

AFRICAN AMERICAN LIVES

Thirteen/WNET New York
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thirteen.org



press information

Series At-A-Glance

Series Overview

For some Americans, the essential question, “Where do I come from?” cannot be answered; their family history and ancestral roots have been lost or stolen. Now, *AFRICAN AMERICAN LIVES*, a new PBS series presented by Thirteen/WNET New York and premiering Wednesdays, February 1 and 8, 2006 at 9 p.m. (ET), is the first documentary series to employ genealogy and science to explore black roots in America and Africa. Hosted by renowned Harvard scholar **Henry Louis Gates, Jr.**, and utilizing expert genealogical and historical research and DNA analysis, the four-part series traces the lineages of Professor Gates and eight other prominent African Americans - neurosurgeon **Dr. Ben Carson**, actress **Whoopi Goldberg**, **Bishop T.D. Jakes**, astronaut **Dr. Mae Jemison**, musician/producer **Quincy Jones**, sociologist **Dr. Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot**, comedian/actor **Chris Tucker** and TV pioneer/philanthropist **Oprah Winfrey**. Viewers will accompany them on a transformational journey of discovery as they unearth remarkable new truths about their family history - including fascinating stories of ancestors who were free during the time of slavery. Through the examination of these nine lives, the series provides an unprecedented understanding of African American history. In the process, it will underscore for all Americans the importance of knowing their past, in order to unlock the future.

Outreach

AFRICAN AMERICAN LIVES will be accompanied by a far-reaching educational outreach component. Working in cooperation with seven public television stations in key markets across the country, Thirteen's teacher-training initiative will provide direct, hands-on training to more than 1,000 K-through-12 educators, guiding them in the use of the broadcast program, Web site, and print materials in standards-based classroom instruction. Extensive community outreach is also being planned with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA), as well as historical organizations and museums nationwide, to engage children and families of all ages in an exploration of their family origins. Ancestry.com is creating a special Web site specifically for the 4.4 million BGCA kids nationwide so they can begin that journey. In addition, PBS has designated the series a Program Club Pick (www.pbs.org/programclub), which encourages viewer discussion groups at the community level.



Web Site

Launching January 16, a vibrant companion Web site (www.pbs.org/aalives) will feature a beginner's guide to tracing one's own family tree, giving visitors step-by-step guidance in how to research their own past. The online component will also provide background on the science and scholarship featured in the series, extended interviews with series guests, and interactive learning tools that will appeal to all age levels.

DVD

AFRICAN AMERICAN LIVES will be available on DVD through shoppbs.com after the broadcast premiere. It will also be available for general retail through PBS Home Video and

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Major funding for *AFRICAN AMERICAN LIVES* is provided by  and the following  brands: **Pringles®, Folgers®, Bounty®, Charmin®, Tide®, Downy®, Pampers®, Crest®**

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WNET NEW YORK

KUNHARDT
PRODUCTIONS

Co-Produced By
Thirteen/WNET New York
and Kunhardt Productions

Paramount Home Entertainment on May 2, 2006.

Production and Funding

AFRICAN AMERICAN LIVES is a co-production of Thirteen/WNET New York and Kunhardt Productions. Episode one is produced and directed by Jesse Sweet; episode two is produced and directed by Leslie Asako GladsjØ; episode three is produced and directed by Leslie Farrell; and episode four is produced and directed by Graham Judd. Farrell and Judd are series producers, with Dyllan McGee as senior producer for Kunhardt Productions. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., William R. Grant and Peter Kunhardt are executive producers. Major funding for *AFRICAN AMERICAN LIVES* is provided by The Coca-Cola Company and the following brands by the Procter & Gamble Company: Pringles®, Folgers®, Bounty®, Charmin®, Tide®, Downy®, Pampers®, Crest®. Additional funding for outreach activities is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

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