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DEMAN Live: Sean “Diddy” Combs’ Revolt Media & TV: Social Justice Journalism

INTRO: Dave Karger

Welcome to DEMAN Live. I'm DAVE KARGER, Duke alum and host on Turner Classic Movies. DEMAN is the Duke Entertainment, Media and Arts Network. And it's the University's hub for the creative industries. On this show, you'll hear a past episodes of DEMAN live, which includes panels and one on one chats with alumni. Thanks so much for listening and enjoy.

02:48 Detavio Samuels

Alright, all right. Good evening, everybody. My name is de Detavio Samuels. I'm Duke Class of 2002. Currently, I'm the Chief Operating Officer at an amazing company called Revolt Media and TV founded by the legendary Sean “Diddy” Combs. I don't know what folks your age called him. I call him Puff Daddy. I think at this age, you guys probably know him as Diddy” more so.

I want to thank you guys for joining us for this special edition of DukeCreate and DEMAN Live. It's a really amazing series featuring some incredibly talented folks that I have the pleasure of working with every single day. We recently launched a new show in light of COVID in light of the movement against racial injustice and for Black Lives Matter. We recently launched a new show called Revolt Black News. And so brought the team here who was responsible for pulling that together every single week. Again, talented people that I'm just blessed to work with daily. We're grateful to be here with all of you hope that wherever you are in the world, you know, we're talking about we're not just national, we're global. So wherever you are in the world, we hope that you guys are feeling safe.

Um, okay, so let's let's, let's do this. So, I started that revolt on June 1. Prior to that, we had maybe done one or two Revolt Black News. My question for this team is why does the world need Revolt Black News now? Why is it important that Revolt Black News exists in media today? I'm not gonna call on you individually. So you know, whoever wants to talk talk?

08:51 Cherisse McKenzie

Um, I think Detavio you mentioned this. So um, when COVID hit, it was very clear to us that unfortunately, the African American community was being hit the hardest, right? The numbers and data wasn't truly there yet, but just based on all the stuff we were seeing in media, it was showing us that you know, our communities were one that was being hit very hard, and no one was really shining a light on that. Now, of course, everyone has that angle and is talking about it, but at the time, we didn't notice that. So kudos to our fearless leader Mr. Combs. He was like, you know, we really need to ring the alarm and do a state of emergency Town Hall, which is exactly what we did. Dion will laugh because we pulled it off in two days. We got amazing people from Killer Mike to Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms to Yara Shahidi. And we got an overwhelming great response from it. So it really caused us as

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a team that you know, really sit back and say, Look, we we actually at our core were very Social justice minded. And actually, when we started, we had a whole news theme. And we had moved away from that. So when we did the state of emergency townhall, it was very clear to us that one, our audience was very interested in this, they wanted the information, and they wanted to hear it from different celebs and different people that you know, you don't normally hear, talk about the issues. So that kind of bursts and sped up our development of revolt black news, because it's actually something we're working on in the past and never really developed. And then it was like, very clear. So then fast forward to when we're thinking about the show, we were like, everybody who is already a face, who's onset of the culture, you know, is literally built for this. Um, so then we're like, let's do it all out. And then we asked Eb to join us. And it's it's history and ever since.

10:54 Detavio Samuels

We're often running, and why do you think Revolt Black News needs to exist today?

10:59 Eboni K. Williams

Right? Well, Cherisse, hit the nail on the head D. It's all of those things, the moment the pandemic also think, listen, we live in a society in this moment that is more saturated with more content than any of us have ever seen or probably thought possible, right? And that's amazing. But one of the byproducts of that is consumers, which is everybody listening to this this video and call, they have more scrutiny and more questions than ever before. And the reality is, in the past, it used to be like a foregone conclusion that everything that was kind of titled news, you could believe in trust. We know that's no longer the case. Right? Some of that's due to the current administration, and so forth and so on. We live in a fake news society. So I think it was really important that people should reset the demand for the people is what led us to Revolt Black News, people want a news product that they can unequivocally trust, to be of their interest to reflect their values to not just reflect things that are sensationalized or negative, or clickbait, but things that really do reflect the full 360 scope of the black experience and the black story. And, and that's really what rowboat black news does. And I think it came about because there was a need, there was a one of my mentors in Durham, North Carolina, Butch Williams, who's a legendary attorney in the space, he said, Eb, the key to life is founded needed fill it. And I feel like that is what Revolt Black News did. Right? It saw an obvious need for this type of news content for our people, and it filled it.

12:32 Detavio Samuels

Awesome. Deon, you don't have to jump in. I know you've been on the journey longer than anybody else. And it was just an idea. So just do you have do you want? Do you have anything you want to add?

12:41 Deon Graham

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Yeah, I mean, I would say just that this was an idea we had for years. And I guess the idea was so big and puffs had that it always everything had to like be perfect for it to come about. And then COVID hit. And we did the state of emergency. And I remember telling him I was like this, this is the story like we can create this news platform right now. Like, while everybody's watching. It doesn't have to be perfect. Everybody's on Zoom, everybody's at home. And I think I put a battery in his back to kind of allow us the freedom to, to deliver an offering that that wasn't necessarily all buttoned up and polished, but deliver the news right from from our perspective, and it wasn't so much about production, it was more about what we were getting across and how.

13:26 Detavio

Yeah, so what you guys hear in that is that this is an idea. And it's an idea that didn't just happen yesterday. It's an idea that's been incubated for quite some time. But there's also this thing about what this moment created. It's also something about the need, the void as Eboni said the opportunity that this moment created, that made the folks here feel like it was our time to go. So Deon, you said a little bit on this, and I'm not calling you it just referencing you. I think he said something a little bit about our perspective. And so what I want you guys now and again, jump in with whoever wants to go first. Um, talk to me about like, how you would describe our journalistic lens. Talk to me about how you guys see our strategy in terms of how we are choosing to cover social justice and the handful of other topics that Revolt Black News is tackling.

14:16 Deon

I'll jump in because you kind of called on me. I mean, the black perspective, that's, that's, that's that's what it is. There's no There's no channel that I can turn on that speaking to me caring about me caring about my issues, maybe delivering in the way that I can understand. So that's what I always tried to push us for and I know Eboni and Cherisse. They do they do a great job of getting that across like sometimes you may need to hear of a very important topic from a rapper and then you connect and you're like, oh, maybe I should research. Maybe you need to hear from a black doctor. Just so you can have that that sort of like feeling of okay, he's speaking to me, he understands me. So that's what I always like this. This is from our perspective, the black perspective.

15:01 Detavio

Yeah, very much rooted in the black perspective. And the way you know, some of the ways that we kind of talked about is when you look at the news right now, it's very politically based left and right, right. But what if you want to care? What if you care about your ethnicity? What if you're in a moment where you care about your people? Can you see people who look like you on the news, talking about things that are important to you? And so we try to feel that as much as possible. Eboni, Cherisse, anything else you guys want to add about our lens and our approach to black news?

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15:30 Eboni

I want to add this part, Detavio. Oh, that's exactly right. When we talk first and foremost, about a black perspective, Dion spot on with that, but a very overused. A very overused mantra these days is, you know, the black population is not a monolith. It's overused, but it's very true. And we take that very seriously here at revolt, right. And so even when we speak about the black perspective, we try to show as much fullness. So what that perspective entails and encompasses as we can, for instance, when we start talking about defunding the police or other crimes from BLM, and things of this nature, yes, of course, we have our on the ground activists that are associated with Black Lives Matter for sure. We also have black law enforcement in our conversation, we repeatedly reach out and we have those conversations that include officers and sergeants and other leaders in law enforcement, they look like we do, because that's important to have to the table. Likewise, when we talk about what's going on in the housing crisis in the midst of COVID, we want to show a full political spectrum. So we have people that show up in progressive posture, Democrat leaning left leaning posture, we have black conservatives on our on our platform so that we can hear what that viewpoint looks like to So again, just really trying to lean into the fullness and a 360 degree perspective of black perspective and black experience.

16:47 Detavio

That's exactly right. So it's black news, from a black perspective, from a black perspective, with voices that span the black spectrum, right. So everybody can come at it from different angles, we're not trying to push one agenda, we're trying to get to solutions. And the best way to get to solutions is to hear people who attack things from different perspectives. Cherisse, anything you want to add or no?

17:09 Cherisse

No, that's exactly right. And I think just touching more on the solutions, um, you know, especially in your traditional sense, when you watch other news on different outlets, it's normally just the reporting, right? It's giving you the facts, and then there's no opinion on it, or there's no kind of next steps. What Eboni and I work towards every week is like making sure that we're not only giving you the facts, and we're not only giving you the differing perspectives, but you walk away knowing okay, this is the problem I'm in and these are some steps that I can take to either help myself get out of this situation or learn more on how to progress, you know what I mean? And that's what we definitely land on which each week each episode as the week's go on his way to take the information and make a better informed decision, or change their outlook or, you know, whatever they're doing.

18:05 Detavio

100% Black news from a black perspective, from voices from various perspectives. We also talk about across various topics. So Eboni is now doing things like sports and right we're getting into those things. But that is also very solution oriented, that we don't want to just talk to our people about the

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problems, but we want to explore solutions, trusting to know that they are gifted and smart and intelligent. And that if you give them the facts and the perspectives, various perspectives and opinions, and very solution oriented, that they can figure it out for themselves. Okay, so let's move on to making an episode of Revolt Black News. So for us, that process starts on Friday. So Cherisse, let me just kick it to you. So what is an average Friday? So for the audience, this we start on Friday, the show airs on Thursday, what happens in that Friday meeting?

18:57 Cherisse

Yep, so we have a Friday brainstorm team meeting where everybody comes with different headlines, and different, um, you know, kind of trending news topics, and then we try to decide on a light theme that we can basically land on, that connects these different topics, if you then we, in that workflow, we also identify talent. So we'll go through and we'll say okay, such and such would be good for this. And maybe we can reach out to this person because they might have a perspective on such said topic, etc, etc. We go then hit the weekend where our talent booker is, you know, doing some hard reach out and trying to get those folks. Normally, I don't know if you guys know, but talent booking on a show is very, very hard and should be, you know, higher on some levels than what people think in terms of making or breaking a show. So, normally we get back together as a group on Monday, and Eboni will know where we hear, oh, this person can do it this person that. So then we do another iteration of that brainstorm, where we figure out who's available, who might be, you know, put on the shelf for a later episode. And then we again, look at the topics that are trending and then see if we need to switch the format. We locked format Monday evening, and then we're normally shooting segments Tuesday, Wednesday, and going into post for delivery Thursday.

20:33 Detavio

Now, Eboni, so Cherisse talked us through the production schedule. And she talked about that on Friday and Monday, you guys kind of top of talk about what things to cover? How do you make a decision on what to cover? Everybody comes with ideas, everybody has their own thoughts on what they think should be discussed that next Thursday? How do we actually land or decide where we're going to land in turn from from a show from a from a show perspective?

20:59 Eboni

Well, what's really great is Detavio, we really, I think, develop our show and land on those spots by consensus. Right? So what's inevitable, as Cherisse was describing is, you know, there's going to be things that you just repeatedly seeing, throughout a news week, a news cycle, where it's like, okay, we're seeing consistent overtures about addressing mental health in the black community, or we're seeing consistent overtures about talking about policing in the black community or what have you. And so what's, what's interesting is on these brainstorming calls, we might have different angles. But the consensus starts to become very clear, right? What feels important to most of our team starts to

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overlap. And where we see that overlap is kind of where we land. And then as you said, D, we're starting to add more segments. So we're doing black excellence and entertainment. And that's great, right? Because then everybody can kind of contribute different verticals, different things. We have a great what we like everybody else. What's life without a good group chat, we have a great group chat. And in there, you know, it's popping all day, all night, all day, every day. And people are constantly able to ping each other with Oh, Yo, did you see this headline? Did you see this update? What do you think about this? Oh, this is wild. And that's really where a lot of our headlines and a lot of our our consistencies come from, you know, it's kind of to use a football analogy, we really do kind of play certain positions by committee. And I think that really adds to the texture and the variety. And like you said, the scope of the show, I really enjoyed that collaborative way that we put the show together. It's not just although I am one of the executive producers on the show, by no means are we just watching an hour worth of whatever he likes. It's very much a collaborative effort.

22:35 Detavio

So six days where the production starts with Friday, where there's a brainstorm, get you through to Monday, by Monday evening, you finally figure out what the story is you want and the talent you have access to who you're recording on Tuesday, Wednesday, make that show aired Thursday night, start back over on Friday. It's a lot going on, right? And it's a lot going on in CO and in the world with COVID, and BLM. So my next question to you guys is how does the team maintain focus and clarity? How do you guys keep your eyes on whatever your Northstar is? How does that happen? Is the group checking each other holding each other accountable? Is it something that you're looking at every day saying, look, we got to make sure we remember that it's black news and black perspective, like how do you guys maintain focus and clarity?

23:24 Cherisse

I think it's a little bit of both of what you said they Detavio, as a group like Eboni said, we have a really great communication stream where, you know, down to the APs to the writer to the producers, to editors, you know, they all have voice. They're all checking in, they're all sharing stuff. They're all sharing notes on. So as an episode airs on Thursday, we all share notes with each other as a group, to say, you know, this could have been better, maybe we could have, you know, switched the segment a little bit this way or changed your graphic here. So I think all those processes in place really helped us to keep evolving every week. And like you said, you know, making sure that we're sticking to our Northstar. And Deon actually helps me with this. But we also read the comments like I don't want to kick it to him. Yeah, like that. That's big for us, because it allows us to see feedback from our very audience, you know what I mean? We don't need to necessarily agree with everything, people saying, you know, the Internet can be shifty, but that does help us as well, you know, to see what folks like what they didn't like, and you know, what changes they suggest, as well.

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24:36 Deon

Yeah, I think I think another Northstar to just besides like comments, and any front facing metrics is just the idea that this is necessary. And we know how important the work is that we're doing. So maybe like other shows would be judged on like, immediate, like sponsorship dollars or, you know, how many views it gets. I try not to look at that, like, you know, obviously you need that to keep the The operation going but but this is bigger than what what just happens to tomorrow? I mean, this is us making a collective effort to change. Change the world basically. Right? That's my North Star. And I know that's the group's is that if this thing were to get as big as we all dreamed making it could be it would be world changing, you know life changing for a lot of people that have a platform like this across whatever network.

25:28 Eboni

That's true. And I like that a lot do and I think the collective Northstar for every single person that touches Revolt Black News is is just that it is the empowerment and just the overall betterment of life for black people, period full stop into story, right? So it doesn't matter if it's a sports segment and entertainment segment, social justice segment. Political segment is always with that through line through line is how does this work to advance life for our people. And and we take it very seriously, I'm proud to say right, like, it's, it's it's a, it's a product, but it has resources. You know, I'm so proud to say that a lot of our segments in the comment section, or rather, the description will be posted digitally, we literally have places you can donate to, to bail bonds associations, to get people that are protesting out of confinement, we literally have resources for domestic violence resources for different things that are affecting our community. And we take that very seriously. And then I just want to add that I just think we do a very, very good job of keeping consistent around that like Deon said, you know, we as long as we know that we're providing the information, I think I want to say that was a mandate from Mr. Combs early in the process is that we really have to give our people the facts they need to go about their day to day. And like the most recent episode that we just aired this week, or last week, rather, on Thursday, in a word, it was informative, right. And I think that becomes a mandate personally, for me to make sure that every week it's that and the final thing I'll say is you said it early on, we're not really necessarily chasing perfection. I think that you know, Cherisse and myself and the team, we are very committed to every single week it looking better and better and better and better. So we have these post mortems to deconstruct what worked great, what didn't work as well as we like, and where can we have those opportunities to improvement? I don't know when my broadcast career, every good product always started with feedback around the previous week's episode. And we do that every week with Revolt Black News.

27:35 Detavio

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Okay, I have like 10 questions after listening to you guys talk in addition to the questions I have over here, but let me when do I want to go? Let me ask you this, I'll start with you everything because you kept talking about news for our people? Is Black news only for black people?

27:53 Eboni

No short answer. No, no, it's really not. So I'll give you a great example of this, Detavio. Um, it is made first and foremost for our people. But it is not only for our people in the same way that as we are talking about conversations that deal with COVID impacting black people from housing to economics to health disparities, right? How valuable is that to physicians, for instance, are people that work in social spaces are educators that are educating black students, so everybody touches the black community in some some faction. So oh, a great episode I was proud of we talked, you can tell I get all excited. We talked to we did an episode called White Collar Bullshit. And he talked about the systematic racism that goes on in the workplace. And someone I'm very close to who happens to be of Jewish descent was like, Yo, that was so wonderful for me to see he sat there captivated the full time of the episode, because when he reentered his workplace, the next day, he was able to bring a plethora of new information, new perspective and new understanding that actually made him better at his job as a white man interfacing with, of course, a black workforce or people that are inclusive of our people. So that's just a really good example, Detavio, of where black news may be by us for us, but it is hugely beneficial for people outside of the black community, as well.

29:20 Detavio

Yeah, and I'm going to keep going because we have so many questions, but I do just want to say like the vision is 100% that black news is global. Right? And it's not just because we think that there are black and brown people all across the world is that we think the information and the conversation can be useful for all so I will ask as many of you guys want to speak to this one as you can when I've heard is like we're committed to getting better every week. Like there's this notion of it being an iterative process. Who's happy with Revolt Black News the way it is, right now?

29:50 Deon

I mean, I'm not directed at me.

29:55 Detavio

No, no, no, no, no, no, it's to show them that like, know that they This is a journey, right?

30:00 Deon

Yeah. I think I mean, I mean, speaking to young students and whatnot, I mean, that's, that's exactly what you have to approach everything with is the journey. I call it the marathon approach, you know,

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from the late great Nipsey Hussle. He, like, woke me up to, to being committed to the process, right. And that's just what this is, like, once you remove and accept that it this is about the process. That's what you get, like what happened yesterday. So talking about the week over week building of the muscle, perfecting the system getting better, and you hold yourself to that, you know, you can, you can have the hard conversations with your team, you can look back and be like, You know what, we messed up there. But guess what, we're all committed to making it better the next week, so we just keep building from there. Now, if we look back a year from now, and the episodes that looks like this, I won't be here, so.

30:59 Detavio

And that's anybody else, Cherisse, Deon, in addition?

31:01 Cherisse

Yeah, that's a that's a good rule of thumb. And just in terms of like, how you approach your content and just production? You know, I don't think anyone in production thinks that they can even like the Game of Thrones creator, right? They're never gonna say, Oh, this is perfect every time, you know, and, and that's just the reality of production, right? Stuff happens, especially in COVID. We're all prepped, and somebody just happens to join Zoom driving, right? Like, what, okay, you know, so there's like production works, there's issues, so it's never gonna be perfect every time. But you have to be okay with the process. And know that little, you know, workflow or like processes that you put in place helps you every next time you do a new episode, you know what I mean? So, I think..

31:53 Deon

I got like a funny story talking, talking to Puff about that, and I was like, You don't you don't spend the same amount of time on the album cover that you do on the album. And he like, took a long pause, and he was like, says who?

32:06 Detavio

That have worked for anybody, but Puff.

32:11 Eboni

Right, exactly, no, yeah, just to wrap up, um, it's so much about attitude, you know, and the way that, you know, we can have a week where, you know, our hearts are low heavy, like Cherisse said, you know, a couple things might go wrong with production, so might get delivered late, just, it's like everything that could go wrong goes wrong. But what's important is, it's not to sit in that to acknowledge it, to recognize where everybody could have stepped up and done better. And then somebody told me early in my career, you're only as good as the last shift the air, okay. And so therefore, the opportunities in front of you, every single week to demonstrate your value, and that's a

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really positive thing. So I would say that to all young content creators, never let the quest of perfection get in the way of your progress. Also, Never believe your own hype. You know, we've had some episodes that are like, Oh, shit, we cook or we grease, here we go. Um, and then, you know, there's still some kinks, right? So it's just really checking your attitude and making sure that we keep that same Northstar. We stay collaborative, we each stay independently accountable. One thing I really liked about our team, every Revolt Black News, we don't do blame games, you know what I mean? When when, you know, when the ball drops, it drops for us all, you know, and and then we and likewise, we can all help lift that ball back up and make it in a better version of itself the following week.

33:35 Detavio

Very good. Thank you. Yeah, you know, there's that quote that, um, you don't have to be great to start, but you have to start to be great. That's like what you see in this team as a team who envisions greatness you see a team who believe this show is destined for greatness, you see a team who visions this thing can be global and on any stage, but also recognizes that in order to get there, you got to start and you got to go through the process. And failure is only failure once you when you decide to quit in this in this instance, right. And so as long as we are learning as long as we are iterating as long as we're able to hold each other accountable, I think there's a confidence in the team that we can get better every single week we do this okay, a little bit lighter of a subject. Alright, let's go into some fun stuff. They just want to know who chooses what rappers get booked on the show? How does how does casting work? How do you guys decide that you don't put a rap on the screen or a doctor on the screen? Talk to me a little bit just about how we book talent.

34:32 Cherisse

Eboni, of course, you'd say to me, I'm normally Oh, just for lack of a better term. I'm always the one trying to put a rapper in. Yeah. Mainly because, you know, my background is like music production previously came from BT. So like my whole world 100% used to be just rappers. So trying to change that, but no, I think you know, it's just having that knowledge. Um, a lot of folks, especially in hip hop, have knowledge on a lot of the topics we're talking about. And no one ever asked them for their perspective. Like, it's just crazy to me. So we could be the place that gives Big Sean the platform to talk about his alkaline diet and why he's so stuck on that, because he doesn't want to get sick. You know, like, there's like, so many different angles that still connect to some of the main conversations we're having. So I always like to, like, throw that person in if we can, if it makes sense. But we're just not randomly putting in folks, they normally have a wealth of knowledge about what they're talking about, or have experienced that, you know, lends itself to the conversation.

35:49 Eboni

Go ahead, dude.

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35:50 Deon

All the information is digested, you know, like, I mean, that's a part of it, too. Like some sometimes you have to hear from people that you look up to admire through music, or whatever it is for you to understand it. So I think we always have to have that touch. Like, we have to have the rapper, the young actor, whatever, that this is what it is.

36:13 Detavio

Yeah, um, let me close on this one my 30 seconds on this is that, as it relates to talent, one of the tenants of black news is that there are lots of highly qualified, highly skilled, highly intelligent black experts who don't get a shot on CNN, and don't get a shot on MSNBC. And don't get a shot on BBC and whether they're doctors or rappers, we see black news as a place to highlight them and love on them. Right. I when when I saw Professor Mann step in the room, I'm like, Hey, brother, we got to get you on news, right? Like, that's our job. He is an incredible expert who's done a ton for the community. And I know he's already been on TV. So we won't be the first but just saying that we see it as our job to promote these, this kind of black expertise. Eb, anything you want to say to close down on that one?

37:03 Eboni

No, you actually made the perfect point I was gonna piggyback off of me kind of coming from the more traditional news world. I love that revolt. And Cherisse in particular, pushes me even right to constantly apply that cultural lens to traditional news segments and news blocks, right, so that we might be talking about a very conventional news topic. But when you apply that extra lens, whether it's a hip hop lens, or a broader sports lens, or broader cultural lens, it just enriches the content and enriches the dialogue. And more importantly, to me, it makes us entirely unique in the space. And that's one of the things like, I've been a trial attorney, I've been an author, I've worked in politics, I've done a lot of shit in my 36 years of life, but one of my personal mandates, and I encourage every young person on this call to kind of sit with this, how are you uniquely qualified to do what you do? Right. And that's something that I take with me every vertical that I touch. And what I love about what I do with black news every week, is we get to talk about an issue. It might listen, CNN might be talking about health disparities of COVID in the black community, but I guarantee you their conversation will be nothing like the one we're having at Revolt Black News, because of these the lens in which like Cherisse say, like Detavio, saying, like you're saying to do that we we enforce a particular mandate of that intersection of the academic, the political and the cultural.

38:35 Detavio

So I'm gonna, I'm gonna let, where Eboni is kind of like this space, where we're thinking about our careers, right, everything he said, I want everybody to just kind of take a step back and think, how are you unique? So let's stay in the career space for a couple of questions. My first question is just high level straight out the gate. What advice do you have for young alums, people who are still at Duke or

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trying to get their foot into the door of our industry? What advice do you have on how they can one day sit in the seat that you guys are now in?

39:09 Deon

No one's jumping? I think whatever whatever career you're trying to go into, was just to provide value. I don't have the high college education that you guys are pursuing and are going to finish and get a head start. But what I did do is provide value. Whenever I got an opportunity, I made sure that nobody could do the job that I could do, I even took on more than I was supposed to, just to I mean, I was probably overcompensating for not having the degree that I thought I needed. But I realized that you have to have that value. You have to be needed you have to be forced into the conversation so that that's it like if you're if you're going to work at a tech company, come come with your MVP. Come with your app already developed, you know, even if it's if it's not where you want it to be. If you're coming to work at Revolt, when you want to do social media, I want to see your Instagram, what's your stuff looking like? How many views are you getting? If you're a filmmaker, what am I going to look at, I'm going to look at your content and see how you create it. I'm not going to care so much about, you know, the degree for example, I know that's important, but I'm most I'm gonna look at the work and see what you can provide value to me to make my job better.

40:24 Detavio

Yeah, so there's three things I heard in there. There's one note that's about the hustle and just being willing to work. There's another note about value and making sure that you're finding ways to create an add value to the folks who you whose team you want to be on. I always say that I think that the opportunity for Gen Z, specifically, but Gen Z and young Gen Y's, the opportunity for you guys to step into a company and provide value is tremendous. The opportunity for you guys to find a 50 year old executive somewhere and provide value in terms of how they navigate digital and so is tremendous. There's so many opportunities for you guys to add value. And so that's what I hear in the on second piece. And then the third piece that I heard from Deon, is what I call the masterful interest. Don't just show up saying you want to do social media, don't just don't just show up saying you're good at social media, like you need to be able to demonstrate that interest interest or that passion in some way. All right, who else? Anybody else? Cherisse, Eboni, you guys got additions?

41:24 Cherisse

I would say, um, for me, I would say one is like, don't box yourself in. Um, honestly, if I had stuck to what I thought I was going to do, you would have two lawyers on this phone because I was entertainment law. But you know, I just while in school, I did my research. And I actually did a legal internship in media. Viacom, and I hated it. And I learned very quickly that it was probably not for me, right. So then I researched other things in the production space. And I just happened to stumble upon production management. And while in college, you know, in my research, I found that there's such

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such thing as production assistants who get paid \$150 a day on shoots. So literally, I was in school still, and I was paying for America's Most Wanted, again, funny stories about that. ESPN, Desportes, like I was just trying all these different things to see, you know, like what I really liked. And I was like, Nah, I'm good at this production thing. So I should probably continue. And you know, I never looked back. So you know, just don't box yourself in and research. If you really think you're leaning towards something, find out as much as possible about that thing. See, if there's any side gigs, you can start while in school, that's normally a ton of that stuff. And then, you know, really pursue it and work hard.

42:47 Detavio

I think that's such a huge thing for me. And this isn't just about media, but I have so many friends who wanted to be lawyers at 14 and committed to a path in law. And we're, you know, how do you when you graduate from law school 26, right, with a whole bunch of guys that just do. Like, I have friends who are now waking up at 38 years, they hate their job, and they hate their life. And so what I hear Cherisse saying, before you jump in with both feet, find the opportunities that you can to put that toe in the water, put one foot in the water to make sure it's something you really want. Once you know it's something you want, then you can apply Deon stuff, right and be about the hustle and be about creating value in those things. Eb, the young 23 year old star, you got anything to add?

43:41 Eboni

I just want to put a cherry on top of all that great deliciousness Deon yourself is your research said and that's two things, I want to speak to the power of the pivot. So in the example you just talked about, I was practicing law, about seven, eight years, I enjoyed it, but just felt that it wasn't the most unique thing I could offer with my skill set. Right? And so then it comes to hustle that Deon is talking about I had to just dip you know, when you're trying to make a career pivot, which I want to tell everybody that's that's engaging with this dialogue is totally possible. I don't care what how old you are. I don't care how long you've had the career path you've had, you are always in control of your own destiny. If you're not feeling satisfied or nourished, don't ever be afraid of pivot. It will not be easy. You have to be fully invested in your process. But it is possible. Another thing I want to speak to the other side of what Deon said, you know, I heard this brother talking about how he felt. On some level maybe there was a need to overcompensate because of like a lack of a particular formalized credential. I want to caution you know, my Dukies, my Tar Heels, my Terps my whatever we coming from our fancy name brand schools. It's a wonderful, beautiful blessing thing, right that we get to achieve that level of higher education. But when you are in this particular field, um, don't ever mistake that for doing the work that you have to actually demonstrate. Right. So so just be aware on the front end of this thing, because I think I graduated from Carolina with a lot of folks that no one told them this, Detavio.

You know, they really came out of Carolina thinking, you know, I got my USC degree, or I got my I know, Harvard MBAs. I know, Yale JDs, I know a lot of people that think the credential is going to do a

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lot of work for you. And just know that all the credential does at best, is give you an admission slip to have a conversation. That's really about all it's going to do for you. The rest of it, you really have to demonstrate, and I'm particularly talking to any talent that's interested in being on camera. Oh, baby, nobody gives a damn about your pretty little, you know, Blue Ivy Public Law Degree or whatever. What can you do when the light comes on? Okay, it's a very, really clear ask. And then like you said, um, my battery's dying. Okay. Yeah. So also, last thing on that, you guys have the ability to create content every single day in your hand, it's called your phone. So again, no one's interested in hearing what you'd like to host, they want to see what you're hosting. And you can do it every day. But you can do it on YouTube, you can do it on IG live, you could do it wherever, whenever. And that's going to be the best credential that you can have. So just make sure that you're, you're going to school, you're finishing that I love education, I'm an advocate for it. But just know that that will not. That's not the end of your journey. It's the beginning of your journey and make sure that you put a lot of effort into supplementing the formalized credential. That's all.

46:42 Detavio

Absolutely beautiful. Okay, so now I'm going to switch to some of the questions that you guys have submitted just to make sure we get to hear your voice, and that we answered things that are important to you. So I'm going to start with this question. It says for the non-black people in the room, what advice do you have for folks who want to support the movement? So we see the movements important, we see that it's happening? How do we jump in specifically, if you know, we're not a member of the Black community?

47:18 Deon

So, I have this, I have this, I have this not debate, but I had to educate. My wife is white. And this has been like a particularly like, hard time on her because it got really. I mean, you know about things, obviously, we grew up, we grew up in a really diverse community. But what I told her is just just just listen, like, that doesn't always have to be like an action. Like, you could just listen, right? Like, everybody's always trying to come up with some sort of solution and like, How can I help? Where do I donate? Whatever, but in my case, it was just just listen, you know, that that's like, some direct feedback in my home, you know, that that helped us.

48:01 Detavio

Ladies, either one of you want to jump in?

48:03 Eboni

Well, you know, I create, I came up with the curriculum being the nerd that I am, Detavio, um, so to Deon's point, right, the listening the understanding of the true nature of some of the horror, the terror, and the challenge, that is the black American Experience can't be overstated. And it really cannot be

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over understood. So I literally took pen to paper, and I created something I call White People's Homework. And that applies to any non black, I guess, a very real thing. And I took the IG when the when the movement, so to speak, first started, and I had incredible conversations with white brothers and sisters with Jewish brothers and sisters. I'm actually an American Swiss young leader, I don't even know how to hell, I got involved in that. But I am. So I spoke to that community. And in it, I just made it very simple. It's a couple of articles, it's a couple of free documentaries, you could check out on Amazon Prime and Netflix, that just really go deep into some of the historical context. So that so that you can apply it to what you see happening to black folks right now, in short, black people have and always have since we arrived at this country, and we continue to live in a very subordinated second class existence here. And if we are to ever really be able to eradicate that we absolutely need the cooperation, the collaboration of our non black brothers and sisters, to dismantle a system that we didn't create, right, why black people did not create white supremacy or black subordination. So only our non black counterparts can do the actual dissemination of that. And to Deon's point, the first thing you got to do before you can take it apart, you got to understand stand how it was put together.

49:44 Detavio

Yeah, let me maybe if you have the link to that if it's just like a URL answer, okay, so you can send it to me or Amy and maybe we can provide that for folks that we can put it in the chat room. But I think two things that I want to do just to kind of piggyback on that. So if we Start with listening and understanding, which is where deals started. I've been just so amazed, watching our allies find ways to show up, like some really basic stuff, going to protest and handing out water bottles. Like, unfortunately, sometimes like the protests get crazy and people riot, there's graffiti, I've seen allies come back. And they know that that's not a good conversation to move the movement forward. So they're they're painting over graffiti cleaning, but like the mob. And the reason I bring this up is that there's no task that's too small. So get that understanding, do your homework, and then again, start wherever you feel comfortable. I think the other thing is once you get that homework is kind of Evany was talking about, always think that the answer is gonna lie somewhere where you're passionate. The problem with this, this system of systemic racism that we have, is it's everywhere. So if you tell me that you care about health, I can point you in the health direction, if you tell me you care about education, I can point you in the education. If you tell me you care about business, I can point you, it literally permeates our entire system. So Fine. Once you get comfortable once you've done the homework, once you like, you know, you want to take it to the next level, find a space that you're passionate in and run with that if you're passionate about women, getting you know, equal pay at the job, guess what I think the biggest thing that the women's movement could do in terms of equal pay, right, now let's put their arms around black women, because white women are making 80% of what white men are making black women are making 60%. Right, go fight that battle for the 60%. It's even more egregious. And guess what? I highly doubt that you can solve it for the 60% without also solving it for the 80. Right? And so no matter what it is that you do, no matter what it is that you're excited about,

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there is a black times systemic racism story for you to get involved. So look for those because that's where you'll naturally be passionate.

Okay, maybe one more question with time as a follow up for okay, maybe one more question, which is there was one about race? Okay. His identity black, that so it's not just about race, this is an identity question. His identity, black, Hispanic, Catholic, LGBT, LGBTQ, whatever it is how people choose to identify his identity driving consumption, do you think it will continue to drive consumption with media, especially news? And so let me see if I want to reframe this for the team. So the question is, how important is identity and driving the content that we are creating this notion about it being black times news? Is that relevant only in the new space? Do we think there's a specific opportunity for identity based news? Are there other opportunities outside of the news category? Where does identity play a role in your books? Is that good enough for anybody to start with?

52:58 Cherisse

Hmmm, that's a great question. I mean, I definitely think in terms of news, and we've tasked ourselves with taking that on as well, we didn't want to box ourselves in just the traditional or what people think is the traditional black people's problems, right? So we did touch on the LGBTQ struggle, because that is very real for a lot of people in this subcategory, and they are black. You know what I mean, like, so I definitely think identity, even more now is being talked about, as it should have been all along. And I do think in terms of just other content, besides news, you'll start to see that come in more as well. Like, I think it is not fair to us. Black Lives Matter and all black lives matter and then have an episode talking about representation for LGBTQ and then we don't follow that up with having representation of an LGBTQ person in our content or you know, some of the other stuff we're doing so um, that's definitely something we're working on as a network and they Detavio and Eboni knows it's dear to my heart. So you know, we're working on that and everything with Revolt Summit, even with the panelists we choose and, and different things. So I hope I kind of answered it.

54:16 Detavio

Yeah. So and the way I'll quickly summarize that one and and see if anybody else wants to jump in is while black for black news, specifically, while Black may be the place that we center, we are often looking for the intersection of things black times LGBTQ, black times being poor black times, right? We're looking for those places to have not just a black conversation, but an intersectional conversation. Okay, anything else from Eboni and Deon, that you guys want to add? You don't have to.

54:45 Eboni

I'll concur with that. And listen, I think if I'm internalizing the question appropriately, I think sometimes when we think about identity, fill in the blank identity, content, identity politics, it can get about bad

Transcript

rap. Right. But I, I don't really think that's warranted. I think if we kind of sit with it and be really honest and candid, it only makes sense that our individual identities, whatever those may be, and I use those plural, right, because as the question yields itself, we don't none of us have a single identity, we have a racial identity, we have a gender identity, we have a sexual orientation, identity, we have a socio economic identity, right? Those things, of course, only naturally create and cultivate our interest, our perspective and what we are likely to engage in. I think the opportunity is what you speak to Detavio, which is the intersection opportunity for that multitude of identity. And I think that's the beautiful thing. So again, I hear, you know, especially in the phrase identity politics, I think that's often frowned upon. But to me, all politics are identity, tell me a type of politics that's not rooted in how different people identify. So that's the reality. And I think, again, when we lean into that in a very honest way, we really get a lot of opportunity for identity intersection.

56:08 Detavio

So thank you for that, I'm going to refer 30 seconds, and then let each one of you close. So if you just want to think about your 15 Second goodbye, kind of one last thought you want to leave the team with, whether it's about careers or Revolt Black News, or breaking into the industry, think about what that is, and then I'm going to start with you, Cherisse, when I get to you since you were the last one. Okay, last time. Okay, so my point of view on black news and why I also think it's important specifically. And I don't know that I tell this all right all the time. And maybe I'll have this conversation with everybody. So she can make sure that I'm being as articulate as I want to be when I say these things. But like, I truly do believe that we live in a social order. And that at the end of the day, that black folks stay at the bottom of the totem pole. Why I think that's important is because if you're looking for solutions for all, the most efficient, effective way is to go to the bottom to see what works there. Because by definition, it'll work all the way up. So again, when I talk about, like, let's do this fight to get women equal pay, let's go to the bottom with black women, but we're only making 60% of what white men are, and let's start that fight there. And if we get that fight one, we will solve it for the 60s, the 70s, the 80s, the 90s. And so why think Black news in particular is important and why it needs to have this kind of identity focus is because if you want to solve poverty, if you want to solve the issues we have with with with with race and education, if you want to solve the issues we have with healthcare, I think the black community is always a fantastic place to start. Because we are always suffering from these things at greater lengths than anybody and if you can fix it for the people who are the most marginalized, the most disenfranchised, then I think you have a great chance of fixing it for everybody. That would be my last statement before I have to do my real close. Move final words Cherisse, Eboni, Deon.

58:09 Cherisse

I just want to thank you guys for having us. It was a pleasure talking to you. Again, you know, just work hard research and find what you really are passionate about. And you know, pour all your energy into

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that and I promise you it'll pay off for you. And I would not be the content person without plugging. Tune in to Revolt Black News Thursday on Revolt YouTube and our channel six o'clock PT nine o'clock ET.

58:36 Eboni

Perfect, perfect. Perfect. Yeah, I want to thank you all, you know, Dukes not so bad. You know, I want to just say that, I'm just kidding. I'm so much love for y'all seriously. Um, and I guess I want to really kind of speak to what Detavio mentioned, right? This social construct that and a social contract that black Americans really do exist in when it comes to our experience in America. And I think what this moment is about, and one of the reasons I left the courtroom and went into broadcasting and mass media is because representation is so important, and particularly the representation of black excellence, because sadly, that's not the narrative that that mainstream media outlets have provided around who black people are and what black people are capable of. And I was very fortunate that I had a single black mom who also did not have a formalized education, but made sure that I had a very clear and fact base understanding of my people, and the resilience and the brilliance of who, who I was as a young black woman, and to be able to represent that excellence in a platform like revolt black news on a consistent basis. That's my life's work. So I would encourage everybody engaging in this conversation to ask your research show up in excellence, exactly who you are, and represent that consistently representation and excellence are really keys to changing humanity.

1:00:09 Detavio

You know, Deon bring us home.

1:00:12 Deon

I don't have the good ending like Eboni had, but I was gonna say, I'm just just just be you. I spent I spent a lot of years trying to like, figure out how I'm supposed to like fit in. And it always came down to whatever I want. I was attracted to the fact that I was standing out and just be me. And any field I feel that is just be authentic to who you are. And you're going to attract the energy that you want to be around and about the right job, you're going to start the right company, and you're just going to have an overall better life. Right? Like, just be you that's what a constant reminder to myself.

1:00:50 Detavio

Beautiful, and find the places who are willing to coach train nurture you and accept you the way you are. Right? I think that's another reason why we think this company which is black owned, but by far and by no means all black is a safe space for people to come from all walks of life to kind of find their way.

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Thank you guys for joining us tonight. And thank you for to have a wonderful panelists. Stay well, thanks and good night for real. Be blessed.

OUTRO: Dave Karger 57:28

That's it for this episode of DEMAN Live. I'm DAVE KARGER, DEMAN is a signature program of Duke Arts and Duke Alumni Engagement and Development. Follow DEMAN on social and stay updated at DukeDEMAN.com, that's d e m a n.com where you can find our full archive of episodes. Thanks so much for joining us. See you next time.

This episode was produced by me, Lilly Clark, in collaboration with Hear at Duke, Duke's student run podcast hub. Our theme song is "Carolina" by Cameron Tompkins.

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