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**“FINDING YOUR ROOTS WITH HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.”**

**SEASON EIGHT PREMIERES IN JANUARY 2022**

**New Season Consists of 10 New Episodes Premiering on PBS**

*New Episodes Explore Ancestry Stories of Pamela Adlon, Erin Burnett, Amy Carlson, David Chang, Terry Crews, Brittany Packnett Cunningham, Lee Daniels, Tony Danza, Raúl Esparza, Kathryn Hahn, Rebecca Hall, Anita Hill, Regina King, Nathan Lane, John Leguizamo, Damon Lindelof, Mario Lopez, Leslie Odom, Jr., André Leon Talley, Melissa Villaseñor and Lena Waithe*

Arlington, VA (August 10, 2021) — Twenty-one of America’s most fascinating people discover the rich history and tremendous diversity hidden within their families in the eighth season of the critically acclaimed PBS series **FINDING YOUR ROOTS WITH HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.** The new season will premiere in January 2022 on PBS.

**FINDING YOUR ROOTS, Season Eight** features ten newepisodes showcasing guests who have excelled in a wide array of fields, each with ancestral stories that touch on the human experience and bring insight into how they became the trailblazers they are today. Among the guests are stars of the stage and screen **Amy Carlson** (“Blue Bloods”), **Terry Crews** (“Brooklyn Nine-Nine”), **Tony Danza**, **Raúl Esparza** (“Law & Order: SVU”), **Kathryn Hahn** (“Wandavision”), **Rebecca Hall** (*Vicky Cristina Barcelona*), **Nathan Lane,** **John Leguizamo**, **Leslie Odom Jr.** (*Hamilton*) and **Melissa Villaseñor** (“Saturda Night Live”); multi-hyphenates **Pamela Adlon, Lena Waithe** and **Regina King**; filmmakers **Lee Daniels** (“Empire,” *Precious*) and **Damon Lindelof** (“Watchmen,” “Lost”); fashion legend **André Leon Talley**;journalist **Erin Burnett;** talk show and radio host **Mario Lopez;** restaurateur **David Chang**; andactivists **Brittany Packnett Cunningham** and **Anita Hill**.

“I am thrilled to share the deeply moving and surprising stories of the wide range of guests in Season 8 of FINDING YOUR ROOTS*.*I am humbled by the passion and the support our series has inspired from every sector of our society. Our guests--and their ancestors--embody what*Finding Your Roots* and the American Experience are all about:  America is a nation of immigrants, willing and unwilling, but at the level of the genome, despite our apparent differences, we are 99% the same.   Each of us is complicated in our own unique ways, but each of us descends from ancestors who have a story to tell and the goal of FINDING YOUR ROOTSis to allow them, at long last, to tell those stories. At a time when our country has witnessed so much strife over the last year, it is so important to remind our fellow citizens of how much we share in common. That so many talented people participated in this season in the face of the pandemic is a testament to the power of storytelling. In the most challenging of times, it is comforting--and inspiring--to know where you come from, and to reaffirm the unity of the American people.”

To uncover their stories, **FINDING YOUR ROOTS**uses every tool available—from cutting-edge DNA research to old-school genealogical sleuthing—revealing long-buried secrets and hidden aspects of our shared history. Along the way, the series compiles family trees that span the globe—from the United States to South America, Europe to Africa, Asia and more. Episode to episode, audiences will meet guests’ ancestors who crisscrossed the globe to become businesspeople and bootleggers, war heroes and criminals, farmers and factory workers, all the while 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.

Assembling the extensive family trees and ancestral narratives alongside Dr. Gates are DNA expert **CeCe Moore** (Founder, The DNA Detective and host of ABC’s “The Genetic Detective”) and genealogists **Nick Sheedy** and **Kimberly Morgan**,who together have solved hundreds of mysteries and reconnected innumerable lost relatives over the past two decades.

In conjunction with the series, 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*](http://www.pbs.org/weta/finding-your-roots/). WETA will also develop educational lesson plans for Season Eight that will explore the science behind DNA, genealogy, and ancestry testing—and seek to engage high school students in meaningful ways around story-driven science concepts. This educational material will be available in the “Finding Your Roots” collection on [PBS LearningMedia](https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/fyr/), a free service offering educators access to research-based, classroom-ready digital learning experiences that align with Common Core and national and state standards. PBS LearningMedia reaches more than 1.6 million unique users each month.

**FINDING YOUR ROOTS WITH HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.,Season Eight** 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.

Support for **FINDING YOUR ROOTS WITH HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR., Season Eight** is provided by Johnson & Johnson. Support is also provided by Ford Foundation, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, Candace King Weir, Lloyd Carney Foundation, and by The Inkwell Society and its members Sheryl Sandberg and Tom Bernthal; Jim and Susan Swartz; and Anne Wojcicki. Major support is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

An electronic press kit for **FINDING YOUR ROOTS WITH HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.,Season Eight**, including downloadable photos for promotional use, is available on [PBS Pressroom](http://pressroom.pbs.org/Programs/f/Finding-Your-Roots).

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**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 NOT DONE: WOMEN REMAKING AMERICA (PBS), THE BLACK CHURCH: THIS IS OUR STORY, THIS IS OUR SONG (PBS), 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 1-8), THE BLACK CHURCH: THIS IS OUR STORY, THIS IS OUR SONG (2021), 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 the three part HBO documentary, OBAMA: IN PURSUIT OF A MORE PERFECT UNION and feature documentary, A CHOICE OF WEAPONS: INSPIRED BY GORDON PARKS. Past productions include Emmy and Peabody award winning, TRUE JUSTICE: BRYAN STEVENSON’S FIGHT FOR EQUALITY (HBO, 2019); 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); and GLORIA: IN HER OWN WORDS (HBO, 2011). 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:**

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