

PIONEERING ETHIOPIAN MEDIA EXECUTIVE MEHRET MANDEFRO JOINS AWARD-WINNING STARTUP TBTM STUDIOS AS COO

The Emmy-nominated writer, producer, director, and media entrepreneur kicks off her tenure with trip to MIPCOM

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- [Dr. Mehret Mandefro](#) – who produced the Emmy-nominated film *How It Feels To Be Free*, alongside Executive Producer Alicia Keys – has joined the C-suite of [TBTM Studios](#), the world's first blockchain-based video entertainment platform that is rewarding fans and compensating creators for building communities around great content.



Dr. Mandefro will kick off her tenure as COO by leading a delegation to MIPCOM (October 17-20), including TBTM Studios' founder and [CEO, Derrick N. Ashong](#), and the company's President of Production, Stan Jakubowicz, to pursue international distribution for the company's slate of new

formats, including flagship series, "The Mic: Africa." The interactive talent competition and docu-series has won seven international awards over the past 18 months, including five Telly Awards (two Gold, two Silver, one Bronze).

“

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said Ghana-born Founder and CEO, Derrick N. Ashong

Born in Ethiopia, Dr. Mandefro earned a BA in Anthropology from Harvard University, an MD from Harvard Medical School, a Masters in Global Public Health from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine as a Fulbright Scholar, and a PhD in Anthropology from Temple University, before serving as a White House Fellow in the Obama administration; and giving a viral TED Talk on

the job-creating, democracy-saving power of the creative industries, which she is currently adapting into a book.

Dr. Mandefro began her media career in the U.S. where she co-founded the production company Truth Aid Media and subsequently became the Executive Producer of Ethiopia's Kana Television, where she was showrunner of Ethiopia's first teen drama series, Yegna, before the network was acquired by Canal+. She is also co-founder of the Realness Institute - a non-profit that is building the film and television industry across Africa through premiere training programs that have partnered with Netflix and Sundance. She is also a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

"It's deeply gratifying to welcome Mehret to TBTM Studios," said the Ghana-born Ashong. "Having both started our journeys in Africa and achieved success in Hollywood and beyond, we share a profound sense of responsibility to tell the real stories of our home Continent and lift her most brilliant creators onto the world stage. Mehret can leverage her impressive array of experience across Media, Government, Finance and Impact, to help TBTM Studios scale globally, so we can empower billions of youth across the Global South."

"TBTM Studios is launching a revolution in the global media industry with our Take Back the Mic (TBTM) platform, using a blockchain-based digital currency to reward fans and creators in the Global South and Diaspora for their role in building communities around amazing content," said Dr. Mandefro. "Derrick and I knew each other in college, then recently reconnected through a mutual friend and one of TBTM Studios' seed investors. As soon as we spoke, I knew I had to help take his vision of turning Culture into Currency to the next level."

As a proof of concept for the company's technology, Ashong leveraged his background working for the biggest names in entertainment, including Oprah Winfrey, Steven Spielberg and ABC-Disney, to create an original interactive content property that rewarded fans and artists for using the TBTM platform to cast the show. The web series became a back-to-back Emmy finalist for "Outstanding Interactive Program."

Dr. Mandefro, whose film Difret was Ethiopia's submission to the Academy Awards, joins a team of A-players with numerous awards and nominations in the US and internationally, including the Venezuela-born Mr. Jakubowicz, whose films La Mujer de mi Hermano and The German Doctor, were Venezuela and Argentina's Oscar submissions, respectively.

"We have a huge vision for what our company can achieve by bridging Culture and Technology to



Dr. Mehret Mandefro

amplify the potential of artists and fans across the Global South,” added Ashong. “With Mehret’s know-how and relationships, we have every confidence that we will be able to make that vision a reality.”

About TBTM Studios

TBTM Studios has built the world’s first blockchain-based video entertainment platform, Take Back the Mic (TBTM), which rewards creators and fans for building community around great content. Their TBTM social-viewing platform is a play-to-earn solution that enables users in Africa to Zero-Rate their internet experience by earning unrestricted mobile data. Launched by an Ivy League team of Google, LinkedIn alumni and Emmy, Golden Globe, and Oscar-winning executives, their flagship program, the interactive talent competition and docu-series, The Mic, has earned 2 Emmy nods, 5 Telly Awards (2 Gold, 2 Silver, 1 Bronze) opposite Netflix, HBO and Disney+, a Murex D’Or Award, and a Monaco Streaming Festival Award, as well as almost over 1 billion media impressions worldwide and 5 Times Square billboards in New York City. TBTM Studios has just opened its Dubai office, adding to its presence in Hollywood, Buenos Aires, and Mauritius, East Africa.

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