

president Fidel Castro to briefly allow citizens to leave the island voluntarily. Osorbo was largely on his own after that.

"Maykel had a hard childhood," says El Funky, who met Osorbo in the neighborhood as a kid. "He had to become a man at a really young age and went through really difficult things." They stayed friends throughout the years, and they always had a love of music in common. They both wanted to be performers, but El Funky had to put his career ambitions on hold in 2005, after his first child was born, to focus on opening a café with his father.

In 2013, Osorbo came knocking on his door. "He said, 'Compadre, you have talent, we've known each other for years. There are all these music festivals in Cuba with prizes. I have a studio where we can work without a problem,'" El Funky remembers. At first, El Funky told Osorbo that he was done with music, but Osorbo had a way of inspiring. Within a few months, they were releasing songs together and independently, building recognition as artists in the neighborhood. They rapped about life in Cuba, and invariably what they were releasing was political. "I've always said that anyone who writes songs about everyday realities in Cuba is talking about the situation in Cuba," he says. "So, without meaning to, we were making protest music."

Osorbo's work took on a radical urgency in 2018, when Cuba proposed Decree 349, a law that prohibited any artistic expression in both public and private spaces without approval by the government's Ministry of Culture. Authorities were also given the power to shut down artistic activity that they deemed as containing "sexist, vulgar or obscene language." Many artists and poets spoke out against the law, many of them eventually creating the MSI collective. Osorbo took on a central role alongside Otero, who was arrested dozens of times for staging demonstrations and art performances. Osorbo's music became more direct than ever, filled with lacerating critiques of the government. In late 2020, he teamed up with El Funky for "Diazcarao," a heated, blistering rap that directly took aim at president Diaz-Canel. El Funky believes that song is what started to rattle the government, just before "Patria Y Vida" exploded into the world.

Once they'd recorded their parts in "Patria Y Vida," Osorbo and El Funky decided to take a huge risk by shooting a few scenes for a music video Romero was planning. They worked with the video director Anyelo Troya, who pawned off one of his cameras to get better equipment for the shoot, and snuck into an abandoned building in the dead of night. The Cuban government had enforced lockdown curfews, and they'd all face fines and even jail time if they got caught. They had three friends stand watch the entire night, switching off so they could sleep, and featured Otero in the video as well. Once it was finished, the video made an impact quickly, garnering one million views within three days.

"People who know me and my work were like, 'Now you really went crazy.' I knew there was going to be a fallout," El Funky remembers. Ramos says that shortly after the song came out, she heard people starting to use the phrase 'patria y vida' casually on the street, and she noticed neighbors playing the song in public. She says that she was stunned by how much other Cubans were connecting to "Patria Y Vida," but she was concerned about Osorbo. "All of us knew when we saw the reaction it got that there were going to be consequences. We know the authorities weren't going to forgive something like that."

Cuba, at the time, had been ramping up arrests on artists in particular. A 2021 report

from the international NGO Freemuse, which has been documenting and researching incidents of censorship and suppressing freedom of expression, showed that Cuba's rappers are some of the most persecuted rap artists in the world. Prisoners Defenders outlined more than 120 "repressive police acts" committed against Osorbo between 2019 and 2021, including beatings and arbitrary detentions. In one incident, he was picked up by police when he was at a park with his two-year-old daughter, who was left alone after authorities took him away.

Clashes that intensified that April ultimately led to his arrest. According to Prisoners Defenders, Osorbo had been walking to MSI headquarters when he saw police harassing a woman on the street. He attempted to intervene, and police moved to arrest him instead, despite not having a reason. By then, Osorbo had become a beloved figure in town, and neighbors quickly jumped in and helped him escape. They surrounded police officers and screaming at them to let Osorbo go, showing the mass support he had from Cubans. (An image of Osorbo holding one handcuffed arm up in the air after evading arrest went viral.) Almost a month later, on May 18, authorities picked him up again, handcuffing him shirtless and without shoes on while he was at home. Like many of the previous arrests, this one was made without an arrest warrant or clear charges against him. He's been held ever since.

El Funky was detained at one point as well, but ultimately let go. "I'm not the type of person they were going to arrest," he says. "I've done stuff, don't get me wrong, and I'm a person who has a lot of support, but I don't have a personality like Maykel and Luis Manuel. These guys are leaders—natural leaders. When they thought of things, what they'd come up with was so ingenious that it was a danger to the state."

In addition to his work with Prisoners Defenders, Larrondo is a singer who's played the most renowned Venues in Spain and several other parts of the world. He's performed with the legendary Celia Cruz and sang on an album alongside artists such as Gloria Estefan and Alejandro Sanz. He understands the value of freedom of expression intimately. His interest in Osorbo's case came from his experiences both as a musician and a defender of human rights, and he's been working with the hope of finding organized, systematic ways for the artistic community to show solidarity with artists who are oppressed around the world.

"Patria Y Vida" was the main storyline at the 2021 Latin Grammys, and the song's two wins made headlines around the world. There was some inevitable controversy, with skeptical fans and musicians arguing that "Patria Y Vida" reflected a Western, anti-left political agenda and noting that the government organization USAID has used Cuba's hip-hop scene in the past as a way to infiltrate the Cuban government. (Some Cuban rappers Rolling Stone spoke to have countered that regardless of what the U.S. has done, Cuba's artists and hip-hop scenes have their own voice.) But more broadly, the Latin Recording Academy was applauded for swaying from its more risk-averse tendencies and recognizing a song with a strong social message.

And then, as the months passed, Osorbo's story largely faded from mainstream coverage—and, seemingly, from the Latin industry and Latin Grammy's consciousness. Osorbo, who remains behind bars, wasn't mentioned at the 2022 awards ceremony this past November, and El Funky says no one contacted him about other efforts to raise awareness. However, he has kept writing music about Osorbo and other political pris-

oners in Cuba, refusing to back down. Artists such as Romero have also spoken out; he's currently working on a documentary about "Patria Y Vida."

Larrondo believes that cases such as Osorbo's illustrate a violation of fundamental rights, and that limits on artistic expression—like other human-rights violations—require bigger, broader movements in response. "In the music industry, as well as in the sports industry, there isn't a systemic process to show solidarity with oppressed artists or athletes," he says. "I say this thinking of the Iranian case of the athlete sentenced to death. I haven't seen soccer players, or soccer clubs, express themselves against that sentencing in a big way, doing things like organized moments of silence at stadiums, the same way I haven't seen artists defending the freedom of Maykel Osorbo in a massive way."

He adds: "The fact that some artists have stood up for Maykel is good, but without some coordination or a major response from the collective art world to support a Latin Grammy winner, and a constant, permanent message—without that, you can't have that person set free from prison. Any artist in any regime could suffer things similar to Maykel."

Ramos worries constantly about Osorbo's medical condition in prison. She says he went through a critical period in which skin lesions and boils appeared on his skin, perhaps a result of contracting scabies or an infection in prison. Though he's since stabilized, she wonders if the symptoms could be a sign of cancer, and she believes the Cuban government is actively withholding medical attention—something it has been accused of doing with prisoners in the past. Beyond that, she says Osorbo's mood has dipped, especially after the holidays. "He's really not doing well, and he's been that way for a long time," she says. "Especially these days toward the end of the year, which is a tough time that you typically spend with family."

Despite all this, Osorbo recently managed to share an audio recording, which was posted on his social media accounts. It's a message of gratitude to his family, his friends, and above all, those who have supported him. "Those supporters have been there for me at all times, they have made me grow," Osorbo says. "They have made me leave behind who I was and they've made me who I am."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Florida will provide the Clerk a translation of her remarks.

HONORING COMMANDER JAMES CHRISTIAN DUNCAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. EZELL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. EZELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Commander James Christian Duncan of the 31st Combat Training Squadron of the United States Air Force.

Lieutenant Colonel Duncan joined the Air Force in 2003 and trained at Columbus Air Force Base where he finished with distinction, flying both the T-6 and the T-38.

He has a distinguished training career, training other pilots on both the F-15E and the F-35. Before the 31st was activated in April of 2021, Duncan served as commander of Detachment 1 of the 29th Training Systems Squadron.

In his career, Commander Duncan had received many honors and awards, including the Transition Top Gun Award, Military Training Award, Flying Excellence Award, and the Order of Daedalians AETC Commander's Trophy.

On November 1, he retired from the armed services and is looking forward to opportunities with his family, Amy, Elliana, Micah, and Sarah.

I thank Commander Duncan for a career of service to our country and wish him the best in retirement.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 9 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. BICE) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, Your grace is sufficient for all that we will face this day. When we find ourselves faltering for want of a reason to hope, weakened from lack of energy or enthusiasm, dismayed by the complexity of the issues at hand, let us not, as Howard Thurman encouraged, shrink from the present intensity, lest we turn away from the power of Your love.

Yours is the power that is made perfect in our weakness. Yours is the strength that carries us through the difficulties of the day. Yours is the mercy that enables us to endure the repercussions of our own mistakes. Yours is the hope that gives us purpose when nothing in our lives is certain.

May we not shrink from the many challenges this day will reveal, and may we never turn away from the incredible power Your love provides.

In the strength of Your word we stand, and in the power of Your name we pray.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the Chamber the approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1 of rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from California (Mr. HARD-

ER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. HARDER of California led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

FOCUS ON HONORING VETERANS ON VETERANS DAY

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, as we approach Veterans Day this coming weekend, we will remember that on the eleventh hour of the 11th day of the 11th month it was originally the end of World War I. It was known as Armistice Day, and in 1919 was the first Armistice Day until the Treaty of Versailles finally was done after several iterations of armistice was done back then.

Finally, in 1945, World War II veteran Raymond Weeks had the idea to expand it to all veterans. Raymond Weeks was later known as the father of what we now know as Veterans Day. In 1954 it was fully renamed Veterans Day.

To properly put the focus on the service and thanking of all our living veterans, this Saturday on November 11, I urge all Americans to pause and participate in honoring our living veterans at local events you may find in your area, Madam Speaker.

Let them know. It is not just a Friday off for Federal employees and the banks or no mail on Saturday, but a grateful Nation, instead, thanks them for preserving our freedom and that we should also be participants in our citizenship for our country.

END HUNGER NOW

(Mr. MCGOVERN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I thank the Biden administration for meaningfully updating the Thrifty Food Plan as Congress mandated in the last farm bill.

Before the Biden administration took action, the Thrifty Food Plan had not been updated in 50 years. That is absurd. Needy families were having to make purchasing decisions based on data from one-half century ago.

Nevertheless, thanks to their updates, SNAP recipients now get an extra \$1.40 per day. It is a small increase, but it means more people can make ends meet.

Guess what, Madam Speaker?

It is something that is real that is already helping families buy groceries.

I am so sick and tired of hearing my Republican friends play the inflation blame game, but then, when it comes time to actually do something to actually help families pay for groceries, Republicans are floating the idea of rolling back the Thrifty Food Plan update. Really, that is a rotten thing to do.

As Congress works to complete the 2023 farm bill, I strongly urge all of my colleagues to join me in rejecting this cruel and cynical approach.

Enough for God's sake.

THE DEVOTED SERVICE OF COLONEL CHARLES ECKART OF CORYDON, INDIANA

(Mrs. HOUCHIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. HOUCHIN. Madam Speaker, if you ask anyone who knows him, you will learn that Colonel Charles Eckart of Corydon, Indiana, among other things, is devoted. He is devoted to his faith, to his family, and to his country.

Colonel Eckart served in the United States Army for 28 years. He served our Nation with unwavering dedication, protecting our freedom and ensuring our liberty. His service extended beyond the call of duty, making a profound impact on countless lives and communities. This is why he is being inducted into the Indiana Military Veterans Hall of Fame.

Colonel Eckart was awarded the Bronze Star for his heroism during the Tet Offensive in Vietnam.

He taught English literature at his alma mater, the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He was the battalion commander in charge of the U.S. Army Reserves in Jeffersonville and retired as a colonel in 1993 in Indianapolis.

Although he retired, his service never stopped. He has served his community of Corydon for decades and has served as the West Point liaison for Indiana's 9th District for the last 23 years.

This is where my staff and I have had the honor and privilege of getting to know him.

Colonel Eckart is loved by my staff, his family, his community, and his country. It is truly a blessing to honor him on the House floor today.

Madam Speaker, I congratulate Colonel Eckart on being inducted into the Indiana Military Veterans Hall of Fame. Indiana is proud to call him one of its own.

HIGH AUTO INSURANCE RATES

(Ms. TLAIB asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, auto insurance discrimination continues to keep our residents in the cycle of poverty in Michigan.