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***Episode 115, “Private Eye”***

September 2021

**Overview**

The purpose of this report is to identify opportunities for content creators to diversify character representations. This report measures representations of six identities in the script *Episode 116* for LEGO Titan:

* [Gender](#7rdsrmby8a10)
* [Race/Ethnicity](#km0uzj1c47vm)
* [LGBTQIA+](#l5fofjr5yyu7)
* [Disability](#phoxthamc9m4)
* [Age (50+)](#w6ssfbo3nmng)

**Methodology**

Spellcheck for Bias is a collaboration between the Institute and the University of Southern California’s Signal Analysis and Interpretation Laboratory (SAIL) which analyzes scripts and manuscripts to create a breakdown of characters and dialogue. Spellcheck for Bias also incorporates Human Expert Coding to determine the representation of six identities (gender, race, LGBTQIA+, Disabilities, Age 50+ and Body Size). Spellcheck for Bias also provides an analysis of Tropes and Stereotypes and attributes such as racial and gender injustice, violence, and discrimination.

For this report, we analyze characters who spoke 1 line of text or more. In *Episode 115*, 12 characters met this criterion:

| **CHARACTER NAME** | **LINE COUNT** |
| --- | --- |
| MATEO | 75 |
| COOPER | 60 |
| IZZIE | 47 |
| NOVA | 37 |
| ZOEY | 29 |
| LOGAN | 17 |
| MRS C | 9 |
| MS PUTNAM | 7 |
| DETECTIVE | 5 |
| OZ | 4 |
| SNOOTY RICH MAN | 2 |
| NIGHTMARE KING | 2 |
| LIBRARIAN | 1 |

**Gender Analysis**

***For comparison, women constitute 51% of the U.S. population.***

* 46% of characters are specified as female.
* One co-leading character is female (“Izzie”).
* The script contains 1 character opportunity to increase gender diversity.

Characters by Gender

| **FEMALE CHARACTER** | **MALE CHARACTER** | **GENDER UNSPECIFIED** |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | MATEO |  |
| ZOEY | COOPER |  |
| IZZIE |  |  |
| NOVA |  |  |
| ZOEY |  |  |
| IZZIE | LOGAN |  |
| MRS C |  |  |
| MS PUTNAM |  |  |
|  |  | DETECTIVE |
|  | OZ |  |
|  | SNOOTY RICH MAN |  |
|  | NIGHTMARE KING |  |
| LIBRARIAN |  |  |

The See Jane Test

| **In order to pass the See Jane test, a script/manuscript must have:** | |
| --- | --- |
| **✔** | At least one prominent character (leading, co-leading, supporting character) who is a woman who; |
| **✔** | Is not depicted with gender stereotypes or tropes. |

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**Race/Ethnicity Analysis**

***For comparison, people of color constitute 38% of the U.S. population.***

* 46% of characters are specified as characters of color.
* The co-leading characters are characters of color (“Mateo” and “Izzie”).
* The script contains 5 character opportunities to increase racial/ethnic diversity.

Characters by Race/Ethnicity

| **CHARACTER OF COLOR** | **WHITE CHARACTER** | **RACE/ETHNICITY UNSPECIFIED** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| MATEO | LOGAN |  |
|  | COOPER |  |
| IZZIE | MATEO |  |
| NOVA | DARK ARCHER | NOVA |
| ZOEY | COOP |  |
| LOGAN |  |  |
| MRS C |  |  |
|  |  | MS PUTNAM |
|  |  | DETECTIVE |
|  | OZ |  |
|  |  | SNOOTY RICH MAN |
| NIGHTMARE KING |  |  |
|  |  | LIBRARIAN |

The Shonda Rhimes Test

| **In order to pass the Shonda Rhimes test, a script/manuscript must have:** | |
| --- | --- |
| **✔** | At least one prominent character (leading, co-leading, supporting character) who is a character of color who; |
| **✔** | Is not depicted with race/ethnicity stereotypes or tropes. |

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**LGBTQIA+ Analysis**

***For comparison, LGBTQIA+ people comprise 5.6% of the U.S. population.***

* 0 characters are specified as LGBTQIA+.
* One co-leading character is unspecified (“Izzie”) while the other is specified as heterosexual (“Mateo”).
* The script contains 8 character opportunities to increase LGBTQIA+ diversity.

Characters by LGBTQIA+ Status

| **LGBTQIA+ CHARACTER** | **HETEROSEXUAL CHARACTER** | **SEXUALITY UNSPECIFIED** |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | MATEO |  |
|  |  | COOPER |
|  |  | IZZIE |
|  |  | NOVA |
|  | ZOEY |  |
|  | LOGAN |  |
|  |  | MRS C |
|  | MS PUTNAM |  |
|  |  | DETECTIVE |
|  | OZ |  |
|  |  | SNOOTY RICH MAN |
|  |  | NIGHTMARE KING |
|  |  | LIBRARIAN |

The Vito-Russo Test

| **In order to pass the Vito-Russo test, a script/manuscript must:** | |
| --- | --- |
| **✘** | Contain a character that is identifiably lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer. |
|  | That character must not be solely or predominantly defined by their sexual orientation or gender identity (i.e. they are comprised of the same sort of unique character traits commonly used to differentiate straight/non-transgender characters from one another). |
|  | The LGBTQIA+ character must be tied into the plot in such a way that their removal would have a significant effect, meaning they are not there to simply provide colorful commentary, paint urban authenticity, or (perhaps most commonly) set up a punchline. |



**Disability Analysis**

***For comparison, people with disabilities constitute 19% of the U.S. population.***

* 8% of characters are specified as having a physical, cognitive, or communication disability.
* The co-leading characters are not specified as having a disability (“Mateo” and “Izzie”).
* The script contains 12 character opportunities to increase disability diversity.

Characters by Disability Status

| **CHARACTER WITH DISABILITY** | **CHARACTER WITHOUT DISABILITY** | **DISABILITY STATUS UNSPECIFIED** |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | MATEO |
|  |  | COOPER |
|  |  | IZZIE |
|  |  | NOVA |
|  |  | ZOEY |
|  |  | LOGAN |
| MRS C |  |  |
|  |  | MS PUTNAM |
|  |  | DETECTIVE |
|  |  | OZ |
|  |  | SNOOTY RICH MAN |
|  |  | NIGHTMARE KING |
|  |  | LIBRARIAN |

The Marlee Matlin Test

| **In order to pass the Marlee Matlin test, a script/manuscript must have:** | |
| --- | --- |
| **✔** | At least one prominent character (leading, co-leading, supporting character) with a physical, cognitive, or communication disability who; |
| **✔** | Is not depicted with disability stereotypes or tropes. |

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**Age (50+) Analysis**

***For comparison, people ages 50+ constitute 34% of the U.S. population.***

* 23% characters are specified as ages 50+.
* The co-leading characters are under 50 (“Mateo” and “Izzie”).
* The script contains 4 character opportunities to increase age diversity.

Characters by Age

| **CHARACTER 50+** | **CHARACTER UNDER 50** | **AGE UNSPECIFIED** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| v | MATEO | LOGAN |
| MR OZ | COOPER | MR OZ |
|  | IZZIE | MATEO |
|  | NOVA |  |
|  | ZOEY |  |
|  | LOGAN |  |
| MRS C |  |  |
|  |  | MS PUTNAM |
|  |  | DETECTIVE |
| OZ |  |  |
|  |  | SNOOTY RICH MAN |
| NIGHTMARE KING |  |  |
|  |  | LIBRARIAN |

The Betty White Test

| **In order to pass the Betty White test, a script/manuscript must have:** | |
| --- | --- |
| **✔** | At least one prominent character (leading, co-leading, supporting character) who is 50+ who; |
| **✔** | Is not depicted with age stereotypes or tropes. |

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**Body Size Analysis**

* N/A
* We do not analyze body size for this script.

| **CHARACTER WITH LARGE BODY TYPE** | **CHARACTER WITH SMALL/MEDIUM BODY TYPE** | **BODY SIZE UNSPECIFIED** |
| --- | --- | --- |
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The Lizzo Test

| **In order to pass the Lizzo test, a script/manuscript must have:** | |
| --- | --- |
|  | At least one prominent character (leading, co-leading, supporting character) with a large body type who; |
|  | Is not depicted with size stereotypes or tropes. |

**Intersectional Analysis**

|  | **Female Character** | **Character of Color** | **LGBTQIA+ Character** | **Character with a Disability** | **Character 50+** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Female Character** |  | **YES** | **NO** | **YES** | **YES** |
| **Character of Color** | **YES** |  | **NO** | **YES** | **YES** |
| **LGBTQIA+ Character** | **NO** | **NO** |  | **NO** | **NO** |
| **Character with a Disability** | **YES** | **YES** | **NO** |  | **YES** |
| **Character 50+** | **YES** | **YES** | **NO** | **YES** |  |

**Positive Aspects and Continued Positive Representation:**

* Disrupting Gender Norms:
  + Izzie satirizes detective noir in this episode by playing a funny, witty, and astute detective from the 1940s, upending gender norms with respect to detective work and comedy.
* References to Women in STEM:
  + Episode thoughtfully incorporates female contribution to major scientific discoveries and weaves women into the history of science for viewers:
    - “If the amateur fossil hunter Mary Anninng hadn’t shared her passion for paleontology with the world, Charles Darwin couldn’t have used it to inspire his own theories about evolution” (pp. 3).
* Celebrates Many Types of Creativity:
  + Mateo, a character of color, is encouraged to continue his unconventional artwork and eventually agrees to display it to the school.
* Women of Color in Informal Positions of Authority:
  + Mateo’s artwork is validated by a female character of color, which defies norms surrounding authority, since a character of color (Mrs. C) rather than a white man tells Mateo that his artwork is good and worth sharing.
* Healthy Depictions of Masculinity and Male Friendship:
  + Mateo has heightened social anxiety in this episode, particularly with respect to how others will perceive his drawings. He is able to cope with this through the emotional support of his male friend Cooper. Cooper’s support defies gender norms with respect to who provides emotional comfort.

**Potential Pitfalls**

* **Potential Racism:** 
  + Izzie uses the term “nitty gritty” (pp. 7):
    - While the true origins of the phrase are up for debate, nitty gritty is said to have origins with links to slave trading[[1]](#footnote-0).
* **Potential Ableism**:
  + Consider replacing ableist language (“dunce”, “lame”, “stupid”) with neutral language (e.g., “silly”, “obtuse”, “turkey”). Not only is utilizing alternative language more inclusive, it can serve to expand children’s vocabulary and encourage children to be more creative with their language choices.

1. Marshall, Chris. (2020). “Be Careful not to use these Racist Phrases in your Content” *Brand Content.* (Reference: <https://brandcontent.co.uk/outfoxed/be-careful-not-to-use-these-racist-phrases-in-your-content/>). [↑](#footnote-ref-0)