

AFRICAN AMERICAN LIVES 2

Thirteen/WNET New York
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thirteen.org



press information

Production biographies

HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.

Writer, Host, Executive Producer

Henry Louis Gates, Jr. is the Alphonse Fletcher University Professor at Harvard University, as well as director of the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research.

Professor Gates is co-editor, with K. Anthony Appiah, of the encyclopedia *Encarta Africana* (1999), published on CD-ROM by Microsoft and in book form by Basic Civitas Books under the title *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience*. He is the author of *Wonders of the African World* (1999), the companion book to the six-hour PBS television series of the same name.

In addition, Professor Gates is the author of several works of literary criticism, including *Figures in Black: Words, Signs and the 'Racial' Self* (Oxford University Press, 1987); *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism* (Oxford, 1988), winner of the 1989 American Book Award; and *Loose Canons: Notes on the Culture Wars* (Oxford, 1992). He is the author of *Colored People: A Memoir* (Knopf, 1994), which traces his childhood experiences in a small West Virginia town in the 1950s and 1960s; *The Future of the Race* (Knopf, 1996), co-authored with Cornel West; and *Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Man* (Random House, 1997).

An influential cultural critic, Professor Gates's publications include a 1994 cover story for *Time* magazine on the new black Renaissance in art, as well as numerous articles for *The New Yorker*. In addition, he has edited several anthologies, including *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature* (W.W. Norton, 1996), and *The Oxford-Schomburg Library of Nineteenth Century Black Women Writers* (Oxford, 1991), and is the co-editor of *Transition* magazine. Previously for PBS, Professor Gates produced and hosted *Wonders of the African World* (1999), *America Beyond the Color Line* (2004), *African American Lives* (2006) and *Oprah's Roots* (2007).

Professor Gates earned his M.A. and Ph.D. in English Literature from Clare College at the University of Cambridge. He received a B.A. in English Language and Literature, summa cum laude, from Yale University in 1973. Before joining the faculty of Harvard in 1991, he taught at Yale, Cornell and Duke Universities. Professor Gates has received nearly 50

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honorary degrees, as well as a 1981 MacArthur Foundation “Genius Award,” the 1993 George Polk Award for Social Commentary, the *Chicago Tribune* Heartland Award in 1994, and the Golden Plate Achievement Award in 1995. In addition, Professor Gates was named one of *Time* magazine’s “25 Most Influential Americans” in 1997, one of *Ebony* magazine’s “100 Most Influential Black Americans” in 2005, received a National Humanities Medal in 1998, and in 1999 was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In 2006, he was inducted into the Sons of the American Revolution after tracing his lineage back to John Redman, a Free Negro who fought in the Revolutionary War.

WILLIAM R. GRANT

Executive Producer

William R. Grant is director of science, natural history and features programs at Thirteen/WNET New York, the flagship of the U.S. public television system. He joined WNET in 1995 after 12 years at WGBH in Boston, where he was managing editor of *Frontline* and executive editor of *Nova*. At WGBH he also served as executive producer of *Living Against the Odds* and *Made In America?*

At Thirteen/WNET, Grant is in charge of one of public television’s largest documentary production departments, which brings to national broadcast an average of 60 hours of programs a year in the areas of natural history, science, history, business, travel, and other topics. While at Thirteen/WNET he has also been executive producer of *Innovation* and *Going Places*, two PBS anthology series, and numerous miniseries, including *America on Wheels*, *Savage Skies*, *Savage Earth*, *Savage Seas*, *Knife to the Heart*, *Stephen Hawking’s Universe*, *On the Trail of Mark Twain*, *The American President*, *In Search of Ancient Ireland*, *The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow*, *Slavery and the Making of America*, *African American Lives*, and *The Supreme Court*. He has been responsible, as executive in charge of production, for *Nature*, one of public television’s most watched continuing series, and the miniseries *Savage Planet*, *Secrets of the Dead*, *Secrets of the Pharaohs*, *Warship*, *Africa*, *1900 House*, *Frontier House*, *Manor House*, *The Secret Life of the Brain*, *Colonial House*, *Texas Ranch House*, and *Warplane*.

Prior to joining WGBH in 1983, Grant was for 14 years a reporter and editor at two of the nation’s largest daily newspapers – the *Detroit Free Press* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, where his work won numerous awards. In 1979-80 he was a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University. He was inducted into the Kentucky Journalism Hall of Fame in 2001 and in 2005 was named to the University of Kentucky’s Hall of Distinguished Alumni.

Programs produced under his supervision have won 13 national News and Documentary Emmy awards, including one for the 2005 series *Slavery and the Making of America*, one for the 2004 series *DNA*, and six George Foster Peabody awards, including one for the 2002 series *The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow*.

PETER W. KUNHARDT

Executive Producer

Peter Kunhardt, a 10-year veteran of ABC News, executive-produced the critically acclaimed PBS series *African American Lives* (2006) as well as *Oprah’s Roots: An African American Lives Special* (2007). In 1987 he formed Kunhardt Productions in order to work more closely with both

his father and brother. In 1988, he won his third national Emmy Award for *JFK: In His Own Words* on HBO. Kunhardt is co-author of *Lincoln: An Illustrated Biography*, and served as producer and director of the ABC miniseries *Lincoln*, the Discovery Channel documentary *Barnum* and *The American President* for PBS. During the past 18 years he has overseen more than 120 hours of programming for PBS, the networks and cable.

DYLLAN MCGEE

Executive Producer

Dyllan McGee was senior producer for both *African American Lives* and *Oprah's Roots*. She joined Kunhardt Productions in 1993, serving as senior producer for all documentaries and educational programming. Past projects McGee has worked on include *Freedom: A History of US*, *The American President*, and *Inside the White House* for PBS; *Eternal Egypt* for The History Channel; and *The Kennedy Tapes Revealed* for Bravo. In addition, McGee serves as the supervising producer for Picture History, an online resource for 19th and 20th-century photography. She is a Trustee of the Taft School and lives in Katonah, N.Y., with her husband and two children.

GRAHAM JUDD

Senior Producer

Graham Judd was the series producer for *African American Lives* and producer of *Oprah's Roots*. A New York-based filmmaker, Judd has specialized in producing ambitious and popular history and current affairs documentaries for more than 20 years. He began his career as a staff producer with the BBC, for whom he produced and directed many high-profile television projects, earning among many other awards the prestigious Sanford St. Martin. In 2001, Judd moved to the United States to produce the critically acclaimed *Muslims*, a two-hour *Frontline* special investigating the cultural and political resurgence of Islam through stories of individual Muslims in Turkey, Malaysia, Iran, Egypt, Nigeria and the United States. The following year, he traveled to Afghanistan, Israel and the Gaza Strip to make the film *September's Children*, which explored the psychological impact of war and terrorism on kids. In 2004, Judd served as series producer for the prime-time PBS history series *History Detectives*, before joining Kunhardt Productions as senior producer. Documentaries Judd has created and supervised have aired not only on the BBC and PBS, but also on ABC, Discovery Channel and The History Channel.

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