. Revealing one's income often leads to judgment based on financial status, which I prefer to avoid. My take is that financial matters are private and should be treated as such.

I once confided in a close friend about my income, believing she would keep it confidential. However, she felt jealous and inferior because I earned more. I never intended to make her feel that way. Generally, I am open about this with friends and family, but I've learned that money is a sensitive and divisive issue. You have to walk a tight rope between transparency and privacy.

Also, when an individual learns that the next person earns a significant amount but still relies on others for support, it may raise some very difficult questions. Full disclosure is good, but it leaves one vulnerable. I strive to protect my financial information for my own safety and security.



Caleb Mumo, 29

English and Literature Teacher

Privacy in financial matters is crucial. If relatives know you earn a substantial income, they may impose expectations or forget you have your own plans and challenges. Keeping some details of your income private keeps a bit of the pressure at bay.

I have also noticed that when some people get to know how much you earn, they may start spreading rumors that you are engaging in illegal or immoral activities. Additionally, if someone with a Bachelor's degree earns more than someone with a Master's, it could lead to disrespect or condescension, which could hurt professional relationships.

Some people are perceived to be selfish, but remember that the amount they can give depends on their financial situation and current needs. For instance, if I apply for a loan and get it, I will definitely not disclose this information because it can lead to unwelcome demands for money, and some may expect much more than I can provide, which may breed conflict and affect my goals and plans.

I don't feel pressured to share my income. Even when I choose to talk about it, I never disclose the exact amount. I always underquote. This way, I avoid setting unrealistic expectations. By being discreet, I allow others to form their own assumptions, thus preserving my financial privacy and autonomy.

Income disclosure is a personal choice, influenced by one's character traits and background. Allowing others to speculate rather than providing exact figures helps one set realistic expectations.

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In Brief

- Bilal Mohamed is the first-ever African Esports champion from Kenya
- The 25-year-old Kenyan was born in the UK, but has been living in Kenya since he was seven.
- He went to Braeside Primary and High School and then Peponi Secondary School
- Bilal is scheduled to graduate in June 2024 with a Bachelor of Business Science in Financial Economics degree from Strathmore University
- The fifth born in a family of eight started Esports casually in 2019 before taking it up seriously 2020 after watching videos of Japanese player Daigo Umehara
- In his first international tournament abroad, Bilal, who goes by the mnker MoZ, won the gamrX African Championship title in Street Fighter 6 in Lagos, Nigeria early this month after defeating Nigerian Chukwudi Okoli 3-2 in the finals
- Bilal is under the guidance of coach Brian Diang'a aka Beast, and trains at the Afrigamer cafe located at Adlife Plaza in Nairobi
- He specialises in fighting games

Champion Bilal Mohamed is Kenya's first-ever African Esports champion

Student of business who brought African Esports title home

BY GEOFFREY ANENE

How did it feel to be crowned the African Esports champion?

It was so amazing to win, especially since the player I fought in the final was someone I had played and lost to online before. In the lead-up to the African Championship, I was practicing a lot since I knew he would be my main challenger.

I really practiced hard and worked on my weaknesses. Beating him to win the tournament was a very big achievement for me. I'm very happy. Part of me

did not believe it, but it was reality. It was a happiness I hadn't felt in a long time. My opponent shook my hands after the match and congratulated me. It felt very nice. After the tournament, we played more matches just for fun.

What does it take to be an African champion?

Commitment, and a lot of practice hours. It is not easy. In Africa, it is even more difficult because the online infrastructure is not very developed. We have a lot of issues in Africa such as random

blackouts and occasional internet outages, so there are a lot of things that make it challenging to grow in this sport.

You have to fight through all of those hardships. Most of my training is done online because offline, there are not many players locally, so I'm forced to play online players from Southern African countries and from the Middle East. The Middle East has so many talented and experienced players. They also have a proper Esports team, so I play a lot of their players. Luckily, Ken-

ya is located in a good spot geographically to play with opponents from different countries online.

How did you defeat such experienced opponents?

I knew about the tournament two months in advance, so I spent the first month practicing hard for it. I had a rough idea of the opponents I would be facing because the African Esports scene is not that big. I know all the top players in the continent. I prepared with my opponents in mind.

I watched videos of them playing so that I could know what to expect in terms of their playing styles because each player plays differently. I prepared a strategy for each of them. On the day of the tournament, I focused only on my matches and my strategies, and it worked!

Let's go back to where your Esports journey started...

It started in 2019. I used to play a game called Call of Duty as well as other single-player games just for fun. Then I stumbled upon a video on YouTube about fighting games, which inspired me. In the clip, there was a very exciting match between Japanese player Daigo Umehara and American player Justin Wong. There were so many spectators who were cheering wildly. I remember wishing I could be part of the game. I was fascinated. After that I began playing Mortal Kombat 11 to sharpen my skills.

What was your first year in Esports like?

It wasn't good at all. I had to buy the basic equipment. Then in 2020 I began taking on Kenyan opponents. I lost many times because they were much more

skilled than I was. I also played opponents online from Zambia and South Africa, and lost to them. But with time, I got better. I started winning tournaments online against South African and Zambian players and from there I was hooked.

Roughly, how many hours do you put into training?

It depends. If a tournament is coming up, I put more hours into training. For example, before heading to Nigeria, I trained for three to four hours every day. But, normally I don't put in that many hours because we don't have tournaments that often. Mostly we have only one major tournament in a year.

Who is your role model in Esports?

It is the person who got me into the fighting games – Daigo Umehara. He is the reason I'm playing today. He is still playing and doing well in the sport. I like him because he is a legend in the fighting games. That parry he did against Wong got me into this sport. Outside Esports, I look up to former professional boxer Muhammad Ali and basketball player Michael Jordan. They were so dominant in their disciplines, and I would like to achieve that someday.

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