A Love Letter to Atlanta

Monday 24 November, 2025

A New Era of Cross-Cultural Dialogue

Described by Forbes Africa as “a voice in global media”, recognised by GQ South Africa as “Africa’s Modern Storyteller” and regarded by Rolling Stone Africa as a “vanguard shaping global African cinema”, meet the critically acclaimed multi-hyphenate Norman Busigu: the British-Ugandan, independent Journalist, Filmmaker, Broadcaster and Model. With an impressive portfolio career and decorated display of accomplishments that stretch across continents, he has successfully embarked on a worldwide mission to connect and serve the creative ecosystems of the African diaspora. A key element of Busigu achieving this however, will require him to understand and engage with the various sub-cultures of Black-America.

Below, Busigu chronicles his life changing experience of Atlanta in October 2025, having attended primarily for the ForbesBLK Summit at Morehouse College (representing his media platform Postcards From The Diaspora, with his travels also being in collaboration with British Airways). His time there also served as a crash-course masterclass in Black-American history, culture and community. Enamored by Black-American Southern culture and eager to return, Busigu now hopes his work will help to bridge the gaps that exist between Black-British, African and Black-American discourse through fostering and initiating youth led cross-cultural dialogue.

Southern Hospitality

Up until my travels to Atlanta, and ashamedly, the concept of “southern hospitality” was one which I believed to be, mostly a metaphor. The notion of “southern hospitality” was introduced to me through Hip-Hop – it being a moniker that rap superstars such as Ludacris proudly professed in their songs to give out-of-towners the clear message that they will be welcomed with open arms in their cities. Being a true Hip-Hop lover, I take their lyrics to be one’s truth, or at the very least, a window into the mind of the artist putting their pen to paper. Importantly, this art form growing up was my introduction to the regional nuances and complexities found within the Black-American lived experience i.e. from “Do or Die Bed-Stuy” to the “Da Dirty Souf”.

Funnily enough, “southern hospitality” first entered my life in the form of an incredible Black-American woman from Atlanta (or rather, an ATLien as many call themselves!), of whom I met at the Cannes Lions Festival 2025 in June. Amongst the buzzing hubbub of a rooftop mixer event specifically for Black attendees, it was her soothingly sweet country twang, slow yet assured speech, and endearing expressions such as “hey cousin!” and “what’s good twin?” that lulled me into a space of comfort and safety.

As she went onto explain, the familiarity that she had with me, is how swathes of the black community operate and engage in their interactions in ATL (and the Black south more widely), for the most part. This innate warmth and friendliness that they supposedly have has manifested itself to close-knit culture which exists. It breeds the essence of six degrees of separation in practice, meaning you are never too far away from someone successful, and importantly, that they are accessible. This camaraderie within Black-American culture fascinated me…

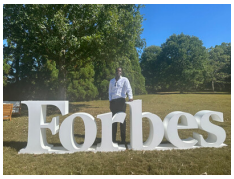
Following our time in the French Riviera, she spent months playfully lobbying for me to visit The A, and even offered to host me at her snazzy apartment in Buckhead and show me why they call her city the Hollywood of The South. This was a promise she fulfilled – a prime example of “southern hospitality” being alive and well. A trip with her to Lenox Square, the Belt Line, and a drive through town with her revealed to me the normalcy of the visibly affluent black middle and upper classes: thriving entrepreneurs, property owners, and unbridled creativity… this is a city bursting with opportunity and prosperity for the black community. As a city which is dubbed the Black Mecca, this isn’t exaggeration – it’s actually very accurate. Once you see it, you can’t unsee it. And this is a truth that I want the world at large to really know and appreciate.

The ForbesBLK Summit

In this year’s edition of the ForbesBLK summit, black leaders, entrepreneurs, emerging talent etc across the industries congregated at Morehouse College to discuss the theme of charting a new path to economic prosperity, against the looming uncertainty of shifting global geo-politics, DEI drawbacks and the age of Artificial Intelligence being thrust upon us all. Over three powerful days, high-profile speakers,

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pioneering creators and changemakers (ranging from the Premier of Bermuda the Hon E David Burt, to the CEO of Liberty Bank and Trust Alden McDonald, to ATL Mayor Andre Dickens) offered candid reflections and bold visions for the future of black entrepreneurship and influence.

What struck me as very different about this summit by comparison to others I've attended, was the sense of urgency and collective responsibility that everyone in the room had. The desire to empower each other and find ways to distill this knowledge back to our communities. The networking didn't feel transactional – it was sincere. A safe space had been cultivated at Morehouse, and I quickly made friends from all over America and the world, many of whom I still speak with.

Many Black-Americans I spoke with attributed these feelings I felt directly to the environment that Atlanta specifically cultivates – one of collaboration, collectivism, and community. This is something which I have seldom experienced elsewhere. Being across the street from Spelman College, this also gave me a glimpse into the universe of HBCU culture.

The City Too Busy to Hate

It was my days following the ForbesBLK Summit where I really got a taste of the Black-American (southern) culture. From seeing endless murals depicting black power and history etched across the walls all over the city… to hearing Neo-soul, R&B, Hip-Hop/Rap and other such black music genres out loud at any given moment through someone's car speakers or blaring from a restaurant/bar… to having the most fun I've ever had a Sunday Brunch (while at Marcus Bar and Grille): feasting on Black American soul food and delicacies like gumbo and peach cobbler, all against the backdrop of a 4 hour live DJ set which made me feel like I was in a lively club! The culture is inescapable, and will pass through your being in whatever form it finds itself, at any given moment.

One of my most striking moments of this was while attending a Sunday Service at Ebenezer Baptist Church (where Martin Luther King Jr. was baptised). It is difficult to articulate in written words the feeling, but I have never been part of such a soulful practise of worship – where you instinctively feel the urge to clap, sing, dance and rejoice. Prayer and worship were a deeply spiritual experience here. And in this moment, I began to realise how interconnected the elements of Black-American culture are. For example, R&B as an art form is known to have historic roots in the church – this environment being an incubator of sorts from where many household names in this genre emerged from and honed in their crafts before permeating into global soundscapes.

Separately, seeing Orchestra Noir perform epic renditions of cultural classics live also hammered home this feeling that Black-American music and art are experienced and expressed very soulfully down south, in a manner which cannot be replicated. It is also in the church where members of the fraternities and HBCU's come together to help empower the youth and volunteer in their community. This togetherness visibly came alive was during my time at the Morris Brown College Homecoming – walking alongside the emphatic fanfare and festivities during the parades throughout sections of the city gave me a window into the incredible world of these academic institutions, and could receive a write-up just on this very topic alone!

Final Thoughts

There is nowhere on earth like Atlanta, and it is a perfect representation of what "southern hospitality" embodies. The City in the Trees has left me green eyed to experience more. This is a city rich and deep in the cultural history of the Black-American journey toward socio-political and economic empowerment. The soul and spirit of Black-America is firmly seated in Atlanta. Ironically, it was someone's display of "southern hospitality" (something which I used to doubt was truly a real thing) that made me take a leap of faith into the world of Black-America - and I haven't looked back since. I'm excited to see where my adventures in exploring Black-American culture take me next.

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