**Spellcheck For Bias: *Beast***

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January, 2021

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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 *Beast* for Universal Pictures:

* [Gender](#7rdsrmby8a10)
* [Race/Ethnicity](#km0uzj1c47vm)
* [LGBTQ+](#l5fofjr5yyu7)
* [Disability](#phoxthamc9m4)
* [Age (50+)](#w6ssfbo3nmng)
* [Body Size](#ua15q4ot3gj6)

**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 five lines of text or more. In *Beast*, 8 characters met this criterion:

| **CHARACTER NAME** | **LINE COUNT** |
| --- | --- |
| Nate | 261 |
| Martin | 170 |
| Mare | 115 |
| Jess | 77 |
| Likezo | 21 |
| Pilot | 9 |
| Banji | 9 |
| Leader | 5 |

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.***

* 2 characters are specified as female.
* The leading character is specified as male.
* The script contains 0 character opportunities to increase gender diversity.

Characters by Gender

| **FEMALE CHARACTER** | **MALE CHARACTER** | **GENDER UNSPECIFIED** |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | NATE |  |
|  | MARTIN |  |
| MARE |  |  |
| JESS |  |  |
|  | LIKEZO |  |
|  | PILOT |  |
|  | BANJI |  |
|  | LEADER |  |

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.***

* 3 characters are specified as characters of color.
* The leading character has an unspecified race/ethnicity.
* The script contains 4 character opportunities to increase racial/ethnic diversity.

Characters by Race/Ethnicity

| **CHARACTER OF COLOR** | **WHITE CHARACTER** | **RACE/ETHNICITY UNSPECIFIED** |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | NATE |
|  | MARTIN |  |
|  |  | MARE |
|  |  | JESS |
| LIKEZO |  |  |
|  |  | PILOT |
| BANJI |  |  |
| LEADER |  |  |

The Sidney Poitier Test

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



**LGBTQ+ Analysis**

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

* 0 of the characters in the script 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** |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | NATE |  |
|  |  | MARTIN |
|  |  | MARE |
|  |  | JESS |
|  |  | LIKEZO |
|  |  | PILOT |
|  |  | BANJI |
|  |  | LEADER |

The Vito-Russo Test

| **In order to pass the Vito-Russo test, a script/manuscript must:** | |
| --- | --- |
| **NO** | Contain a character that is identifiably lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer. |
| **NO** | 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 as having a disability.
* The script contains 8 character opportunities to increase disability diversity.

Characters by Disability Status

| **CHARACTER WITH DISABILITY** | **CHARACTER WITHOUT DISABILITY** | **DISABILITY STATUS UNSPECIFIED** |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | NATE |
|  |  | MARTIN |
|  |  | MARE |
|  |  | JESS |
|  |  | LIKEZO |
|  |  | PILOT |
|  |  | BANJI |
|  |  | LEADER |

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.***

* 0 characters are specified as ages 50+.
* The leading character is specified as under 50.
* The script contains 4 character opportunities to increase age diversity.

Characters by Age

| **CHARACTER 50+** | **CHARACTER UNDER 50** | **AGE UNSPECIFIED** |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | NATE |  |
|  |  | MARTIN |
|  | MARE |  |
|  | JESS |  |
|  |  | LIKEZO |
|  |  | PILOT |
|  | BANJI |  |
|  |  | LEADER |

The Betty White Test

| **In order to pass the Betty White test, a script/manuscript must have:** | |
| --- | --- |
| **NO** | At least one prominent character (leading, co-leading, supporting character) who is 50+ who; |
| **NO** | 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.***

* 0 characters are specified as having a large body type.
* The leading character is not specified as having a large body type.
* The script contains 7 character opportunities to increase large body type diversity.

Characters by Body Size

| **CHARACTER WITH LARGE BODY TYPE** | **CHARACTER WITH SMALL/MEDIUM BODY TYPE** | **BODY SIZE UNSPECIFIED** |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | NATE |
|  |  | MARTIN |
|  |  | MARE |
|  | JESS |  |
|  |  | LIKEZO |
|  |  | PILOT |
|  |  | BANJI |
|  |  | LEADER |

The Cooper Test

| **In order to pass the Cooper test, a script/manuscript must have:** | |
| --- | --- |
| **NO** | 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** | **NO** | **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+** | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** |  | **NO** |
| **Character with Large Body Type** | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** | **NO** |  |

**Positive Aspects**

* The script does a great job of flipping the Damsel in Distress trope on its head by having the young female characters rescue their father from the lion.
* Nate, a prominent male character, is shown expressing grief, remorse, and a desire to be a good father to his two daughters.
* Jess’ claim to fame as a soccer star is a surprising gender role flip that helps paint her as dynamic and defies stereotypes about women athletes.

**Potential Pitfalls**

* Racism: The script invokes indigenous stereotypes and racialized language to paint African villagers in stark juxtaposition to Americans and white South Africans (e.g., opening with a quote that uses the slur “savages,” referencing how villagers used to “kill cats for bushmeat," painting the “real Tongan Village” as “dangerous,” describing the villager as speaking “broken fucking english”).
* Racism: All characters of color are primarily featured as dead bodies, service workers in white industries, subordinate employees, or villains within the story.
* Sexism/Racism: The script romanticizes male martyrdom (where male characters sacrifice themselves to save female characters from external threats). If main characters are cast as white, the leading white male characters will mainly be saving white women from villains of color and an external threat in the wild.
* Racism: The scene where Likezo, a Black African character, grins while blocking the young girls Jess and Mare, plays into stereotypes about Black men being threatening and predatory.
* Sexism: The script makes clear that female characters play a supporting role to the male characters, who are the main focus of the story: “And Mare. Who we will not see again. Because this is Man vs. Lion. A story as old as Africa."
* Racism: Features extreme violence against Black bodies--almost all victims of the lion are Black, and are killed in brutally violent ways.