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The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

Production Biographies

Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

Executive Producer, Writer, Presenter

Henry Louis Gates, Jr. is the director of the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research and Alphonse Fletcher University professor at Harvard University. He is the author of *Life Upon These Shores: Looking at African American History, 1513-2008* (Random House, 2011) and *Faces of America* (New York University Press, 2010), which expands on interviews he conducted for his critically acclaimed PBS documentary series of the same name. *The Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Reader*, ed. Abby Wolf (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2012), a collection of three decades of his work, was published in 2012. He co-wrote *Lincoln on Race and Slavery*, with Donald Yacovone (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

Professor Gates is editor-in-chief of TheRoot.com, a daily online magazine focusing on issues of interest to the African-American community and written from an African-American perspective, and the Oxford African American Studies Center, the first comprehensive scholarly online resource in the field of African-American and Africana Studies. He is co-editor, with Kwame Anthony Appiah, of *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American*

Experience and Encyclopedia of Africa: Two-Volume Set (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). He co-edited *The Oxford Handbook of African American Citizenship, 1865-Present*, with Claude Steele, Lawrence D. Bobo, Michael Dawson, Gerald Jaynes, Lisa Crooms-Robinson, and Linda Darling-Hammond (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), and *Call and Response: Key Debates in African American Studies*, with Jennifer Burton (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010). With Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, he is the co-editor of the eight-volume biographical encyclopedia *African American Lives* (Oxford, 2008).

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; *Loose Canons: Notes on the Culture Wars* (Oxford, 1992); and *Tradition and the Black Atlantic: Criticism in the African Diaspora* (Basic Books, 2010). 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; *Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Man* (Random House, 1997); and *In Search of Our Roots: How Nineteen Extraordinary African Americans Reclaimed Their Past* (Crown, 2009), which won an NAACP Image Award in 2010.

An influential cultural critic, Professor Gates has published 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, 2nd ed., 2004) 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), *Oprah's Roots* (2007), *African American Lives 2* (2008), *Looking for Lincoln* (2009), *Faces of America* (2010), *Black in Latin America* (2011), and *Finding Your Roots* (2012).

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 51 honorary degrees, as well as a 1981 MacArthur Foundation "Genius Award," the 1993 George Polk Award for Social Commentary and the 2008 Ralph Lowell Award, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's highest award. 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 and to *Ebony*'s "Power 150" list for 2009. In 2013, he was named to AARP's list of The "Influentials": 50 Over 50. He 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 to John Redman, a Free Negro who fought in the Revolutionary War.

Peter W. Kunhardt

Executive Producer

Peter Kunhardt formed Kunhardt Productions, now Kunhardt McGee Productions, in 1987. Currently he is an executive producer of *The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.* (PBS) and a second season of *Finding Your Roots with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.* (PBS). Most recently he has worked on *Makers: Women Who Make America* (PBS), *Faces of America with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.* (PBS), *Gloria Steinem: In Her Own Words* (HBO), *Teddy Kennedy: In His Own Words* (HBO), *African American Lives 1 & 2* (PBS). He has also co-authored four companion books, including *Lincoln: An Illustrated Biography* (Knopf and ABC) and *Looking for Lincoln*

Dyllan McGee

Executive Producer

Dyllan McGee is a partner and Emmy-award winning executive producer at Kunhardt McGee Productions. She is currently Executive Producer on *The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.* (PBS). She recently founded the critically-acclaimed *MAKERS: Women Who Make America* (PBS and AOL, 2013). Recent productions also include: *Finding Your Roots with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.* (PBS, 2012), Emmy-nominated, *Gloria: In Her Own Words* (HBO, 2011), Emmy-award winning *Teddy: In His Own Words* (HBO), *This Emotional Life* (PBS) and *Faces of America with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.* (PBS, 2010). Other works include: *African American Lives 1 & 2*, (PBS, 2006 & 2008), Oprah's *Roots* (PBS, 2007), *Looking for Lincoln* (PBS, 2009), *'til the River Runs Clear* (PBS, 2007); *The Road to 9/11* (PBS, 2005), *In Memoriam: New York City, 9/11/01* (HBO, 2002); and *The American President* (PBS, 2000).

Julie Anderson

Executive Producer

Executive Producer of Documentaries and Development, WNET

Julie Anderson is an executive producer of documentaries and development at WNET. She is currently working on *The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.* (PBS). Prior to WNET, Anderson served as a producer for HBO documentary films where she oversaw all aspects of production. Anderson's work on the documentary short *God is the Bigger*

Elvis (HBO, 2012) got her an Academy award nomination. Preceding her work at HBO, Anderson served as creator, executive producer, program development for CNN's iReport Film Festival. She also worked as co-creator and executive producer for ESPN's 60-minute magazine series, *E:60* and as creator, executive producer for BET's 60-minute talk show, *Meet the Faith*. Anderson has received four Emmy awards and two Peabody awards.

Stephen Segaller

Vice President of Programming, WNET

Executive in Charge, WNET, The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

Stephen Segaller oversees all national and local programming from WNET's producing subsidiaries – THIRTEEN, WLIW21 and Creative News Group. These productions include: *Nature, Great Performances, American Masters, Secrets of the Dead, PBS NewsHour Weekend, Religion & Ethics Newsweekly, Cyberchase, NYC-Arts, and Reel 13; documentary series featuring Henry Louis Gates Jr., Niall Ferguson, and Simon Schama; and special projects like the recent Shakespeare Uncovered.*

Rachel Dretzin

Senior Producer

Rachel Dretzin is a partner and executive producer at Ark Media. She is currently the senior producer of *The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.* (PBS). She was senior producer of the ten part PBS series *Finding Your Roots with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.* (PBS). Her documentaries for *Frontline* have earned her an Emmy nomination, a Peabody Award, the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Grand Prize and the du-Pont Columbia Silver Baton. They include *Football High* (2011); *Digital Nation* (2010); *Growing Up Online* (2008); *Failure to Protect* (2003) *The Persuaders* (2004); *Merchants of Cool* (2001) and [The Lost Children of Rockdale County](#) (1999.) In addition to her work for *Frontline*, Dretzin has produced pieces for NPR's *All Things Considered*, MSNBC's *Edgewise*, AMC Movie Classics and a 15-minute film for *The New York Times* called "Naked."

Leslie Asako Gladsjo

Senior Story Producer

Leslie Asako Gladsjo is currently the senior story producer of *The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross*. She recently served as Senior Story Editor for the 10-hour national PBS series [Finding Your Roots with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.](#) (2012). She produced and directed episodes of the PBS series [African American Lives](#) (2006), [African American Lives 2](#) (2008),

and [Faces of America](#) (2010). Prior to that she was based in Paris, where she directed long-format documentaries on social and cultural topics for European public television stations including Arte (*Une Enfance Gaie*, *Prier dans la Cité des Anges* and many others), BBC (*Pandemonium*), France 2 and France 5 (*Peuples d'Ici*, *Français d'Ailleurs: Les Turcs de Paris*), as well as shorter pieces for M6, Canal Plus and others. Her independently-produced films including *Truth Under Siege* (1994), an award-winning feature-length documentary about dissident media in former Yugoslavia, *Stigmata: The Transfigured Body* (1992) and a series of collaborations with the controversial machine performance group Survival Research Laboratories have won awards at national and international festivals.

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