

INT: PRESS CONFERENCE: DAY

A WHITE MALE POLITICIAN addresses the media

POLITICIAN

We've invested over 60 million dollars in funding for diversity in arts and entertainment and we've created an additional 5000 jobs! We're taking great strides towards erasing systemic racism and creating meaningful opportunities for minorities so we can all grow together.

CUT TO:

INT: CONFERENCE ROOM: DAY

A WHITE MALE NETWORK EXECUTIVE is in a meeting with EMILY, a WHITE FEMALE EXECUTIVE and RHONDA, a BLACK FEMALE EXECUTIVE.

WHITE MALE NETWORK EXECUTIVE

Both scripts are amazing but as you know, we can only choose one. Emily, your thoughts?

EMILY

Hmmm...I think the kid from Thunder Bay who moves to Toronto to start a rock band and ends up on a reality show has good market potential.

RHONDA

We had a show like that last season. It got pulled due to low ratings. Statistics show there's a significant demand for BIPOC content in our target demographic. That's why I think we should produce this Indo-Caribbean sitcom pilot.

WHITE MALE NETWORK EXECUTIVE

I'm not so sure about that Rhonda. Caribbean accents...well, they might confuse people.

RHONDA

That's not an excuse to not give it a try. You both know this is the better story. Besides, it's never been done

CONTINUED:

before! You talk about diversity; tell me, what was the last project this network has produced featuring people of colour?

WHITE MALE NETWORK EXECUTIVE
Umm...I don't recall off the top of my head but I will get back to you on that later.

EMILY
(muses thoughtfully)
I believe it was "Bobby's Biscuit Blues" from 1982?

WHITE MALE NETWORK EXECUTIVE
That's right!

RHONDA
An animated series about a Black boy and a talking biscuit. Quite honestly, it was ridiculous, not to mention condescending! Times have changed. This network can and must do better.

WHITE MALE NETWORK EXECUTIVE
We have! We hired you.

RHONDA
And you continue to ignore my suggestions. It's like I'm a ghost in the room.

EMILY
That's not true.

RHONDA
Oh yeah? Alright then. Which one of these shows are we going to produce; White boy from Thunder Bay or ex-pat Caribbean sitcom?

WHITE MALE NETWORK EXECUTIVE
Let's take a vote. I think the Thunder Bay scenario's a safer bet; show of hands?

He RAISES his hand. After an awkward moment, Emily follows.

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RHONDA

See, that's what I'm talking about!
That's the problem with this network.
You always want to play it safe,
thereby depriving people of colour a
real chance of fair and accurate
representation on television.

Rhonda packs up and EXITS the room, shaking her head in
disgust.

WHITE MALE NETWORK EXECUTIVE

(Stares at Emily who stares back
quizzically)

What?

CUT TO:

INT: PRESS CONFERENCE: DAY

POLITICIAN

As you can see, our Diversity
Initiative Program has gone a long way
towards providing equal opportunities
for minorities in arts and
entertainment.

An ASIAN REPORTER at the front of the press gathering
addresses the Politician.

ASIAN REPORTER

Actually, there are many people of
colour within these industries
complaining about a lack of
substantial roles in major
productions. Also, that their input is
often overlooked at the corporate
level. What do you have to say about
that?

POLITICIAN

(Slowly sidesteps off the podium)
We've invested over 60 million dollars
in funding for diversity in arts and
entertainment and we'll get back to
you in a moment...

A BIPOC NARRATOR steps into the frame.

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BIPOC NARRATOR

There's all this talk about diversity in the news and on social media. We hear so much about additional funding being allocated to institutions to make their offerings more inclusive. Yet many people of colour experience a different reality within these settings. We are often undermined in the decision making process, which in turn influences what our community sees on film and television. In order to effect real change, there needs to be a shift not only in hiring practices but also, in the mentality within these institutions. Our voices matter. Our stories matter. Diversity is just talk unless it's put into action.

FADE TO BLACK OR LOW ENTROPY CREDIT ROLL:

THE END