



# Memphis vs. Louisville — stories behind bloody drama that sparked feud

SPORTS, 1B

# THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL

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Pastor Keith Caldwell speaks as members of the 13 unions who represent City of Memphis workers demonstrate outside Memphis City Hall against Mayor Paul Young's effort to invalidate Memorandums of Understanding between the city and the unions on Oct. 21. PHOTOS BY CHRIS DAY/THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL

# 'Song Sung Blue' has debut in Memphis

New Craig Brewer movie

John Beifuss  
Memphis Commercial Appeal  
USA TODAY NETWORK – TENNESSEE

After six weeks of premieres and previews in Paris, Berlin, Los Angeles and elsewhere, writer-director Craig Brewer brought his latest feature film, "Song Sung Blue," to his hometown Dec. 8 for its Memphis debut.

"I know this is what everybody says, but I mean it — this is a movie that needs to be seen in theaters," said Brewer, 54, in an interview before the invitation-only screenings for family, friends and media in two auditoriums at the Malco Paradiso.

"There are so many communal, emotional moments in this movie," he said. "The energy in a packed house is electrifying."

A Focus Features release, "Song Sung Blue" opens in theaters nationwide on Christmas.

"I'd really like to see Memphis show up on Christmas Day," Brewer said. "I really would like to blow away New York and L.A. in terms of screen average," he said, referring to the average number of tickets sold per auditorium. "I'd like every single theater to be sold out."

Dec. 8's Memphis premiere occurred several hours after the Golden Globe Foundation announced that Kate Hudson, who stars alongside

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# Tennessee to execute 'red-headed stranger,' serial rapist

Kirsten Fiscus  
USA TODAY NETWORK – TENNESSEE

On a crisp fall night parked outside a home on Brookfield Avenue in the Brainerd area of Chattanooga, a man whom police called the "red-headed stranger" watched a woman get dressed and leave.

Inside, 20-year-old Karen Pulley was left alone.

It was Sept. 30, 1988.

The man got out of the car, crept up to the house and climbed through a bathroom window. He armed himself with a two-by-four piece of lumber he found at the home.

Pulley was in bed when the stranger walked in.

Police believe that night's events were the first in a string of violent acts committed by one man against women across Chattanooga from the end of September 1988 to the beginning of

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# Library workers fight for union recognition

Union push is about more than pay, Memphis public library workers say

Katherine Burgess  
MLK50: Justice Through Journalism

T'Arrah Mathis loves doing story-time with neighborhood children at the historic Orange Mound Library, where she works.

Memphis Public Libraries supported her work as the author of children's books, Mathis said, so she seized the chance to become a library assistant. At the library, the work is all "about relationships" with the kids and other community members, she said.

"They trust us," Mathis said. "We build relationships. We help with homework. We help with providing clothing for some of the kids that we know are having issues at home. We feed them. ... I like to say that librarians are really like community heroes, everyday heroes. We're there."

But library workers in Memphis, from librarians to material processors, have fewer legal protections than most city employees because they are currently considered "appointed" by the mayor. Most city workers are civil service employees. Library workers are fighting to be reclassified, but also to have their union recognized by the city. The workers interviewed in this article spoke as union members, not on behalf of the city of Memphis.

Many library workers make less than \$44,000, the living wage for a single person with no children living in Memphis, said Laura Bontrager, who works in the sciences department at the Benjamin L. Hooks Central Library. The City Council approved a measure Nov. 18 that would set the minimum salary for city workers at \$40,000.

While pay is important, it isn't the only issue motivating the union push, the workers say. Memphis' libraries



Members of the 13 unions who represent City of Memphis workers hold up signs spelling out "save unions" as they demonstrate against Mayor Paul Young's effort to invalidate Memorandums of Understanding between the city and the unions during a Memphis City Council meeting at city hall on Oct. 21.

have become even more essential as federal cuts have targeted workforce development programs, homelessness funding and more, spurring calls for the city to improve safety, address languishing repairs and increase staffing levels.

"We need real action, real commitments and dedication to show that you do support and appreciate your libraries," Mathis said.

Workers want better pay, protections, and a voice at the table

The city of Memphis has 18 library branches, and its workers have a broad

range of responsibilities: Some order, catalog and deliver books. Others curate a "Library of Things" with items ranging from karaoke sets to sewing machines, and organize events ranging from children's story times to fantasy fairs. Workers build robots with teenagers, research resources for library users, work on the library's website, teach classes on job skills and more. The libraries offer health fairs, genealogy classes, arts and crafts and summer camps.

While the libraries are often touted as bright spots for the city, workers say they are under-resourced. At Orange

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