

Bridge Builder Conversations: Maria Howell Discusses Representation, Funding of Black Stories in Hollywood

The well-respected actress and singer explains the "narrow lens" used to depict Black people, and the lack of exposure for Black directors and screenwriters.

CHARLOTTE, NC, UNITED STATES, February 24, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Bridge Builder Conversations](#) continues with episode four, [now available on YouTube](#), featuring actress and singer Maria Howell and Charlotte community leader David "Dae-Lee" Arrington discussing the deficit of diverse stories in the entertainment industry.



Actress and singer Maria Howell poses with David "Dae-Lee" Arrington (Photo courtesy: Harris Jeter).

Howell, a Gastonia, North Carolina, native, is an accomplished jazz singer and voiceover actress widely known for her acting debut in "The Color Purple," as well as roles in "Hidden Figures," "Hunger Games," "The Blind Side," "Army Wives," "Criminal Minds," "Delilah" and others.

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Those kinds of instances would remind me abruptly, 'Yeah, Mariah, you're Black. Don't forget that.'"

Maria Howell (recalling being called the n-word)

Though she considers herself fortunate, Howell talks to host, Dae-Lee, about her desire to see more representation in Hollywood of Black people and their array of life experiences.

"It's a narrow lens," she said. "Whoever writes the stories [has a] limited perspective of us (Black people). There are many layers to us, but the stories aren't written about those other layers."

Howell also opened up about the struggles of finding good roles, describing Black women as "the

lowest on the totem pole when it comes to roles.”

“That’s why I’m so proud of those who make their own projects, make their own films, instead of waiting on somebody to give them roles,” she added. “There’s a lot of content out there that we produce for our own community. It just may not be as exposed because the dollars aren’t behind it.”

Bridge Builder Conversations is a nine-part, unscripted video series featuring various leaders and artists sharing their personal journey and discussing the opportunities and challenges of building bridges across difference within their industries.

Bridge Builder Conversations debuted Jan. 13 with a meaningful race talk with former Bank of America CEO Hugh McColl. The series, sponsored by Bank of America, HUE HOUSE, Urban Outfitters and Mansion, can be viewed on the Bridge Builder YouTube channel.

The video series is a creative resource from Bridge Builder Consulting™, an innovative, relationship-centered consulting agency, engaging organizations and their leaders as they navigate Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) work. Dae-Lee’s Bridge Builder Motivational Journal is now available, as well as the Bridge Builder Patreon and Bridge Builder Motivations podcast on all podcast platforms including Apple Podcasts and Spotify.

Bridge Builder Conversations release bi-weekly through May 5. Details for the series can be found at WeBridgeBuild.com/BBC.

BRIDGE BUILDER CONVERSATIONS LINEUP

- (Released) Hugh McColl, former chairman and CEO of Bank of America
- (Released) Myloan Dinh, multidisciplinary artist and former refugee
- (Released) Kyle Mosher, multidisciplinary artist featured by Forbes, The New York Times, HBO and others
- ([Watch Now](#)) Maria Howell, accomplished actress and singer
- March 10 – Veronica Calderon, senior vice president of diversity, inclusion & equity at Truliant
- March 24 – Michael Marsicano, president and CEO of Foundation For The Carolinas
- April 7 – Dennis Reed, Jr, award-winning songwriter, recording artist and CEO of Inspire the Fire
- April 21 – Molly Shaw, former president and CEO of Communities In Schools of Charlotte-Mecklenburg
- May 5 – Harvey B. Gantt, first African American elected as mayor in Charlotte

ABOUT DAVID ‘DAE-LEE’ ARRINGTON

David “Dae-Lee” Arrington is a Norfolk, Va., native who now calls Charlotte, N.C., home. Summarizing his journey “from the corner to the cul-de-sac,” Dae-Lee experienced a 180-degree racial, cultural and socioeconomic shift that changed his life and inspired his work today to bridge divides that keep us from experiencing our collective best.

Dae-Lee is a 40 Under 40 Business Journal Winner, GRAMMY-nominated producer, recording artist, co-owner of Black-owned creative agency HUE HOUSE, founding member of Fair Play Music Equity Initiative and serves on many boards and community organization committees.

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