

SoulVision®

MAGAZINE

**Jeffrey Wright:
Next Level Cinema**

November 2020

EDITORS NOTE

BK Fulton



Photo by Queon "Q" Martin

| “What side of history will you be on?”

If you have not read *Caste* by Isabel Wilkerson (winner of the Pulitzer Prize for *The Warmth of Other Suns*) you should. This book also will win major book awards. It succinctly and objectively lays out the origins of our discontents. You probably won't be shocked to learn that Nazi Germany studied the American system to establish the diabolical regime that attempted to exterminate Jews. The book makes it clear why racists fly confederate flags and Nazi iconography almost interchangeably. The question presented is which side of history we will choose to be on, especially our white Brothers and Sisters who U.S. racists are trying to manipulate via fear tactics. I believe the good people outnumber the bad. What I am not sure of is whether or not fear is more compelling than hope. It was love and hope that got us all through some dark days, so I choose love and hope.

BK Fulton - November 2020 (continued)

If you really believe in the dream of America, the choice of who to vote for this presidential election cycle is a simple one. If you are blinded by the dog-whistles of racism and bigotry, the choice will appear more difficult. Say what you will. When it came down to voting in 2016—7/10 white men and 6/10 white women voted for Trump. I pray that in 2020 you will vote your faith and values and not your fears. A vote for hatred, bias, lies, indecency and hucksterism is a vote driven by fear. It's the same craziness and hysterics that led to Nazi Germany.

What side of history will you be on? What America do our children deserve? What's kind of ironic is that DNA wise, we are 99 percent the same. If the oldest human bones are found in Africa, then we are all descendants of and connected to that continent. How we got here is through a series of astonishing events, many lies, too many deceptions and numerous atrocities. Where we go from here will be determined by the way we VOTE. I pray you vote reason over race. I pray you vote love over hate. I pray that you love the dream of "America" as much as you say you do.

In this issue of SoulVision Magazine, we feature the great Jeffrey Wright. His talent is undeniable. In our candid conversation with Jeffrey, he reveals his process and his passion for cinema. Creatives Kingsley Kobayashi and Nova Lorraine share some of their magic sauce with us. We also include a sneak peek at the upcoming documentary—Ali's Comeback by Art Jones—detailing the resurgence of the pugilist legend's first fight after being stripped of his heavyweight title in 1967 at the tender age of 25. We close out the issue with a champion of childhood literacy—Carylee Carrington, a new recipe for the soul by chef Jerome Grant, and words of wisdom from media mogul and legend Paula Madison. You get a new look when you have Soul-Vision! Thank you for reading and sharing.

Follow BK Fulton on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#). To learn more about Soulidify Productions, visit their website [soulidify.com](#) and follow them on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).

CELEBRITY

Jeffrey Wright: Next Level Cinema



Photos by Sandro Baebler

| “The way an actor learns the craft is on the stage.”

Jeffrey Wright is a thoughtful and immensely talented actor who makes it a point to find roles that are meaningful. His roles often speak to social and political issues. Jeffrey's career began in the theater. Finding a passion for acting in college, Wright's dedication to his craft paid off in the form of a Tony award for his breakout role as Belize in *Angels in America*. He would later reprise this role for the HBO miniseries adaptation of the play that earned him an Emmy and a Golden Globe. On screen, one of his earliest roles was his portrayal of Jean-Michel Basquiat in *Basquiat*. He exposed audiences to the complicated, brilliant, and tragic life of the highly esteemed artist.

Jeffrey Wright: Next Level Cinema (*continued*)

Beyond the screen, Wright is deliberate in his political and social activism. He has used his voice to speak out against injustice and to help others. He most recently created *Brooklyn For Life!* that helps feed frontline pandemic workers in Brooklyn, NY. In our conversation with the actor, he eloquently lays out the current condition of our political state and muses over the difficulties of finding adequate solutions to many of today's challenges.

Over the years, Wright has garnered respect from directors and producers alike. Once viewed as one of the more underappreciated actors of his generation, that moniker is no longer applicable. As he plays Bernard Lowe in *Westworld*, Commissioner Gordon in *The Batman*, Roe-buck Wright in Wes Anderson's *The French Dispatch*, and returns as Felix Leiter in the new James Bond film *No Time to Die*, Wright has worked smart and hard to earn his success as an actor. In the very honest and open interview below, Jeffrey Wright tells us exactly how he arrived at the next level of cinema.

Where are you from and what was it like growing up there?

I grew up in Southeast Washington, D.C., for the most part, but I spent a good deal of my childhood in the Tidewater area of Virginia, where my mother grew up and my grandparents lived. I would go down there after the last week of school. My mom would drive me down, drop me off, hang out for a couple of days, and then go back to DC. The next time I would see her was at the end of the summer when she would come back to pick me up.

My childhood was pretty much spread between those two places. I'm a city boy but I got a little bit of "country" in me too. My grandfather was a waterman and farmer. He was the main father figure in my life. I got a little bit of that watery ground, salt air and seawater in my veins.

Who was your biggest inspiration growing up?

My mother was a lawyer. She was my biggest inspiration. My mother was the person who gave me all of the tools and the opportunities that shaped my life and journey.



She was a woman who came to DC in 1957 after graduating from the Hampton Institute, as it was called then, and she made her way to Howard University Law School. She was the first in our family to go to law school and become a lawyer. Her older sister had gone to nursing school at North Carolina A&T after graduating from the Hampton Institute. She was the first to go to graduate school and the first to go to college. She was a nurse at DC General Hospital for 30 odd years. I was raised by both of them in DC.

They were a part of that generation of black folks who came up from the South who represented and embodied the values of the civil rights movement. They were people who had faith in hard work, faith in their abilities, and an insistence that society provides a means for them to express all that they can be.

Jeffrey Wright: Next Level Cinema (continued)

I was born in the middle of all of that. I was born in 1965. I was born at the height of the civil rights movement. I was born as the black power movement emerged. I was born as the women's rights movement emerged. So, growing up in Washington DC was really inspirational to me. It shaped the way I viewed the world and the way I do my work.

The roles that strike me and compel me are roles that have some kind of relevance beyond entertainment. They often have social relevance and at times political relevance. These themes can be implicit or overt, but they draw me in. I want my work to mean something. It really is a function of having come of age in the household, city, and time I grew up.

I'm more inspired and starstruck by people like Angela Davis and Shirley Chisholm and all of these people who represented an insistence that our country, as Dr. King said, "Be true to what it said on paper."

What was the most important lesson you learned in the early phases of your career?

Our family was really defined by the character of my grandfather and grandmother. Aside from the fact that my grandfather was a showman in his own right, he was a master storyteller, or as they say down there, "He could tell those lies," as guys who lived on the water often do. He also sold a bit of liquor in his day. He had a lot of folks come by the house looking for fish, for vegetables, looking for a "taste" [a drink] and so he had a stage on which he performed. But beyond that, what they really taught me and what I don't think I truly appreciated then but I certainly do now because I recognized its influence on me, was the lesson of hard work.

My grandfather woke up at 5:00 AM. I was asleep, and he was off to work. He was an older man at the time. He was off on the water gathering his crab pots, oysters, whatever the season brought, and he came back home after selling what he caught, grabbed a bite to eat, and headed out into his field. He had a couple of acres that

he farmed. After he finished, he came back home and went out there again to sell his goods in the yard. He worked from sun up 'till sundown every day and loved it. It strengthened him and his family and our community.

"The roles that strike me and compel me are roles that have some kind of relevance beyond entertainment.... I want my work to mean something."

Right, your grandfather's example influenced you to be dedicated to what you do?

A lot of people look at acting and see the glitz and the glamour of it. They see the award shows and all. What they don't appreciate is that underneath all of that is a lot of hard work and a lot of persistence to be able to sustain yourself in the business. For example, on *Westworld*, at times we pull 20-hour days. We average about 16-hour days and it's not a lot of hanging out and sitting in your trailer. We get there on set and hustle because we have a lot of work to do. We have a lot of film to put in the can.

It is a 10-episode (season 3 was 8) TV series. That is really four or five movies we are shooting in the course of maybe 6 months. Sometimes I get called to set like, "Hey you got to be on set at 2:00 in the morning." I'm like, "What? The bar just closed. What are you talking about?"

We have to use all of the sunlight we can on the first day of the week, Monday. You got to get out there early so you can get a start on the week. So by the time you hit Friday, because of the union rules and turnaround and things like that, you might end up on Friday with like an 8 am call that will have you working until Saturday morning.

I say that all to say, I love what I do. I love my work. I love the people that I find myself working with now. I've chosen great collaborators. I've chosen great parts. I make a good living. This is all true. But it takes a lot of

Jeffrey Wright: Next Level Cinema (continued)

work and it takes a lot of time away from my family. It takes a lot of flights here and there and I guess I owe the ability to handle that from the lessons I was taught by the country folks that raised me.

At what point in your career did you begin to feel you had made it?

“Made it” can mean many things. The thing about our profession is that there are very few guarantees in our business. There is a lot of uncertainty. In the last five years, I have only reached the place where I can project out what I will be doing for a couple of years or a year even. That’s really because of *Westworld*. It has given me some kind of security that if we do well, and there is still that if, we will return the next year or shortly thereafter. I’ve put myself in a position now where there are directors seeking me out to work on their projects.

I thought I had made it after the first play I had ever done in college. The play was called *Bloods*. It was the reworking of a novel about black Vietnam veterans and their experiences. It was a novel written by Wallace Terry. There was a student named Kevin Frasier who passed away from AIDS a couple of years from graduating. This was at Amherst College during my junior year of college. Kevin had put together this evening of monologues based on that novel. I think it was the winter of 1986 when I started acting. This was my first performance and we did it in a small black box theater. People saw that production and were moved by it. They were compelled by what I was doing. In some ways, you ask me when I had made it or what was my big break, it was that night when I went out there, did what was being asked of me and people responded. Once you’ve proven the case, the momentum builds from there.

Where did you go from there?

At the end of the day, you are not reliant on what someone is offering you, but you are reliant on your own abilities to work in this space. From there it was about developing my skills and training and working in the

theater. I had worked in the theater professionally for seven years before I got to Broadway.

While my beginning helped me to appreciate that I had something, it wasn’t until I did *Angels in America* on Broadway, and it was about halfway through that run—which was a year and a half run, where I had finally said to myself, “You know, I’m an actor now.” It is not so much that you achieve a particular point or receive awards and jobs pay well. I think success is more about a kind of quiet understanding of your value. Once you have acquired that understanding and sense of clarity about what you are doing, then you might be able to say that you’ve made it.

What would you consider to be your greatest achievement?

My current greatest achievement? Well, that’s a work in progress too. That’s called parenting. That is the hardest work that I have undertaken and the most rewarding but also the most demanding. I have an 18-year-old son who just graduated high school and a 15-year-old daughter. No character that I can create can surpass them as my reward.

“I think success is more about a kind of quiet understanding of your value.”

We are living in a time of a lot of turmoil and pain. What are your thoughts on the state of our country and do you believe this is a watershed moment for racial justice?

I’m deeply concerned about what is happening in our country right now. I’m really awestruck by the ways in which our national dialogue has deteriorated. It is a result of a couple of things. It is a result of the tragic lack of competent leadership at the top and the malevolence and divisiveness that emanates from the White House every day, practically every hour. It is also the result of

Jeffrey Wright: Next Level Cinema (continued)

the technology that allows these kinds of destructive messages to be disseminated by the hour and the technology that allows this messaging and divisiveness to be amplified in real-time.

We have the person in the highest seat in the land who speaks only to a narrow base of concerns relative to the larger population of the country, who refuses to work in any way to define and cultivate a common sense of Americanness, who works solely for what he perceives is his own personal, political and financial benefit, all while using the tools of misinformation, disinformation, deception, deception of the country, and self-deception. I am very concerned.

You have all of these political tools with technology like social media that we carry around in our pockets every day that facilitate the agenda of not only him but other bad actors who are averse to the truth and facts and are working towards their own selfish ends. So, you have a combination of things creating more tension in this country than we have seen in many, many decades.

Including the 60s?

Yes. No doubt during the 60s, we had an incredibly tumultuous period. We think of the period between 1963 and 1968 when JFK, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, and Bobby Kennedy were assassinated. It was a decade of incredible turmoil and upheaval.

But we didn't have this technology, right? That pours gasoline on those fires. We all could somehow manage to find something that looked like common ground; that provided a place where we could stand and take in what was happening to us as a collective. We are so disjointed right now. We have such chaotic relationships with one another and it is incredibly dangerous. Even when we vote this guy out of the White House, the genies that the technology has allowed out of the bottle—disinformation and misinformation—will be extremely difficult to jam back into that bottle.

It makes it difficult to find a solution.

It makes it much more difficult to craft a way forward that leads to the type of progress and expansion of equal rights and justice in our country. Even while there are these cataclysmic things happening in the country around race relations, and the need for police and criminal justice reform. The way forward is still very cloudy because we lack clarity, the clarity of leadership. I think it is well on the side of those who are protesting for change. I still think we lack a clarity of leadership and it concerns me.

It is wonderful that we have multigenerational energy but how do we achieve the political and legislative outcomes that are going to speak to and facilitate the



Jeffrey Wright: Next Level Cinema (continued)

kind of systemic change we need in this country? I think too many of us—because year after year, decade after decade of corroding trust in government—have given up hope that there can be real seismic movement in the right direction.

Please elaborate.

When the violence erupts, the frustration erupts, the anger erupts, and it is understandable. So how do we regain the trust that we can afford in a way that is going to push this country to a more perfect union? How can we regain control over the facts so that we all can agree that the sun came up in the morning as opposed to the sun setting in the morning? We can't even agree on basic truths now. So, I'm really concerned. I'm trying to do what I can to help provide an understanding and clear messaging around these things.

I've been involved in some projects around voter suppression, such as the film called *Rigged* that I narrate and kind of walk the audience through. I just finished narrating a film called *American Pathogen*, a documentary that chronicles the Trump administration's failure to respond to this pandemic in an effective way. *American Pathogen* outlines all of the steps that it took to dismantle the work that has been done by the Obama administration to prepare the country for something like COVID-19, and it chronicles all of the missteps and malfeasance associated with the Trump administration's response from the beginning of COVID in January and February.

These are projects that I've been involved in with the hopes to shine some light on the basic facts that we are all living under, whether or not we admit to it.

Can you give us insight into how you prepare for a new role?

The only constant for me in preparing for roles is to remain open to whatever the particular project calls for. I don't have any one way of preparing but I try to remain

fluid, flexible, and adaptable to whatever the situation may be. I have to be like water in many respects.

Preparing for a role like *Basquiat* is different than preparing for the role of Commissioner Gordon in *The Batman*, so I have to just be aware of the different needs and respond to them. For *Basquiat*, I spent about six months prior to working on that film painting, trying to absorb and study as much of his work from books and actual paintings that I had access to and trying to recreate his language, his poetry, his imagery so I could facilitate it on camera. I studied footage of him and spoke to a few people who knew him but not many because I wanted to form my own opinions of him. I tried using every tool I could to try to conjure his memory and recreate him and walk through the space in the way that he walked to do justice to his story.

It was particularly important because at the time that we made the film, very few people knew about Jean-Michel Basquiat and now he is practically a household name. So, I think it is a responsibility when you introduce someone's story to your audience for the first time that you be as beholden to the truths of his life as possible.

And that was a different process for *The Batman*.

Yes. What I've done with *The Batman* is to go back and read some of the material before our film. It is an 80-year-old set of stories. The first comic was released in 1939 by DC Comics (*Detective Comics*). I went back and read some of the original versions to understand how this began and then read the more modern versions to see how it has evolved.

James Gordon is a black man now, so there has been pushback from a small group of folks. For me, it was important to go back and dig deeper into what these stories represented so I could understand how I could work my way into it. What I have discovered is that there has always been an evolution of the story, an evolution of the characters, and an evolution of their narratives. For

Jeffrey Wright: Next Level Cinema (*continued*)

example, what is wonderful about *The Batman* series is that it is one of the very few superheroes series that is grounded in an American city (Gotham—New York City). So you have the opportunity to explore more grounded ideas and issues than you might explore in other stories. These issues are experienced through the lens of a detective genre, which I find very interesting.

You look at New York in 1939, I think New York was 90-95 percent white. So obviously the characters that were written then reflected a Gotham that was born of those facts. Gotham today is a very different city. All you need to do is take the 7 train out through Queens to a Mets game and you will understand this city is a confluence of colors. The characters in this Batman, particularly James Gordon, have evolved from 1939 to reflect

a contemporary Gotham. So, there is a different set of requirements than what would be required for *Angels In America*, *Westworld*, or the other projects I've done.

In Wes Anderson's new movie, *The French Dispatch*, you play the character Roebuck Wright who has been described as a "mashup of James Baldwin and A.J. Liebling" by *The New Yorker*. Tell us a little bit more about this character and how you approached this role?

We met for lunch and he told me about what he had written. Before he sent me the script, he described it to me as you suggest. A couple of weeks later he sent me the script. From the moment I read the script, the character just seared into me. The music that was expressed through his language stayed in my head like a song you hear on the radio that you instantly love. The language Wes had written was so beautiful and moving that I was hooked from the start.

Roebuck Wright is a fictional character and draws from a bit of Baldwin, a bit of AJ Liebling, and a bit of Tennessee Williams. He's kind of an amalgam but he exists in the middle. It's a film that in many ways is a love letter to writers and also in some ways, certainly my character, is an exploration of solitude—the case of the stranger in a strange land. But also, someone who is running away from home. And at the same time, trying to redefine and understand what home is for him as he finds the celebration of life through the creation and experiencing of great food.

It really is a fascinating story that he has drawn. I can't wait for people to take it in. I think it is a beautiful film with an incredible group of actors—Benicio del Toro, William Dafoe, Frances McDormand, Bill Murray, Léa Seydoux—were a part of it. Wes is just a masterful filmmaker. He has his own language, his own way of working. He is a wonderful collaborator. He is demanding, he is exacting, but he's fully committed and a wonderful on set general and brilliant writer.



Jeffrey Wright: Next Level Cinema (continued)

When you aren't acting, how do you relax?

I've been going to California for many years since the early 90s as an actor, but it was only about five years ago when I started working out there and commuting back and forth between LA and New York for *Westworld* that I understood Los Angeles' competitive advantage over New York and that is the Pacific Ocean.

When I'm not working over there you can find me out in the ocean surfing. That's where I go to make myself whole. That's where I go to clean my mind, body, spirit, and to avoid all of the nonsense on the land to the extent that I can. The ocean is where the dolphins and the whales return. They were mammals on the land. They returned to the ocean to evolve into something greater, so it has become that type of refuge for me.

I used to skateboard as a kid, almost religiously, until I broke my leg riding in a pool. It was only about seven years ago when I made a trip to Hawaii with my kids and my daughter wanted to take surf lessons that I discovered surfing and I've been hooked ever since. It has been a great gift to my life.

Before we go, what advice do you have for young people who want to not only get into acting but are seeking out roles that are meaningful and impactful?

The business is very different than when I started but my advice is probably still the same and that is to find a part. It doesn't have to be in a big movie. It doesn't have to be in a movie at all. For me, it started with a play and one thing led to another. I encourage people to still do work in the theater if you want to be an actor.

"It is wonderful that we have multigenerational energy but how do we achieve the political and legislative outcomes that are going to speak to and facilitate the kind of systemic change we need in this country?"

We've gotten so caught up in the trappings of the work, you know, the instant gratification, the fame, the money and I think we've lost sight of how it all begins. It begins with an understanding of what you are doing. The way an actor learns the craft is on the stage so by the time you get to the film set you can shape your role into something that is sustainable. With practice you will develop a sense of time and a sense of proportion and a sense of control over your instrument that gives you the presence and power for acting. Always start in the theater.

Nova Lorraine's Fashion Dreams



| “When you find your calling, give it your all.”

Nova Lorraine is a fashion designer and creative storyteller. She is the founder of Raine Magazine, a publication that gives a voice to tomorrow's stars in fashion, culture, and technology. Born in Jamaica, her family migrated to the States when she was seven years old. They settled in Connecticut. Nova always had a thing for fashion. She would sit in school and sketch designs but didn't realize she could make a career out of it. As she saw her brother studying to become a doctor, Nova decided that a similar career path was right for her. She was on the pre-med track in undergrad but decided against going to medical school, feeling psychology better suited her. She went on to receive her master's degree in clinical psychology from the University of Connecticut (UCONN). However, she still had a feeling she wanted to pursue her dream as a fashion designer, so Nova enrolled at the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) to study fashion design.

With capital support from family and friends, Nova was able to launch her first fashion line, which earned her the Haute Couture Designer of the Year award and two rising star nominations from Fashion Group International. Today, Nova is an avid storyteller, expressing herself through a wide range of formats. “I tell stories through fabric as it relates to my fashion,” she explains. “I use the written word, in terms of my books, screenplays, and poetry; and for performance art, dance, hosting and acting are my tools.”

Nova Lorraine's Fashion Dreams (continued)



Nova is currently working on the launch of her new book and fashion collection. "The fashion collection is a quality first clothing and accessory line that embodies the essence of coastal living," she says. "The book is called *Unleash Your Supernova*. The book will be published by Skyhorse Publishing and distributed through Simon & Schuster." She describes the book as a guide to increasing creativity and overcoming burnout. "It is a useful toolbox full of goodies to assist anyone on the journey of creative entrepreneurship," she says.

You will be able to see Nova Lorraine discuss the ways you can be the architect of the life you want in her upcoming TED Talk on March 2021. Penn State University will be hosting the event. Nova Lorraine's story is far from finished. As she expands her creative output to novels and screenplays, Nova is inspiring others to pursue their creative passions.

Credits:

Photography: Vital Agibalow for Hensel

Wardrobe: Grand Showroom NYC, Amnesia, LEO & LIN, Barbara Bela, JVLAURNT, Manuela De La Cruz, and Alex Stone

Stylist: Janet Igah

Asst. Stylist: Emmanuela Blanc

Makeup: Elisa Bailon

Hair: Ashia Richardson

To learn more about Nova Lorraine, visit novalorraine.com and follow her on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

Kingsley Kobayashi: Using Business to Help Others



Photos by Shanka Rao

| “Invest in the future.”

Kingsley Kobayashi is an entrepreneur who was born and grew up in Benin City, Nigeria, and relocated to Japan in 1993. He is an entrepreneur involved in several investment, finance, environment, hospitality, empowerment, and charity businesses. One of Kingsley's new business ventures is blockchain, a new database technology that has the potential to transfer data more securely and more efficiently.

In many developing and under-developed countries, a large segment of the adult population is “unbanked” which means they do not have a checking or savings account. “More than 1.7 billion adults worldwide are unbanked,” he explains. But the majority of the unbanked have mobile phones.” Kingsley is creating a blockchain payment system that allows the unbanked to use their mobile phones for transactions, payments, and other financial services. “This will help to alleviate their financial difficulties,” he says.

Kingsley Kobayashi: Using Business to Help Others (continued)



Kingsley believes the technology will also help the medical industry, specifically telehealth and telemedicine. "With the current pandemic, people with non-severe medical issues are encouraged not to go to hospitals to avoid getting infected," he explains. "Patients can be diagnosed through video calls and their medication could be securely prescribed through blockchain." With blockchain, doctors and pharmacists can have instant access to vital medical records that allow for the best patient treatment. Kingsley says this technology can expand to counseling sessions such as marriage counseling, and even psychiatric counseling.

Kingsley is also conscious of the environmental waste that is being produced throughout the continent of Africa and others. Accordingly, he is investing in clean

renewable energy. "Turning waste to energy will help to alleviate two major problems: One is keeping the cities clean and the second is providing city dwellers the energy needed for daily activities, business development, and infrastructure," he explains. He says that waste is a major issue in many developing nations because of overpopulation and poor long-term solutions for waste disposal. "Our project offers solutions for both a cleaner environment and the production of electricity," he says. Kingsley Kobayashi is using business to empower the underserved so that everyone can live out their dreams.

To learn more about Kingsley Kobayashi, visit kingsleykobayashi.com and follow him on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

MOVIES

Art Jones: Telling the Story of Muhammad Ali's Return to the Ring

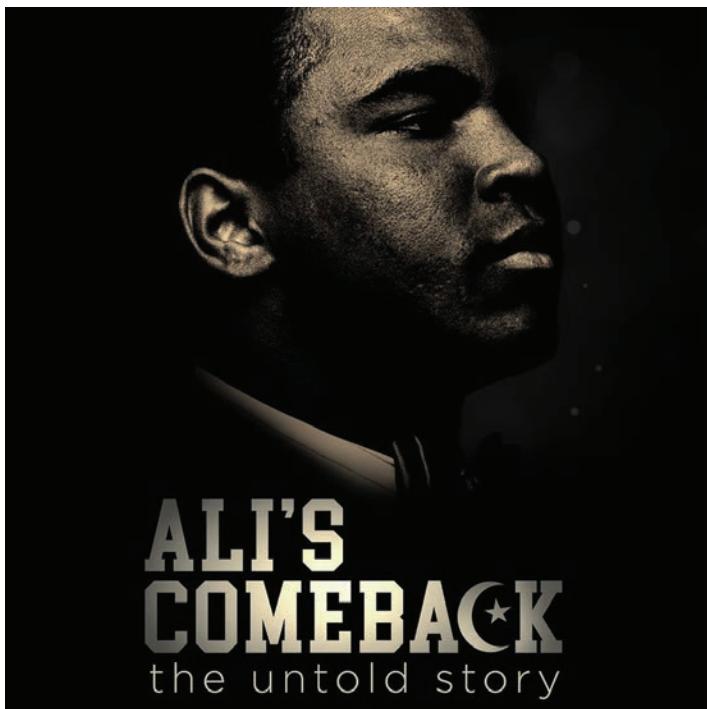


Photo by Dream Factory, LLC

| “There is always an untold story that needs to be told.”

Art Jones is a filmmaker and native of Harlem, New York. Art became interested in filmmaking as a grad student working as an unpaid production assistant (PA) on the children’s program *Schoolhouse Rock*. “Seeing how it impacted my then 4-year-old son opened my eyes to the infinite possibilities of harnessing this medium to craft engaging stories,” he says. “At heart, I am an educator who sees the infinite possibilities for delivering meaningful content via film and television.” His latest film, *Ali’s Comeback: The Untold Story*, celebrates those who made it possible for the greatest boxer of all time to make his return to the ring.

Art Jones: Telling the Story of Muhammad Ali's Return to the Ring (continued)



When Muhammad Ali passed away on June 3, 2016, Art stayed in that weekend, putting to good use his new subscription to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. The newspaper had run several articles about Ali's connection to Atlanta, Georgia. Art quickly learned that Atlanta was the place that allowed Ali to return to boxing after three and a half years in exile. "I learned that there were well over 50 attempts across the country to get him a license," he explains. "I asked myself, 'How was the Atlanta license possible?'" He decided right then and there that he wanted to explore the subject and capture it all on film. Art and his team discovered there wasn't a documentary about this specific moment in history. *Ali's Comeback: The Untold Story* was born. "Muhammad Ali's comeback ranks among many untold stories about amazing black people and events that have gone ignored for far too long," Art says.



From left: Mark Stith, Olayimika Cole, Tylon Davis, Mandy Fason, director-writer-producer Art Jones, Brittany Wyatt, Carlita Scarboro-Vazquez, and Jay Vazquez attend the Atlanta premiere of *Ali's Comeback: The Untold Story* at the Atlanta History Center in January 2020.
Photo by Jason Grindle Photography.

The film won the Audience Award at the Pan African Film Festival and will be available to watch on video on demand starting December 1 through Vision Films. Art Jones will continue to explore the history of black people and events with his next docudrama about the Haitian Revolution.

To learn more about *Ali's Comeback: The Untold Story*, visit aliscomebackllc.com and follow them on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

Carylee Carrington: Virtual Literacy



Photos by Dawn Gardner

| “Inspire children to dream.”

Carylee Carrington is a literacy advocate who uses her books to bridge the racial divide. Her most recent book, *Pretty Hair*, follows Sophia on her first day of school. On her first day, Sophia discovers that her cornrows make her look different than the other girls in her class. After Sophia is teased, she begs her mother to style her hair just like her classmates'. Carylee wrote *Pretty Hair* to help young girls accept their individuality and understand that every hair-style/texture is “pretty.” *PopSugar* recently listed *Pretty Hair* as one of the 20 books in their “Diversify Your Kid’s Bookshelf” list.

As the host of *Read With Carylee* (now available to watch on SoulVision.TV and YouTube), Carylee prioritizes lesser-known children’s book authors and gives them a platform to reach a larger audience. “It is a new spin on LeVar Burton’s *Reading Rainbow*,” Carylee says. “I believe it is important for children to be able to connect with authors and see that they aren’t just celebrities. I hope this inspires children to dream and stretch their reading to more authors. It may inspire them to write too.”

Carylee Carrington: Virtual Literacy (*continued*)



Carylee's mother, lifelong educator Dr. Norma McPherson, was a motivating force in Carylee's life. She encouraged her to write and get her work published. Earlier this year, Dr. McPherson lost her battle to cancer. "This has become a new drive for me to make sure that I continue to do my best and promote literacy education," she says. "This was a passion for us both and I am honored to continue her legacy in this way."

To learn more about Carylee Carrington, visit readwithcarylee.com and follow her on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Carylee hopes to increase the show's reach to parents while they are at home with their children. "With this pandemic, children are now at home with their parents much longer and many are being homeschooled," she explains. "I want my show to be a valuable resource for parents, teachers, and schools. *Read With Carylee* gives parents and young readers the equivalent of virtual author visits."

CHEF'S CORNER

Chef Jerome Grant



Photo courtesy of Jackie DC

“A super tasty balance of spicy, sweet, and fall flavors, this is definitely a standout dish on any dinner table!”



Photo by chef Jerome Grant

Apple Sambal-Roasted Pumpkin w/ Coriander

Course: Lunch or Dinner

Cuisine: American

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 45 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour and 5 minutes

Serving Size: 6-8

Ingredients

Sambal

- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 4 garlic cloves, very finely chopped
- 12 Thai chilies, very finely chopped
- 1 2-inch piece of ginger, peeled and minced
- 1/2 small red onion, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp salted roasted peanuts, coarsely chopped
- 2 small apples peeled, halved, cored and cut into 1/4-inch dices
- 2 tbsp fresh lime juice
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp coarsely torn mint
- 1 tbsp coarsely torn cilantro

Squash

- 2 pounds mixed winter squash (acorn or butternut)
- 1 cup grapeseed oil
- 1 tbsp coriander
- salt, as needed

Preparation

Sambal

1. In a large skillet, heat the vegetable oil. Add the garlic, chiles, ginger, and onion.
2. Cook over moderate heat until softened for about 4 minutes.
3. Add the peanuts and cook until sizzling for about 3 minutes.
4. Add the apples, lime juice, sugar, and salt.
5. Cover and simmer, stirring a few times until the apple is barely tender for about 3 minutes.
6. Let cool slightly.

Chef Jerome Grant (*continued*)

Sambal

1. Line a sheet pan with parchment paper, and heat the oven to 400°F
2. Wash, slice and seed the squash, cutting it into approximately 1/2-inch-thick rings and wedges.
3. Arrange on a sheet pan, drizzle with oil then season with salt and coriander.
4. Roast for 30 to 45 minutes, turning the pieces about halfway through until the squash is tender and slightly browned in places.

JACKIE is a restaurant home to the James Beard-nominated chef Jerome Grant. Guests will experience international flavors, innovative cocktails, an extensive wine list, and a beautiful setting. Chef Grant's childhood, travel, and extensive professional career come together at JACKIE to create a new way to enjoy American cuisine. JACKIE's ethereal spirit infuses every aspect of this namesake restaurant, merging the distinctly cool design of the swinging 60s with chef Jerome's classically delicious cuisine, a modern cocktail menu, and an extensive wine list.

For Service:

Place squash on large platter. Then drizzle sambal over squash and garnish with cilantro and mint.

COMMUNITY

Young, Black & Lit: Daring Our Kids to Dream Big



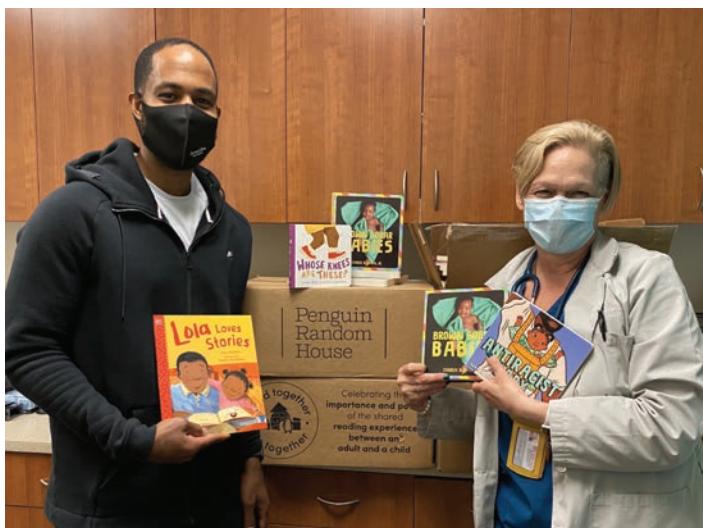
Young, Black & Lit co-founders Krenice Roseman and Derrick Ramsey at pop-up book store at Oakton Elementary School in Evanston, Illinois. Photo courtesy of Young, Black & Lit.

| “Aim to change the narrative with love.”

Each month we highlight a community program that aligns with the values of SoulVision Magazine. We believe engaging with one’s community is critical to fostering positive change in the world.

Young, Black & Lit was created to provide free children’s books that feature black characters to children in the Chicago area. “We distribute books to children through partnerships with schools and organizations that serve low-income youth,” co-founder Derrick Ramsey says. The organization also sells children’s books via its online bookstore. Proceeds go towards Young, Black & Lit’s mission to give youth free books. “In a world that too often undervalues the beauty and brilliance of black children, we aim to change the narrative,” Derrick says. “We are an organization that is rooted in love: love of children, love of reading, and love of black culture.”

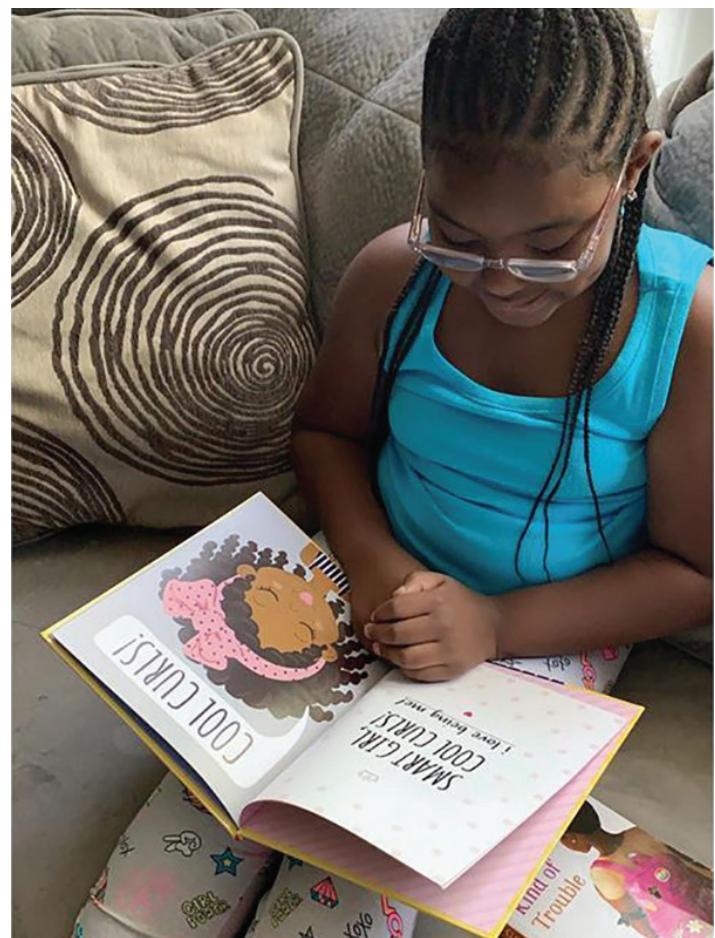
Young, Black & Lit: Daring Our Kids to Dream Big (continued)



Young, Black & Lit donating books to Chicago area pediatrician offices in partnership with Reach Out and Read.
Photo courtesy of Young, Black & Lit.

Through their free book program, Young, Black & Lit is telling young black kids that their experiences and lives matter. “Many education scholars agree that when books serve as mirrors that allow children to see themselves, their families, and their communities reflected, children feel valued,” Derrick explains. “When those same books serve as windows, allowing children to see the similarities and differences they have with other cultures, children feel connected.”

Young, Black & Lit’s new Lit Year Program provides one new book per month for the 2020-2021 school year. Because the program expands into the summer, students will receive a total of 15 books. The books are given to students who qualify for the free/reduced lunch program at their participating schools. The program starts with children in kindergarten and works with them through 3rd grade. “Research shows that students who were not proficient in reading were four times more likely to drop out of high school than proficient readers,” he says. “A



Young, Black & Lit ambassador Kalaya reading Happy Hair by Mechal Renee Roe. Photo courtesy of Young, Black & Lit.

significant way to improve the reading achievement of children is to increase their access to print. Lit Year Program participation ensures that each child will have at least 60 books in their at-home library by the end of 3rd grade.” Through literature, children can dream far and wide. When we invest in our children, we all win.

To learn more about Young, Black & Lit, visit youngblacklit.org and follow them on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

LEGENDS

Paula Madison



Photo courtesy of Paula Madison

Paula Madison is the chairman and CEO of Madison Media Management LLC, a Los Angeles media consulting company. In 2011, after walking away from her job as executive vice president and chief diversity officer at NBCUniversal, Paula wanted to know more about her family. Paula documents her journey in the film *Finding Samuel Lowe: From Harlem to China*, produced and directed by Chinese-Jamaican filmmaker Jeanette Kong, and her memoir *Finding Samuel: Lowe China, Jamaica, Harlem*.

Growing up in Harlem, Paula and her brothers didn't quite look like many around the neighborhood. She knew her mother had Chinese ancestry, but she didn't know much about her family lineage. She knew that her maternal grandfather was Samuel Lowe, a Chinese shopkeeper living in Kingston, Jamaica. It was said that he had two partners who were black Jamaican women and that he fathered children with them. Through research on Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org, Paula discovered that Samuel did in fact meet her grandmother while living in Kingston, Jamaica and they had a familial connection.

Paula Madison (continued)

When Paula traveled to Jamaica she found out that her grandfather was part of the Chinese ethnic group Hakka, many of whom migrated from China. Every four years, Hakka descendants have a reunion. There was a reunion happening in Toronto, Canada. Paula and her brothers decided to attend. At the reunion, she became well acquainted with the Hakka descendants. They helped her trace her family to Shenzhen, China. Paula, her brothers, and 16 other family members made the trip to Shenzhen and reunited with the Lowe family who welcomed them with open arms.

Paula's unique journey afforded her the realization that her legacy is bigger than her. Understanding one's history is a critical step in creating a sense of purpose. In these times, it is important to not take for granted those we love. Family is everything.



“Take the time to reach out to folks who you haven’t heard from in some time, to folks you meant to catch up with, to folks you spoke with just last month. We’re in a time when the abhorrent behavior in the White House is compounded by COVID-19 quarantines requiring that we remain in our own houses. We routinely are wishing each other good health and reminding each other to stay safe. I’m wishing we all stay safe and care for our mental health because anxiety and depression are at an all-time high, especially among our people right now. So don’t wait another day. Reach out to those who are on your mind. Stay safe. Stay healthy. Vote.”

– Paula Madison