



**“FINDING YOUR ROOTS WITH HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.”  
SEASON SEVEN PREMIERES JANUARY 19, 2021**

**The new season will consist of ten episodes airing throughout  
Winter and Spring 2021**

*New Episodes Explore Ancestry Stories of Clint Black, Lewis Black, Erin Burnett, Rosanne Cash, Glenn Close, Andy Cohen, Jim Gaffigan, Kasi Lemmons, John Lithgow, Jane Lynch, Audra McDonald, Christopher Meloni, Tony Shalhoub, Nina Totenberg, John Waters, Pharrell Williams and more*

Arlington, VA (July 30, 2020) — Today’s most compelling personalities discover the surprising stories buried within their own families in the seventh season of the critically acclaimed PBS series **FINDING YOUR ROOTS WITH HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.** The new season will premiere on Tuesdays beginning January 19, 2021 at 8:00 p.m. ET (check local listings) on PBS.

**FINDING YOUR ROOTS, Season Seven** episodes will broadcast throughout Winter/Spring 2021 and will continue to feature exciting new guests who are game-changers in their fields, with family histories that illustrate the power and diversity of the human experience. Among them are actors **Glenn Close, John Lithgow, Jane Lynch, Audra MacDonald, Christopher Meloni** and **Tony Shalhoub**; acclaimed musicians **Clint Black, Rosanne Cash** and **Pharrell Williams**; groundbreaking directors **Kasi Lemmons** and **John Waters**; renowned journalists **Erin Burnett** and **Nina Totenberg**; hilarious comedians **Lewis Black** and **Jim Gaffigan**; popular late night personality **Andy Cohen**; and more to be announced.

In sharing their stories, **FINDING YOUR ROOTS** uses every tool available, from cutting-edge DNA research to old-school genealogical sleuthing, to reveal long-buried secrets. Spanning the globe, the series compiles family trees in these new episodes that trace throughout the United States and Canada; across Europe and Africa; and more. Episode to episode, audiences will meet guests’ ancestors who were businesspeople and bootleggers, war heroes and criminals, farmers and immigrants, the persecuted and the persevering under the most extraordinary circumstances. Together, the arc of each guest’s family personalizes history while emphasizing the human connections that unite everyone.

At the center of it all, guiding every discovery, is host and executive producer Henry Louis Gates, Jr., the Alphonse Fletcher University Professor at Harvard University and director of the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research. “As we enter our 7th season on PBS, *Finding Your Roots* continues to illuminate the past by unlocking the histories contained in our guests’

DNA,” says Henry Louis Gates, Jr. “Building on traditional paper trail research, genetic genealogy is a powerful tool for reconnecting branches on family trees eroded by silence and time. It also underscores one of the central themes of our series — that all of us, in one way or another, descend from immigrants whose travels across space are part of the larger human story of movement either through necessity, brutal force, escape, or the search for a better life.”

Assembling the extensive family trees and family narratives alongside Dr. Gates are DNA expert CeCe Moore (Founder, The DNA Detective and host of ABC’s THE GENETIC DETECTIVE), and new lead genealogist Nick Sheedy, who carries on the work of founding series genealogist Johni Cerny (Founder, Lineages), who unfortunately passed away in early 2020.

In conjunction with the broadcast, co-producer WETA, the flagship public broadcaster in the nation’s capital, will work with stations across the country to encourage viewers to explore and share their family histories via social media using the hashtag #FindingYourRoots on Facebook and Twitter, via [Facebook.com/FindingYourRootsPBS](https://www.facebook.com/FindingYourRootsPBS) and @HenryLouisGates, and on the series companion site, [pbs.org/FindingYourRoots](https://pbs.org/FindingYourRoots).

**FINDING YOUR ROOTS WITH HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR., Season Seven** is a production of McGee Media, Inkwell Media, Kunhardt Films and WETA Washington, D.C. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. is the writer, host, and executive producer. Dyllan McGee and Peter Kunhardt are executive producers. John F. Wilson is the executive producer in charge for WETA. Bill Gardner is the executive in charge for PBS. Sabin Streeter is the senior producer. Natalia Warchol is the series producer. Hannah Olson is the consulting producer. Deborah Clancy Porfido is the supervising producer. Kevin Burke is the producer. Robert L. Yacyshyn is the line producer. Sabin Streeter and Krista Whetstone are directors. Corporate support is provided by Ancestry and Johnson & Johnson. Support is also provided by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Candace King Weir, the Lloyd Carney Foundation, and by the — the Zegar Family Foundation, Demond Martin, and the Ben Horowitz Fund through the Community Foundation of Greater Memphis. Major support is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and PBS.

An electronic press kit for **FINDING YOUR ROOTS WITH HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR., Season Seven**, including downloadable photos for promotional use, is available on [PBS Pressroom](#).

###

### **About WETA**

WETA is the leading public broadcaster in the nation’s capital, serving Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia with educational initiatives and with high-quality programming on television, radio and digital. WETA Washington, D.C., is the second largest producing-station of new content for public television in the United States, with productions and co-productions including PBS NEWSHOUR, WASHINGTON WEEK, THE KENNEDY CENTER MARK TWAIN PRIZE, THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS GERSHWIN PRIZE FOR POPULAR SONG, LATINO AMERICANS, ASIAN AMERICANS and documentaries by filmmaker Ken Burns and scholar Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Sharon Percy Rockefeller is president and CEO. More information on WETA and its programs and services is available at [www.weta.org](http://www.weta.org).

### **About McGee Media**

McGee Media was founded by award-winning filmmaker Dyllan McGee to produce documentary content that is innovative, compelling, and immersive. Every story is born from a vision of a more fair and equitable world. Whether it is the sweeping history of the African-American experience, or the intimate personal stories of the hundreds of women who made up the feminist movement, McGee Media uses television, film, and digital media in radical new ways to inform and inspire. Recent projects include RECONSTRUCTION: AMERICA AFTER THE CIVIL WAR (PBS), AFRICA'S GREAT CIVILIZATIONS (PBS), BLACK AMERICA SINCE MLK: AND STILL I RISE (PBS), MAKERS (PBS), FINDING YOUR ROOTS (PBS), ONCE & FOR ALL (AOL), FIRST IN HUMAN (Discovery), and RANCHER, FARMER, FISHERMAN (Discovery).

### **About Inkwell Media**

Inkwell Media was founded by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. to produce sophisticated documentary films about the African and African-American experience for a broad audience. The six-part PBS documentary series THE AFRICAN AMERICANS: MANY RIVERS TO CROSS (2013) earned the 2013 Peabody Award and NAACP Image Award. Inkwell Films has co-produced FINDING YOUR ROOTS (Seasons 1-7), RECONSTRUCTION: AMERICA AFTER THE CIVIL WAR (2019), AFRICA'S GREAT CIVILIZATIONS (2017), BLACK AMERICA SINCE MLK: AND STILL I RISE (2016), BLACK IN LATIN AMERICA (2011), FACES OF AMERICA (2010), LOOKING FOR LINCOLN (2009), AFRICAN AMERICAN LIVES 2 (2008), OPRAH'S ROOTS (2007) and AFRICAN AMERICAN LIVES (2006).

### **About Kunhardt Films**

Kunhardt Films specializes in documentary films about the people and ideas that shape American history. Most recently completed is TRUE JUSTICE: BRYAN STEVENSON'S FIGHT FOR EQUALITY (HBO, 2019). Past productions include JOHN MCCAIN: FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS (HBO, 2018); KING IN THE WILDERNESS (HBO, 2018); THE NEWSPAPERMAN: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF BEN BRADLEE (HBO, 2017); BECOMING WARREN BUFFETT (HBO, 2017); JIM: THE JAMES FOLEY STORY (HBO, 2016). Other films include LIVING WITH LINCOLN (HBO, 2015); NIXON BY NIXON: IN HIS OWN WORDS (HBO, 2014); FINDING YOUR ROOTS (PBS); MAKERS: WOMEN WHO MAKE AMERICA (PBS); THE AFRICAN AMERICANS: MANY RIVERS TO CROSS; (PBS); GLORIA: IN HER OWN WORDS (HBO, 2011); THIS EMOTIONAL LIFE (PBS, 2010); TEDDY: IN HIS OWN WORDS (HBO, 2009); and AFRICAN AMERICAN LIVES (PBS). Kunhardt Films was founded in 1987 as Kunhardt Productions. It is run by Peter Kunhardt and his two sons Teddy and George in Pleasantville, New York.

### **PRESS CONTACT:**

[FindingYourRoots@id-pr.com](mailto:FindingYourRoots@id-pr.com)