

# A history of black contestants on 'The Bachelor' and 'The Bachelorette'



VIDEO  
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ABC

On Monday night, Jubilee Sharpe was eliminated from the *The Bachelor*. Although she struggled to cope with the difficult emotions brought up by the group-dating experience, the 24-year-old war veteran is undeniably gorgeous, bright, and funny, and seemed genuinely attracted to star Ben Higgins. She's also black, which—as even a casual student of the long-running ABC reality dating show could tell you—never bodes well for a contestant's chances.

Since its 2002 debut season, *The Bachelor* has been overwhelmingly white, as has its sister program, *The Bachelorette*. The franchise was even the target of a class action lawsuit alleging racial discrimination in 2012, which was ultimately dismissed. For an illuminating breakdown of how minority participants have fared in recent seasons, see this blog post by Karen X. Cheng.

This problem isn't limited to contestants: All of the Bachelors have been white—although there has been one Latino Bachelor, Juan Pablo Galavis, who is Venezuelan-American. The 11 women chosen as *The Bachelorette* to date have all been white, although an executive for ABC—which is a part owner of Fusion—suggested the next Bachelorette would be "diverse." (Our money is on this season's Caila Quinn, who is half-Filipina.) Ironically, Lifetime's scripted drama *UnReal*, which centers on the production of a fictionalized version of *The Bachelor*, has cast a black lead before the actual series.

Until Higgins asked her to leave in week five, Sharpe had been one of three black women featured on the show this season, alongside Jami Letain and Amber James, who were eliminated in week three and four, respectively.

In the history of the franchise, on both *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*, a black contestant has never lasted longer than five weeks. **In fact, more than half—59%—of black Bachelor and Bachelorette contestants leave the shows within two weeks.** (For reference, in recent years, seasons of *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* typically last 10 weeks.)

We combed through *Bachelor* and *Bachelorette* history to find 36 African-American and African-Canadian contestants who've competed on the programs (including one woman who returned for a second season).

Our list may not be comprehensive—it's largely assembled from contemporary episode recaps and press materials, as early seasons are not available for download online or sold on DVD, and ABC declined to share a list of black *Bachelor* alumni—but it's nevertheless a revealing look at how the franchise's conception of race has evolved (and how it hasn't) over more than a decade.

#### Season 1: Alex Michel (2002)



**LaNease:** Eliminated in episode three. (LaNease, then 23, made the final eight contestants, but there were only six episodes total in the show's debut season.) She was responsible for the first-ever kiss on *The Bachelor*.

In an AOL interview, LaNease said she didn't feel that she'd been discriminated against or "exploited" on the show, but did mention that producers had instructed her to ask Michel whether he'd dated an African-American woman before. "That wasn't a question I would have asked someone at that time, on a date," she said.

**Kristina:** Aged 26. Eliminated in episode one.

#### Season 2: Aaron Buerge (2002)





CRAIG SJODIN

**Lori:** A 26-year-old former NBA cheerleader. Eliminated in the first rose ceremony, which took place in the season's second episode.

**Season 3: Andrew Firestone (2003)**



**Ginny:** A 25-year-old law student from Kansas City, Missouri. Eliminated in week one.

**Season 4: Bob Guiney (2003)**





**Julie:** Aged 29. Eliminated in week one.

**Karin:** A 32-year-old mortgage consultant. Eliminated in week four.

**Season 5: Jesse Palmer (2004)**



[This is the only cast photo we could find from this season, and we can't even tell who's who.]

**DeShaun:** A 25-year-old account manager from Ohio. Eliminated in week one.

**Celeste:** A 24-year-old production associate from Ithaca, New York via Los Angeles. Eliminated in week two.

**Season 6: Byron Velvick (2004)**





**Elizabeth:** A 28-year-old pharmaceutical sales rep from Chicago. Eliminated in week four, after an unsuccessful one-on-one date at an aquarium.

**Season 7: Charlie O'Connell (2005)**



**Kyshawn:** A 30-year-old bartender from Nashville. Eliminated in week one. She asked O'Connell if he's open to interracial dating. He responded, "I went to prom with a black girl. I've dated them all."

**Paris, Season 8: Travis Lane Stork (2006)**



Princess (L) and Kathy (R).  
ABC

**Princess:** A 26-year-old substitute teacher from Los Angeles. Travis asked Princess who named her, and she told him, "My mother." Eliminated in week one.

**Kathy:** A 25-year-old graduate student from Stockton, California. Eliminated in week one.

**Rome, Season 9: Lorenzo Borghese (2006)**



**Sarah:** A 30-year-old journalist from British Columbia. Eliminated in week two.

**Officer and a Gentleman, Season 10: Andy Baldwin (2007)**



ABC

**Lindsay:** A 22-year-old student from Kansas. Eliminated in week one. After the rose ceremony, she was heard to say, "If I was blonde and had fake tits, I would've gotten picked."

**Season 11: Brad Womack (2007)**





**Regina:** A 31-year-old account representative from San Diego. She introduced herself to Womack as "Miss Brown Sugar." Eliminated in week one.

*London Calling, Season 12: Matt Grant (2008)*



**Marshana:** A 27-year-old fashion designer from Brooklyn. She survived a two-on-one date in week four, but was eliminated in the fifth of the season's eight weeks. Marshana is the only black contestant yet to place in the final six on either *The Bachelor* or *The Bachelorette*.

*Season 13: Jason Mesnick (2009)*



ABC

No black contestants.

*On the Wings of Love*, Season 14: Jake Pavelka (2010)



ABC

No black contestants.

Season 15: Brad Womack (2011)



ABC

No black contestants.

Season 16: Ben Flajnik (2012)



ABC

No black contestants.

Season 17: Sean Lowe (2013)





(It's worth noting that the previously mentioned discrimination lawsuit was filed between seasons 16 and 17.)

**Ashley:** A 25-year-old model from North Carolina via Denver. Eliminated in week one.

**Brooke:** A 25-year-old community organizer from Pittsburgh. Eliminated in week two.

**Leslie:** A 28-year-old poker dealer from Florida. Eliminated in week four during a one-on-one date, after dinner with Lowe but before what would have been a private concert with Ben Taylor for the couple. (Instead, the musician performed for Sean, all by himself.)

**Robyn:** A 24-year-old oil account field manager and former dancer for the Houston Rockets from Topeka. She prefaced her first kiss with Lowe by offering him a piece of candy and asking, "Do you like chocolate? Which chocolate do you want to taste?" Eliminated in week five.

#### Season 18: Juan Pablo Galavis (2014)





**Chantel:** A 27-year-old account manager from Miami. Eliminated in week two.

**Danielle:** A 25-year-old psychiatric nurse from Illinois. Eliminated in week five. She later appeared on the first season of *Bachelor in Paradise*.

**Season 19: Chris Soules (2015)**



ABC

**Amber:** A 29-year-old bartender from Illinois. Eliminated in week three.

**Season 20: Ben Higgins (2016)**





**Jami:** A 23-year-old bartender from Alberta. Eliminated in week three.

**Amber:** Now 30, Amber returned for a second consecutive season (in the interim, she also competed on *Bachelor in Paradise*), but was eliminated in week four.

**Jubilee:** A 24-year-old military veteran from Fort Lauderdale. Another contestant (one of the season's four Laurens) suggested that, rather than Jubilee, Ben would want a wife who could get along with "the other soccer moms," a comment that registered with many viewers as a racial microaggression. Eliminated in week five.

*The Bachelorette*

**Season 1: Trista Rehn (2003)**



ABC

**Jack:** A 27-year-old firefighter from Cleveland. Eliminated in week two.

**Season 2: Meredith Phillips (2004)**





**Marcus:** A 26-year-old personal trainer from Los Angeles. Eliminated in week two.

**Season 3: Jen Schefft (2005)**



**Ryan:** A 34-year-old lawyer (now an ABC News correspondent) from New York City. Eliminated in week two.

**Season 4: DeAnna Pappas (2008)**



ABC

**Jeffrey:** A 27-year-old math teacher from Miami. Eliminated in week one.

**Season 5: Jillian Harris (2009)**





ABC

No black contestants.

**Season 6: Ali Fedotowsky (2010)**



ABC

No black contestants.

**Season 7: Ashley Hebert (2011)**



ABC

No black contestants.

**Season 8: Emily Maynard (2012)**



ABC

**Lerone:** A real estate consultant from Laguna Beach. Eliminated in week one.

**Season 9: Desiree Hartsock (2013)**



ABC

**Will:** A banker from Washington. Eliminated in week two.

**Season 10: Andi Dorfman (2014)**





ABC

**Ron:** A 28-year-old beverage sales manager from Israel via Nashville. Ron voluntarily left the show in week three following the death of a friend.

**Marquel:** A 26-year-old sponsorship salesman from California. Marquel brought Andi a tray of cookies, pointing out a black-and-white cookie that represented their relationship: "Look to the cookie," he told her, "Look to the black-and-white cookie." Eliminated in week five. He later appeared on the first season of *Bachelor in Paradise*.

In August 2014, Marquel published a blog post in which he questioned why he hadn't been chosen as the next *Bachelor*:

The most important and obvious elephant in the room that remains to be an underlying concern for some, is the question of will there ever be a black *Bachelor* or *Bachelorette*? Let me be clear, I not trying to be *that* guy. But I'd be lying to myself and the world if I didn't say that I feel like race played a large factor in this decision. What else could it have been?

#### Season 11: Kaitlyn Bristowe (2015)



**Kupah:** A 32-year-old entrepreneur from Boston. Kupah confronted Kaitlyn and asked if he was "the minority guy that fills a quota." Eliminated in week two before the rose ceremony, after Bristowe overheard him complaining about her

to the other men.

**Jonathan:** A 33-year-old automotive spokesman from Michigan. Eliminated in week four. He went on to compete in the second season of *Bachelor in Paradise*.

**Ian:** A 28-year-old executive recruiter from Los Angeles. He quit the show in week five after Kaitlyn allowed Nick Viall to join the cast: "I question your intentions... I feel like you're here to make out with a bunch of dudes on TV," he told her. In his exit interview, Ian said, "Seeing how badly Kaitlyn's been at being *The Bachelorette*, I feel like I know what it takes to be *The Bachelor*. (Thomson eventually apologized to Bristowe during the *Men Tell All* special.)

*An earlier version of this story mistakenly stated that Jonathan was eliminated in week two of season 11; he was eliminated in week four.*

Molly Fitzpatrick is senior editor of Fusion's Pop & Culture section. Her interests include movies about movies, TV shows about TV shows, and movies about TV shows, but not so much TV shows about movies.

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## 'Unite the Right' Organizer's Dad Owns Him on Livestream



Sophie Weiner  
31 minutes ago •

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Photo: AP

Sometimes you just need a little break from the unending terror of the news cycle, something to lift your spirits and remind you that life still has its moments. Well, folks, we've got a doozy for you today, in the form of a video

that shows the “Unite the Right” organizer and noted Nazi Jason Kessler totally humiliated by his father on livestream.

The stream was a conversation between Kessler (who appears on a phone screen in the corner) and fellow Nazi doofus Patrick Little. It originally aired online in June, but the clip of Kessler and his father was brought to the attention of Twitter this week (the clip itself on YouTube has fewer than 4,000 views).

As Little discusses the threat that Jews pose to society, Kessler’s father’s voice comes booming over the speaker. “Hey! You get out of my room!” he yells at his dipshit son. Kessler tries to power on, not acknowledging his father’s obvious distain. “You got a drunk roommate there?” Little asks. “Something like that,” Kessler responds.

“My family watches the American History Channel and it’s constant anti-German propaganda,” Kessler whines about the people who for some reason have decided to allow him to live with them for free. “I’m stuck in a situation where I have to stay with my family because I’m paying for all these lawsuits and I can’t afford to do that...but they’re cucked,” he explains, helpfully.

Kessler’s second “Unite the Right” rally took place in Washington, DC this past weekend. Only about twenty white supremacists showed up, and faced thousands of counter-demonstrators.

Jason Kessler’s dad: welcome to the resistance.

#### RECOMMENDED STORIES



All You Fascists Are Bound to Lose If You Don't Show Up In the First Place



Tiny Group of ‘Unite the Right’ White Supremacists Outnumbered by Anti-Racism Counterprotesters in DC [UPDATING]



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