

**LOCAL ARTIST B. LILLY RELEASES NEW SONG, CHALLENGE FOR CHICAGO AND THE NATION
“Dear America” highlights what being Black in this country means for mothers and children**

CHICAGO (February 26, 2021) – When Bernard Lilly, Jr. was born in 1996, his parents knew it would take faith, hope and a little luck to ensure his survival and facilitate his success. Today, Bernard is a rising music artist – stage name B. Lilly – with a deepening love for the Austin neighborhood where he grew up and still resides. He is celebrating his 25th birthday by paying homage to the prayers that got him and countless friends to this point with the release of new music: “Dear America.”

The song opens with church bells and a stanza that recalls the fear in his mother’s eyes as she sees (on television) another black man dead and thinks it could have been Bernard. In her figurative letter to America, she pleads for her “... *son to live out all his dreams... find out what’s inside of him. Please keep him safe on a day-to-day...*”

B. Lilly also uses the song to pay tribute to those whose dreams were left unfulfilled – particularly, as a result of police brutality: “*This song’s for Trayvon (Martin) and Laquan (McDonald); Eric (Garner) and Freddie Gray. This song’s for Sandra (Bland), Natasha (Ramsey) and far too much to name. I’m just sick and tired of being sick and tired... there’s nothing left to say.*”

“Dear America” is also poised to extend its musical reach with a call to action, including a social media challenge scheduled to launch this Spring. Understanding the viable voices of inner-city youth, B. Lilly is planning a “Dear America” project to solicit letters, posts and other forms of expression about their perspectives on the current state of affairs in local communities and the nation.

“This song is a very personal piece that has not only changed my life; but, is very necessary today,” said B. Lilly. “I wrote it from the perspective of my own mother when she was pregnant with me, as well as the perspective of nearly two dozen Black mothers who shared with me their concerns about raising children in these volatile times.”

The song also features vocals by Opal Staples, of Chicago’s renown musical family, The Staples; who has been featured on “Empire,” “Chicago PD,” “Chi-Raq” and “The Chi”; and was a contestant on gospel singing competition, “Sunday’s Best.”

“Dear America” is available on all music streaming services, including Spotify, Tidal, and Apple Music. For more information on this single and future releases, visit blillymusic.com; or, connect with B. Lilly on Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and Facebook.

“I want him to be brave... ‘praying to the Lord... ‘hate for us to lose this war...” – “Dear America”

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