

# Black History Month on ITV

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## Black History Month on ITV

ITV is celebrating Black History Month this October with a new brand campaign, high profile documentaries with leading talent, the return of TV's first comedy panel show about Black History, as well as engaging and awareness-raising strands across ITV's daytime programmes, and curated collections on ITV Hub and BritBox, plus specially commissioned content for digital platforms.

Commissioning Editor for the season, Satmohan Panesar, said:

“Building on last year's celebrations, Black History Month returns to ITV this October. Featuring a range of engaging documentaries from some of our highest profile talent; through their personal stories, the films will explore what it means to be black in Britain today. We're also really pleased that *Sorry, I Didn't Know* returns, which is a brilliant and entertaining showcase of diverse talent.

Continuing our commitment to diversity off screen during the season, we're delighted to be working with DocHearts and Uplands Television, who are making their first films for ITV as part of the season, and continuing to develop diverse production talent at TriForce Productions and TwoFour on their Black History Month commissions."

## **Programming**

A series of specially commissioned films, as well as the return of the only comedy panel show about Black History, are leading ITV's programming for Black History Month, this October.

### **Sorry I Didn't Know - Sunday nights in October**

Jimmy Akingbola returns to host comedy panel show Sorry, I Didn't Know, for a five part series airing across Sunday nights in October.

Chizzy Akudolu and Judi Love are back as the team leaders presiding over the guests as they battle it out over four rounds, unveiling interesting Black History facts along the way.

The show will once again be a riotous showcase of some of the hottest comedians from diverse backgrounds as they have their knowledge tested of untold stories and unsung heroes. Russell Kane, Dane Baptiste, Reginald D Hunter and Fatiha El-Ghorri kicked off the series joining the team captains, with talent including Eddie Kadi, Stephen K Amos, Sara Pascoe, Verona Rose, Kemah Bob, Sikisa, James Acaster, Bethany Black, Paul Chowdry, Curtis Walker and Kojo Anim featuring across the series.

Sorry, I Didn't Know is commissioned by Gemma John Lewis and Joe Mace in ITV Entertainment Commissioning, and is produced by TriForce Productions and was created by husband and wife team, Fraser and Minnie Ayres.

"We are very excited to be back for another series of Sorry, I Didn't Know," said Minnie Ayres of TriForce Productions. "This year we launched a competition to find additional writers and we were able to offer two brand new writers, Viv May and Shikira Porter, the opportunity to join the writing team working with showrunner Fraser Ayres and seasoned writer Mark Boutros. It's been great to see them flourish and become a vital part of the SIDK team."

Gemma John Lewis, ITV Entertainment commissioning said: "We are delighted that Sorry, I Didn't Know is back for a second series. Jimmy, Judi and Chizzy,

together with a roster of famous faces help to shine a light on Black people who have been overlooked or had their faces and stories brushed over in history. Through a mix of comedy and poignance, each episode delivers something that viewers may not have known before."

**Black History Month also features content across ITV's daytime shows, as well as three primetime documentaries from leading ITV talent - will.i.am, Ashley Banjo and Charlene White.**

**will.i.am: The Blackprint - 14 October at 9pm**

ITV will air will.i.am: The Blackprint, a one-hour documentary that follows global superstar will.i.am's personal and timely exploration of what it means to be Black and British, in the country he calls his second home.

Born and raised in Los Angeles, will.i.am first came to the UK over twenty years ago. Since then the British public have welcomed will.i.am into their homes and hearts as a fully-fledged national treasure. Yet despite all the time he has spent in this country that he loves, will.i.am has never had the opportunity to explore Black Britain and find out what it's really like to live here.

But now all that's set to change as will.i.am embarks on a fascinating nationwide quest to learn about the lives of Black Brits, and compare and contrast the lived experience on both sides of the Atlantic.

From civil rights heroes and trailblazers in tech, to inspiring schoolchildren, will.i.am's mission sees him meeting members of the Black community from across the country, and learn about the milestone events that have helped shape the modern Black British landscape.

With surprising, shocking and revealing moments throughout, will.i.am's thought provoking journey draws upon his own experiences growing up, and spans the heartbreak of the past, the struggles of the present day and the hopes for our future.

will.i.am: The Blackprint is a Twofour (part of ITV Studios) production, and the Executive Producers are will.i.am and Nic Patten. The Senior Producer is Laetitia Nneke. The Commissioning Editor is David Smyth in ITV Entertainment.

Nic Patten, Executive Producer and Twofour's Head of Factual Entertainment, said: "We're proud to be contributing to this season of programming with will.i.am and are extremely grateful to everyone who took part in the

documentary. Through this personal and informative film, will.i.am examines the UK's role in Black history from the slave trade to the present day. Driven by his unique and forward-thinking perspective, he also looks towards the future and shines a light on a new generation who promise to become the innovators of tomorrow."

### **Ashley Banjo: Britain in Black and White - 19 October at 9pm**

Also this October, ITV premieres Ashley Banjo: Britain in Black and White. In the summer of 2020 Ashley Banjo was thrust into the centre of the Black Lives Matter movement. The pro equality routine performed by Diversity, one of the most complained about moments in OFCOM's history, suddenly cast Ashley and his fellow dancers into the political spotlight, and at the centre of a vicious twitter pile on. The lines between entertainment, politics and history blurred.

A year on from that moment and having won a BAFTA as a recognition of the importance of it, Ashley is using his own personal experience to go on a journey to explore Britain's relationship with race.

Ashley will reveal how race and racism have impacted upon his life and that of his family and friends. Crucially by meeting civil rights trailblazers from modern history and those who disagree with their work, he will also try and understand what it means to take a stand. He'll get first hand testimony of the perils, positives and optimism of 'standing up'. Armed with these stories and information, these trailblazers help him navigate his newly found purpose as champion for civil rights in the UK.

Ashley Banjo: Britain in Black and White w/t is an Uplands Television production for ITV. The Executive Producers are Ashley Banjo, Eamon Hardy, Mike Smith and David Olusoga. Satmohan Panesar is the Commissioning Editor for ITV Factual Entertainment.

Eamon Hardy, Executive Producer said:

"Uplands Television strives to bring historical context and understanding to the issue of race. Ashley brought a real curiosity and keen intelligence to this personal journey in an effort to understand the attacks on him. He has shown great courage in taking a stand and tackling the subject head on. I think this film will be a powerful addition to ITV's Black History Month season".

### **Charlene White: Empire's Child - 21 October at 9pm**

Charlene White embarks on a journey to uncover the roots of her connection to the British Empire. In a revealing and emotional journey, Charlene travels across Britain and Jamaica to investigate her own heritage and the relationship between the Empire and her family.

By piecing together broken records and going back in time to the very start of the British Empire, Charlene will make some surprising and shocking discoveries about how the British Empire has shaped her family's lives and asks the question what it is to be Black and British.

This is a deeply personal and moving film that looks at Charlene and her identity; a quest for the truth of the British Empire's role in the making and remaking of families of Caribbean descent and to find out if we can ever truly emerge from the shadow of empire.

Empire's Child is a Doc Hearts production, with Andy Mundy-Castle and Sam Bickley as executive producers, and Anna Manton as producer/director. The Commissioning Editor is Satmohan Panesar, ITV Factual Entertainment.

Andy Mundy Castle said: "We are really proud of Charlene White: Empires Child, our first commission for ITV, which has been a collaborative process from start to finish. It's not often you get a real time historical investigation unfold right before your eyes and we believe will be a genuine treat for the audience. Making this film has been an incredible journey and a real achievement amidst challenging circumstances which involved international travel. We all know and love Charlene White so I hope people get to see her unfiltered on a deeply personal journey, that truly speaks to British history."

## **ITV Daytime**

**Good Morning Britain** will celebrate Black History Month with a special news feature series called 'Black History Icons.' This brand new weekly strand will see five special films exploring important Black figures overlooked or airbrushed out of history, and will air every Friday in October. Each story, including the first Black person in space and the forgotten sixth Beatle, will be told by some beloved famous faces such as Fleur East, Craig Charles, Maggie Aderin-Pocock MBE and Kris Akabusi.

**Lorraine** fashionista Candice Brathwaite travels to Barbados to trace her roots and understand more about her grandparents' journey to the UK as part of the Windrush generation, and to celebrate Bajan culture - food, fashion and celebrity lifestyles.

**This Morning** continues to deliver key topical ideas this October with Hamza Yassin fronting a brand new series focusing on nature and wildlife, host Alison Hammond will take on additional presenting duties to deliver surprises to individuals that have missed a special milestone due to the pandemic, chefs Nisha Katona and Joseph Denison Carey continue to bring their style and flair to the kitchen and guests on the sofa will include Strictly stars Oti Mabuse and Ugo Monye.

After marking last year's Black History Month with a RTS award-winning first ever all-black panel, **Loose Women** will once again be shining a light on the important topics we need to discuss right now, through the experiences of our panelists. This October they'll be tackling taboos like skin lightening as part of their 'We Need To Talk About...' series, taking a trip down memory lane with Charlene White's Life Before Loose and interviewing the rising black stars our panellists want to celebrate. Kelle Bryan will also be investigating why there is still an absence of women of colour on the covers of mainstream magazines.

### **ITV Hub and BritBox**

The full series of Sorry, I Didn't Know, will.i.am: The Blackprint, Ashley Banjo: Britain in Black and White and Charlene White: Empire's Child will also be available on ITV Hub, alongside further curated content in the Black History Month collection including Alison Hammond: Back to School, Sorry, I Didn't Know series 1, In the Shadow of Mary Seacole, Don't Hate The Playaz series 1-3, Unsaid Stories, Stephen Lawrence: Has Britain Changed, The Murder of Stephen Lawrence, Stephen and Martin Luther King by Trevor McDonald, IRL with Team Charlene and Craig and Danny: Funny, Black and on TV.

BritBox will mark Black History Month with a range of collections exploring the black experience. The Black Voices rail will host a mixture of documentaries and dramas based on actual events. These include Mandela: From Prison to President, Fighting for King and Empire: Britain's Caribbean Heroes and Small Island. The Black British Stars of the Stage and Screen rail showcases titles including 12 Years a Slave, Attack the Block and the Royal Shakespeare Company's Othello. BritBox have also created a Black British Telly rail celebrating black actors in dramas and comedies such as Noughts & Crosses and Chewing Gum, as well as a Top 10 Black British Icons rail highlighting standout stars such as Lenny Henry.

### **Brand campaign**

Launching on air later this week, ITV's brand campaign showcases Black History in the making. It pays tribute to amazing role models in industries such as sport, music and science, who inspire a new generation of young people by being visible role models.

Marketing Executive Queenie Safo-Antwi said:

"ITV is for everyone, and this campaign is a hopeful and inspiring look at how young people are the potential heroes of tomorrow, with a nod to the black stars that are inspiring them today. We want to engage and inspire family audiences with this creative campaign which will run across our network in October."

ITV have partnered with photographer Brunel Johnson who has shot the images which feature in the campaign.

### **Channel Ident**

Illustrator, Kingsley Nebechi, in collaboration with Mimi Nwosu, Civil Engineer have produced the ITV ident for October, as part of ITV Creates. The idea behind this piece is to implement the cultural representation and identity of patterns into a concrete version of the ITV ident.

This collaboration focuses on Mimi's work as a Civil Engineer specialising in concrete, and both Mimi and Kingsley's identity, both being of Nigerian origin - as well as their combined love for African patterns and art. View the ident here - [ITV Creates](#).

### **Digital Mini Series across ITV Hub and social platforms**

ITV is also celebrating Black History Month with a three-part exclusively digital series featuring one-on-one conversations about the journeys and experiences of two influential figures in the same field from different generations - called **Black History Month: The Bridge**.

The Bridge sees in-depth discussions between three pairs from Activism, Comedy and Journalism: Model and activism icon, Munroe Bergdorf, chats to Black Lives Matter thought leader, Imarn Ayton; Legendary comedian Stephen K Amos is in conversation with recent TikTok superstar, Ehiz; Long-time journalist and presenter Sean Fletcher sits down with up and coming entertainment journalist, Will Njobvu.

Digital Development Manager Joël Duncan said:

“It was great bringing influential black figures from different generations into the same space to have an empowering conversation about their inspiring journeys and different experiences. All the speakers were incredible and really opened up about their story and shared some nuggets along the way, which I’m sure will inspire the viewers at home.”

Produced by ITV’s Innovation team in conjunction with Project Gorilla, the creators of the culturally groundbreaking show [Blue Therapy](#), the series will air across ITV’s digital platforms (YouTube, Instagram, TikTok & Twitter) from October 13th, and as a full series on ITV Hub at the end of October.

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