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**PREMIERES ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2022 AT 9 PM ET/ 8 PM CT ON PBS**

**Four-Part Series from Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Explores the Black American Experience**

**Through Interviews with Leading Academics, Scholars, and Experts**

**Including Charles M. Blow, Angela Davis, André Holland, Fab 5 Freddie, Jason King, Killer Mike & More**

**Washington, D.C.** — **July 28, 2022** — The latest documentary series by renowned scholar Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., **MAKING BLACK AMERICA: THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE**, will premiere on Tuesday, October 4, 2022, at 9 PM EDT / 8 PM CDT (check local listings) on PBS, PBS.org and the PBS Video app. Produced by McGee Media, Inkwell Media, and WETA Washington, D.C., the new four-part series highlights the vibrant cultural and social spaces at the heart of the African American experience.  View the trailer [here](https://www.pbs.org/video/making-black-america-trailer/).

“For centuries, 'the Grapevine' has connected Black Americans in formal and informal networks not just as a way of communicating but of building and sustaining communities large and small," said Henry Louis Gates, Jr., the program's host, writer, and executive producer. "From churches to fraternal and sororal organizations to Black Twitter, this is the story of the making of Black America and how, in the making, a people did more than survive the onslaught of enslavement and segregation. They redefined America and its cultural gifts to the world. All of us are grateful to our partners at CPB and PBS for giving us the opportunity to explore this history and what it can teach us as we struggle to overcome the challenges of our times.”

Dr. Gates is the series executive producer and host, working with directors Stacey L. Holman and Shayla Harris, who all recently worked together on Gates’s last documentary series, THE BLACK CHURCH: THIS IS OUR STORY, THIS IS OUR SONG (2021).

Series directors Stacey L. Holman and Shayla Harris, noted, “throughout history, African Americans have created a dynamic community and culture that flourished beyond the color line. MAKING BLACK AMERICA celebrates the places and institutions that were built by and for Black people with hope, love, and sustained by joy.”

MAKING BLACK AMERICAchronicles the vast social networks and organizations created by and for Black people beyond the reach of the “White gaze.” The documentary series recounts the establishment of the Prince Hall Masons in 1775 through the formation of all-Black towns and business districts, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, destinations for leisure and the social media phenomenon of Black Twitter. Gates sits with noted scholars, politicians, cultural leaders and old friends including **Charles M. Blow** (journalist and commentator**), Angela Davis** (political activist, scholar and author), **André Holland** (actor), **Fab 5 Freddie** (hip-hop pioneer and visual artist), **Jason King** (chair of the Clive Davis Institute of Recorded Music), **Killer Mike** (rapper and activist) to discuss this world behind the color line and what it looks like today.

Over the course of four weekly episodes, MAKING BLACK AMERICA takes viewers into an extraordinary world that showcases Black people’s ability to collectively prosper, defy white supremacy, and define Blackness in ways that transformed America itself.

Episode One – October 4, 2022 at 9 PM EDT / 8 PM CDT

As early as 1775, free Black people in the North and South built towns, established schools, and held conventions ─ creating robust networks to address the political, economic, and social needs of the entire Black community.

Episode Two – October 11, 2022 at 9 PM EDT / 8 PM CDT

With the hopes of a multi-racial community dashed, African Americans turn within, creating a community that not only sustains but empowers. From HBCUs to Black businesses to the Harlem Renaissance to political organizations, Black life flourished.

Episode Three – October 18, 2022 at 9 PM EDT / 8 PM CDT

To survive a period of economic cataclysm and global war, African Americans relied on informal economies, grassroots organizations and cultural innovations behind the color line to sustain themselves and dismantle the oppressive realities of Jim Crow.

Episode Four – October 25, 2022 at 9 PM EDT / 8 PM CDT

Despite the gains of legal desegregation, all Black political and cultural movements - from Black Power to Black Twitter - continued to provide a safe space for a community riven by class, sexuality and generational divisions to debate, organize and celebrate.

WithMAKING BLACK AMERICA, Gates continues as one of the preeminent documentarians in public media by producing content bringing the African and African American experience to a broad audience, including the works THE BLACK CHURCH: THIS IS OUR STORY, THIS IS OUR SONG (2021); RECONSTRUCTION: AMERICA AFTER THE CIVIL WAR (2019); AFRICA'S GREAT CIVILIZATIONS (2017); BLACK AMERICA SINCE MLK: AND STILL I RISE (2016); THE AFRICAN AMERICANS: MANY RIVERS TO CROSS (2013); and AFRICAN AMERICAN LIVES (2006). Gates’s robust slate of programming also includes the ongoing popular PBS series FINDING YOUR ROOTS WITH HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR., which will return to PBS for its ninth season with all-new episodes beginning Tuesday nights at 8 PM EDT beginning January 3, 2023.

MAKING BLACK AMERICA will be accompanied by an outreach and public engagement program. With support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, local PBS member stations and public radio stations will provide opportunities for communities to participate in a national conversation about the impact of Black organizing and community-building and the ongoing implications for American society today. In addition, there will be a website and educational resources designed to engage teachers and students through multiple platforms, including PBS LearningMedia.

For more updates and additional information, please visit [pbs.org/makingblackamerica](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cllucas%5CDocuments%5CMaking%20Black%20America%5Cpbs.org%5Cmakingblackamerica). Viewers are encouraged to join the conversation on social media with @HenryLouisGates and @PBS on Twitter and Instagram; /HenryLouisGatesJr and /PBS on Facebook; and by using #MakingBlackAmericaPBS. All promotional materials, including an electronic press kit and downloadable photos, are available on [PBS Pressroom.](https://pressroom.pbs.org/programs/m/making-black-america)

MAKING BLACK AMERICA: THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE is a production of McGee Media, Inkwell Media and WETA Washington, D.C. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. is the writer, host, and executive producer. Dyllan McGee is executive producer. John F. Wilson is executive producer in charge for WETA. Bill Gardner is the executive in charge for PBS. Stacey L. Holman is series producer and director. Shayla Harris is producer/director. Deborah C. Porfido is supervising producer. Robert L. Yacyshyn is line producer. Kevin Burke is producer. Mattie Akers is archival producer.

Major corporate support for MAKING BLACK AMERICA: THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE is provided by Bank of America. Corporate support is also provided by Johnson & Johnson. Major support is also provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting; Ford Foundation; Open Society Foundations; The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; Gilder Foundation; The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations; and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. Additional funding by The Inkwell Society and its members Howard and Abby Milstein; Jim and Susan Swartz; Georgette Bennett and Dr. Leonard Polonsky; Joanne L. Cassullo; Deval Patrick; Roger and Jurate Altman; David M. Cote; Betsy and Jesse Fink; John H. N. Fisher and Jennifer Caldwell; Nancy A. Garvey; Peter Schwabach and Misan Sagay Schwabach; Josh Steiner; Richard and Kathy Taylor; Charlotte Wagner; Richard Cohen; David and Nina Fialkow; Steven L. Rattner; Robert F. Smith; Mitch Kapor and Freada Kapor Klein; Connie Lurie; Nicole Commissiong and Darnell Armstrong; Demond and Kia Martin; Gwen and Peter Norton; May and Samuel Rudin Family Foundation; Fletcher and Benaree Wiley; Beth Rudin DeWoody; Grant S. Johnson; and Vincent and Elaine Luke. Funding also provided by public television viewers.

**About WETA**

WETA is the leading public broadcaster in the nation's capital, serving Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia with educational initiatives and with high-quality programming on television, radio and digital. WETA Washington, D.C., is the second-largest producer for the PBS system. In addition to producing documentaries and series with Henry Louis Gates, Jr., WETA produces news and public affairs programs, includingPBS NEWSHOUR and WASHINGTON WEEK; films by Ken Burns and Florentine Films, including BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, MUHAMMAD ALI and the forthcoming THE U.S. AND THE HOLOCAUST; performance specials including IN PERFORMANCE AT THE WHITE HOUSE, THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS GERSHWIN PRIZE FOR POPULAR SONG, NATIONAL MEMORIAL DAY CONCERT and A CAPITOL FOURTH; and health content from Well Beings, a multiplatform campaign that includes original broadcast and digital content, engagement campaigns, and impactful local events, and the documentary KEN BURNS PRESENTS HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT: YOUTH MENTAL ILLNESS A FILM BY ERIK EWERS AND CHRISTOPHER LOREN EWERS. More information on WETA and its programs and services is available at [www.weta.org](http://www.weta.org/)*.*Visit [www.facebook.com/wetatvfm](http://www.facebook.com/wetatvfm) on Facebook or follow @WETAtvfm on Twitter*.*

**About McGee Media**

McGee Media was founded by award-winning filmmaker Dyllan McGee to produce documentary content that is innovative, compelling, and immersive. Every story is born from a vision of a fairer and more equitable world. Whether it is the sweeping history of the African-American experience, or the intimate personal stories of the hundreds of women who made up the feminist movement, McGee Media uses television, film, and digital media in radical new ways to inform and inspire. Recent projects include Emmy-nominated FREDERICK DOUGLASS: IN FIVE SPEECHES (HBO), NOT DONE: WOMEN REMAKING AMERICA (PBS), THE BLACK CHURCH: THIS IS OUR STORY, THIS IS OUR SONG (PBS), RECONSTRUCTION: AMERICA AFTER THE CIVIL WAR (PBS), AFRICA'S GREAT CIVILIZATIONS (PBS), BLACK AMERICA SINCE MLK: AND STILL I RISE (PBS), MAKERS (PBS), FINDING YOUR ROOTS (PBS), ONCE & FOR ALL (AOL), FIRST IN HUMAN (Discovery), and RANCHER, FARMER, FISHERMAN (Discovery).

**About Inkwell Media**

Inkwell Media was founded by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. to produce sophisticated documentary films about the African and African-American experience for a broad audience. The six-part PBS documentary series THE AFRICAN AMERICANS: MANY RIVERS TO CROSS (2013) earned the 2013 Peabody Award and NAACP Image Award. Inkwell has co-produced FREDERICK DOUGLASS: IN FIVE SPEECHES (2022), FINDING YOUR ROOTS Seasons 1-9 (2012-2022); THE BLACK CHURCH: THIS IS OUR STORY, THIS IS OUR SONG (2021); RECONSTRUCTION: AMERICA AFTER THE CIVIL WAR (2019); AFRICA'S GREAT CIVILIZATIONS (2017); BLACK AMERICA SINCE MLK: AND STILL I RISE (2016); BLACK IN LATIN AMERICA (2011); FACES OF AMERICA (2010); LOOKING FOR LINCOLN (2009); AFRICAN AMERICAN LIVES 2 (2008); OPRAH'S ROOTS (2007) and AFRICAN AMERICAN LIVES (2006).

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