

Showtime Black History Month

Written by Robert ID759

Tuesday, 25 January 2005 04:47 -

In celebration of Black History Month, SHOWTIME will anchor a month of original programming and compelling stories focused on the African-American experience. The salute kicks off February 1st with the 14th annual Black Filmmaker Showcase, featuring six shorts by up-and coming African-American filmmakers.

Also included in the Black History Month line-up will be several Showtime Original Pictures with top-notch talent including Whoopi Goldberg, Danny Glover, Mario Van Peebles and Forest Whitaker, as well as the premium network premiere of the movie "Barbershop 2:Back in Business," starring rapper/actor Ice Cube and Sean Patrick Thomas.

BLACK FILMMAKER SHOWCASE - Premiering at 10 p.m. February 1, 2005

Founded in 1992, the Black Filmmaker Showcase has been responsible for introducing talented African-American filmmakers to the industry. Through this program, the network selects several films that have their debut on SHOWTIME. Beginning in 1995, Showtime Networks began awarding a \$30,000 grant to one of the selected filmmakers. This money is used towards the production of a short film which will later have its exclusive world premiere on SHOWTIME.

Following their premiere, the showcase films will also repeat during the course of the month as individual shorts.

This year's short film selections are:

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The grant-winning film - GIFT FOR THE LIVING by Director Tamika Miller -the loving relationship between a grandmother and granddaughter is told through the sacrifices they make trying to give each other the perfect birthday gift. Irma P. Hall (Showtime's Soul Food) stars and Vanessa Williams (Showtime's Soul Food) narrates.

GET HOME SAFE, by Director Lyndon McCray, follows three Black teens in New York as they try to get a cab to take them home to Brooklyn.

In OUT OF BODY EXPERIENCE, directed by Vanskie Elder, Jr., a man trying to come to terms with his wife's unexpected pregnancy dreams he is eight months pregnant. Chris Spencer ("Don't Be a Menace to South Central") stars.

Impending fatherhood is also a key theme in HOPE'S CHOICE, directed by Garrett Thompson. A young man is torn between creating a stable home environment with his pregnant girlfriend and thug-life with his friends.

RED EYE, directed by Kevin Gordon, is a provocative visual commentary on society's image of Black men -- assuming they are all criminals, womanizers and drug-addicted alcoholics.

Melanie R.W. Oram directs SHOOK, which follows a young wife played by Robynn Lee ("Deliver Us from Eva"), as she discovers her husband is having a gay affair on the "down low."

SHOWTIME ORIGINAL PICTURES: Airing each Tuesday in Feb. at 10 p.m.

DEACONS FOR DEFENSE (Feb. 8): Based on the true story of a group of African American men who chose to take an aggressive and armed stand in the civil rights movement to fight the Ku Klux Klan, the film stars Forest Whitaker, Jonathan Silverman and Ossie Davis. The film is directed by Bill Duke.

The teleplay was written by Richard Wesley and Frank Military and the story by Michael

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D"Antonio.

DEACONS FOR DEFENSE is a Robert Rehme production.

CROWN HEIGHTS (Feb 15): Starring Mario Van Peebles and Howie Mandel, this multi-layered film takes place in the wake of the Crown Heights race riots where long-simmering tensions were brought to the surface after an African-American child was killed in a tragic car accident. Based on a true story, the film dramatizes how two community leaders strove to create dialogue and foster cultural understanding by founding Project Cure.

The film was produced and directed by Jeremy Kagan from a story by Michael D"Antonio and a

teleplay by Toni Ann Johnson. CROWN HEIGHTS is a Jeremy Kagan production.

GOOD FENCES (Feb. 22): Set in the 1970s and starring Oscar(R) and Golden Globe(TM) Award-winner Whoopi Goldberg and Emmy(R)-nominated Danny Glover, GOOD FENCES is a dramatic portrait of an upwardly mobile African-American family for whom the American Dream becomes a nightmare. Based on a novel of the same name by Erika Ellis, the screenplay was written by Emmy(R)-nominee

Trey Ellis. The film was produced by 40 Acres and a Mule Filmworks for SHOWTIME. Executive producers include Spike Lee and Sam Kitt with Whoopi Goldberg and Danny Glover serving as producers.

The director is Ernest Dickerson.

BARBERSHOP AND BARBERSHOP 2: BACK IN BUSINESS: 6:15 p.m. Jan. 30

Kicking off the celebration early -- Showtime is airing a mini-marathon

tribute to the "Barbershop" movies starring rap artist/actor Ice Cube and Sean Patrick Thomas.

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The original smash comedy hit details a day in the life of a small Chicago Barbershop and its patrons. In the sequel, the barbershop is trying to defend itself against a mega hair styling chain opening right across the street.

BARBERSHOP 2: BACK IN BUSINESS will also air several times in February, so check local listings.

Web Site: <http://www.SHO.com>