**Spellcheck For Bias: *ABOUT MY FATHER***

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**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 *ABOUT MY FATHER* for LIONSGATE:

* [Gender](#bookmark=id.gjdgxs)
* [Race/Ethnicity](#bookmark=id.30j0zll)
* [LGBTQ+](#bookmark=id.1fob9te)
* [Disability](#bookmark=id.3znysh7)
* [Age (50+)](#bookmark=id.2et92p0)
* [Body Size](#bookmark=id.tyjcwt)

**Methodology**

Spellcheck for Bias is based on inventions and software developed at the USC Viterbi School of Engineering. For this report, we analyze characters who spoke 1 line of text or more. In *ABOUT MY FATHER*, 15 characters met this criterion:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **CHARACTER NAME** | **LINE COUNT** |
| SEBASTIAN | 622 |
| SALVO | 425 |
| ELLIE | 234 |
| TIGGER | 164 |
| FRANK | 141 |
| LUCKY | 99 |
| DOUG | 66 |
| TSA OFFICER | 6 |
| GATE ATTENDANT | 6 |
| BRETT | 4 |
| FEMALE CLIENT | 2 |
| GLORIA | 2 |
| PASSING JOGGER | 1 |
| FRIENDLY WOMAN | 1 |
| CHRIS HAYES | 1 |

Automated coding is combined with expert human coding to generate the quantitative and qualitative analysis below.

**Gender Analysis**

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

* 6 characters are specified as female.
* The leading character is female.
* The script contains 2 character opportunities to increase gender diversity.

Characters by Gender

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **FEMALE CHARACTER** | **MALE CHARACTER** | **GENDER UNSPECIFIED** |
|  | SEBASTIAN |  |
|  | SALVO |  |
| ELLIE |  |  |
| TIGGER |  |  |
|  | FRANK |  |
|  | LUCKY |  |
|  | DOUG |  |
|  |  | TSA OFFICER |
| GATE ATTENDANT |  |  |
|  | BRETT |  |
| FEMALE CLIENT |  |  |
| GLORIA |  |  |
|  |  | PASSING JOGGER |
| FRIENDLY WOMAN |  |  |
|  | CHRIS HAYES |  |

The See Jane Test

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **In order to pass the See Jane test, a script/manuscript must have:** | |
| **YES** | At least one prominent character (leading, co-leading, supporting character) who is a woman who; |
| **YES** | 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.***

* 0 characters are specified as characters of color.
* The leading character is specified as white.
* The script contains 7 character opportunities to increase racial/ethnic diversity.

Characters by Race/Ethnicity

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **CHARACTER OF COLOR** | **WHITE CHARACTER** | **RACE/ETHNICITY UNSPECIFIED** |
|  | SEBASTIAN |  |
|  | SALVO |  |
|  | ELLIE |  |
|  | TIGGER |  |
|  | FRANK |  |
|  | LUCKY |  |
|  | DOUG |  |
|  |  | TSA OFFICER |
|  |  | GATE ATTENDANT |
|  |  | BRETT |
|  |  | FEMALE CLIENT |
|  |  | GLORIA |
|  |  | PASSING JOGGER |
|  |  | FRIENDLY WOMAN |
|  | CHRIS HAYES |  |

The Sidney Poitier Test

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **In order to pass the Sidney Poitier test, a script/manuscript must have:** | |
| **NO** | At least one prominent character (leading, co-leading, supporting character) who is a character of color who; |
| **NO** | Is not depicted with race/ethnicity stereotypes or tropes. |



**LGBTQ+ Analysis**

***For comparison, LGBTQ+ people comprise 4.5% of the U.S. population.***

* 1 characters are specified as LGBTQ+.
* The leading character is specified as heterosexual.
* The script contains 7 character opportunities to increase LGBTQ+ diversity.

Characters by LGBTQ+ Status

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **LGBTQ+ CHARACTER** | **HETEROSEXUAL CHARACTER** | **SEXUALITY UNSPECIFIED** |
|  | SEBASTIAN |  |
|  | SALVO |  |
|  | ELLIE |  |
|  | TIGGER |  |
|  | FRANK |  |
|  | LUCKY |  |
|  |  | DOUG |
|  |  | TSA OFFICER |
|  |  | GATE ATTENDANT |
| BRETT |  |  |
|  |  | FEMALE CLIENT |
|  |  | GLORIA |
|  |  | PASSING JOGGER |
|  |  | FRIENDLY WOMAN |
|  | CHRIS HAYES |  |

The Vito-Russo Test

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **In order to pass the Vito-Russo test, a script/manuscript must:** | |
| **YES** | Contain a character that is identifiably lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer. |
| **YES** | 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). |
| **NO** | The LGBTQ 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.***

* 0 characters are specified as having a physical, cognitive, or communication disability.
* The leading character is not shown having a disability.
* The script contains 15 character opportunities to increase disability diversity.

Characters by Disability Status

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **CHARACTER WITH DISABILITY** | **CHARACTER WITHOUT DISABILITY** | **DISABILITY STATUS UNSPECIFIED** |
|  |  | SEBASTIAN |
|  |  | SALVO |
|  |  | ELLIE |
|  |  | TIGGER |
|  |  | FRANK |
|  |  | LUCKY |
|  |  | DOUG |
|  |  | TSA OFFICER |
|  |  | GATE ATTENDANT |
|  |  | BRETT |
|  |  | FEMALE CLIENT |
|  |  | GLORIA |
|  |  | PASSING JOGGER |
|  |  | FRIENDLY WOMAN |
|  |  | CHRIS HAYES |

The Marlee Matlin Test

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **In order to pass the Marlee Matlin test, a script/manuscript must have:** | |
| **NO** | At least one prominent character (leading, co-leading, supporting character) with a physical, cognitive, or communication disability who; |
| **NO** | Is not depicted with disability stereotypes or tropes. |



**Age (50+) Analysis**

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

* 3 characters are specified as ages 50+.
* The leading character is under 50.
* The script contains 7 character opportunities to increase age diversity.

Characters by Age

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **CHARACTER 50+** | **CHARACTER UNDER 50** | **AGE UNSPECIFIED** |
|  | SEBASTIAN |  |
| SALVO |  |  |
|  | ELLIE |  |
| TIGGER |  |  |
| FRANK |  |  |
|  | LUCKY |  |
|  | DOUG |  |
|  |  | TSA OFFICER |
|  |  | GATE ATTENDANT |
|  |  | BRETT |
|  |  | FEMALE CLIENT |
|  |  | GLORIA |
|  |  | PASSING JOGGER |
|  |  | FRIENDLY WOMAN |
|  | CHRIS HAYES |  |

The Betty White Test

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



**Body Size Analysis**

***For comparison, people with large body types constitute 39% of the U.S. population.***

* 2 characters are specified as having a large body type.
* The leading character is not specified as having a large body type.
* The script contains 12 character opportunities to increase body type diversity.

Characters by Body Size

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **CHARACTER WITH LARGE BODY TYPE** | **CHARACTER WITH SMALL/MEDIUM BODY TYPE** | **BODY SIZE UNSPECIFIED** |
|  |  | SEBASTIAN |
|  |  | SALVO |
|  |  | ELLIE |
|  |  | TIGGER |
|  |  | FRANK |
|  |  | LUCKY |
| DOUG |  |  |
| TSA OFFICER |  |  |
|  |  | GATE ATTENDANT |
|  |  | BRETT |
|  |  | FEMALE CLIENT |
|  |  | GLORIA |
|  |  | PASSING JOGGER |
|  |  | FRIENDLY WOMAN |
|  | CHRIS HAYES |  |

The Cooper Test

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **In order to pass the Cooper test, a script/manuscript must have:** | |
| **YES** | At least one prominent character (leading, co-leading, supporting character) with a large body type who; |
| **NO** | Is not depicted with size stereotypes or tropes. |



**Intersectional Analysis**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Female Character** | **Character of Color** | **LGBTQ+ Character** | **Character with a Disability** | **Character 50+** | **Character with Large Body Type** |
| **Female Character** |  | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** | **YES** | **NO** |
| **Character of Color** | **NO** |  | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** |
| **LGBTQ+ Character** | **NO** | **NO** |  | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** |
| **Character with a Disability** | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** |  | **NO** | **NO** |
| **Character 50+** | **YES** | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** |  | **NO** |
| **Character with Large Body Type** | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** |  |

**Positive Aspects**

* The storylines around immigrant parents, first-generation Americans, and the "old-world"/motherland mentality is very relatable and powerful. This film will resonate with and mean a lot to immigrant parents and their children, as well as viewers who can appreciate the rich histories built by a country of immigrants. This script has a subtle but powerful political message that virtually all Americans are immigrants.
* It is highly positive that we see Sebastian showing his emotions and even casually crying in front of Ellie.
* Salvo portrays a positive picture of masculinity also, being that he comes off as tough and strict, but still takes pride in being a hair *stylist* rather than barber. He is also a very caring dad, respectful of the women he works with, and eventually shows a range of more emotions beyond his “resting bitch face.”
* The relationship between Salvo and Sebastian is very positive in showing positive masculinity, sharing emotions, and crying in front of each other.
* Tigger, Frank, and Salvo depicted as incredibly physically active as people ages 50+ is a very positive representation of older folks. The paintball scene is an especially wonderful challenge to ageist stereotypes.
* Tigger’s depiction as a great shot and NAVY veteran are traits we do not often see in women on screen. Also, the fact that she does political commentary defies gender stereotypes.

**Potential Pitfalls**

* Potential Racism: Sebastian as narrator’s statement that “Ellie’s ancestors were so WASP-y, even their slaves were white.” This punchline derives its humor from the idea that white people have more value than Black people, but instead of challenging this idea, it reinforces it.
* Potential Racism: Given Doug's mentions of slaves having built the property and reparations, it could be problematic to cast Gloria as a person of color, where she would be falling into the stereotype of people of color being in a service position to (i.e., "the colored help"). That said, it would be positive to show characters like the Passing Jogger and the other Friendly Woman who Sebastian sees on his walk as people of color to show that WASPs aren't the only ones able to vacation at White Oaks.
* Potential Sizeism:
  + The initial scene where Sebastian is making fun of the TSA Officers for being fat may be humorous, but it contributes to normalizing fatphobia and making it okay for fat people to be the butt of jokes:
    - Sebastian calling one agent “Officer Man Boobs” twice in the script (which is both sizeist and sexist).
    - Narrator Sebastian questioning whether TSA officers “have to pass some sort of physical” because the two large body type officers are heaving and can’t run very fast.
    - When Sebastian returns to the airport at the end of the script, the two TSA officers are throwing donut holes into each other’s mouths.
  + Doug is portrayed as a series of large body stereotypes that characterize him as lazy, unattractive, slow, a loser, and poorly dressed. Also, lots of fat jokes as punchlines in this script which means the audience is being asked to laugh again and again at characters with large body types. Is there a way to make Salvo (especially) insulting without reinforcing fatphobia?
    - Salvo calls Doug the "world's chubbiest train conductor.”
    - Salvo says “Wait! At least slow down! You’re gonna get a cramp!” when Doug runs away during paintball.
    - Salvo says “And at the speed he was moving, he won’t get far.”
    - Salvo says “Well, I wouldn’t say “ran.” It was more of a labored trot. Like an old lady trying to beat a walk signal).
    - Salvo makes a joke about following Doug’s trail of “Almond Joy wrappers.”
* Potential Ageism: Sebastian says, "but you're still somehow managing to mash your saggy old privates together like two heavyweight boxers!" which both paints older folks as frumpy and unattractive and is also is a jab at "heavyweight" or larger-bodied folks.