

Meridian native makes Top 14 on 'American Idol'

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Mississippi Clarion Ledger
USA TODAY NETWORK

Contestants on "American Idol" Season 23 are rapidly dwindling down to the best of the best, and Meridian native Jamal Roberts is holding steady in the Top 14.

Monday night, April 21, six of the Top 20 contestants were sent home. Roberts earned his Top 14 spot with a smooth rendition of "Try a Little Tenderness."

Roberts, a 27-year-old P.E. teacher at Crestwood Elementary, started his "American Idol" journey when he won a golden ticket singing "Mary Jane" by Rick James in audition rounds. In the weeks since his audition round aired, Roberts has traveled throughout the U.S. with his fellow contestants, eluding elimination rounds with his raw, soulful performances.

During his audition, judges Luke Bryan, Lionel Richie and Carrie Underwood were blown away by Roberts' vocals, but told the singer he could use some more confidence to match his powerful voice.

Roberts has since grown his stage presence, and even performed Jelly Roll's "Liar," in front of the artist himself, prompting Jelly Roll, this season's artist in residence, to declare the song "Jamal's song."

Monday night, fresh from moving the audience to tears with his Sunday night performance of Jason Nelson's "Forever," Roberts owned the stage once again with his animated performance of "Try a Little Tenderness," casually giving Bryan a first bump as he circled the judging station.

Sunday night, audience voting determined which of the Top 24 contestants would move forward to the Top 20. Kyana Fanene, MKY, Penny Samar and Grayson Torrence were sent home.

Then, on Monday night's episode, the audience voted to choose the first 10 spots in the Top 14. The judges had the length of a commercial break to decide which of the remaining 10 would join the Top 14 — saving four and sending



Meridian native Jamal Roberts commands the stage on "American Idol" Season 23.

PROVIDED BY CHRISTOPHER WILLARD/ DISNEY

six home.

Roberts secured his Top 14 spot based on audience votes alone, earning him immediate safety in the top 10 audience-determined spots.

Who else is in the Top 14?

Here are the Top 14 of "American Idol" Season 23:

- Kolbi Jordan
 - Thunderstorm Artis
 - Filo
 - John Foster
 - Mattie Pruitt
 - Canaan James Hill
 - Breanna Nix
 - Jamal Roberts
 - Slater Nalley
 - Gabby Samone
 - Desmond Roberts
 - Josh King
 - Ché
 - Amanda Barise
- Barise, Ché, King and Desmond Roberts were saved by the judges. Isaiah Misailegalu, Drew Ryn, Oliver Bergeron, Baylee Littrell, Zaylie Windsor and Victor Solomon were sent home.

When does American Idol come on?

If you want to follow along with Roberts' journey, episodes air Sunday and Monday nights at 7 CST and on Hulu the following day.

Got a news tip? Contact Mary Boyte at mboyte@jackson.gannett.com

Hegseth warns 'leakers' could be prosecuted

Joey Garrison
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth lashed out at "leakers" within the Pentagon, warning they could face criminal prosecution as he tried to fend off mounting criticism about his job performance.

A defiant Hegseth addressed his latest controversies in an interview April 22 on Fox News' "Fox and Friends," where he previously worked as a co-host. He said three recently terminated Pentagon employees — Dan Caldwell, Darin Selnick and Colin Carroll — were put on leave because an internal investigation found they'd fed information to the media.

"If we think you are leaking to the press, that's a very real problem. We take that very seriously at the Pentagon," Hegseth said. "Disgruntled former employees are peddling things to try to save their (expletive), and ultimately, that's not going to work."

Hegseth said the Pentagon launched an investigation with the Defense Department's Office of Special Investigations following a series of stories that relied on nonpublic information. He said the investigation "led to some unfortunate places, people I have known for quite some time, but it's not my job to protect them."

He said the Pentagon plans to turn over information about leakers to the Department of Justice.

"When that evidence is gathered sufficiently — and this has all happened, very quickly — it will be handed over to DOJ, and those people will be prosecuted, if necessary," he said.

Hegseth's appearance came after the New York Times, citing four anonymous sources, reported April 20 that Hegseth shared sensitive military information in a Signal chat with a group that included his wife, brother and personal attorney. The communication mirrored the attack plans on Houthi militants in Yemen that Hegseth shared in a separate Signal chat of Trump officials the same day that inadvertently included the editor of The At-



The New York Times, citing four anonymous sources, reported April 20 that Defense Secretary Hegseth shared sensitive military information in a Signal chat.

ANNA MONEYMAKER/GETTY IMAGES

lantic magazine.

Hegseth did not deny sending the information to his wife, Jennifer Hegseth, a former Fox News producer, or his brother and personal attorney, both of whom have jobs in the Pentagon. But he said the information wasn't war plans.

"I look at war plans every single day. What was shared over Signal then and now, however you characterize it, was informal, unclassified coordinations for media coordination and other things," Hegseth said.

Hegseth told "Fox and Friends" co-host Brian Kilmeade he believes the story came from information leaked by a terminated former Pentagon employee.

"Why would it surprise anybody, Brian, if those very same people keep leaking to the very same reporters, whatever information they think they can have to try to sabotage the agenda of the president or the secretary?" Hegseth said. "Once a leaker, always a leaker, often a leaker."

President Donald Trump has stood behind Hegseth amid the controversies, and the White House denied a report by NPR that Trump is looking at potential replacements to lead the Pentagon.

LEGAL NOTICE

SOUTHEAST COMPRESSION UTILITY AND RELIABILITY EXPANSION PROJECT

FORREST COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

NOTICE OF PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF INTERSTATE NATURAL GAS PIPELINE FACILITIES

On April 16th, 2025, Gulf South Pipeline Company, LLC (Gulf South), filed an application for its Southeast Compression Utility and Reliability Expansion Project ("SECURE Project" or "Project") with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) under Section 7(c) of the Natural Gas Act in Docket No. CP25-219.

As part of the SECURE Project, Gulf South is requesting approval to make improvements at four locations to help maintain reliable natural gas service in the Southeastern United States. The proposed work includes adding new compressor units and equipment at Gulf South's existing Tallulah Compressor Station in Madison Parish, LA, and Jasper Compressor Station in Jasper County, MS; upgrading Gulf South's Forrest Compressor Station in Forrest County, MS by adding a new compressor unit, modifying an existing unit, and installing ancillary equipment; and building a new compressor station in Hinds County, MS, which will include one compressor unit and ancillary equipment.

The Project is more fully described in Gulf South's application to the FERC. A copy of the application is available at The Library of Hattiesburg Petal and Forrest County — Petal Library (714 S Main Street Petal, MS 39465) and can be accessed on the FERC's eLibrary at <https://elibrary.ferc.gov/eLibrary/search>. Search in the eLibrary by entering the docket number in the Reference Number field to access the Project documents. Gulf South has also mailed Project notices to landowners who are considered directly affected by the Project, per the FERC's regulations, and to relevant governing entities.

Gulf South's Project website (SECURE.gulfsouthpl.com) addresses general information about the Project, including Frequently Asked Questions, the regulatory process, environmental protection, safety, how to contact Gulf South, and how to access the FERC's website to review and obtain copies of public filings.

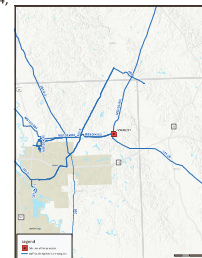
For information on becoming involved in the FERC review of this Project or to obtain the FERC pamphlet, "An Interstate Natural Gas Facility on My Land? What Do I Need to Know?," go to the FERC's website at www.ferc.gov or call the FERC Office of External Affairs at (202) 502-8004, or toll free at (866) 208-3372.

For additional information about the Project, you may contact Gulf South via its Project hotline or Project email address.

Hotline: (877-972-8533)

Email: community.voices@bwpipelines.com

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