

AMERICAN INDIAN NETWORK DIVERSITY REPORT CARD FOR 2007

American Indians in Film and TV

The report focuses only on primetime scripted programs from fall of 2006 to fall of 2007. It grades the networks in all categories, on numbers on where they are as of this date. It also includes comments on the guilds that represent American Indian Talent.

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Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen, this report and the grades earned by the four major networks are based on information provided by them. The report focuses only on primetime scripted programs from fall of 2006 to fall 2007. It grades the networks in all categories, on numbers on where they are as of this date. Given that we are in our eighth year of reporting on network diversity, the American Indian remains invisible in many categories.

Through our working partnerships with the networks we continue to create new and exciting outreach and training programs. We continue to create a solid foundation for future growth and employment, based on our approach to diversity which is, “Diversity – by – Design Not Diversity – on –Demand”.

Behind the camera American Indians remain invisible. With only one writer, 0 Directors, 0 Producers. We are still misunderstood and underrepresented in front of the camera. Guest starring roles are the training ground and opportunity for talent to be considered for regular and recurring roles. There is no excuse for the continued exclusion of the actors who happen to be American Indian for guest starring roles.

Last year I asked the media present to do a story on the Romantic Discrimination of the American Indian. This has created the American Indian to be the Invisible American. I want to thank Jose Rios at Fox news for having me as a guest on Good Day LA and covering last year’s awards ceremony. I want to thank Ernie Thornton at ABC for doing an incredible story on the invisibility of the American Indian in the media and covering the

awards ceremony. I ask you here today to do a story, the exposure helps shine a light on the problems we face.

Personal Comment.

Despite our underrepresentation we have some incredible gains to report in primetime shows. We are on the radar! Like all other communities we now have a few heroes we can look up to. All four networks continue to evaluate and create new outreach programs in Indian Country.

In our 2006 report we included comments on the guilds and how they are responding to the lack of diversity in primetime TV. We do not grade them but, we feel they have a role in the hiring of their minority membership. The guilds also have a need to increase their qualified minority membership and increase the talent pool for our employers. American Indians need the involvement of the unions to help promote and create opportunity for employment. Again we meet with or contacted the DGA, WGA West, PGA and Screen Actors Guild. Here is a brief summary of those meetings;

DGA Last year they supplied a minority report of the top forty primetime series directors. This year their report included all half and one hour scripted shows. There was a total of 1913 episodes; 75% directed by white males, 12% directed by white females, 10% directed by minority males and 3% were directed by minority females.

American Indian membership grew from ten to sixteen. We need an American Indian Directors Committee to help recruit and promote American Indian Directors

WGA West Ricardo Montelban once said, "If it's not on the page, it's not on the stage". Our writers are the single most important element in the creative process. This year the guild hired Kim Myers to head the diversity

department. Under her leadership the guild has created the first American Indian Writers Committee to help promote and recruit American Indian writers. This committee will help mentor and guide new American Indian writers through the process of becoming guild members. This committee will be a resource for show runners to tap into to create contemporary storylines for existing shows and bring in new staff writers.

To date there are only ten minority show runners.

PGA Last year we reported that they do not track their minority membership. I was told that they are now looking into the process of tracking their minority membership. They have continued their very successful minority workshop.

Screen Actors Guild I am a proud member of the guild. After six years of political wrangling, we have created two new committees; The President's National Task Force for American Indians and the Hollywood American Indian Committee. These two committees are the first for American Indians in the guild's history. We want to thank Kent McCord for his valued support of the American Indian.

On the other hand, we have found resistance in the areas of discrimination, underrepresentation and contract enforcement. In April of 07 CSI:Miami aired an episode called "Bloodlines" integrating a contemporary American Indian storyline. Of course they investigate murders and because of the history portrayed by the media they had an American Indian murder someone by scalping him. Not only was this an act of discrimination, it was offensive and historically incorrect.

In April the committee passed a motion to send CBS a letter of objection and request a meeting with the producer of that episode. It took SAG five months to approve the letter and send it. During this wasted time CBS re-ran the episode. Our codified basic contract in Sec 26 gives the guild the right to call for meetings to discuss any matter related to discrimination and or

underrepresentation of any of the state or federally protected minority groups.

The letter was sent in August and a meeting has yet to be set. The question that must be asked; Will our guild enforce our contract or is the guild resisting because of the far reaching effects it could have on our upcoming contract negotiations.

We are grateful for the committees but, if they lack the support of the guild they have no teeth. By not enforcing our contract the guild is not only failing the American Indian it is failing all the underrepresented minority membership at SAG.

I will now highlight some of our gains in primetime shows. I will also mention a few daytime gains.

NBC After a guest starring role on Law and Order SVU Adam Beach was brought back as a series regular. Kam Miller was also pitched to the show as a staff writer, she was picked up. What a great team NBC and Dick Wolf has put together.

NBC hired Chris Eyre as a shadow director on “Friday Night Lights” with the prospect of future employment. NBC has also identified two other directors for consideration, Shawna Baca and Amy Talkington.

Mitch Longley has a recurring role on “Las Vegas”.

This a great start for NBC in creating positive role models for our community. NBC continues to stay committed to the employment of behind

the camera and executive level employment. They continue to broaden their outreach into Indian Country to identify and train new talent.

Fox Entertainment Fox continues to increase their outreach programs into Indian Country building a solid foundation to identify and train American Indian talent. There has been many prospects identified and trained, making their way up the pipeline into primetime TV.

Fox has two series regulars; Jonathan Joss “King of the Hill and Eric Balfour “24”

Notable mention John Hensley on “Nip/Tuck FX , Tawny Cypress K-Ville and Shawna Bach “On the Lot”

The best I saved for the last. Fox has a new series coming out January 14th “Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles” starring Summer Glau as Cameron. She plays an enigmatic and otherworldly student at his high school, who soon proves to be much more than his confidante – she assumes the role of John’s fearless protector. She is not an Indian in the plot; she is character playing a futuristic role. These are exactly the kind of roles actors who happen to be American Indian are looking for.

Fox stays committed to the hiring of behind the camera talent, executive level staff to help in the creative process and outreach programs.

ABC ABC continues to increase their outreach into Indian Country. Creating new programs to identify and train American Indian talent.

ABC has four American Indian series regulars in their lineup; Kristen Chenoweth “Pushing Daisies”, Angie Harmon “Women’s Murder Club”, Tamara Feldman “Dirty Sexy Money” and Ty Pennington host “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition”

Notable daytime players; Tyler Christopher “General Hospital” and Matt Ostroff “All My Children”.

ABC added a writers program at IAIA and remains committed to the training of new American Indian talent.

ABC still has no writers, directors, producers or children in their Kids programming.

CBS CBS remains committed in increasing their outreach programs into Indian Country to train and identify new talent.

CBS has a number of notable mentions of talent hires. At the end of December CBS will air “Comanche Moon”. Out of 82 speaking roles, 23 were American Indian. Some of which were; Adam Beach, August Schellenber, Keith Robinson, Wes Studi, all leads. Also Aldred Montoya, Anthony Parker, Floyd Westerman, Frederick Lopez, Geraldine Keams, Jack Burning, Joe Marshall, Jonathan Joss, Rodney Smith, Scotty Auguare, Steve Reevis, Tatanka Means, and Zahn McClarnan.

CBS hired a historical consultant and linguist for historical accuracy on this project. As a community we are grateful for the opportunity to work and show off our acting abilities. Period piece films are not career sustaining projects and add to the dilemma of stereotyping roles for American Indians. This is the mind set we are trying to change. Actors who happen to be American Indian can play any role created by the industry.

There are ten guest starring roles that were filled by American Indians; Gregory Norman Cruz “Criminal Minds”, Princess Lucaj “Jericho”, Dagger Salazar “Criminal Minds”, Sonya Stephens “Criminal Minds”, Tonantzin Carmello “CSI:Miami”, Brooke Grant “Ghost Whisperer”, Jay Montalvo

“CSI:Miami”, Brian Overly “Moonlight”, Grace C. Renn “Criminal Minds”, and Charles Shen “CSI:Miami”.

Unfortunately the advancements at CBS have a dark cloud cast over them by an unintended and avoidable mistake on their show CSI:Miami. They used a scalping as a way of murder committed by an American Indian. We have received a verbal agreement that CBS will re-edit the episode and issue a written apology to the American Indian community. To date we have not seen either, we will let you know when we receive it.

This unintended mistake could have been avoided by research or reaching out to the community. It gives clarity to the value of having an American Indian writer on staff.

Chris Davidson has identified two American Indian directors for possible employment at CBS. Chris continues to broaden his outreach to identify new talent.

The American Indian remains underrepresented and misunderstood in the Twenty First Century. We are the Invisible American. The networks all acknowledge this exclusion and have expressed a desire to correct the invisibility of the American Indian.

This concludes our report.

Thank you ladies and gentlemen.