

'Please Baby Please' to fulfill its original intent

Politically charged 'black-ish' episode gets belated home

LOS ANGELES, Aug 11, (Agencies): A politically charged episode of "black-ish" from 2017 that was shelved by ABC has found a home on Hulu, a corporate sibling of the Disney-owned broadcast network.

"I cannot wait for everyone to finally see the episode for themselves," series creator Kenya Barris posted Monday on social media.

Barris said he hopes the half-hour episode, titled "Please Baby Please", fulfills its original intent: to inspire vital dialogue about "where we want our country to go moving forward and, most importantly, how we get there together."

He asked producer Walt Disney Television to reconsider making the episode available and, in recognition of "the importance of this moment, they listened and agreed," he said.

The network and a representative for Barris did not respond to requests for comment Monday.

The change of heart comes amid ongoing protests and calls for broad social change prompted by the death in May of George Floyd, a Black man, while in Minneapolis police custody.

When ABC decided to pull the episode from the 2017-18 season and put it on ice, the network lauded "black-ish" for its deft examination of "delicate social issues" in an entertaining and educational manner. But "creative differences" over the episode couldn't be resolved, ABC said.

The Emmy-nominated series has tackled thorny social issues during its ABC run, which began in 2014. That a streaming platform was deemed suitable for "Please Baby Please" reflects the creative freedom producers can gain outside the traditional confines of broadcasting.

Barris remains executive producer of "black-ish" (and its spin-offs, ABC's "mixed-ish" and Freeform's "grown-ish"). But he is making new shows, including the edgy family comedy "#Black..", as part of a production deal with streamer Netflix.

"Please Baby Please" joins the "black-ish" library of past seasons on Hulu.

Improvised

The episode revolves around a sleepless night in the household of Dre and Rainbow Johnson (Anthony Anderson, Tracee Ellis Ross). To calm his infant son during a storm, Dre begins by reading a children's book — the Spike Lee-Tonya Lewis Lee work of the episode's title — then shares his own anxieties.

As Dre offers up an improvised fable, it's the actions of the then-fledgling Trump administration that are identified as part of his unscripted. His monologue includes a thinly veiled reference to "the shady king".

The episode widens out to look at deep social divisions that Dre says followed the election of America's first Black president, Barack Obama, and the eye-opening revelation that "not every-

one's a fan" of change, as the character puts it.

"Daddy's scared too. ... Everything's so crazy now," Dre says softly to his son at one point.

Through imagery and concerns expressed by other family members, the episode touches on issues besides racism, including mass shootings, climate change and rights.

"Black-ish" has four nominations for next month's Emmys on ABC, including lead actor nods for Anderson and Ross.

The show revolves around the family's lives, as they juggle several personal and sociopolitical issues. The show also features the characters Zoey Johnson (Yara Shahidi), Andre Johnson, Jr (Marcus Scribner), Jack Johnson (Miles Brown), and Diane Johnson (Marsai Martin).

In later seasons, the characters of Josh Oppenhol (Jeff Meacham), Ruby Johnson (Jennifer Lewis), Charlie Telfy (Deon Cole), and Leslie Stevens (Peter Mackenzie) were promoted to series regulars, while the character of Earl Johnson (Laurence Fishburne) makes recurring appearances.

The show also ranks relatively highly among shows broadcast by ABC in terms of television season ratings, and ranks among the top ten in the United States for estimated total audience size. The show's success has also prompted a spin-off titled Grown-ish, which stars Shahidi as her character travels to college. In May 2019, ABC ordered a prequel spinoff, Mixed-ish, centered on young Bow and her biracial family in the 1980s.

Television

Variety



In this Aug 12, 1984 file photo, American singer Lionel Richie performs during the closing ceremony of the Summer Olympics Games in Los Angeles. (AP)

Music

A signature moment for singer

Richie recalls closing '84 Olympics

By Tim Dahlberg

Lionel Richie was just beginning his career away from the Commodores when he got word he was wanted for what would be the biggest solo gig of his life.

The Los Angeles Olympics were just a few months away and closing ceremony producer David L. Wolper had a problem. He wanted to put on an all-star singing finale to close out the games, but the stars weren't cooperating.

Michael Jackson was out because he was a Pepsi spokesman and this was a Coca Cola Olympics. Frank Sinatra wasn't available, and neither were other artists whose managers didn't want them appearing in an ensemble act.

So it was left to Richie to bring the curtain down on the first Olympics in the United States in 52 years.

"Next thing I know is I'm on a football field out in the (San Fernando) valley somewhere rehearsing with all these people diving and dancing all over," Richie recalled in a recent interview with The Associated Press. "I was just getting my feet wet after the Commodores. I think I had done a couple Vegas shows just to warm up, but nothing like this."

The audience would be vast, so the song had to be good. Some 92,000 people had tickets to the LA Coliseum that night, and an estimated 2.6 billion more would tune into the closing ceremony on television.

Richie's new solo album had several hits, but he knew there was only one song to end the celebration that was the successful Los Angeles games.

He would do "All Night Long." And he did it almost all night long, singing for 9 minutes as athletes danced on the field and people rocked in their seats.

"I basically just re-enacted the entire All Night Long video and brought it to life on stage," Richie said. "For the first time in my life they were saying

don't worry about the budget and just do the song. It was a brilliant moment."

Before Richie took the stage there had already been a spaceship dubbed "The Aluminum Taco" by producers that hovered over the Coliseum, depositing a 10-foot-tall alien who got out and hung around the Olympic flame. The E.T. movie had just come out two years earlier, and aliens were still a theme.

Paraded

Break dancers were big at the time, too, which is how Richie found himself surrounded by several hundred of them as he paraded around the stage inside the Coliseum. Among the break dancers was a 16-year-old named Cuba Gooding Jr, who would go on to big things of his own in Hollywood in later years.

"He turned to me and said, Mr Richie I want to make sure this works, we'll make you look good," Richie recalled. "I said, kid, your mom and dad aren't going to be looking at me they'll be looking at you. Go out and have the best time of your life because they'll remember this for a lifetime. Years later he came up to me and said do you remember me backstage?"

Richie hit the stage in white pants and a sparkling open blue glitter blazer. As he began singing some of the break dancers began crashing around him because the stage was slick with evening dew.

As the words came out, the dancing in the stadium began. Athletes from around the world partied like it was 1984, and kept partying until they were finally told to leave the stadium.

"Well, my friends, the time has come," Richie sang in the song's Calypso style, "to raise the roof and have some fun."

Richie was already a star on the verge of breaking out. Now he was a global superstar, something he found out quickly enough the next day.

"I was sitting in traffic and a guy four cars up was crossing the street and saw me and yelled 'Lionel Richie, All Night Long, All Night Long.' All the people started honking their horns and a Japanese family on the way to visit Disneyland started screaming," he said. "I realized, I'm no longer the invisible man."

It was an iconic Olympic moment that elevated closing ceremonies which were mostly an afterthought at previous Olympics to a new status.

And it was a signature moment for Richie, whose career is still in high gear at the age of 71. Richie is a judge on "American Idol" and would have been touring Europe this summer had the pandemic not interfered.

"That was it as far as a performing highlight," he said. "You can't get any bigger than the whole world watching."

Also:

LAS VEGAS: The Electric Daisy Carnival in Las Vegas will not be happening this year.

Organizers of the electronic dance music festival has announced that the event will be pushed back to 2021. Typically held in May at the Las Vegas Motor Speedway, the festival was postponed initially until October because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Insomniac CEO and Founder Pasquale Rotella says it's now slated for May 21-23 of next year. Tickets for this year's festival will be honored. Anyone who can't make the new dates can fill out an online form. In an Instagram post, Rotella said organizers were trying to set up a way for attendees to be tested for COVID-19 before coming to Las Vegas and again at the venue.

"Unfortunately, we just learned that the medical advances necessary to pull this off will not be ready in time," Rotella wrote.

More than 150,000 people attend each night of the carnival, which features more than 200 performers on eight stages. (AP)

Features

ARABIC TIMES

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2020

NEW YORK: Antonio Banderas says he's tested positive for COVID-19 and is celebrating his 60th birthday in quarantine.

The Spanish actor announced his positive test in a post Monday on Instagram. Banderas said he would spend his time in isolation reading, writing and "making plans to begin to give meaning to my 60th year to which I arrive full of enthusiasm."

"I would like to add that I am relatively well, just a little more tired than usual and hoping to recover as soon as possible following medical instructions that I hope will allow me to overcome the infection that I and so many people in the world are suffering from," wrote Banderas.

A spokesperson for Banderas didn't immediately respond to messages Monday.

Earlier this year, Banderas was nominated for the Academy Award for best actor for his performance in Pedro Almodóvar's "Pain & Glory." (AP)

LOS ANGELES: Angelina Jolie asked Monday that the private judge overseeing her divorce from Brad Pitt be disqualified from the case because of insufficient disclosures of his business relationships with one of Pitt's attorneys.

In a filing in Los Angeles Superior Court, Jolie argues that Judge John W. Ouder Kirk should be taken off the divorce case that she filed in 2016 because he was too late and not forthcoming enough about other cases he was hired for involving Pitt attorney Anne C. Kiley.

It says that during the Jolie-Pitt proceedings Ouder Kirk has "failed to disclose the cases that demonstrated the current, ongoing, repeat-customer relationship between the judge and Respondent's counsel."

It goes on to say that Pitt's attorney "actively advocated for Judge Ouder Kirk's financial interests in moving - over the opposing party's opposition - to have his appointment (and his ability to continue to receive fees) extended in a high profile case."

An email to Kiley and Pitt's lead attorney Lance Spiegel seeking comment was not returned, nor was an email seeking comment from Ouder Kirk.

Pitt and Jolie, like other high-profile couples, are paying for a private judge in their divorce case to keep many of its filings and the personal and financial details within them sealed, though some legal moves must be made within standard court procedure.

Jolie's filing emphasizes that a private judge must follow the same rules of disclosure and conflict of



Jolie



Banderas

interest that other judges must.

The filing says "it doesn't matter if Judge Ouder Kirk is actually biased. Under California law disqualification is required so long as a person aware of the facts 'might reasonably entertain a doubt' about Judge Ouder Kirk's ability to remain impartial."

Jolie's attorneys have sought in private proceedings to have

Ouder Kirk disqualify himself, but the filing says Pitt's side has insisted on keeping him.

"As is set forth in the filing, all my client is asking for is a fair trial based on facts, with no special favors extended to either side," Jolie's attorney Samantha Bley DeJean said in an email to The Associated Press. "The only way litigants can trust the process

is for everyone involved to ensure that there is transparency and impartiality." Pitt and Jolie were declared divorced, and the Pitt was dropped from her name, in April of 2019, after their lawyers asked for a bifurcated judgment, meaning that two married people can be declared single while other issues, including finances and child custody, remain. (AP)