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Shark Tank TV exposure helps Flossmoor couple grow business

BY **QUINTON R. ARTHUR**
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Keithan and Quiante Hedrick of Flossmoor may not have gotten a deal, but their idea for the platform Candi, a social network that allows fans to chat with their favorite celebrities and influencers, was seen by more than four million viewers of the ABC-TV show Shark Tank on Jan. 7.

Shark Tank is a popular business reality TV show that gives entrepreneurs a chance to pitch their ideas to wealthy potential investors.

The Hedricks ask was \$500,000 for 15% equity in the company. The goal was to use this money to develop the mobile app, grow their team and market their product. The Hedricks launched Candi in December 2019. Candi, an acronym for Celebrities and Influencers, is an app that allows fans to have conversations in five-minute increments with their favorite celebrities and influencers.

The “sharks” on the panel gave them good feedback. Kevin Hart’s concern was relying on celebrities to market the business, while Mark Cuban and Kevin O’Leary couldn’t find value in the business. For Barbara Corcoran and Lori Greiner, the amount was too much.

“If we could do it again, of course we would have asked for a smaller dollar amount to get a deal done, but ultimately we asked for a dollar amount that we knew we needed to provide the type of returns they want,” said Keithan.

Still, the national exposure for Candi brought more traffic to the site, more book-



Quiante and Keith Hedrick of Flossmoor pitched their business idea on the TV show Shark Tank.

ings from fans and more talent acquisition. “We’ve probably had over 100 inquiries, and maybe 50 to 100 that we’ve accepted,” said Keithan.

He said the real experience of entrepreneurship is: before the glamour of success comes the sleepless nights, challenges to meet payroll and general horror stories.

In the immediate future, they want to continue to expand their talent portfolio of 350 celebrities and influencers. Candi also has hosted cooking events, studio sessions and even speed dating events.

“We want everyone to know Candi for a hub for virtual experiences with celebrities,” said Quiante.

For Candi, the goal is to allow everyone in the world to talk to someone that they idolize.

The Hedricks are looking at one of two long-range goals: being an IPO or making a successful exit by selling the business.

Police allege car theft victim stood on Halsted firing shots

BY **CAROLE SHARWARKO**
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The victim of a vehicle theft was himself taken into custody on Dec. 23 and charged by Homewood Police with firearms crimes for shooting after his car as the thief drove it away.

Shortly before 10 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 28, Tyrone Hymon left his vehicle unoccupied and running in a parking lot at the 18200 block of Halsted Street in Homewood.

An unknown person or people entered the car and drove away. Hymon, a resident of Columbus, Georgia, chased after the vehicle on foot as it drove down Halsted Street.

While chasing the vehicle, police allege Hymon fired a gun in its direction, before he was struck by a second vehicle.

Homewood police and paramedics arrived on the scene, where EMTs treated Hymon, 36, for minor injuries.

Later, police recovered shell casings from the area, and they say an investigation revealed Hymon to be the person who discharged a firearm in the incident.

They arrested Hymon, charging him on Dec. 24 with three felony counts, including aggravated discharge of a firearm, aggravated unlawful use of a weapon by a felon and one count for being an “armed habitual criminal.”

At a hearing on Dec. 25, a Cook County judge issued a \$100,000 D bond for Hymon.

Police continue to investigate the motor vehicle theft. Anyone with information can contact the Homewood Police Department Criminal Investigations Unit at 708-206-3420.