

44th Annual UCLA Entertainment Symposium

WEBINAR SERIES

School of Law
UCLA Ziffren Institute for Media, Entertainment,
Technology & Sports Law

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2020

5:50p - 6:50p PDT

**SPORTS, ENTERTAINMENT AND RACIAL EQUITY: HEEDING THE CALL
FOR JUSTICE**

moderator:

Lisa Gilford

Partner, Sidley Austin LLP

panelists:

Nichelle Carr

Founder, WC1 Studios

Nicole Duckett

General Counsel and Vice President, LA Clippers LLC

Karen Grant-Selma

Senior Vice President, Business & Legal Affairs,
OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network

NICHELLE CARR

FOUNDER, WC1 STUDIOS

NICHELLE S. CARR IS THE CHIEF CONTENT OFFICER AT AUDPOP, A CAREFULLY CURATED VIDEO CONTENT PLATFORM OF OVER 75,000 FILMMAKERS AND OVER 200 MILLION VIEWERS WORLDWIDE THAT IS DEDICATED TO DISCOVERING, SUPPORTING, AND CONNECTING THE WORLD'S BEST FILMMAKERS TO OPPORTUNITIES. SHE IS ALSO AN INDEPENDENT PRODUCER AT WC1 STUDIOS, AND IS PASSIONATE ABOUT THE IDEA THAT A STORY WELL TOLD CAN CHANGE THE WORLD. AT AUDPOP, "DREAMS START HERE," AND WC1 STUDIOS BRINGS TO LIGHT AND RAISES AWARENESS OF "NEW STORIES FROM NEW VOICES" — BOTH COMPANIES AMPLIFY EVOCATIVE AND ENTERTAINING UNTOLD STORIES FROM DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES FOR GLOBAL AUDIENCES.

NICHELLE IS A CREATIVE EXECUTIVE WHO SPECIALIZES IN DEVELOPING BIG IDEAS AND MAKING THEM HAPPEN. SHE IS A PRODUCER WITH GLOBAL FILM DISTRIBUTION AND MARKETING EXPERTISE. HER VARIED EXPERTISE AND PASSIONS ARE REFLECTED IN THE WORK THAT SHE'S DONE

AND THE PLACES SHE'S LIVED — INCLUDING MEDIA, FINANCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN EUROPE AND THE U.S., HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY IN NIGERIA, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION IN SENEGAL. BEFORE AUDPOP AND WC1 STUDIOS, NICHELLE WAS A VICE PRESIDENT AT UNIVERSAL PICTURES IN BOTH LONDON AND LOS ANGELES, AND HAS DEEP EXPERIENCE IN COMPLEX CROSS-BORDER CORPORATE, COMMERCIAL, AND FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS WITH ELITE INTERNATIONAL LAW FIRMS.

NICHELLE SERVES AS THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S INTERNATIONAL AWARD USA AND IS AN EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE ACLU FOUNDATION OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA. SHE GRADUATED FROM STANFORD LAW SCHOOL AND IS ADMITTED TO PRACTICE IN CALIFORNIA, NEW YORK, ENGLAND AND WALES. SHE ALSO HOLDS DUAL DEGREES IN BLACK STUDIES AND LAW, JURISPRUDENCE & SOCIAL THOUGHT FROM AMHERST COLLEGE.

NICOLE DUCKETT

GENERAL COUNSEL AND VICE PRESIDENT, LA CLIPPERS LLC

NICOLE DUCKETT IS THE GENERAL COUNSEL AND VICE PRESIDENT OF THE LA CLIPPERS LLC WHERE SHE HAS BUILT A LEGAL AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT FROM THE GROUND UP AS THE ORGANIZATION'S FIRST IN-HOUSE COUNSEL. IN ADDITION TO DRIVING THE ORGANIZATION FORWARD AS THE COMPANY'S CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER, SHE ALSO PLAYS AN INTEGRAL ROLE IN ALL BUSINESS INITIATIVES AND STRATEGIES OF THE ORGANIZATION. SHE SPEARHEADED THE FORMATION OF THE LA CLIPPERS G LEAGUE TEAM, AGUA CALIENTE CLIPPERS OF ONTARIO; HAS PROCURED AND MAINTAINED BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE LA CLIPPERS AND NUMEROUS FORTUNE 500 COMPANIES, SUCH AS RED BULL, AMERICAN AIRLINES, AND KIA MOTORS; NEGOTIATED ONE OF THE MOST LUCRATIVE REGIONAL TELEVISION DEALS IN NBA HISTORY; AND CONTINUOUSLY SERVES AS A BUSINESS ALLY TO HER INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS. MS. DUCKETT IS THE FIRST AND ONLY BLACK WOMAN TO SERVE AS THE CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER OF AN NBA FRANCHISE.

MS. DUCKETT'S BROAD CORPORATE EXPERIENCE EXTENDS BEYOND THAT OF A TRADITIONAL CORPORATE OR FINANCE ATTORNEY. PRIOR TO JOINING THE CLIPPERS, DURING HER TIME AS THE MANAGING

PARTNER OF THE LOS ANGELES OFFICE OF AT MILBERG LLP, MS. DUCKETT REPRESENTED CLIENTS IN INITIAL PUBLIC OFFERINGS, PROVIDED CORPORATE GOVERNANCE EDUCATION AND TRAINING ON FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS, AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE AND SECURITIES LITIGATION. IN ADDITION, MS. DUCKETT ADVISED NUMEROUS MULTI-NATIONAL COMPANIES IN COMPLEX BUSINESS LITIGATION, CORPORATE INTERNAL INVESTIGATIONS, AND FOREIGN CORPORATE PRACTICES ACT INVESTIGATIONS FIRST AT THELEN LLP AND THEN AT MAYER BROWN LLP.

MS. DUCKETT IS A FORMER CITY COMMISSIONER, SERVING MAYOR ANTONIO VILLARAIGOSA AND SERVING MAYOR ERIC GARCETTI, SHE OVERSAW THE LOS ANGELES CONVENTION CENTER AND THE LOS ANGELES TOURISM BOARD. IN 2018, SHE WAS CHOSEN AS GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE YEAR BY THE *LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL*.

MS. DUCKETT RECEIVED A BACHELOR OF ARTS IN ENGLISH FROM GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY, 1995, DEAN'S LIST. SHE RECEIVED A JURIS DOCTOR FROM UCLA SCHOOL OF LAW, 1998, EDITOR UCLA NATIONAL BLACK LAW JOURNAL.

LISA GILFORD

PARTNER, SIDLEY AUSTIN LLP

LISA GILFORD IS A LEADING COMPLEX CIVIL LITIGATOR WITH A PRACTICE FOCUSED ON CLASS ACTIONS, MULTI-DISTRICT LITIGATION, AND LARGE SCALE COMMERCIAL DISPUTES. SHE IS LEAD COUNSEL TO CLIENTS IN A WIDE VARIETY OF INDUSTRIES INCLUDING AUTOMOTIVE, PHARMACEUTICAL, COMMUNICATIONS, OIL AND GAS, AEROSPACE AND CHEMICAL MANUFACTURING, SPORTS AND HIGHER EDUCATION. CLIENTS TURN TO LISA FOR COUNSEL ON THEIR MOST CHALLENGING AND SIGNIFICANT LEGAL ISSUES. HER ADVOCACY SKILLS HAVE PLAYED A PIVOTAL ROLE IN SHAPING THE OUTCOME OF NUMEROUS CLASS ACTIONS AND AGGREGATE LITIGATION MATTERS NATIONWIDE.

LISA'S NUMEROUS ACCOLADES INCLUDE BEING NAMED BY THE LOS ANGELES *DAILY JOURNAL* AS ONE OF ITS "TOP 100 LAWYERS" (2015–PRESENT), "TOP WOMEN LAWYERS" (2013–2019) AND "TOP WOMEN LITIGATORS" IN CALIFORNIA (2013–2018). THE *LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL* NAMED HER TO THE "L.A. 500" (2019, 2020), AS ONE OF THEIR MOST INFLUENTIAL WOMEN ATTORNEYS (2018–2020) AND AMONG THE "MOST INFLUENTIAL MINORITY LAWYERS" (2019). THE JOHN M. LANGSTON BAR ASSOCIATION OF LOS ANGELES RECOGNIZED LISA AS A LAW FIRM PARTNER HONOREE AT THEIR 2019 HONORING EXCELLENCE IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION AWARDS. SHE WAS ALSO RECOGNIZED AS THE "CONSUMER

LITIGATION LAWYER OF 2018" BY THE CENTURY CITY BAR ASSOCIATION AND HAS BEEN INCLUDED IN *THE BEST LAWYERS IN AMERICA* (2018–2020). LISA RECEIVED THE J. MICHAEL BROWN AWARD FROM DUPONT IN 2008 FOR HER PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, RECRUITING AND MENTORING IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION. RECENTLY, LISA WAS SELECTED TO SERVE A THREE-YEAR TERM AS AN ALTERNATE LAWYER REPRESENTATIVE TO THE NINTH CIRCUIT JUDICIAL CONFERENCE.

LISA CURRENTLY SERVES AS THE DIVERSITY COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR OF SIDLEY'S GREATER LOS ANGELES OFFICES AND IS A MEMBER OF SIDLEY'S CCPA LITIGATION TASK FORCE, A DEDICATED GROUP OF LAWYERS FOCUSING SPECIFICALLY ON LITIGATION INVOLVING THE CALIFORNIA CONSUMER PRIVACY ACT (CCPA).

LISA PREVIOUSLY TAUGHT AT THE GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY LAW CENTER AND WAS A GRADUATE FELLOW AND PUBLIC SERVICE LAWYER WITH GEORGETOWN'S INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC REPRESENTATION. LISA EARNED HER LL.M. FROM GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY, HER J.D. FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA GOULD SCHOOL OF LAW AND RECEIVED A B.A. FROM FURMAN UNIVERSITY. SHE CURRENTLY SERVES ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THE NAACP LEGAL DEFENSE FUND AND THE LOS ANGELES MUSIC CENTER.

KAREN GRANT-SELMA

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, BUSINESS & LEGAL AFFAIRS, OWN: OPRAH WINFREY NETWORK

KAREN GRANT-SELMA IS SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, BUSINESS & LEGAL AFFAIRS, OWN: OPRAH WINFREY NETWORK. GRANT-SELMA ALSO OVERSEES OWN STANDARDS & PRACTICES, INTERNATIONAL SALES, UNION ADMINISTRATION, INSURANCE, PARTICIPATIONS, RIGHTS MANAGEMENT, AND RISK ASSESSMENT.

PRIOR TO JOINING OWN GRANT-SELMA HANDLED BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS FOR DREAMWORKS ANIMATION, LEADING A FOCUS IN DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTION OF BOTH SCRIPTED AND NON-SCRIPTED LIVE ACTION SERIES FOR ALL DREAMWORKS PLATFORMS. GRANT-SELMA'S CAREER WITH BUSINESS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS FOR ENTERTAINMENT COMPANIES SPANS OVER 20 YEARS, INCLUDING EIGHT YEARS AS VICE PRESIDENT

OF BUSINESS & LEGAL AFFAIRS AT ITV STUDIOS AMERICA AND POSITIONS AT LIVE NATION PRODUCTIONS, UNIVERSAL PICTURES KIDS & FAMILY PRODUCTIONS, MAKER STUDIOS, AMC NETWORKS, NBCUNIVERSAL, AND MIRACLE ENTERTAINMENT. SHE BEGAN HER CAREER IN PRIVATE PRACTICE AT DEL SHAW MOONVES TANAKA FINKELSTEIN & LEZCANO.

GRANT-SELMA HOLDS A JURIS DOCTOR DEGREE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA GOULD SCHOOL OF LAW, A BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION IN MARKETING FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI AND IS A MEMBER OF THE ACADEMY OF TELEVISION ARTS & SCIENCES, THE BRITISH ACADEMY OF FILM & TELEVISION ARTS/LA, AND IS ON THE BOARD OF COUNCILORS FOR THE USC GOULD SCHOOL OF LAW.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PANEL: SPORTS, ENTERTAINMENT AND RACIAL EQUITY: HEEDING THE CALL FOR JUSTICE

- A. MCLE Credit Information and Instructions
- B. MCLE Attendance Record Form and Evaluation
- C. Outline of Topic/Issues
- D. "Netflix Pledges \$5 Million to Support Black Creators, Youth and Black-Owned Businesses," *Variety* (June 15, 2020)
- E. "The Reckoning Over Representation: Black Hollywood Speaks Out, But Is the Industry Listening?" *Variety* (June 30, 2020)
- F. "Channel 4 and Filmmakers Debate Black British Creative Response to George Floyd," *Variety* (June 16, 2020)
- G. "Hollywood Must Not Settle for the Comfortable Response to Fight Systemic Racism (Guest Column)," *Variety* (June 17, 2020)
- H. "Women and People of Color Still Underrepresented Behind the Scenes, Study Says," *Variety* (February 6, 2020)
- I. "Colin Kaepernick Signs First-Look Deal With Walt Disney," *Variety* (July 6, 2020)
- J. "Colin Kaepernick Elected to Board of Medium as Blogging Platform's First Director Who Is a Person of Color," *Variety* (June 18, 2020)

CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS

MCLE. UCLA SCHOOL OF LAW IS A STATE BAR OF CALIFORNIA APPROVED MCLE PROVIDER. BY ATTENDING THE 44TH ANNUAL UCLA ENTERTAINMENT SYMPOSIUM WEBINAR SERIES ON AUGUST 5, 2020, YOU MAY EARN MINIMUM CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION CREDIT IN THE AMOUNT OF UP TO **0.75 HOUR OF GENERAL CREDIT AND 1 HOUR OF RECOGNITION AND ELIMINATION OF BIAS IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION AND SOCIETY CREDIT** (0.75 HOUR OF GENERAL CREDIT FOR LABOR OF LOVE: A DISCUSSION OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN UNIONS, TALENT AND PRODUCERS AND 1 HOUR OF RECOGNITION AND ELIMINATION OF BIAS IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION AND SOCIETY CREDIT FOR SPORTS, ENTERTAINMENT AND RACIAL EQUITY: HEEDING THE CALL FOR JUSTICE).

IN ORDER TO RECEIVE CREDIT, **YOU MUST VERIFY YOUR PARTICIPATION.** DURING EACH OF THE TWO PRESENTATIONS OF EACH WEEKLY WEBINAR, **A UNIQUE CODE WILL BE ANNOUNCED AND/OR SHOWN.** EACH ATTENDEE WILL THEN NEED TO WRITE DOWN THE CODE FOR THE CORRESPONDING PRESENTATION ON AN ATTENDANCE FORM WHICH, ALONG WITH AN EVALUATION, IS PROVIDED ON THE NEXT PAGE. **YOU ARE REQUIRED TO RETURN THE COMPLETED ATTENDANCE FORM TO EVENTS@LAW.UCLA.EDU WITHIN FIVE DAYS AFTER THE LAST DAY OF THE MONTH IN WHICH THE WEBINAR TAKES PLACE TO RECEIVE YOUR CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATORY ATTENDANCE.** YOU MAY ALSO RETURN A COMPLETED EVALUATION TO EVENTS@LAW.UCLA.EDU.

UCLA SCHOOL OF LAW CERTIFIES THAT THIS ACTIVITY CONFORMS TO THE STANDARDS FOR APPROVED EDUCATION ACTIVITIES PRESCRIBED BY THE RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE STATE BAR OF CALIFORNIA GOVERNING MINIMUM CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION.

OFFICIAL RECORD OF PARTICIPATORY ATTENDANCE FOR CALIFORNIA MCLE

PROVIDER: UCLA SCHOOL OF LAW (provider #1211)

SUBJECT MATTER/TITLE: The 44th Annual UCLA Entertainment Symposium Webinar Series

DATE AND TIME: Wednesday, August 5, 2020, 5:00 p.m. - 6:50 p.m. PDT

LOCATION: Los Angeles, California

LENGTH OF ACTIVITY: 1.75 hours

ELIGIBLE CALIFORNIA MCLE CREDIT: up to 0.75 hour of general credit and 1 hour of recognition and elimination of bias in the legal profession and society credit

	Presentation	MCLE CODE	Attended (please initial)
5:00 pm - 5:45 pm 45 minutes 0.75 hour of general credit	LABOR OF LOVE: A DISCUSSION OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN UNIONS, TALENT AND PRODUCERS Michael Maizner (Moderator), Richard W. Kopenhefer and Olga Rodriguez-Aguirre	_____	_____
5:50 pm - 6:50 pm 1 hour 1 hour of recognition and elimination of bias in the legal profession and society credit	SPORTS, ENTERTAINMENT AND RACIAL EQUITY: HEEDING THE CALL FOR JUSTICE Lisa Gilford (Moderator), Nichelle Carr, Nicole Duckett and Karen Grant-Selma	_____	_____

The undersigned attendee affirms that he/she attended the above-referenced session(s) as initialed above.

Attendee Full Name:

Attendee Bar Number:

Attendee Signature:

Attendee Email Address:

Please return completed form to events@law.ucla.edu within five days after the last day of the month in which the course takes place.

UCLA School of Law is a State Bar of California approved MCLE provider.

ACTIVITY EVALUATION FORM FOR CALIFORNIA MCLE

Please complete and return to events@law.ucla.edu

PROVIDER UCLA School of Law (provider #1211)
PROVIDER PHONE # (310) 825-0971
PROVIDER ADDRESS 1242 Law Building, Box 951476, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1476
TITLE OF ACTIVITY The 44th Annual UCLA Entertainment Symposium Webinar Series
DATE OF OFFERING Wednesday, August 5, 2020, 5:00 p.m. - 6:50 p.m. PDT
SITE Los Angeles, California

NAME OF PARTICIPANT (optional)

Please indicate your evaluation of this course by completing the table below

Question	Yes	No	Comments
Did this program meet your educational objectives?			
Were you provided with substantive written materials?			
Did the course update or keep you informed of your legal responsibilities?			
Did the activity contain significant professional content?			
Was the environment suitable for learning (e.g., temperature, noise, lighting, etc.)?			

Please rate the instructor(s) of the course below

Instructor's Name and Subject Taught	On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being Poor and 5 being Excellent, please rate the items below	Rate 1 – 5
Michael Maizner (Moderator), Richard W. Kopenhefer and Olga Rodriguez-Aguirre	Overall Teaching Effectiveness	
LABOR OF LOVE: A DISCUSSION OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN UNIONS, TALENT AND PRODUCERS	Knowledge of Subject Matter	

Instructor's Name and Subject Taught	On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being Poor and 5 being Excellent, please rate the items below	Rate 1 – 5
Lisa Gilford (Moderator), Nichelle Carr, Nicole Duckett and Karen Grant-Selma	Overall Teaching Effectiveness	
SPORTS, ENTERTAINMENT AND RACIAL EQUITY: HEEDING THE CALL FOR JUSTICE	Knowledge of Subject Matter	

SPORTS, ENTERTAINMENT AND RACIAL EQUITY: HEEDING THE CALL FOR JUSTICE

OUTLINE OF TOPICS/ISSUES

THE NATIONAL DISCUSSION AROUND RACIAL INEQUALITY HAS BEEN REIGNITED BY THE TRAGIC DEATHS OF GEORGE FLOYD AND COUNTLESS OTHERS AT THE HANDS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT. DURING THIS TIME, MANY INDUSTRIES ARE BEGINNING TO DIVE DEEP INTO THE WATERS OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND EVALUATING THE WAYS IN WHICH THEY CAN, AND SHOULD, ENGAGE IN THE WORK TO MAKE THE WORLD A MORE EQUITABLE PLACE FOR ALL. AS GATEKEEPERS OF SOCIETAL KNOWLEDGE, IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY TO EVALUATE ITS ROLE IN THIS CONVERSATION. THIS PANEL WILL EXPLORE THE INDUSTRY'S RESPONSE TO THIS MOMENT IN HISTORY, AND THE WAYS IN WHICH CREATIVE CONTENT SHAPES AND GUIDES THE DISCUSSION ON RACIAL JUSTICE. IN PARTICULAR, THE PANEL WILL EXPLORE (1) THE CHANGES THAT NEED TO BE MADE AT THE C-SUITE LEVEL IN ORDER TO EFFECTUATE LASTING RACIAL EQUITY; (2) THE NECESSITY OF AMPLIFYING DIVERSE STORYTELLERS TO PUSH THE CONVERSATION FORWARD; AND (3) THE WAYS IN WHICH CREATIVE CONTENT CAN RESHAPE HOW SOCIETY THINKS ABOUT RACIAL JUSTICE.

Jun 15, 2020 3:12pm PT

Netflix Pledges \$5 Million to Support Black Creators, Youth and Black-Owned Businesses

By Todd Spangler



Netflix

[Netflix](#) said it will donate \$5 million to organizations dedicated to creating opportunities for Black creators, Black youth and Black-owned businesses, including Ghetto Film School, Black Public Media and Colin Kaepernick’s Know Your Rights Camp.

The subscription-video company announced donations of an initial \$3 million, with more to come.

“Tackling racism and injustice in meaningful ways means creating long-term opportunities for the Black community,” Netflix chairman and CEO Reed Hastings said in a statement. “The main role we play is through our funding of and member viewing of important content like ‘When They See Us.’ As an additional step, today we’re committing \$5 million to nonprofits dedicated to creating direct opportunities for Black creators, Black youth and Black-owned businesses.”

On the creator front, Netflix is donating \$1.5 million total to [Ghetto Film School](#), [Film Independent’s Project Involve](#), [Firelight Media](#) and [Black Public Media](#).

Netflix also is giving \$1 million grants to three youth-oriented organizations: [Know Your Rights Camp](#), [the Posse Foundation](#) and [Black Girls Code](#). And the company said it is donating \$500,000 to Black-owned businesses “in our own backyard of Los Angeles”; [Vermont Slauson Economic Development \(VSEDC\)](#), a nonprofit group that provides resources to communities in South Los Angeles traditionally underserved by banks, will disperse the grants.

Last month Netflix was among the first [media and entertainment companies to announce support for the Black Lives Matter](#) movement after Minneapolis man George Floyd was killed by police, sparking nationwide protests for equality and criminal-justice reform. And last week, the streamer launched a [“Black Lives Matter” collection featuring over 45 titles](#) about racial injustice and the experience of Black Americans.

Meanwhile, Netflix said, many of its employees also have been personally donated to Black and racial-justice causes, with the company matching all employee donations at 200%.

Jun 30, 2020 6:00am PT

The Reckoning Over Representation: Black Hollywood Speaks Out, But Is the Industry Listening?

By
Elaine Low, Angelique Jackson

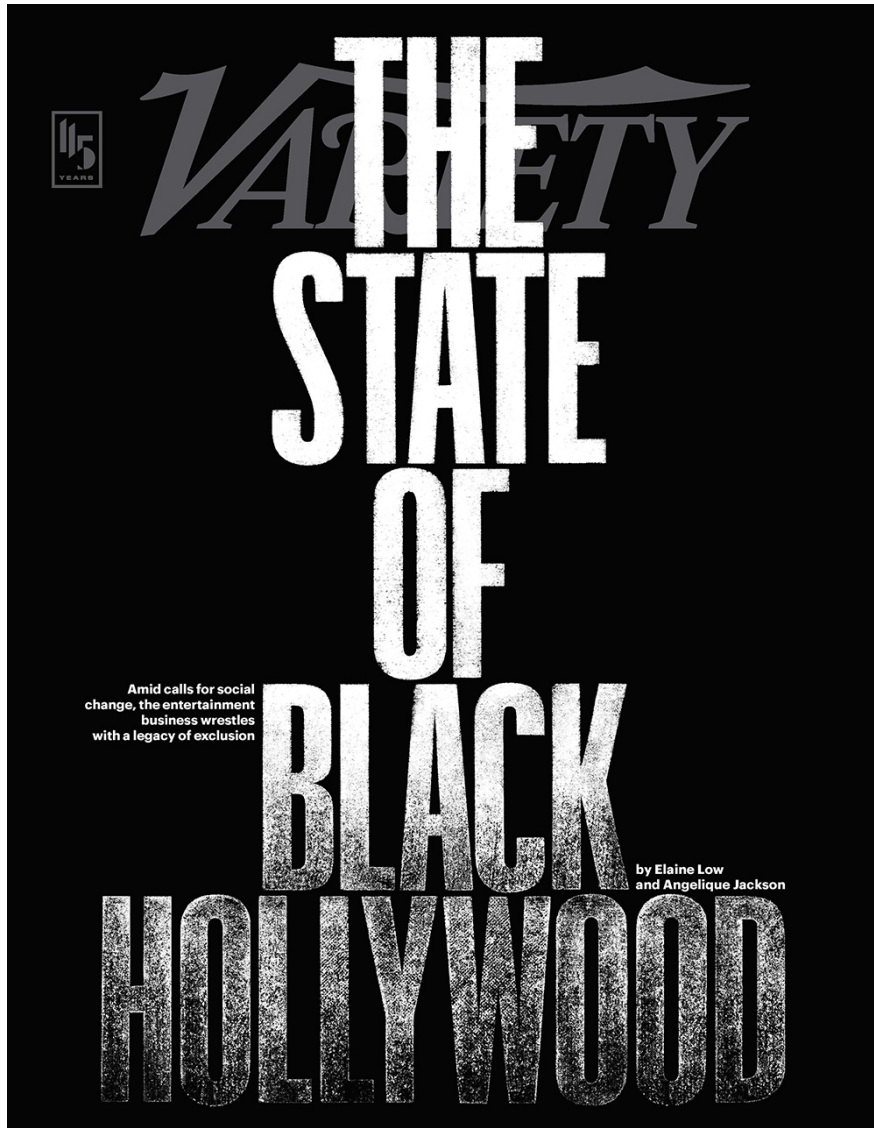


Michael Buckner/Variety/Shutters

Former “Glee” star [Amber Riley](#) remembers the time early in her career when a producer told her that she and other actors of color were “a little more disposable, because that’s the way the world is.” As her professional trajectory continued, she witnessed her fair share of bad behavior, and knew who would — or would not — be held accountable.

“Being told that the white girls are not fireable is being told that you’re disposable,” she tells *Variety*. Riley internalized that message to the point that she was “distracted” going into auditions in her post-“Glee” career, dealing with anxiety and a loss of confidence.

“I just felt like, there’s a million Black actors that want this — what is special about me? ... That’s what that feels like [when] nobody cares,” says Riley. “They don’t care that you’re being abused on set, whether that’s verbally or otherwise. They don’t care.”



Annie Jen for Variety

Riley recalls all this in the wake of “Glee” actor Samantha Ware revealing that the show’s star, Lea Michele, allegedly threatened in 2015 to “s— in [her] wig.” Riley’s support of Ware on social media led to Black actors with similar experiences reaching out, and prompted her to create #unMUTEny, a movement to “end Black silence in the entertainment industry, hold power structures accountable for suppressing Black experiences and confront microaggressions with courage.”

“We need to address behaviors that are allowed on sets,” says Riley. “We need to address why the Black experience is diminished when it comes to telling you what happened, why we’re not believed, why we feel afraid for our jobs, why we feel disposable.”

Riley is not the only one in Hollywood and elsewhere speaking up about the need to lift Black voices. The death of George Floyd while in the custody of Minneapolis police in late May has been a catalyst on an international scale, prompting hundreds of thousands to march in the name of Black Lives Matter and to call for reform of the law enforcement and criminal justice systems.

This has permeated other industries, including Hollywood, whose controversy-shy mega-corporations took the unusual step of issuing public statements decrying racism as thousands of Black artists shared their experiences with workplace discrimination.

What many in the entertainment industry are ready to say aloud is this: The institution itself is imbued with white supremacy and a patriarchal structure designed to proffer advantages unequally. Now the question is whether Hollywood, a town built on the very premise of exclusivity and gatekeeping, can make good on its commitment to inclusion — and amplify the voices of Black talent and other creatives of color the way it has purported to.

The tenor of the current conversation around racism and police brutality has undergone a tectonic shift, even though unarmed Black men have been dying at the hands of police officers for years. The 2014 deaths of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo., and Eric Garner in New York, for instance, sparked waves of outrage but no internal soul-searching in, say, the headquarters of NASCAR or Aunt Jemima parent company Quaker Oats.

Some surmise that the coronavirus pandemic left the millions confined to their homes little choice but to pay attention; others attribute the acceleration of the Black Lives Matter movement to the increasing power of social media. The entertainment industry's recent reckoning with gender parity, sexual misconduct and #OscarsSoWhite has perhaps positioned it to be more inclined to engage in some self-interrogation.

“Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, all those deaths coming in quick succession — I think it's opened up an entirely different conversation that particularly in Hollywood, coming in the wake of #MeToo, I think everyone is realizing that the business has been built on some systemic wrongs that need to be righted,” Netflix vice president of original content [Channing Dungey](#) tells *Variety*.



The death of George Floyd has ignited calls for reform not only of the criminal justice system but of industries including Hollywood. *Michael Buckner/Variety/Shutters*

Regardless of the cause, this moment appears to be an inflection point in the way we think about institutional racism. But no part of the issue is news to the Black community.

“This is no more urgent today than it was four months ago to people who’ve been paying attention,” says The Black List founder and CEO Franklin Leonard. “And it’s great that there are some people who are now saying, ‘Oh, maybe we should be doing things differently,’ but the need for that change has existed certainly for as long as I’ve been in the business, and I would argue that it’s been necessary since the first Hollywood blockbuster was ‘The Birth of a Nation.’”

The industry has long evolved past films like “The Birth of a Nation” and Disney’s “Song of the South,” and more women and people of color have come to occupy positions of power, both in front of and behind the camera. But that has not been enough to cancel out generations of hurt and exclusion.

Black writers still “can’t get a shot to write their stories,” says director [Matthew A. Cherry](#), who won an Oscar this year for his animated short film, “Hair Love.”

“If you look at a big majority of studio films that have come out, be they biopics or stories with primarily Black characters, a lot of times you have white screenwriters who are able to tell those stories,” he says. “This is tricky, because a lot of times they’ll say, ‘OK, we want a big-name writer on it,’ or ‘We need to rely on the credits of said writer.’ It’s just like a lose-lose situation because you can’t get credits if you don’t get opportunities. And the people that’ve been getting opportunities for the last 30, 40, 50 years haven’t been us.”

Most studios and networks boast a slate of well-intentioned inclusion initiatives to showcase acting, directing and writing talent from communities of color. But structural shortfalls, perhaps more damaging in their subtlety, persist. Take TV diversity programs, which are often great stepping stones for writers and directors of color to get their first job on a series.

“But what ends up happening is that a lot of them get stuck there, right?” says Dungey. “Because once they’re no longer the diversity hire that’s paid for through the program, they still are facing that same barrier to entry. They don’t have the same relationship. It makes me so frustrated when we’re putting together a director list for a season of television, and then they come back and they say, ‘We have one woman, one person of color — that’s good.’ And then you know, the other eight are white men. And I’m like, ‘Wait a minute; you’re telling me that there’s no one else you can find that makes this?’”

The salary for a writers program hire typically comes from the studio or network running the program, not the showrunner’s budget. “A Black Lady Sketch Show” staff writer Ashley Nicole Black, who has not participated in such a program but has heard from many who have, contends that such structures incentivize showrunners to not promote those diversity hires but instead replace them with a new “free” writer of color.

That’s not to say the programs have not seen writers who have gone on to big success. Mindy Kaling, Donald Glover and Alan Yang are all alumni of NBC’s Diverse Staff Writer Initiative, for instance. NBC’s program funds the salary of a staff writer for three years; if a showrunner wants to promote that writer to story editor, then he or she need only pay the difference.

“If you look at a big majority of studio films that have come out, be they biopics or stories with primarily Black characters, a lot of times you have white screenwriters.”

Matthew A. Cherry, Oscar-winning director

But the latest Writers Guild of America inclusion report makes obvious the glaring continued racial disparity in writers’ room ranks. In the 2019-20 season, 51% of staff writers were white, and the rest were people of color. That parity did not translate to the upper echelons: More than 80% of executive producers and showrunners were white, while fewer than 20% were people of color.

“The system is racist,” says Black. “So the system is going to tend toward elevating white people and not elevating people of color. And the only way to fix the system is to attend to every single part of the system. So if you’re just getting people in the door and you’re not attending to how long they stay there, how quickly they’re promoted and elevated — the system, once they’re in the door, is going to tend toward kicking them back out the door.”

Black’s experience on the HBO comedy series has been unique — she is part of a writers’ room populated only with Black women — and a testament to the necessity of healthy representation. When she started on “A Black Lady Sketch Show,” she was “pitching hot fire,” unencumbered by having to explain cultural references to a mostly white audience in order to set up a joke.

“In a room full of all Black women I didn’t have to do that first task,” says Black. “I was just doing the comedy. And it made work so much easier. And I was like, this is how white men are working all the time. It’s like I was doing comedy with a boulder on my back and someone just took it off, and now I’m running up the hill.”

Some go so far as to indicate that the industry’s approach to diversity and inclusion is an act of misdirection, when the focus should be on the conditions that have allowed the main benefactors of the status quo — white men — to remain in positions of control.

“When people who have benefited their whole lives from white supremacy and patriarchy are asked to create a program or hire a woman or two or change the way they think about who’s qualified, they’re all pretty game to do it,” says “Transparent” creator Joey Soloway (who recently changed their name from Jill). But instead of being rewarded with an episode to direct or being given “a pat on the head,” they say, the issue is “asking white people and especially white men to really interrogate what they’re willing to give up to be anti-racist.”

The dialogue now happening in the industry is about more than inclusion and creating spaces, Soloway says. “It’s about, I think, white people and men being willing to say, ‘Wow, the help I’ve had from living in patriarchy, the help I’ve had from living in white supremacy, has really done a number on everybody else.’”

Actor Kendrick Sampson recently recruited more than 300 Black creatives — including Tessa Thompson, Sterling K. Brown, Common, Viola Davis, Tiffany Haddish, Issa Rae, Octavia Spencer and Kerry Washington — to sign a letter denouncing Hollywood for “encouraging the epidemic of police violence and culture of anti-Blackness.”



Amber Riley speaks at a BLD PWR and Black Lives Matter gathering in Los Angeles on May 30. *Shalae Madison*

“The lack of a true commitment to inclusion and institutional support has only reinforced Hollywood’s legacy of white supremacy,” wrote Sampson. “This is not only in storytelling. It is cultural and systemic in Hollywood. Our agencies, which often serve as industry gatekeepers, don’t recruit, retain or support Black agents. Our unions don’t consider or defend our specific, intersectional struggles. Unions are even worse for our below-the-line crew, especially for Black women. Hollywood studios and production companies that exploit and profit from our stories rarely have any senior-level Black executives with greenlighting power.”

Internally, studios and networks have made attempts to break down barriers to entry for Black people and other people of color through executive incubators and pipeline programs. But those efforts are not as fast-moving as many would like. Look no further than a snapshot of any major entertainment company’s board of directors or executive team to see mostly white men looking back.

Tara Duncan, the incoming president of Disney-owned cabler Freeform and one of the few Black network heads in the industry, is a founding member of Time’s Up-backed Who’s in the Room, an executive mentorship program that aims to improve diversity among executives and producers. Eighty percent of its 23 mentees, all of whom started as senior assistants to decision-making executives, have since been promoted or moved into new positions since completing their first year in the program.

“I’ve had to navigate issues of being called aggressive and angry,” says Duncan of her experience in the industry, adding that she has been challenged to defend the value of projects from creators of color about which she has been passionate. “There’s this sort of instinct that if it’s featuring a predominantly Black cast or it’s from a Black creator, then that’s only going to appeal to a niche audience. So yeah, these are issues that I have faced continuously in my career. For me, that mentorship made all the difference, which is why it was very important to me that I also would become a mentor.”

Cherry similarly feels a responsibility to keep the door open for other Black creators, in the vein of Ava DuVernay, Jordan Peele and Michael B. Jordan’s efforts to promote Black talent. Yet speaking out comes despite a very real fear of professional repercussions, which is why Cherry tweeted his support for John Boyega after the “Star Wars” actor took the megaphone at a Black Lives Matter protest in London on June 3 to address the crowd.



Counterclockwise from bottom left: Ashley Nicole Black, Robin Thede, Lauren Ashley Smith, Holly Walker, Akilah Green, Rae Sanni and Brittani Nichols are members of the “Black Lady Sketch Show” writers’ room, which is composed solely of Black women. *Courtesy of HBO*

“Look, I don’t know if I’m going to have a career after this, but fuck that,” Boyega said at the protest. Hollywood heavy-hitters including Peele, Olivia Wilde, J.J. Abrams, Mark Hamill and Rian Johnson also publicly affirmed their support for the young star.

“I think people are realizing that we have an opportunity to actually have their back and say, ‘We support you; we’re gonna hire you regardless, you know what I mean? We do have your back,’” Cherry says, pointing to celebrities such as Gabrielle Union — who filed a harassment complaint against NBCUniversal, Fremantle Media and Simon Cowell’s Syco amid concerns about racism and on-set misconduct — and Mo’Nique, who last year filed suit against Netflix, alleging pay inequity and gender and racial bias.

For her part, “Glee” star Riley is no longer worried about speaking up. Late 2019 saw her falling into a deep depression that hobbled her so much that she couldn’t sing or work; she lost 25 pounds and ended up in the hospital. Riley has since learned how to manage what turned out to be anxiety, and does not care if she is blackballed, so long as she can improve the entertainment landscape for the next generation.

“I’ve made my money,” says Riley. “I can continue to make money in the background. I can be a part of a production team, and you don’t even know my ass is there, and be making more than being in front of the camera. There’s not going to be anyone that’s going to be able to stop me.”

The momentum is building around calls to action. Leonard and Black were among the 1,000 Black artists, including Union, DuVernay and David Oyelowo, who formed the Black Artists for Freedom collective; in an open letter they urged cultural institutions to cut ties with law enforcement and “put their money where their mouths are.”

The ball is now back in the court of Hollywood’s power players— studios, networks, agencies, production companies — to move the story forward.

“I would love to see a major studio or streaming platform make the public commitment that, at a minimum, their spend on production will reflect demographic realities of the population of the U.S. for minority groups,” says Leonard. “If we as a business are going to spend a billion dollars on content, 13% of that is going to go to the African American community for stories by and about people in that community, 50% of it will go to women, etc. If they want to really go big, they would commit to a floor of the way the world actually is.”

That may sound radical, he says, but the notion becomes less so when considering that white men make up only about 30% of the U.S. population but create the bulk of Hollywood’s output.



Actor John Boyega speaks at a Justice for Black Lives protest in London on June 3; Hollywood heavy-hitters such as Jordan Peele and J.J. Abrams later publicly expressed their support of his action. *NEIL HALL/EPA-EFE/Shutterstock*

WarnerMedia chief enterprise inclusion officer Christy Haubegger, who recently joined the HBO and Warner Bros. parent company after spending 14 years working to improve representation at CAA, says the next step is to do more than “random acts of diversity.”

“I’m a big fan of databases,” she says. “I like taking excuses away. Nobody can say, ‘I couldn’t find them.’ And so we’re building a centralized set of tools for our executives, and for our

partners, like our production company partners, to be able to access, to facilitate, looking at more diverse opportunities. Everyone's trying to hire more female episodic directors, and everybody's got kind of a list. I'm like, 'No, no, we're gonna make one big list for you.' I'm a believer in systems, and I think systems are the only way to get sustainable change."

As part of the move in recent years toward increased accountability, companies such as WarnerMedia and Netflix have publicly released granular internal demographic breakdowns, offering transparency on how many people of color are on staff and in the upper ranks. Whether other entertainment giants will follow suit remains to be seen. While the conversation appears to be moving in a constructive direction, executives and creators are cautiously optimistic about the changes to come.

"When I have brought this up, I have been pleasantly surprised at the willingness to listen and think there is still, quite frankly, some fear," Freeform's Duncan says. "I think we're all grappling with where to start. And how do we do something that feels effective and something that's truly going to make a difference? I will say I definitely think there is a real desire. But I think, again, we have to acknowledge that it's not just about doing the right thing. This is also good business."

Ultimately, Riley believes it comes down to ensuring that Black voices are properly valued, which she considers the industry's biggest blind spot. She advises Black creatives and their allies not to lose sight of the end goal.

"I need people to understand the long game," says Riley. "I need everyone to be disciplined, after the motions and all of the commotion and all of the passion and the performance has died down. And I need them to be consistent with their message, with their feelings, because we all know when we stop seeing results, it's gonna take self-discipline to make sure that it gets done."

Jazz Tangcay contributed to this report.

Jun 16, 2020 7:56am PT

Channel 4 and Filmmakers Debate Black British Creative Response to George Floyd

By Naman Ramachandran



Tom Nicholson/Lnp/Shutterstock

On Monday, Liana Stewart’s short “My First Time,” featuring testimonies from people who recall the first time they were racially abused, aired on U.K. broadcaster [Channel 4](#), its streaming service All 4 and its social channels. It drew just under a million viewers, according to Danny Horan, head of factual for Channel 4.

Stewart’s film is the first of five shorts made by Black British filmmakers under the series title “Take Your Knee Off My Neck,” airing weeknights this week, commissioned by Channel 4 as a response to the killing of [George Floyd](#).

On Tuesday, Stewart participated in a virtual panel discussion as part of the [Edinburgh Television Festival](#). “I put a lot of pressure on myself, because this is not just about the public watching, this is about the Black community as well,” Stewart said during the debate.

Another panelist, Channel 4 commissioning editor Rita Daniels said, “It is a massive responsibility, it is a huge burden and you worry about it. I am probably one of the only few commissioning editors in factual that is Black, so you do feel that people are looking at me to change the system, create more opportunities, which I have been doing actually, quietly.”

Daniels spoke about the need to nurture and protect emerging Black talent. “It is hard out there, we’ve got different backgrounds. A lot of us didn’t go to those Ivy League universities, so you are learning how to navigate that very white system. But it can be done.”

The shorts are produced by Milk & Honey Productions. The company’s managing director, and panelist, Lucy Pilkington, said: “For me, the only point in making these films is if they make the audience, which, let’s face it, is 93% white, sit up and look why we are so angry. These aren’t about the protests, they are protests.”

Talking about next steps, Horan said that U.K. public service broadcasters need to commission differently and have leadership at all levels who look and sound different, and tell stories that reflect the country’s diversity.

Earlier on Tuesday, Channel 4 chief executive Alex Mahon appeared before a House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport committee to provide evidence on an inquiry into the future of public service broadcasting in the U.K. Mahon revealed that during the lockdown period audiences for news and factual programming were up 40%, with young audiences aged 16-34 rising 75%. Black and Minority Asian audiences were up by nearly 30%, Mahon said.

Jun 17, 2020 8:00am PT

Hollywood Must Not Settle for the Comfortable Response to Fight Systemic Racism (Guest Column)

By Darrell D. Miller, Derrick Johnson



Michael Buckner/Variety/Shutters

Images have immense power. As the currency of Hollywood, they can be potent weapons against the ugly realities of racism, hate and intolerance in America. They have the power to inspire, to humanize and to dehumanize, as we saw in the video of George Floyd’s slow, violent death at the hands of the Minneapolis police.

Images have historically played a leading role in galvanizing America to fight for racial justice and equality. In the 1800s, when ugly caricatures of Black people filled the pages of newspapers and popular magazines, Frederick Douglass sat for more than 100 photographic portraits — a purposeful strategy to show the world images of a serious, dignified Black man. In 1915, the six-year-old [NAACP](#) launched a national campaign against the racist film “The Birth of a Nation,” which portrayed Black characters as violent criminals and the Ku Klux Klan as heroes. Recognizing the power of cinema, the NAACP feared the movie would incite additional violence against Black people — and indeed, both the number of lynchings and the membership of the Klan reportedly rose the year the film was released.

In the 1960s, images of vicious attack dogs and other brutality unleashed by police upon nonviolent Black demonstrators were broadcast into American living rooms and helped turn public opinion in favor of the civil rights movement, leading to transformative changes in our civil rights laws and Hollywood programming.

Yet today, in its response to this unprecedented moment in history sparked by the public murder of George Floyd, Hollywood — which is literally in the business of creating, producing, marketing and exploiting images approved and greenlit by a handful of C-suite executives who shape American culture — is again resorting to the same old social justice playbook.

Studios, networks and other entertainment companies led by this insular group of executives have rushed to make the usual symbolic gestures of support for the Black community. They pledge financial support for activists, hire the proverbial one Black writer, produce a Black television show or greenlight one low-budget Black film, even execute 180-degree reversals on long-running legal battles they would never have contemplated conceding absent the current climate.

These are “the comfortable give.” And frankly, these isolated gestures simply contribute to preserving the status quo.

In this moment, when centuries of oppression have come to a tipping point, Hollywood must, and can, do more. We cannot continue to operate on autopilot when considering who is portrayed in our productions, how they’re portrayed and who makes those decisions. Hollywood must devote its true strength — that of global image-maker and influencer — to the fight for justice and institutional change.

How do we achieve that? Accountability.

Each year, alongside box office receipts, Nielsen ratings and corporate profits, entertainment companies should publicize concrete diversity hiring and programming goals, and report on their results in achieving them. That’s commitment to positive change. That’s what the memory of George Floyd (and Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and so many others) requires us to do if we are serious this time about moving our industry and the world forward through the images that originate from Hollywood.

Now is the time for accountability and action, not symbolic gestures. Now is the time for the senior leadership of Hollywood, including the ultimate gatekeepers who sit on the boards and in the C-suites, to hold themselves and each other to account.

Racism is not merely personal in this country, it’s structural: so deeply embedded in our systems and practices that they continue to produce racially disparate results, even if no prejudiced human specifically seeks that outcome. This is how the C-suites and writers’ rooms remain so white, and how a studio executive could suggest that Julia Roberts play the lead role in a film about Harriet Tubman. It is structural racism that places so many institutional barriers in Black people’s paths: from under-resourced schools to a lack of family-supporting wages, overly aggressive policing and voter suppression.

Over the years, the rich tapestry of life in the Black community has been systemically ignored in favor of simplified one-dimensional caricatures, token characters, and the false narrative that Black communities are dangerous, one-dimensional ghettos. These messages from Hollywood travel far and hold fast. Last year in Ghana, Africans on a national panel told NAACP leaders how difficult it was for them to get beyond their perception of African Americans as violent criminals —which they had learned from American movies and TV.

How Black people are portrayed on screens determines how they are treated in the streets. To accurately depict a community, studios, networks, streamers and production companies need to involve members of that community in decision-making.

And right now, that's not happening.

In its survey of 11 major and mid-major studios, UCLA's 2020 Hollywood Diversity Report found that 91 percent of C-level jobs and 93 percent of senior executive jobs were held by white people. In addition, 86 percent of studio film unit leaders were white.

Entertainment companies regularly use metrics to calculate audience appeal and financial performance. Now is the time for Hollywood to create similar metrics to measure the appointment of members to its Boards of Directors, hiring of Black executives, producers, content creators and showrunners, and quantify the production of diverse content for film, television and streaming — and then publicly announce its goals and report on its progress. The industry should work in close partnership with organizations within the Black community that can provide resources, help shape content and provide the audience to commercially support it.

Considering the significant and growing buying power of Black audiences, setting goals for the creation of quality, diverse content is not a handout or quota system, it's just good business.

Here are four concrete steps entertainment companies should take now to ensure the industry achieves and is held accountable for those results, and to demonstrate that it respects its Black and brown consumers, who consume a disproportionate share of Hollywood's content.

1. Appoint Black people to seats on the board of directors in proportion to the number of Black people reflected in their audiences, subscribers or consumer base.
2. Promote and hire Black people to fill C-suite and senior creative executive positions, who can be advocates for diverse ideas and have the power to see them actually produced and distributed.
3. Set concrete goals and measurable objectives to guarantee distribution of programming that shows people of color in non-stereotypical roles and beyond the token cast member.
4. And, most importantly, gauge success by results, as entertainment companies do in every other operational aspect of their business.

Change is possible, but only if Hollywood stops evaluating its progress on racial and social justice based on the number of well-intentioned gestures it makes, and starts focusing instead on the results it achieves.

Having a serious, industry-wide action plan to confront issues of race in the entertainment industry — and then doing something bold, fresh and structured with accountability to address them — is uncomfortable, but it is necessary and long overdue.

Darrell D. Miller is a partner in the Los Angeles office of Fox Rothschild and the founding chair of the firm's entertainment and sports law department.

Derrick Johnson is the president and CEO of the NAACP.

Feb 6, 2020 1:00am PT

Women and People of Color Still Underrepresented Behind the Scenes, Study Says

By Adam B. Vary



Shutterstock

Representation of women and people of color in feature films [has never been better in Hollywood](#) — if it’s on screen.

The film industry’s efforts to diversify leading roles and especially a movie’s main cast have paid off admirably over the past decade, according to a [new study](#) from UCLA’s social sciences division and the UCLA Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, authored by Dr. Darnell Hunt and Dr. Ana-Christina Ramón. But those efforts remain stagnated when it comes to directors, writers, and top studio executives.

The study, titled “[Hollywood Diversity](#) Report 2020: A Tale of Two Hollywoods,” looked at the top 200 theatrical releases in both 2018 and 2019. (A separate study covering television will be released later this year.)

The most troubling finding is the lack of progress for people of color trying to secure directing jobs. In 2011, people of color made up 12.2% of directors of theatrical films. While that percentage has spiked in the ensuing decade — to 17.8% in 2013, and 19.3% in 2018 — the

overall trend line has remained flat. In 2019, just 14.4% of directors of theatrical films were people of color.

Drilling down further into the demographics, among directors of color, black filmmakers had the highest percentage of overall feature directors in 2018 (10.7%) and 2019 (5.5%). Only 4.3% of directors in 2018 and 3.4% in 2019 were Asian, and only 0.7% in 2018 and 2.1% in 2019 were Latinx. In both years, zero feature films measured by the study were directed by indigenous peoples.

Women directors, by contrast, have seen some appreciable growth in the past decade, from 4.1% of all directors in 2011 to a record high of 15.1% in 2019. Women of color, however, were far less well represented, and as Hunt and Ramón state in the study, women as a whole “remained underrepresented by a factor of more than 3 to 1 in this employment arena in 2019.”

After remaining largely stuck under 10% for most of the decade, screenwriters of color did at least enjoy a rather large uptick in the last two years, from 7.8% in 2017 to 13.9% in 2019. The percentage of women writers also grew over the same period, from 12.6% in 2017 to 17.4% in 2019 — but almost all of those women were white. And in both cases, screenwriters in 2019 were still considerably whiter and more male than the general population. Hunt and Ramón note that it’s impossible to conclude whether the increasing diversity within screenwriters is part of a trend or “just a momentary spike in an employment arena that has been notoriously resistant to change.”

And then there are the executive ranks. According to the study, 91% of studio heads are white and 82% are male. Senior management is similarly monolithic: 93% white and 80% male. And while execs who oversee core studio operations — marketing, casting, legal, etc. — are approaching gender parity, with 59% male, they are still 86% white. Hunt and Ramón note that these figures are “a slight improvement” over figures from the 2015 Hollywood Diversity Report, when studio heads, for example, were 100% male.

On camera, however, the story is much different. According to the study, people of color made up 27.6% of leading roles in the top 200 films of 2019, a massive leap from 2011, when people of color made up just 10.5% of leads. Women in lead roles increased to 44.1% in 2019, way up from 25.6% in 2011.

Those figures are similar to [other recent studies](#) charting the growth in diverse representation for leading roles, but the UCLA study also looked at the diversity within entire main cast of a film. In 2011, casts that were predominantly white — 89% or more — made up 51% of all films released that year. By 2019, predominantly white casts made up just 15.9% of films released. Films with casts that had over 50% people of color, meanwhile, grew from 9.9% of all features in 2011 to 17.2% in 2019.

Most tellingly, the study reveals that having a diverse cast makes a substantial impact at the box office. Films with a predominantly white cast posted the lowest median global grosses in 2019, whereas films with a cast between 41% to 50% people of color performed the best in 2019. Box office performance favored diversity internationally and domestically, as well: For eight of the top 10 highest grossing films worldwide in 2019, the majority of domestic audiences were not white.

Despite the clear financial advantage in a diverse cast, the study also noted that films with black leads were the least likely to earn distribution in China in 2019, and international distribution overall. And at the Oscars, films directed by women haven't won an Academy Award since 2015.

The increasing — and lucrative — diversity on screen and the lack of it behind the scenes was impossible to ignore for Hunt and Ramón.

“It’s as if the White men dominating Hollywood have opted to pursue a strategy of trying to appease the increasingly diverse market with more inclusion on the big screen,” they wrote, “but without fundamentally altering the way they do business behind the camera.”

Jul 6, 2020 9:00am PT

Colin Kaepernick Signs First-Look Deal With Walt Disney

By Brian Steinberg



Todd Kirkland/AP/Shutterstock

[Colin Kaepernick](#)'s journey from San Francisco 49ers quarterback to civil-rights activist will be chronicled in a documentary series developed by [ESPN](#) Films as part of a first-look deal between Walt Disney and Kaepernick's Ra Vision Media production company.

Under terms of the pact, announced Monday, Disney and Ra Vision will emphasize scripted and unscripted stories that deal with race, social injustice and the quest for equity, and work to showcase directors and producers of color. Disney said the agreement would extend across its units, including Walt Disney Television, ESPN, Hulu, Pixar and [The Undeclared](#), an ESPN venue that focuses on matters of race in sports. Kaepernick is slated to work closely with The Undeclared, which Disney said would expand its portfolio across the company.

"I am excited to announce this historic partnership with Disney across all of its platforms to elevate Black and Brown directors, creators, storytellers, and producers, and to inspire the youth with compelling and authentic perspectives," Kaepernick said in a prepared statement. "I look forward to sharing the docuseries on my life story, in addition to many other culturally impactful projects we are developing."

The new series will utilize new interviews as well as never-seen-before archival material that documents the most recent years of Kaepernick's life. The athlete has enlisted Jemele Hill, the journalist who previously worked for both ESPN and The Undeclared, as a producer on the

project. ESPN executives Libby Geist, Kevin Merida and Connor Schell, will executive produce the project for ESPN. Further details are to be revealed at a later date, Disney said.

The agreement with Disney extends Kaepernick's reach into media and entertainment. He was recently named to the board of directors of digital publisher Medium, as part of an agreement that will have him involved with content creation. The former football player has also worked with popular sports apparel kingpin Nike Inc.

The pact could highlight what may evolve into a growing emphasis on telling more stories about people and communities that have gone underrepresented in U.S. popular culture. While TV networks and movie studios have produced many works on Black and Latino characters and stories – they may range from FX's "Atlanta" to Netflix's "Dear White People" – such projects have not represented the majority of content. Protests over the death of George Floyd in the custody of Minneapolis police earlier this year have sparked new conversations across the nation about how people from different communities treat one another, and the media sector has, like other industries, begun to scramble in response.

"Colin has had a singular path as both an athlete and an activist, and, as the nation continues to confront racism and social injustice, it feels particularly relevant to hear Colin's voice on his evolution and motivations," said Jimmy Piatro, ESPN's president.

The Undefeated intends to partner with Kaepernick to "elevate important stories of lives too often unseen and to deliver them to a vast audience across [The Walt Disney Company](#)," said Kevin Merida, senior vice president and editor in chief. "We want to continue to call attention to the issues of racial injustice that America is wrestling with, and do that in new, compelling ways."

Disney feels Kaepernick's experience "gives him a unique perspective on the intersection of sports, culture and race, which will undoubtedly create compelling stories that will educate, enlighten and entertain, and we look forward to working with him on this important collaboration," said Bob Iger, Disney's executive chairman.

Jun 18, 2020 7:00am PT

Colin Kaepernick Elected to Board of Medium as Blogging Platform's First Director Who Is a Person of Color

By Todd Spangler



Steven Senne/AP/REX/Shutterstock

[Medium](#) announced that [Colin Kaepernick](#) is joining its board of directors, the first non-white member of the board. Medium also will partner with the ex-NFL star and civil rights activist to develop anti-racist content for the blogging site.

The other members of Medium's board — which remains all-male — are Medium founder/CEO Ev Williams; Biz Stone, co-founder of Twitter and Jelly Industries; Josh Elman of Greylock Ventures; and Ben Horowitz of Andreessen Horowitz.

In addition to the board seat, Medium will partner with Kaepernick Publishing to create feature content focused on race and civil rights in America. Jermaine Hall, editor-in-chief of Level, will work closely with Kaepernick on his editorial contributions. Kaepernick will be writing stories and collaborating on editorial features for Level/Medium and Medium's new blog Momentum on anti-Black racism and civil rights in U.S. society. He also will interview high profile leaders, activists and athletes, and create content from these interviews that will live on Medium.

Medium is an open publishing platform that lets creators earn money for their work through the Medium Partner Program, which distributes revenue from paying members of the site. The company says Medium is designed to “make idea-sharing more accessible.”

“We’ve been in talks with Colin for some time, and we are honored to be electing him to join our board,” Medium’s Ev Williams, who is also a Twitter co-founder, said in a statement. “Colin’s voice and actions have led the discussion on racial justice, and the world is finally catching up to him. He’s an incisive, independent thinker, whose integrity as an activist and athlete has inspired so many.”

Kaepernick is the founder of Know Your Rights Camp, an organization dedicated to advancing the empowerment of people of color through education, self-empowerment and mass mobilization.

“I am excited for Kaepernick Publishing to partner with Medium to continue to elevate Black voices in the news and publishing industry,” Kaepernick said in a statement. “I also look forward to creating new opportunities and avenues for Black writers and creators with my new role as a Board member.”

As the quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers, Kaepernick in 2016 drew widespread attention for kneeling in protest of racial injustice during the national anthem. Donald Trump blasted Kaepernick and other NFL players who joined the silent protests, calling them “sons of bitches” and urging teams to fire them. After the 49ers told Kaepernick in early 2017 they planned to release him, he opted to become a free agent. Kaepernick later alleged the NFL and team owners colluded to blacklist him for his pregame protests; last year he reached a settlement with the league whose terms were not disclosed.

Medium, founded in 2012, says it has 170 million monthly readers. Last year, Medium launched a suite of publications including ZORA and Level, which speak to issues uniquely faced by women and men of color, as well as GEN, OneZero, Elemental, Forge and Marker.
