

## **‘Are You Being Heard? Representing Britain on TV’**

### **Transcript of the event for Future for Public Service Television Inquiry**

March 22, 2016, Goldsmiths, University of London

**Sir Lenny Henry (LH)**, actor, writer and TV presenter

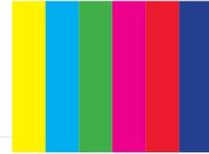
**Dawn Foster (DF)**, writer and journalist

**Bev Skeggs (BS)**, professor of Sociology at Goldsmiths

**Pat Younge (PY)**, MD of Sugar Films and former BBC chief creative officer  
who also chaired the event.

**PY:** Hello, good evening, and welcome to Are You Being Heard. This is the latest in a series of events in Lord Puttnam’s enquiry into the future of public service television. Now, this enquiry extends beyond the BBC, even beyond Channel 4 to look at the whole public service ecology of UK broadcasting. It covers platforms, it covers distribution, it covers public purpose, audience behaviours, regulation, the nations, and portrayal, the issue that we’re going to be concentrating on tonight. Now, tonight’s event forms part of the overall enquiry, and anyone who wants to make a submission you can make a submission by going to @tv inquiry, and actually if you want to tweet during the evening and say how much fun you’re having and all the interesting points we’re making that is #futureoftv. But the enquiry does want your submission, so if at the end of this event you want to make a submission we’ll make sure that you’ve got the email address that you can send your submission in for consideration.

So, to tonight’s event. First of all, apologies from Rupa Huq MP, she’s actually my local MP in Central. You may have noticed there’s been quite a lot of attention around the budget these last few days, and there’s a free line whip on tonight that she has to attend, so there’s going to be a number of votes that she has to stay at Westminster for and she’s deeply sorry that she can’t be with us. But that just means more time for the rest of us. So to briefly introduce myself and then my panellists. My name’s Pat Younge. I’m the managing director of a start up called Sugar Films, and prior to that I used to run BBC in-house production and an American cable network. To my left I have Bev Skeggs. Bev is a professor of sociology at



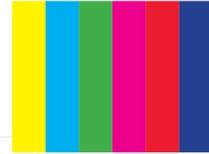
Goldsmiths. She's the author of influential studies, *Formations of Class and Gender* and *Class, Self, and Culture*, research with Helen Woods on identities based on class and presented on television is published in *Reacting to Reality Television, Performance, Audience and Value*.

On my immediate right we have Dawn Foster. Dawn is a writer on politics, social affairs and economics for the *Guardian*, the London reviewer of books, the *Independent* and *The Times* literary supplement. She's also a regular political commentator for Sky News, Channel 4 News, and BBC Newsnight. Her first book, *Lean Out*, like it, is on feminism, austerity and corporate culture. Finally there's somebody I've never seen or met before at the far end of the panel. At the far end of the panel is Sir Lenny Henry. Doesn't need much of an introduction but I'll do one anyway.

LH: Yeah, do your best.

PY: Says here, comedian, actor, writer and television presenter. He's one of the founders of Comic Relief, and a prominent campaigner for the increase in ethnic diversity in media. During a recent speech at the British Academy of Film, Television and Arts, he called the lack of minorities in the media appalling. He actually called it many more things than that. And he is currently working on a PhD on the role of black people in the media, and I think that he's going to say a few words.

LH: Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to Are You Being Heard. It's very nice to see such a variegated audience. I like that. Some people in the house, there's no hard food, never mind. Let me start with a brief outline of the situation. As Pat said, I recently made a speech at BAFTA where I spoke about my shock at the latest skill set census. It revealed that between 2006 and 2012 the number of BAMEs, black Asian minority ethnic, or BAME, working in the UK TV industry has declined by 30.9 per cent. Skill sets figures clearly show that BAME representation in the creative industries in 2012 stood at 5.4 per cent, its lowest point since they began taking the census. This is a terrible, appalling, horrible figure, especially when you consider that London, arguably the UK's biggest creative hub, is 40 per cent BAME. And those figures are compounded by the recent statistics from Directors UK which show that 98.5 per cent of directors in the industry are white.

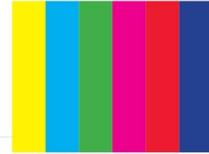


Back then everybody said something needed to be done. Government ministers said something needed to be done, the BBC said something needed to be done, Channel 4 said something needed to be done. Sky announced their 20 per cent BAME targets, and I was invited to talk to a parliamentary select committee. Diversity was going to be addressed. Things was looking up. But most of the major TV companies and broadcasters seemed to think the answer was to set up more training initiatives. Not training courses for those in positions of power on how they could reward diversity and be inclusive in their employment and commissioning, but further training for the BAME talent base. They set up all sorts of BAME training schemes, management training, youth training, even training commissioners.

Now, I'm not arguing against training schemes, far from it. Nor am I suggesting that these initiatives lack merit or the best of intentions. My concern is that when the only solution in order to create significant and sustainable change is the introduction of training schemes it inadvertently creates the perception that the reason why BAME people are leaving the industry, the reason why our numbers are at their lowest in years is because we're not good enough. By all means create training to improve the skill base in the creative industry, but what good's training as a tool to improve inclusion and diversity in the industry if the very systems that have created the problem fail to address their own systemic failure? So here's my revolutionary thought, want to hear it?

All: Yes.

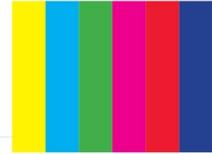
LH: Why don't we change the system? As my brother always says, the sys-tem. Every ten years the government and the BBC do change the system and it's called charter renewal. They set out how many hours of news and current affairs the BBC should produce, they set out how much children's programming in the corporation needs to do, and they set out how many programmes need to come from outside London. Guess what people? It's charter renewal time. So how should we rewrite the charter? I think everybody in the television industry today would agree that ensuring diversity in front of the camera, diversity behind the camera, and a diversity of programmes and voices that speak to all the nation's readers and communities must be our ultimate goal if we're going to truly serve our viewers now and, most importantly, in the future. So let's write that into the charter.



I believe that ensuring programmes of all different genres are being made by diverse production teams is just as important as ensuring programmes made by Scottish and Welsh production teams. So like Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, let's write that into the charter. If there weren't enough news and current affairs programmes being made we wouldn't blame the journalists and give them more training to make better programmes would we? We give our current affairs commissioner a budget and a number of hours on TV and she or he has to find programme makers to make those programmes. When there aren't enough programmes from Scotland we don't give the Scots more training. We place more commissioners up there to find good Scottish programme makers to make decent programmes. Let's do the same to ensure BAME representation.

Let's create a number of commissioners and give them real power, and that means money, money, money, money, to find productions made by diverse teams to make great programmes. And let's not ghettoise those diverse programme makers by saying they can only make programmes about black or Asian issues. It's like Scotland can make Eggheads and it's a Scottish programme, I want BAME professionals to have access to make programmes across the TV landscape from high end period dramas to panoramas. We are calling for a catalyst fund to be written into the charter, with new commissioners that will be called catalyst commissioners. They would act as a catalyst for spreading diversity throughout the industry. To access this catalyst money productions would have to meet certain criteria, the same as nations and regions do. Those criteria are set by Ofcom and relate to where the company is based, how much of the production money is spent in that area, and where a certain amount of that staff come from. If the production meets two of those criteria it is eligible for out of London nations and regions funding.

Exactly the same system could be applied to diverse productions. For a production to qualify itself as diverse it would need to meet these criteria: the number of onscreen BAME talent, the number of BAME senior production staff, the general staff spend on BAME talent. If a programme hits two of these criteria it can qualify for this money. Catalyst money would focus the minds of those in positions of responsibility. If catalyst funding were to be made available production companies would be focused on nurturing



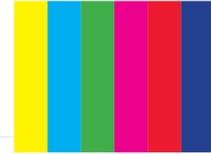
BAME talent to ensure that their productions were eligible. The financial imperative would force broadcasters to change the status quo. Ofcom would regulate this and put in place monitoring systems to keep the whole thing on track.

Now, unlike Donald Trump's hair, a catalyst fund can be incredibly flexible. Build a wall my ass. We're going to build one round him, right? Firstly, the regulator could designate a relatively small sum and increase it slowly over time. This is exactly what Ofcom did with Channel 4 with out of London productions. Secondly, if the dosh isn't spent because not enough suitable qualifying productions can be found it can be rolled over to the next financial year. It could be a rollover. The increased funds would be an even bigger incentive to find programmes that would qualify. Alternatively, if the regulators thought the underspend was because there weren't enough high quality programme ideas submitted that year to the catalyst fund - most unlikely - those funds can be frozen at that level for the following year, but unspent capital could be put into development, and where there is a clearly identifiable need, training. I'm not against training. So in this regard the catalyst fund would act as a self-correcting mechanism to redress the systemic failures leading to underrepresentation of BAME talent in the industry. Can I get a hallelujah?

All: Hallelujah.

LH: To sum up, the catalyst fund would address both supply and, more importantly, demand. You see, my people, the creation of demand and market for programmes that appeal to the diverse audience that is Britain today, made by a diverse workforce in front and behind camera is the key to true change. Once demand has been addressed, targeted training to meet the needs of the industry becomes supply with purpose. Lastly, and I can't stress this enough, the whole point of the catalyst fund is to get diversity into all areas of the television broadcast output. Regional programmes are all about the mainstream. That's why at least a minimum of ten Panorama programmes are made from Northern Ireland every year, Question Time is made in Scotland, and Crime Watch and Doctor Who comes from Wales. That's why the daleks say exterminate, isn't it?

Set the criteria right and catalyst funds would ensure there were more programmes offering a truly diverse perspective across the

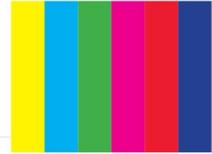


broadcast output made by diverse productions. The idea of BAME indies, more BAME indies being set up to take advantage of these catalyst funds and large indies willing to train and employ more people from diverse backgrounds is really exciting. All it would take is a little tweaking to the charter. Now, two months ago, while the Equality and Human Rights Commission was busy saying that quotas are illegal, they also said the idea of having dedicated funds to help BAME productions overcome the lack of diverse representation both on screen and behind camera is legal. That was a seminal moment, my friends. With the EHRC's blessing we're one step closer to achieving that goal.

Now, I could go on about the need for better monitoring, I could moan about the fact that the industry's much heralded Project Diamond, which is meant to monitor the diversity of productions, has taken far too effing long. Why don't they just go outside and take a picture of their staff and come back in and write it down? But ten years ago the BBC didn't set up a labyrinthine monitoring system before they changed the structure and made more productions from outside London, they didn't need a stockpile of statistics to stipulate that more programmes needed to be made in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. They changed the charter then, and we can change the charter now. We have a once in a decade chance to change history, to make diversity a celebration of our nation rather than a problem. Let's change the charter, let's change history, and let's change the television industry forever. Thank you for listening.

**PY:** A lot to digest there. A lot to tweet about. Catalyst funds, catalyst commissioners, diversity, ghetto programming. Interested in your questions and comments on that which we'll take live from the floor. You know the format of Question Time. Some questions have been submitted. We'll take the question, people on the panel will answer, and then we're going to come back out to you guys and girls for some follow up, so be ready. Those of you who've not met me before, I tend to point at people if hands don't go up, and a microphone tends to follow where I point. So time to stay awake people, try and stay alert. Question one, Rebecca Walmsley. Where's Rebecca? Is she here? No. Well, I have her question. Is TV a platform that encourages us to see a wider range of diversity and issues or does TV discourage this? Bev?

**BS:** No.



**PY:** No, it discourages or it encourages?

**BS:** It closes down any understanding of diversity. I think as it stands at the moment, as Lenny just explained, we don't see a great deal of diversity, and for me the crucial issue is how are the people who are being represented valued? So even when we get representations of young black women, for instance, what value are they being given when they're represented? So it's not an issue necessarily of representation, it's not necessarily an issue of getting people into the jobs, although I think that's important, but the history of having women in the media hasn't necessarily produced great things. And reality television has shown us again and again and again a lot of the most horrific representations of gender. The most horrific class representations were produced by women producers doing domestic television because it's cheap. So I think we have to always ask...

**PY:** Who's left to make anything then?

**BS:** Well, we have to bring in all sorts of different issues around making the people who are making these programmes...they need training. I think the people who are making the programmes need to think about the economy that they're caught up in.

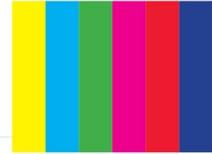
**PY:** When you say the economy, which...?

**BS:** Well, the deregulation of television. I know that's not the BBC, that they have to have independent producers so they have to take on board all sorts of different issues. The people who are producing the most horrific representations of diverse groups need training. They really need training.

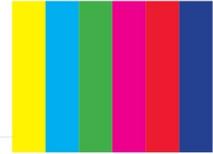
**LH:** What kind of training?

**PY:** What kind of training?

**BS:** Training in why do the majority of middle class TV producers absolutely hate, denigrate and condemn the white working class, for instance. Why do they feel the need to do this? This is a question I've always been intrigued by.



- PY: As someone who works with some of those people they would argue perhaps that they're not. Some would argue that they're showcasing their issues, and others would argue that Big Brother is a game show that you go on and you play the game, and some people have done very well out of Big Brother.
- BS: Yeah, exactly. And I've had lots of arguments with those producers, precisely because they think it's very easy to open people up to exploitation, and the people who go on it usually try and get something...they attempt to have a career in a way that's been closed to them, apart from the celebrity ones of course. So these programmes are based on exploiting people. The reality television programme, which the BBC has produced quite a lot of, and they've produced some of the most pernicious what we call social work television, the moral television that tells people how to behave as better mothers, very rarely better fathers, interestingly, but how to look after children, those moral TV programmes are absolutely horrific in the way they represent mothers in particular. So I would ask for education in that area. There has to be education in...
- PY: Are you talking about Supernanny or...?
- BS: Yeah. Absolutely unbelievable. Wife Swap. All of them. We did a whole study, a two and a half year study of these programmes, which you wouldn't wish on your worst enemy, but we studied these programmes and they are horrific moral denigrations.
- PY: Okay, I'm going to come out to the audience. Anybody thinks Wife Swap is anti-women, pernicious, moral degradation? I think that's all the words. Come on, you all watch it. Gentleman down here has had the courage to put his hand up. Have you got a microphone?
- M: Good evening. Yes, I would tend to agree, but I don't think it stops with just this reality TV you're talking about. My guilty pleasure is Don't Tell the Bride, and that's for exactly the same reason. But probably all of the drama TV crime shows are all about killing, murdering and raping women, and I don't see why it needs to be.
- PY: Okay. Dawn.
- DF: I think it could showcase a wider range of diversity, but I think it often doesn't. What I notice a lot is if you pick a timing, for instance,



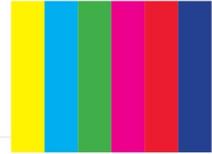
I mean Benefits Street is on prime time, and that's probably the closest we get to showing what life is like for people on benefits, and that's absolutely appalling. But quite often I'm asked oh, did you see X documentary on housing or benefits or social...on poverty, and I look it up and it premiered at 11:30 on a Sunday night. So often when there are good documentaries they're just shoved into cracks in scheduling where you're never going to see them.

But I do feel that representation has got worse, and it feels a lot more getting worse. I don't see any kind of families represented like my family growing up. I think probably the only example of children in care being shown or any non-traditional family is Tracy Beaker. It seems often children's TV is more diverse than actually adult's TV, which I think is completely ludicrous. I do remember things like Biker Grove and some of the BBC dramas I watched as a kid were quite diverse, and as an adult it was far less so. On Bev's point about women's representation, I've just finished watching The Fall, I'm behind everybody else, the fact that it was really popular because people were surprised that there was a strong woman as a main character. Women like crime as well, so it would be good if we were involved in actually being characters rather than just being victims.

PY: Lenny.

LH: It's interesting that you were talking about factual, because I think you're probably right about those factual programmes. I think there's a culture of certainly middle class people making those programmes and sort of factual entertainment too where it's okay to denigrate working class people and people that don't look like them because it's a very monocultural to the most extent... If you walk through those production offices it's a very monocultural type of office. It's changing, but it's very slow change. So in my house growing up we wanted to be entertained, so we probably wouldn't watch something about benefits because you could get that by looking out the window. Benefits Street, we don't watch that. So I think people want to be entertained.

When we watch programmes like – I think you're absolutely right – Broadchurch and Ripper Street and all of these things we want to see ourselves in all aspects of that, not just as the victim or the bad guy or something. We like to be the good guy too as well as the bad guy. We shouldn't be scared to be the bad guy, by the way, because



that's usually the best part in the drama. So we've got to stop thinking that if we're playing the bad guy oh there he go, being the bad guy again. We've got to enjoy the fact that some of our best actors are capable of being just as good as Hugh Laurie, as other people. So we've got to embrace that.

But I think you're right, I think the reason a culture, like the culture in Top Gear, for instance, which is a bit of a blokey, ladsy programme, proliferates, because it's a very monocultural behind the scenes situation there. I think if there was any black or Asian or minority people involved in the producing of that programme they would absolutely say from the get go, and I know this because I've been in multicultural production teams where they go oh come on, that's a stupid joke, oh that doesn't happen. In my experience this isn't true. That's a silly joke. You'd get that, and you wouldn't do that joke. So I think that you're absolutely right, I think there is a bit of training to be done with, not a kind of finger wagging you mustn't say this because it's PC, just the thing of what's cool and what isn't cool. Because we're all Brits now, we all like watching the telly.

PY: As someone who used to be responsible ultimately for Top Gear...

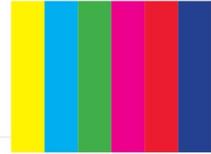
LH: Fine show. A fine show. I watched Top Gear.

PY: ...the fact that it wasn't cool was actually a core part of its appeal. The fact that it was middle aged men being dull, stupid middle aged men was actually central to its appeal. And here's the big thing, one third of its audience were women. Top Gear was very popular with women. So when we talk about diversity of voice there has to be a place for the luddite old Englishman as well, and the BBC sort of made Top Gear it. That doesn't excuse the excesses, but it was a very popular show playing to an older, middle aged, daddy dancing, bad fitting jeans, nasty jacket, crowd.

LH: You're studying the crowd there and I'm studying the... At times the culture of the programme is a big offensive...

PY: Yeah, very offensive.

LH: ...and you kind of think what is that, I don't understand what this is. And it's a thing that ladsy production teams can do if somebody isn't watching.



**PY:** Okay. Lady there. Wait for the microphone. Anybody else want to pick up on the points that have come out of this first question? Lady there.

**Audience:** I don't know whether I should say where I work. I work at the BBC.

**PY:** Good for you. Good.

**LH:** Hurrah.

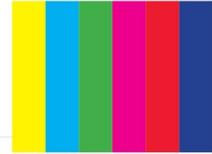
**Audience:** And I'm very proud of working there.

**PY:** So you should be.

**Audience:** And I think what Lenny said about the experience, I think that is the crux of diversity. I think you get it with gender, you get with sexuality, you get it with race, but I think until you have production teams with a range of experience, life experience, educational experience, financial experience, how they've lived, how they've grown up, I think that you'll solve a lot of these issues with their own life experiences. Because a lot of the work that we do, whether you start from a financier like I did, and you work yourself up, until you've got those experiences brought through to programmes, to radio programmes, to TV programmes, that diversity I think is diversity of life experience, and I think your gender and your ethnicity just happens to be part of it. And of course you can vary that, but I think it's the life experience, and I think that's where the BBC suffers in its recruitment and going to the same old, and the recruitment processes and all of those things that I'm a part of. I'm a part of those recruitment processes. But I think that it's about getting the range of experience. And usually the people who really shine are the ones who've had a different life experience or who've been to different universities or are not from London or from different areas, not necessarily just London. Does that make sense?

**PY:** Yeah, perfect sense. There's a really interesting question about when did television become a graduate entry profession? Because it wasn't always, but it is now.

**BS:** It did used to be Oxford mainly. The BBC mainly used to recruit from Oxford.



PY: But ITV used to be local newspapers and...

BS: Yeah. And it kind of expanded out a bit. So the BBC's a little more diverse now in terms of class, but not a lot. So there's quite a big range. What I meant before about deregulation and the structural issues was that in the 1990s when independent production was introduced and, you must know this, reality television became so cheap to produce and people got rid of all the trade union protected camera workers, all the properly trained professional staff were de-unionised, deregulated, and people were put on really short term contracts. Some people were working on three week contracts on reality television programmes. Who can live on that?

PY: It's not just without... The television industry is a freelance industry.

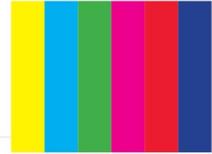
BS: Yeah. And who can live with those conditions in London? Overly rich people. People who've got parental support. People who can survive between contracts. So when I'm talking about structural issues, the structural issues for me as a sociologist is the economy that shapes the ability to produce television and who can actually enter it.

PY: We could open up a whole new discussion about YouTube and the new channels and the new space...but we haven't got time tonight, but I might come down and have a discussion with you about that. Now, we're going to go onto question two. Is Shelia Lewis in the house? Yay.

Audience: Okay. Growing up in the '80s in the UK, obviously, my family and I used to scream with excitement when we saw a black person on TV...They were often baddies, drug dealers or people who'd committed crimes. But we didn't care. Like Lenny, we didn't care. It was a black person on TV. That was in the '80s. Now, my question to the panel is this. It's 2016 and my nine year old boy still screams mummy, there's a black person on the telly. What is being done to give better representation and also positive representation of black people on TV?

PY: Okay. Dawn, do you want to go first?

DF: I don't know. But from what I see, not a huge amount. Thinking about Bev's earlier point, I think a lot of it comes down to who



makes media and who they associate with. I work in journalism and I see that as one of the most middle class white professions going. I'm relatively well spoken. Now I've come out of university I've mostly lost my Welsh accent, but I still stick out like a sore thumb. I write about poverty and people on the breadline and things like that, and not many people do, partly because that's what they know, et cetera. I find it really disheartening when you look at who is written about in newspapers and who is portrayed on television and how they're written about. It's relatively rare to see a black face in a news story and it not be about crime, still. And that doesn't have to be the case, but I think you have to change the people who are behind it in the first place. I don't see how that can happen until we look at our economy and the way we're going, because now it's so difficult to break into these industries.

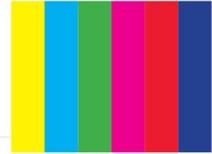
I know barely any people my age who are working class who are getting into media, and when I speak to my older colleagues who are in their 40s and 50s all of them say it's a lot more easy, you can start in your local paper and move up that way. But now you have to be able to afford to come to London, you have to be able to live in London. Hopefully TV's moved out so that might help, but I feel like young people have to start in London, and if they can't afford to then we're just going to have even more of a monocultural TV and media industry.

PY: Lenny.

LH: I was exactly like you. I was on telly in the '80s, so thank you very much for that. Very good '80s. I totally agree with you. My mum used to do that, ring people up in the family. We never had a phone, we had to go across the road to there, can I borrow your phone, there's black people on television, move out the way. You're absolutely right, you just don't see it, even now. BBC are trying hard. It's wonderful actually. They've got the woman on Sky at Night. Have you seen this woman? She's going, look at the stars. They've got the black people in EastEnders. They're one family, but one of them is from Africa, one of them is from Jamaica. One's from Papua New Guinea. We've got Nadia in Bake Off. Can I get a yeah?

All: Yeah.

LH: How good was that when Nadia won? We're all like don't blow it at the end, don't blow it, Nadia. Go for it, Nadia. And then you've got



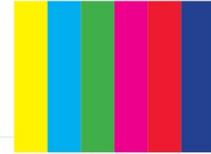
ITV with their Midsomer Murders, and they made a big mistake because ITV had the drama comes to ITV, and they had all the detectives. Not one black person. Not one Asian, black...there's no black or Asian barely in the police force, not one. There's got to be one solving a crime somewhere. Can't just be Luther on his own. More than Luther, the one black policeman on television. No wonder his caseload's killing him. He never gets to change his coat. We never see his family. And then Midsomer Murders. You couldn't have black people in Midsomer because that doesn't represent England. If a black person was in Midsomer he'd walked on from the job centre next door. So they've changed that now.

Channel 4 had a remit when it began to represent voices from the margins, and I don't know about you, but it seems to me that they've drifted away from that, don't you think? Okay, yes, when they had Big Brother you'd get Makhosi. Remember Makhosi? You'd get a few people, and you'd get some in some factual programmes. We had Desmond's and things. But it seems to have drifted away from that a bit, and I hope that there are more programmes like Chewing Gum and all that kind of thing coming up. They've got very strong, slightly whacky diversity policy at Channel 4. Let's see how it plays out. All of these people are trying their best. There have been steps to increase on screen representation, but it's slow. We're at the beginning of it. There is going to be change. But they could change it faster if they wanted to, because it comes from the top, right?

All: Yeah.

LH: So let's wait and see.

BS: Well, I think change will come from outside of these massive institutions of television, and if something like diversity quotas are introduced and people have to scurry around to fill their diversity quota because they can't possibly find anyone down the corridor that they can work with and they don't see anybody that they can work with they're going to have to look to YouTube, they're going to have to go digital, they're going to have to find content. And that content's out there. There's loads of really interesting content which is about diversity if you just look for it. But they don't look. So I think they've got to start looking. And in a way it's about being cool. If you're not looking at the stuff that's out there you can't really



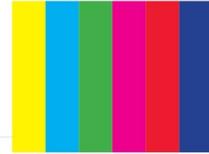
know what's going on. So I think diversity will come from outside, not from inside these institutions.

**PY:** I think the reason actually that this debate is happening now is because the pressure is on from the outside. You can't be the BBC and take a license fee from everybody and not represent them. And the challenge for ITV and Channel 4 and the other pay television platforms is that black and Asian people aren't watching them, and they sell adverts, and which demographic is growing quickest? Black and Asian people. So if you are losing audience share in the fastest growing and youngest demographic which are most valuable to advertisers, if you don't do something about it you don't have a business.

Personally I think BBC actually in terms of numbers on screen... Let me share a conundrum with you when I was at the BBC. So I was in charge of Holby, Casualty, EastEnders. Three shows, very heavy BAME casts, range of roles, heroes and villains, and some great acting going on in all of them, and yet when I talk to black people in South London they say it still doesn't represent our...St George's, still doesn't represent reality here. But then when I go up to Glasgow or when I go up to Skye and I do an audience council they say, we look at Holby, Casualty, EastEnders and we have no idea what that world is, doesn't speak to us. They don't go to hospitals that look like that. Well, they probably do now. They didn't two or three years ago.

There's a real challenge, because everybody talks about the average, and London is very different to the rest of the country. So in London where most black people live you're all very disillusioned that you don't think there's enough, and there are whole parts of the country who think it's gone way too far, and that is a part of the debate that you never hear probably until UKIP votes come in and you see it expressed in other ways. Sky are interesting. Sky have just said one in the top six jobs in production has to be BAME, and if it's scripted then one in the top two roles has to be BAME, or one of the top four roles. And when asked, well, what happens if a company can't do that, then head of television said, well, then we won't be working with them. It's been very clear. You sit on Tony Hall's advisory panel. Do you have that clarity there of mission?

**LH:** Well, no, because the BBC have instituted training initiatives and the assistant commissioner's thing, and they're really trying to



improve their on screen representation, but they haven't done the quotas thing, because quotas can be manipulated. You can get the dude from IT and the guy from security and the woman in the canteen to fill your quota.

PY: But Sky were very clear, top six jobs, exec producer, writer, head of production, they were very clear. It wasn't cleaner, camera... Top six jobs.

LH: I know. But I think that what they're trying to do is do it another way. I certainly think that Stu when he instituted the things at Sky made a big move. I don't think he consulted anybody else to say, well, how are we going to do this and how are we going to define diversity. He just went ahead and did quotas, and I think there's probably other ways to do it. I think the BBC are trying to quickly fast track people who can run departments and green light and commission things, but that's going to take a while. So perhaps the Sky way is the way. I don't know.

PY: So lady there, and then to hands over here. Keep your hands up so that I can...

Audience: Okay. Just to follow on, I've heard the same argument for the last ten, 15 years. I am an ex ITV and BBC person.

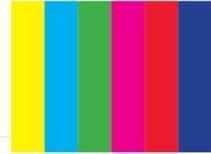
LH: Worked for both.

Audience: Yes.

Audience: As a freelance. And also I used to create TV formats and have been in several discussions where I feel that TV commissioners are uncomfortable with blended programmes...we had a programme that was predominantly made up of black characters and people and was told to, well, spread it out a bit, have some Jewish people in there and somebody else. They were more comfortable with that. And then I found, and I'm going to call it as I see it and experienced it going over to Channel 4 in that same situation, they wouldn't distinguish between an Asian or black person, we were all blended together ...

PY: I'm going to ask you to get to the point...

Audience: Right, sorry.



PY: ...because we've got a lot of people want to...

Audience: Okay. It was therefore they were more comfortable saying we'll blend in people. I've been through the BBC programme Move on Up and we're still having the same discussion.

PY: Okay, so training's not working for you.

Audience: No.

PY: There's a guy up there in a blue shirt, the guy with the microphone and then we can get my friend, the guy behind in the blue shirt, and then the guy...

Audience: Yes, hi, my name's Jonathan.

PY: I'm going to ask you to sort of narrow into a point.

Audience: Yes. And my point is basically for someone who is of Chinese decent it's been over 30 years since...

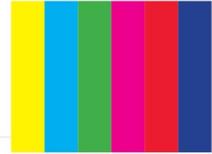
PY: Chinese Detective.

LH: Chinese Detective. Fine show.

Audience: Yeah, absolutely. I used to work for the BBC and when people are in there they can introduce their network. So I think there's two things, not just numbers, so for the British Chinese it's almost zero, but secondly qualitative.

PY: Okay.

Audience: Yeah, I'm concerned that increasing numbers of people working behind the camera is actually going to make a difference, quite frankly. The reason being is I'd be so happy if 90 per cent of the production team behind Downton Abbey were black, that would be brilliant, but so what really? What do we learn about black experience, for instance? And I think one of the reasons why so many people are leaving, people of colour, BAME, if you want to call them that, is because they can't tell the stories they want to tell, and the reason why they can't tell the stories they want to tell is because they're up against commissioners and executives, often



well-meaning actually, who say, well, I like your idea but I'm not convinced it's really going to capture the mainstream audience. And then that is working against the broader context where these executives and commissioners, especially the ones working for the BBC, are worried that they need ratings in order to justify their existence and the fact they pay the license fee. All of a sudden now they're worried about ratings.

So as much as I really appreciate your intervention, Lenny, right at the beginning, I wonder if the charter needs to say something about actually protecting the BBC and other public service broadcasters from commercial forces which is actually, I think, largely to blame for steering minority representations in the way that they're going.

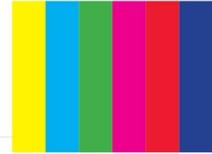
PY: Okay. Pass the microphone back behind you. Is the BBC too commercial?

BS: Well, I think it responds to the imperatives of audience because it has to, because it's competing. We did a study with a reality TV judge, and it wasn't on the BBC but it was very interesting that when they were filming her she had the scores of the audience watching and turning off at the moment she's making decisions in her judgments. It was just extraordinary. So, you must know, ratings matter.

PY: Well, if the BBC didn't get rating then we'd say why pay the license fee. If it gets too higher ratings everyone says it's too popular.

BS: Do they spend money building things? The Wire, for instance, took a huge amount of building and investment and quality in it.

PY: The Wire, I've never watched it. I know the stats. The Wire was watched by less than four per cent of the audience. Same for the Sopranos. All of those great HBO shows have tiny... Doesn't matter when you put them on. Channel 4 had the Sopranos, put it on at ten o'clock it got four per cent share, put it on at 11 o'clock it got four per cent share, put it on at midnight it got four per cent share. But the thing about those shows, they go on HBO in the States which is a pay TV platform. They're not designed for big broad audiences. Everybody in the room here might watch it but you're a select few of which I count myself. But those audiences are tiny.



**BS:** But isn't that the point that the BBC should be producing quality programmes that aren't necessarily [always popular].

**PY:** Absolutely. But if that was all it...because the government...

**BS:** I know, but I think that's what they should be doing.

**PY:** ...would be happy for them to just go to the Olympian high ground and make small programmes...

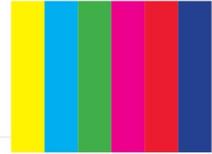
**BS:** It should be like any decent kind of publishing, you publish really high quality stuff and you have a lot of popular stuff as well. You don't just produce for ratings all the time.

**PY:** That's what BBC Four's for. Anyway, somebody up the back there. Sorry, guy there, and then there's a lady at the back.

**Audience:** There seems to be an idea that the BBC and these organisations are essentially benign and with some enlightenment or some training will magically become something else. I think particularly with other media organisations, the people who work in them can't recognise their own prejudice and so it isn't just a question of trying to enlighten them to their prejudice, it's deep seated, it's unconscious, it's a legacy that we all share. I was interested just...the guy from Sky, I don't know exactly how that's worked or if it's good or it's bad, but the fact that somebody at the top of Sky has made such a gesture towards quotas from the top, it's an organisation that's a sister of Fox News and the Murdoch brand, it would be interesting to hear what you folks have to say about the fact that a, effectively, highly commercial right wing organisation has taken a step that these public organisations can't manage to do.

**PY:** I wouldn't throw Sky with... Well, I know it's owned by Murdoch, but I wouldn't say Sky as it plays out in the UK is a right wing brand. It's a platform that carries lots of stuff, and yeah, they're after the audience. They did Dizzy Rascal. You've got to think on the Sky EPG there's a lot of Asian language and minority language stuff. They want subscribers and they really don't care how they get them. There's a lady at the back there and then we're going to take the next question.

**Audience:** My thing was really about finding new production companies, and I was wondering about how you're actually going to source



them, because for lots of BAMEs the way that they've been trained either in their way of production or producing isn't in a conventional university or they've learnt on the job by creating their own work, and I wondered if some of the criteria would allow for people who have not come through conventional means to be able to cross this criteria. Because particularly things like YouTube, for example, it's people who were in their rooms and using their small camera phones and making this content, which is just as viable as any other content. But I really wanted to just understand how moving forward, how you could source those and whether they would be sourced through unconventional ways rather than just looking at degrees and do you know this person and that person, and maybe things like transferable skills which allow them to be just as good as their compadres.

LH: Remember quite a lot of people left the industry because I think quite a lot of people didn't want to move to the regions and nations because they're from London. They're 40 per cent BAME, so quite a lot of people didn't move, and lots of people retrained and did something else. There are people who have the skills to produce and line produce and do accounting and film and stuff that are in existence, and because Birmingham shut down Pebble Mill and because everybody went to Salford and stuff, people didn't want to go there. So you have got a talent base here that is not being utilised to a great extent. Now, talking about what you were talking about, which is Downton Abbey, actually if I got to the set of Downton Abbey I would like it to be a multi-ethnic set. I'd like that.

I've worked in television for 35 years and if you did the team photo at the end of the shoot it would just be me and a bunch of monocultural group of people. I think that behind the scenes we are just as capable of making those programmes as anybody else. We're just as capable of holding a big piece of cardboard and wafting smoke as anybody else, or pushing a camera along as anybody else, or standing there with a boom like this for an hour and a half as anybody else. We can do costume, we can do makeup. I think it's really important. We can also say, yeah, that's a cool programme, let's make that, whether there's white people in it or black people in it, whether it's Benefits Street or whether it's Strictly Come Dancing, we can go, yeah, like the sound of that, let's make that. Why aren't more of us in those positions? That would answer a lot of your questions. The minute we're making decisions about what gets made all of this changes.



**PY:** It's also just about work. Working on Downton is work. It pays the bills.

**LH:** It's a job.

**PY:** It's a job. There's a lady there, then I'm going to move on to the next question.

**Audience:** I just wanted to come back to you, Lenny, the suggestion of the catalyst fund at the beginning of the speech, and I wondered a couple of things really. Firstly, that sounded like a top slicing idea, and I wondered if you'd considered how much money would be needed to make a real impact if that was pursued, and also whether or not that was something you put to Tony Hall as a member of the advisory panel, whether that's been discussed.

**LH:** Well, remember...

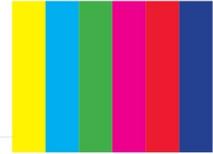
**PY:** Put you on the spot, Lenny.

**LH:** It is, yeah. Well, first of all we said ring fence money, and I kept saying that to Tony Hall and followed him around. You know, when he was having a shower and stuff, I'd be like this, ring fence money. They're allergic to that. So to me, if you've got all these young people and people who were in the industry before and people who can't get a break or people who just make one production a year or one drama a year or whatever, if there's a catalyst fund, which means to get things going, that they have to pitch to a catalyst commissioner for it's going to generate money. I think it's a brilliant thing and it needs to happen.

**Audience:** You've probably seen some of the arguments against top slicing from other areas. Children's is one that's going through the same thing. I just wonder with the influence you have how you're going to counter those arguments which inevitably will come up if top slicing the BBC as part of...

**LH:** Top slicing. What's that?

**PY:** That's where you take the license fee and you take a sum of money off the top and you can say, well, this is just for BAME or this is just



for children and then it's no longer in the BBC's gift to work out how it's spent.

LH: That's right.

PY: But then some people say if you take some more off and give it to ITV.

LH: We're not nation or a region, but we are a community, and the BBC charter is nations, regions and community, and I think the fact that they haven't appropriated an amount of money for community is a neglect. We're not being represented, so why don't they do this? Why are they resisting?

PY: Okay. I'm going to move on to the next question.

Audience: Why are black women never leads in television?

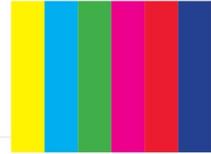
PY: Shall I read the rest of the question as you submitted it?

Audience: Yes.

PY: Never leads, never fancied, never admired, always supporting, always a maid.

LH: We're just about to see Adrian Lester and Sophie Okonedo in Undercover representing as a couple in a big BBC drama series. I believe that's the first time that's been done. That will be interesting. I think the more programmes we get to make... If there was this catalyst fund you'd be able to pitch your show where you can change everything. This happens with whoever's green lighting, whoever's producing, whoever's choosing the writers, whoever's casting. This is about empowerment, and a catalyst fund would empower producers to make decisions like that. We're on the verge of this. I think it's about to happen. Like you say, the pressure from outside, we can push for this. Your question is a fantastic question.

Audience: I attend a dance school and I'm like am I going to spend three years in hard training just to be told, which has happened recently where you get told yeah, you probably won't get cast in a lead but you'll do very good supporting stuff. And I'm not being funny, there is nothing to be gained from saying oh, that's okay, sir. No, it's not.



We can be pretty, we can be admired, and we can be marketed, and I just think it's...

PY: You are. Not can be. You are.

LH: You are. Well, [name inaudible] has got a real attitude towards this, and he is a very determined self-starting young man, and he's flipping the script on how people are taught drama and how people are marketed. He's finding people for writers and creators and actors and actresses, and he's trying to flip the script. I think his sourcing of new talent can only be admired. So there's a change happening. And write your own script. Write your own script where you're fancied and admired and do a five minute monologue and put it on YouTube, and get sponsorship, and then rule the world.

DF: I hope it does change. I just find it endlessly boring how when you look at TV and you look at the women who are cast in leads and who are admired, et cetera, they all look identical, and I don't understand that, because people that my friends sleep with and that I sleep with all look very different.

LH: Every night of the week. What were you saying?

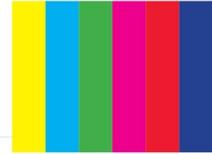
DF: I don't think desire is monocultural. Unless you vote UKIP, to be honest. So I don't see why leads are and why romantic interests are. Recently I was reading about how in *Wolves of Wall Street* Olivia Wilde was told that she was too old to play Leonardo DiCaprio's wife. At the time she was 15 years younger than him. I think he was like 42. And in the end they cast a 22 year old to play his wife. So it's this idea that women can only be fancied if they're very young, very skinny, very white, and looking a very particular way, and that's not how desire works. So why not have a diversity of interests romantically and as leads?

PY: Do you have anything to add?

BS: Well, I can go back to the beginnings of things, of monstrosities in the '660s.

PY: No, don't do that.

BS: There's a very long history about why black women aren't given leads. A very long history. It's racism. So I'd say exactly what you



said, go on YouTube. I mean, part of me hates myself for saying this because I'm going to become the self-enterprising, individualistic subject that markets themselves. Whoa.

PY: YouTuber to you and me.

BS: I think the only way to do it is to actually get yourself out there on YouTube and make them pay attention.

PY: I think YouTube is one of the most brilliant... I mean, not just YouTube, but the ability to get round the gatekeeper by doing your own thing.

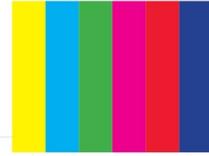
LH: Around the gatekeeper. Jump the fence.

PY: There's a great website called [houseofblack.co.uk](http://houseofblack.co.uk). Go and have a look. A young guy called Leon Jean Baptist had it within him to go and just pull together, aggregate, all of the black web series that were being made in Britain today, and there's about 20 or 30 series with five to six minute episodes, with six to ten episodes per concept. They're being made, as well as Venus Verses Mars came from when that got to Sky. They took the web series, spent a little bit of money on it, took it to Sky. The biggest problem that most people have is getting their voice heard, and you can do it there.

LH: Yeah. [name inaudible] just made their own TV show and just put it on YouTube. She just decided she was going to make her own stuff and upload it. I think SPTV, if you go into somebody's living room and point a mic at them and they spit 42 bars or something and then you upload it and get half a million hits that's an alternate way of looking at an economy. If you're an actor and you want people to see your talent maybe we need to stop thinking about somebody coming and waving a magic wand over us and maybe we need to start writing our own things and putting ourselves up there going here's my talent, do you like me or not, and see what people think and have a dialogue with them. Cut out the middle man.

PY: And for those of you who watched How to Get Away With Murder, remember episode four, the hair?

All: Yes.



**PY:** How often have you ever seen that on television? You never see that. That's authenticity.

**Audience:** Yes, sure. I have a question. For example, why do I count in my diverse background?

**PY:** Why don't you count?

**Audience:** No. Where do I count? When you're talking about diversity in the media and television. Do I count as another minority? I don't know. That's my question.

**LH:** Where do you come in the BAME thing?

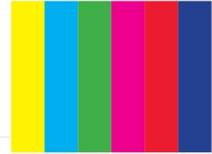
**PY:** And the answer is you don't. I think the answer is you would be white European. But there is an argument that says diversity is more than just race.

**Audience:** Yes, it's more than that I think. For me it's much more to be different somehow.

**PY:** You're totally absent. You're behind the Chinese. The Chinese are at the bottom, but you're just... Pardon me for just being very direct, but there are no Chinese people on television. There are probably more Eastern Europeans on television than Chinese. If you know me, you know I speak very directly.

**Audience:** You can't hear anything about Hungarians of course but we are that many, but you could, for example, make some documentaries about Romanians and you could just hear negativity all the time, and I'm just wondering what we can do about it.

**PY:** I'm going to sort of answer this. I think there's a general British television disinterest in things European, apart from Brexit, in or out. So there was a time when we had European current affairs programmes and Brussels. That time has gone. And also I know a couple of films about Hungarians, The Hungarians are Coming being the best one, which actually turned the paradigm on its head and showed the reality of Romanians coming to Britain and that reality in a very positive way. Probably going to win an award tonight. So I don't think it's all negative, but I think, as you've probably discovered, we're a very small island and a lot of people



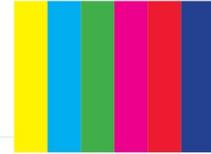
like to keep it like that, sorry. There was a person over there with a microphone.

**Audience:** I'm the equality and diversity organiser with Equity. We're the trade union that represents actors and performers, and we are campaigning around issues around casting and the lack of casting, which the questioner quite rightly raised. So my question... I spend a lot of time talking to casting directors and, if I'm lucky, to producers and directors and there seems to be a wheel of denial, if you like, to quote one of my colleagues, internally around who has the responsibility and the power of the decision about who gets cast. So if I'm talking to a casting director they'll say oh, well, it's not me, it's the producer or the director. If I'm talking to the producer or director they say, oh, it's not me, it's the commissioner. If I get to talk to that commissioner, they might say oh, it's the writer, there's not a lot we can do with the cast. So what I'm interested in is the perspective on the panel, particularly given some of your experience in production, where do you think ultimately the power lies around casting?

**PY:** Just a casting question, where do you think the power lies?

**LH:** With the casting director and the producer, surely. But also this idea of if you're making a television series like *The Night Manager* they're looking for market value names to sell the programme, so they're looking for people who can really make it sparkly and shiny. They've got a great script, they want to give it their best shot, so the producer's make sure you get a good cast, and the casting...going okay, boss, I'll make sure I get a good cast, and then they open up their book and they cast the same seven people. And that can change. They could shake that up easy. But they tend not to. We're going to do *War and Peace*, make sure you get a good cast. Okay. Then just watch what happens. We're going to make sure you get a good cast. Okay. It's just interesting. It's the producer, it's the casting director, it's the writer. The writer can specify, but if it's a nonspecific role and there isn't a general...

When I had my first production company, on the first day of thinking about how we're going to cast this and I would say it would be really great to have an integrated cast and crew on this, and then I wouldn't say anything else, and then on the first day of principle photography I'd walk onto the set and usually they'd done something about it. So it comes from, I think, pressure from

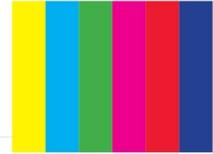


outside, but it does come from whoever's in charge. Whoever's running the show can say when it will happen, generally.

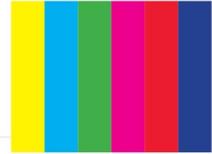
**PY:** It tends to be the show runner, if it's a show runner, or it's the channel and the commissioner. Quite often people say Sarah Lancashire is a BBC One face, and so they get BBC One projects. So channels actually have a big role to... I know scripts and talent has been attached. Right, big question came in a few times. Chloe Coughman. Is Chloe Coughman here? Well, I'm going to ask Chloe Coughman's questions. What is your opinion about the lack of working class actors and working class representation in the arts, but for this particular discussion, in television? It sort of picks up from the Hungarian point there about diversity isn't just about race. It's also about class, disability, sexuality. So let's look at that class question. How big is the bias against working class people? How does it express itself? Want to go first, Dawn?

**DF:** Yes, why not. I'm actually writing a book about this, and about a cultural history of the dole and working class representation in all culture, and I feel like I've noticed that fewer and fewer actors seem to be coming from working class backgrounds. If you ever see an interview with Maxine Peake, half of it is basically clapping about the fact that she's working class and she can string a sentence together, isn't that incredible? I think the fact that she's so rare now shows you exactly how bad it's got. A lot of this is due to the fact that education is more expensive and more exclusive and the cost of rent is higher, but also I think partly it's also the benefits system.

So it used to be the case that I've got friends who were in bands or wrote books and things and what they do is take a few weeks out, sign on, get some stuff done, and they actually used the welfare system as a safety net, which is what it's supposed to be there for. I think now we've got to the point where it's so difficult to claim job seekers allowance, and some children end up at food banks, et cetera, so there isn't a safety net there. But also you can't afford to take risks anymore with your life if you're working class because anything you do could mean that you're homeless, you've got nothing to fall back on. So I feel like we're getting fewer and fewer working class actors, and then we're seeing fewer working class people on our screens full stop. I watch EastEnders, but it doesn't reflect working class life to me. A, everybody's white in the East End, B, nobody talks about the fact their houses must be worth well over a million now.



- LH: I'm minted. Get out of my pub.
- DF: You don't see it anymore. If I think about working class life I see represented it's like Shameless and Benefits Street pretty much now, and I don't see that getting any better while we have an economy that's so geared against poor people and just completely demonises them.
- PY: Bev.
- BS: I obviously agree entirely. I don't think we have a lack of working class representation. I think there's less black working class representation than white working class representation. I think what we have is, again, just total denigration, demonization. They're everywhere. There was one week we counted 97 per cent of reality television was about condemning working class people. So we're not talking about they're not there. They are there to show everything that is wrong with the nation. They're abject, they stop modernisation occurring, they drain the finances of the nation. They have all the histories of 1660s theories of monstrosity and racism, they are contagious, dangerous, and you don't want to touch them.
- PY: I know the guy who's in charge of Benefits Street. He's a good friend of mine.
- BS: Oh.
- PY: I'm going to see him later on this evening.
- PY: But he would argue very strongly that what he's trying to do...
- BS: Oh...
- PY: He would argue very strongly that what he's trying to do is to bring to the attention of the country the reality of life on benefits.
- M: Bollocks.
- BS: Thank you for saying that.
- PY: I think this guy's as left wing as you are, and I think he would say...



BS: The initial contract was a complete con.

PY: ...that that is what he is trying to do.

LH: ...those guys better make their own shows.

PY: Does anybody see any value in Benefits Street?

Audience: No.

Audience: No.

PY: Does anybody see any value in Benefits Street?

Audience: Yes. Can I just say, my sister actually lives on Benefits Street, and when she was growing up she spent a lot of money trying to get a mortgage to buy a house on benefit street.

PY: Say it again.

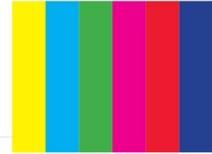
Audience: My sister actually lives on Benefits Street. It's James Turner Street, Winson Green. When she was growing up, I think 21 years old, she bought this house, and she really struggled to buy this house on Benefits Street, but no one focused on the people on that road that actually struggled to buy their property, that go out to work every day, like my sister, it was all Benefits Street, but my sister is actually sat there...

PY: Well, it's called Benefits Street.

Audience: No, she actually works. She's a nurse, and she lives on Benefits Street. Now when she mentions her road wherever she goes, Post Office, whatever, they go oh, Benefits Street. Yet she's worked all her life.

PY: That wasn't really a defence of Benefits Street. I said is there anybody out there who wants to stick up for Benefits Street. There's a lady at the back...

Audience: I'm sticking up for it.



PY: ...there, I can't see, I haven't got my glasses on, sorry. Is it a lady? Yes, it's a lady, sorry. I didn't have my glasses on. God you're a hard crowd. There's somebody at the back there and there's somebody in the middle there. In defence of Benefits Street.

Audience: I'm not defending it.

PY: Well then, give the microphone to somebody who will. That's what I asked for, somebody who wants to speak in defence of it.

Audience: I guess the only thing I found from Benefits Street is that it showed working class people with the entrepreneurial spirit that we had, and I just feel like we never allow that place on TV to be given a narrative to show that to work problems out ourselves. I feel we've had that in Benefits Street, even if it's for a minor second here and there in the episode. I just feel that we had a place we could show a struggle that people were in and that we had to work together as a community to get ourselves out of that and that the working class are a community and they aren't just people in dirty houses in somebody else's community feeding off them, that we're a network helping each other to get through as best as we can, and I feel like that show did it. It may be for like five seconds in the whole thing, but...

PY: Over this side in defence of Benefits Street.

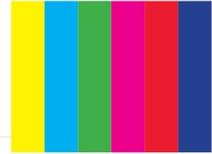
Audience: Why do we have to defend Benefits Street?

PY: Because everybody here's just attacked it so I'm trying to get some balance. I'm trying to see if there's anybody out there who might want to defend it. One thing about Benefits Street is all the people know their neighbour's names which is more than most of us can say probably about the places we live in. Lady over here. Sorry, did you speak already?

Audience: Yes.

PY: Yeah, sorry, going to have to spread it out. No, you're going to have to give the microphone... We've got to spread it out, because you've already had a go, so let somebody else have a go down here.

F: Yes, I just wanted to have another question.



PY: No. You've had a question.

F: It's connected to this working class representation.

PY: No.

F: But what different minorities are represented on screen...

PY: No, you've had a question...

PY: Okay, let's get some order back in the house.

LH: Order.

PY: Okay.

Audience: I know you've got to wrap up soon. So I want to ...it's all very well complaining, but what are we going to do? The question for the panel is what can the general public do about this issue. I'm not just leaving it to the TV people, maybe can regular people do anything? And secondly, is this an issue with the audiences as well? Are they to blame for not having the TV we want as black people? Perhaps we want to see more black representation. There have been programmes, Venus versus Mars has not been recommissioned. Is that because not enough people watched it, whether it's black, white, whatever? ITV in the run up to the MOBOs put on a couple of comedy shows, Pranksters, Comedy Basement, various things. I've not heard they've been recommissioned. Is that our fault for not watching

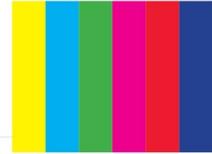
Audience: Can I just say really quickly, lobbying works.

PY: Well, let's panel it.

Audience: Sorry.

PY: There's a question for the panel. What can ordinary members of the public do to in order to move this debate along more quickly than it's currently moving? Just brief answers and then we'll take another question and go back out to the audience.

LH: Support the talent. I think you've encapsulated it. You've answered your own question. Support talent. If something comes along and



it relates to you and it represents you, support it, watch it, tell everybody about it, ring people up. If something's given you plenty of jokes, tell everybody about it. Pat's just told you about a fantastic website, House of Black, go and look at it. Watch SPTV. Watch and support Chewing Gum. I think you're right, you can lobby. All of this, this is all grist to a mill. You can go okay, good. It's not just enough to be vexed in a room. You can actually vote for people who will make these changes or write to people and say I think this, I think that. BBC has a lot, you can write to them. You can ring up the radio.

PY: Here's the thing about the BBC, if you write to them they have to respond.

LH: They have to respond.

PY: I used to write to them, and I used to work there.

LH: That's true. Dear BBC, an otherwise gorgeous day on the road, why don't you come into my office? No, no, I'm writing my letter.

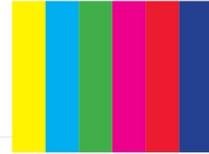
PY: Then they have to reply.

LH: Writing works. Emailing works. Campaigning works. Lobbying works. They have to listen to you.

PY: Dawn.

DF: If you like something watch it, tweet it, tell everybody to watch it as well. But also working for a newspaper, 99 per cent of comments are just like racist crap or sexist crap, so on the rare occasion you get an email that says hey, I thought this article was fantastic your editor is over the moon. So do the same for TV. If you like something write to the BBC and say I loved this, here's why I love it, I want to see more like this, because it's so rare for people to actually do that instead of complaining that it sticks in your mind, so if loads of people write in and say I really love this, it was so great, that obviously goes in.

BS: And I'd agree with all those. But I'd also say don't collude in the denigration, the kind of things we found in our audience research was really quite frightening, that people do get off on not feeling as bad or looking as bad or being as bad. It's a bit like they'll come



for everybody at some point if they're looking for sensation to make exploitation and profit from. So do not collude in the denigration.

**PY:** And you can also contact this enquiry, Lord Puttnam's enquiry, via the hashtags and details here. We haven't got the email address up, but maybe we'll have it at the end.

**Audience:** [futureoftv.org.uk](http://futureoftv.org.uk).

**PY:** We'll tweet that out with the hashtag that we're using tonight so that anybody who wants to make a written submission to this panel of enquiry you'll be more than welcome. Okay. Next question. Do you think having a quota is counterproductive? Do you think having a diversity quota in TV is or would be counterproductive? Bev.

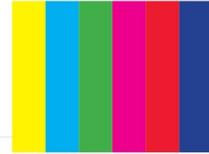
**BS:** No. I think they can be incredibly useful in calling people to account...I still think they bring people to account and put issues on the agenda.

**PY:** Okay. Dawn.

**DF:** I don't think they're counterproductive. I think that if you show that you can't be trusted then you're just going to have to have these rules imposed on you, and then maybe when you actually start commissioning and casting properly then you can have the freedom to do so again.

**PY:** That'll teach them.

**LH:** I don't know. We used to talk about this a lot and we decided that we didn't think the quota thing was working because, as I said earlier, you can get the guy from security and you can get the woman from the kitchen and you can get the IT people and you say yeah, there's your 40 per cent, that's reflective of our nation. But the older I get the more I think that something needs to be done about representing who we are. And because diversity is all of us, because diversity is everybody and we're a community, how are we going to do that if they don't make some kind of fund or appropriation for us, which is why I keep saying the catalyst fund will stimulate production of BAME, which is black Asian minority ethnic community. If you make a fund and say this is like Scotland, like Northern Ireland, like Wales, if we make this money for this purpose



and for this community that will change everything. That's what I think.

PY: What about the argument, and I know, because we've had this discussion, that people then are concerned that they only seem to have got the job because they're a minority?

LH: That's pain, stick in your ass. But after a while when you've been in a job a few years then you think damn, I run things now. I was sad because I thought I was a token but now I'm actually the boss of a national god damn thing, and I can do some good, be with my family again. I think that's pride messing with you. I've heard that a lot, oh it's just like token, right. I just think get over that and do the job, prove how good you are, show how good you are and then start employing people. It's about work in the end. Everybody just wants to work. Everybody wants a job. Everyone needs to represent. Whether it's quota or targets or catalyst fund or whatever, make the appropriation and give people the opportunity to work.

PY: That's why it's different to target. Because quotas have to be met, targets don't.

Audience: There's a white quota working out at the moment anyway.

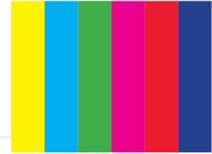
PY: Just the chair. Don't shoot the chair. Lady there.

Audience: I think the quotas that have been suggested so far are not actually asking for that much.

PY: They should be higher?

Audience: Well, no. I think that that's perhaps a step in the right direction. I mean, you shouldn't slate the quotas because actually it's just a step. It's not saying everyone to be BAME on the production team or in the highest positions, it's saying one or two. I think that's very reasonable and that is a reflection actually in terms of the numbers of a production team of our cultural representation.

Audience: My voice will reflect I have a lot to do with the nation's quotas or targets. What it is, it's not a fund, it's the same percentage of the television budget in the BBC as their percentage of the population. The three nations together account for 17 per cent, and now we have the same percentage of programmes will be made in the



nations. Not made about the nations, not necessarily culturally obsessed, but made in that place. And that actually isn't top slicing. It is deciding in advance how that money will be used for a social, cultural purpose, and I think that has become accepted. I don't think that is anything like... But believe me, it took ten years of my life to battle for that. And every slight that you're recounting about being self-obsessed, ghetto, narrow, crazy, Celtic, obsessives, all that, I think once it happens it doesn't feel unfair or narrow or prejudice, just as Salford, which was denigrated by everyone, feels now like a pretty normal part of the situation of life. And Five Live I think sounds better and fresher and more different there than it did when it was down the corridor from Radio Four replicating exactly the same interviews back to back. So I don't think it is about a ghetto creating that, it is about infiltrating it by policy, by public decree into what the organisation's about.

LH: Okay.

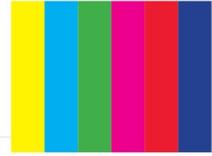
PY: One last question. There's a lady there, so I can see you.

Audience: As a drama school student, we are...

PY: Marvellous. Well done Central.

Audience: So as Central students we feel like we're kind of feeding that quota, and we constantly go to our lecturers and our teachers and people in charge going okay, you filled that quota, but look around this building, everyone here's white. But this quota is supposed to be mentally representative of what society was, it's supposed to be this room, but that work doesn't feel anything...like you'll still go to this building, you still step into this place and you still feel like you're a minority, you feel like you're different. So regardless of the fact of these quotas, I wouldn't say they're counterproductive, but I don't feel like they're doing anything because they don't really challenge the issue which is perpetuated in the arts industry that is a predominant white based industry.

How many black drama teachers have I had at school? None. How many black directors have I ever met face to face? None. The lecturers in our university, none of them are black. It kind of makes me question and wonder where is this going? We're constantly told to create our own work, do this, do that, but our work is then seen as ghettoised, and I think those quotas perpetuate that culture of



it becomes ghetto once you do that, and the more we create work about stuff that interests us, which to me is black stuff, it's seen as ghetto. Why should it be seen as ghetto when no one else would be questioning about doing that, and these quotas, they mean nothing to me. They fill this quota but then what? This building is still white.

**Audience:** Yeah, I don't think our main aim should be just to get black and Asian faces into high places because whose agenda are they really going to be serving? Because if they're just going to be doing the exact same job as the white guy before them that's doing it it's still not our actual voice being heard. But at the same time the company is still going to be the same. Look, we're diverse now, we can do what we want again, one in six or whatever it was, but it's still us being hurt. It's more than just colour of someone's skin, it's where they come from, what they're promoting and who they're really serving. Are they serving us or are they serving people at home?

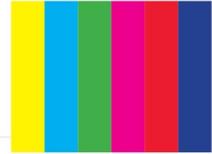
**PY:** [reference to Obama].

**LH:** Yeah. He's the President of the United States, not just the president of the black people. So I guess if you go to work for a big institution or a big company or a big drama school or whatever you have to serve the entire institution, not just your people. That'd be cool wouldn't it? Black present just comes around, black people, follow me, you guys work it out for yourself. So you have to do the job, which is why you have to make Downton as well as... They did have Black Britain. They had London Eye, they had Asian Network, they have all these niche programmes and actually they were little ecosystems for creatives who could come up... A lot of people in the industry who are of colour came up with those programmes. But it seems to me until you're allowed to make decisions about the big mainstream programmes too you're not in the game, so you need to be there going, yeah, Broadchurch, cool, I could direct that, I could produce that, and let's change it up a bit.

**PY:** I actually came out of Black Britain back in the...

**LH:** Fine show.

**PY:** Absolutely fine show. And Gilly and Joseph and Maxine Watts and most of the people, Fatima and all those others who are there now



came out of that one show. Can I just see where the microphones are before I redirect?

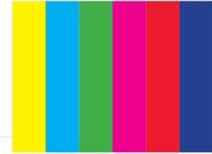
LH: Dude's got a mic.

PY: Right, a mic there, and then over there.

Audience: I have to say I really agree with Lenny's point about having a fund because I really think money talks. I think we have to be hesitant when we say oh, market it yourself, put it on YouTube. I think that's great, but for the people, as the lady says, who don't have parents or are based in London who are just trying to find their living and then to take on all these other disciplines as well to get something off the ground, I think we have to just be very careful with that point, because I think in a way it could just lead some people to be able to say yeah, well, you've got the platform now so there's not really the need for this.

So I just think we need to be careful on that front. I really feel that there is more that we can do. For example, in America they have the BET and Image awards. For some people that might be controversial because you might be saying, well, you're just celebrating a certain section of talent. But in actual fact you're putting that talent on a platform, and hopefully you won't have people like Ridley Scott, a director who I admire, saying, well, I had to do the film that he did last year and have a white washed cast, and then you say that that's not actually a necessity. I think also we need to educate people as well about if you're doing a period drama you don't have to rule out people of colour. We did exist back then. I'm quite surprised actually to myself that I didn't even know, I had no idea, because that's how I'd been brought up, that's what I've watched, and for me that was really sad because before I became an actor I thought there was only certain types of programmes I could be in, and I really hope that that can change.

Audience: I just wanted to go back to the issue of quotas, because I think that quotas help pose the question but they don't provide the solution, and I'm slightly worried about the idea that we should look to the new platforms like YouTube, which of course we should take seriously, and if you have the opportunity and the talent go there. But it's not the solution because it lets the people who have the commissioning and producing and distributing power off the hook. And this enquiry, which I'm involved with, and all sorts of



things that we've heard from the platform are trying to hold to account precisely those people who do have the power, because they have a responsibility. The fact is that we need a broadcast system that looks like all of us, that sounds like us, that talks our language, that poses all our questions. And I think that's not just something we can solve individual by individual using whatever platforms we have, that is something that we need to get those who have more in authority, who have the power to take seriously. That means that we need to see the question of television and diversity as a form of social justice movement, as a democracy movement, then so be it.

PY: Somebody there with the glasses in the middle. Lady down here.

Audience: Hi, my name's Peggy Anne Frasier. I'm from Equity. I'm an actress, and I'm also on the council for Equity. We've talked a lot about getting things on YouTube, but there's a lot of people out there of colour that can do makeup, cameras. Why can't we have our own TV channel, funded with money that we can place things, that people can see us and hear us?

PY: You start it and we'll...

LH: We'll pitch to you. I've got some really good ideas.

PY: There's been a couple of attempts to launch a black TV channel.

LH: I've got a programme called Non-Benefits Street. Little Brother.

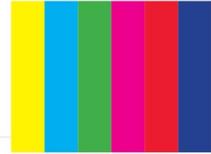
PY: The issue is...

LH: Slave Chef. Ho MasterChef. I'm not eating that food anyway.

Audience: If we could be seen in a positive way...

PY: Yeah, but the issue is money. If you've got the money for a license you can put your signal up, and if you can get an audience... I mean, there are some black channels on Sky - I think Africa Channel may be off air at the moment. There are some channels there. Question the quality sometimes, but they're there.

LH: Yeah. Are they going to make the kind of programmes we want to watch?



PY: But they're there.

LH: I know, but we'll have our own TV channel then we'll get vexed because the programmes aren't good.

PY: Well, is that enough?

LH: It's where it starts isn't it? I suppose it's how we start that and get that going.

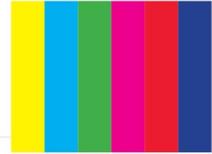
Audience: We are a community.

LH: Yeah, we are a community and we have talent. Jazzy B said to me once that in the end if we do things on the underground they're going to come and find us and monetise it somewhere. So the reason why the YouTube and the cable channels right at the end of the dial, the reason they're good is because the programmes like Black Britain and those programmes were an ecosystem for talent to make programmes that were directed at our community, and then those people are trained up and they are part of a wider community now. We need an on ramp. This isn't just one style of movement, there's a pincer movement going on. So there's YouTube, there's the broadcasters, there's journalism, there's sociology. People are coming at it from different angles, and that's how this is going to get sorted out. And if they write diversity into the charter, if they write specific language about representing communities and diversity in the charter that's going to be a fantastic step forward.

PY: The thing to remember is that this debate is going on in the middle of what is the equivalent of the Industrial Revolution in terms of how television is made. TV is actually just a platform that shows video. My phone shows video. Your computers show video. If you can break your thinking away from television and think about actual content and how it's distributed then a number of other things become possible. Lenny has to go, so I'm going to take one last point from the guy with the mic who's been waiting.

Audience: Lenny, Lenny, Lenny.

LH: That's my theme tune.



Audience: I've got a question for you. Deborah Williams, BFI, diversity manager. Hello.

LH: You're great. I like you.

Audience: Yeah, thank you. Catalysts. I think we probably need to have a conversation about catalysts...

LH: Yes please.

Audience: ...and the standards, because I think if we link the standards to catalysts and we can make a much bigger argument to the government around charter...

LH: Raise a catalyst fund, of course have gatekeepers...

LH: ...and commissioners, have a standard, then we can talk. There's no point in having a fund if it's not going to be properly represented and properly representative of who we are as a community. Right now there's black people here, there's Chinese people here, there's women here, there's people with disabilities. It seems to me that everybody's waving a flag. A lot of this is about class, by the way, so I totally agree with you. But you can only wave your flag from where you're standing. We have to get together and push that way. We're more than what we're being given to do and what we're being seen as. What happened at the BBC all those years ago when they just said we're going to take 19 women who are at a certain stage at their career and fast track them changed the landscape of television. If they can do that for 19 women, they can do that for BAME.

PY: For those of you who are students it was called the Women's Development Initiative. Pat knows it very well. We've run out of time. I just want you please...I'll leave you with the words of Shonda Rhimes. For those of you who don't know who she is, she writes *Scandal*. She hates the word diversity. She said this isn't about diversifying television, it's about normalising television. It's about making television. Thank you all for coming.

**End of transcript**