

***YOU WILL
NEVER
INFLUENCE
THE
WORLD BY
TRYING TO
BE LIKE IT***

Public Relations Portfolio

Kai Gray

Howard University



Overview

The purpose of this portfolio is to demonstrate my understanding of professional writing through a variety of media samples. I have created these samples over the years and curated them for this portfolio.

Contents

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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / HBO.com

December 20, 2017

Contact: Kai Gray, 609-672-6754, kaigray1221@gmail.com

Oprah Hosts Interview with Insecure Cast

New York, N.Y. -Tomorrow, December 21, 2017 at 9 p.m. ET HBO will air an exclusive interview of the Insecure cast, with Oprah as the interviewer.

The interview will talk black hair, and fashion, and there will also be an exclusive behind the scenes look into filming Insecure.

Issa Rae, the lead star of Insecure, said “ I am very excited for everyone to watch this interview. It’s like a deeper look into who we are. And plus, it’s Oprah! I love Oprah.”

Get ready for a night full of laughter and powerful insights from a group of influential black women.

The interview can be streamed on HBO.com.

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Media Advisory

MEDIA ADVISORY / INSECURE HBO

November 29, 2017

Contact: Kai Gray, 609- 672-6754, kaigray1221@yahoo.com

HBO to Release Exclusive Behind the Scenes Interview with Insecure Cast

New York, N.Y.– On December 21, 2017 HBO will air an exclusive behind the scenes interview with the ladies of Insecure cast.

This interview is to be conducted by Oprah. The women will talk black hair, black fashion, filming the television show, amongst other pertinent topics.

RSVP is requested to Email.

WHAT: To be aired on HBO, Oprah will facilitate an exclusive interview and behind the scenes look of the Insecure cast.

WHEN: December 21, 2017 at 9 p.m. ET

WHO: Issa Rae, and her fellow co- stars, Yvonne Orji, Amanda Seales, and Natasha Rowell.

WHERE: Will be aired on television everywhere

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Media Advisory

MEDIA ADVISORY

November 22, 2017

Contact: Kai Gray, 6096726754, kaigray1221@gmail.com

Upcoming Debate for Howard University Student Body President

DATELINE – Washington, D. C.

On April 3, 2018 at 2 p.m. Michael Jordan and Bart Simpson will have a student body presidential debate.

Michael Jordan, a popular and driven student, will battle his opponent for HU student body president. The two candidates will be participating in a debate so students can get a better understanding of Jordan's stances on preeminent topics important to HU students, and will give further insight on his innovative campaign.

RSVP is requested to Email.

WHAT: Michael Jordan is in the running to be student body president and will be participating in an important debate.

WHEN: April 3, 2018 at 2 p.m.

WHO: Michael Jordan

WHERE: Blackburn Auditorium

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Op- Ed

Why *Blackish*'s Portrayal of Howard University Made Me Cringe

It is always interesting to see how Historically Black Colleges and Universities are portrayed on TV, and this week's episode of *Blackish* definitely had an interesting take. Dre, the main character on *Blackish*, is a Howard Alum on the show (and in real life, I might add). His son, Junior., had just been accepted into Dre's alma mater, and Dre spends the entire episode convincing Junior. to attend.

Let it be known, in the beginning of the episode Junior and his mother, Bow, completely disregarded Howard as an option. In fact, Junior only goes to visit Howard to appease his father.

Their entire experience at Howard University was cringe worthy.

When they arrive on campus, the first thing they see are students protesting. The protesters hold signs that say "Students > Money". The camera then reveals another group of protesters, who are also students. The two student groups are in fact protesting each other, and not "the man".

Dre also goes into the library and yells out the infamous "HU!" chant and is ignored by everyone. The students tell him to be quiet because they are studying.

As a current Howard student, who is very proud of her HBCU, the way that they attempted to portray the experience was all wrong. The scenery on the show looked nothing like Howard's actual campus. Also, depicting protests on the show was insensitive. At the time the episode was released, HU students were occupying the A Building due to mismanagement of university funds. I think *Blackish* made a slight joke of that.

It also did not help that Junior clearly did not want to be there. If he had a sour attitude, his experience was also going to be sour.

At the end of the episode, Junior actually makes the decision to attend Howard. He says Howard is the only place where he's seen Black kids on the opposite side of the same protest, and the only place where he's seen so many different Black people. The end of the episode painted HU in a more positive light. However, the representation of Howard on the show could have and *should* have been more authentic. Since Junior made the decision to attend there in the fall, it will be interesting to see how it is depicted in future episodes.

Story Pitch

I would like to write a story that examines how gentrification has affected Washington D.C., and thereby affected Howard University.

This article will examine how recent gentrification has affected Washington D.C., and thereby affected Howard University. The article will touch on how D.C. natives feel towards changes in their neighborhoods, how Howard students feel about living in the Shaw area. Also analyze how the neighborhood's continuous changes will change Howard University culture.

Most D.C. natives have a negative attitude towards the gentrification. They have been pushed out of their homes, and the cost of living is expensive. Howard students also do not like the gentrification for the same reasons, but HU students also have problems with the neighbors.

It is important for someone to write this piece because gentrifiers should be aware of how they are affecting the community.

If my draft is accepted, I can turn in a draft by next week.

Best,

Kai Gray

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News Story

Eminem performed at Yardfest on Friday

After his socially conscious freestyle at the BET Awards, Eminem was invited to perform at Howard University's Yardfest on Friday. Howard students were impressed by Eminem's dissing Donald Trump, and petitioned to have him perform at their beloved homecoming. Eminem has actually been trying to perform at Howard University for years. He said "Man, I love Howard. I think it's a great school. I've always wanted to perform there but you know, it was just never the right time. But this year, we going up!"

Howard University Administration was also pleased to announce this performer, after weeks of students doubting this year's homecoming. Early yesterday morning, a tweet from Howard University's official Twitter account was released announcing Eminem as the main act for this year's Yardfest. This tweet received a lot of praise, from students. One junior student even tweeted "Honestly, @HowardU, I doubted y'all. But y'all came through!"

As the preparation for homecoming on Howard University's campus actually begins, you can see posters of Eminem all around the campus. When we asked a student their thoughts on the Homecoming lineup she said "You know, I'm not like a huge Eminem fan. And he hasn't had any hits in like 10 years. But, I am still excited to see him perform. I love the throwbacks!"

Eminem is rumored to be joined by other notable celebrities like P. Diddy, Cardi B. and Gucci Mane.

Feature Story

Please Stop Killing Us

Police shootings where African Americans are targeted is occurring very regularly. When asked about recent police shootings Howard University student, Kayla Dillard said, “ It’s just really tiring you know. It’s like nobody outside of our Black community wants to see a change.” She is tired of Black people constantly being shot. “ I just feel helpless; but the Black Lives Matter movement is still going on so that’s a good thing.” Dillard believes that the shooting should come to an end, and she believes protesting is making a difference.

“ I definitely feel like these police shootings directly affect me,” said Alexis Pintella, an Elementary Education major at Howard University. “ I have two little brothers and I always tell them to be safe, you know. Never mind the fact that they are young, they can still be a target when it comes to the police. I’m just like never get too comfortable because that could be you.” Pintella feels like police brutality should directly affect every black person in America, no matter what gender. “ It’s not only our black men being killed, but also us as women. All we can do is pray and stay safe.”

“ I feel like all of the recent police shootings need to stop. They happen like everyday.” Alexis Powell is a Howard University Psychology student from Baltimore, Maryland. She remembers when Freddie Gray was a victim of police brutality and citizens of Baltimore rioted. The riots happened right by her house. “ It’s like we riot. Okay. Nothing changes. We protest peacefully and nothing changes. It’s just like what can we do?” Powell believes that it is time for a change, and that getting killed by the people who are supposed to protect citizens of America is not something we should think about daily. She is not sure how to end police brutality, because a number of solutions have been proposed, but none were effective.

Hard News Story

Why Do Y'all Keep Calling The Cops?

Howard University is undeniably Black, with its Black students, Black culture, and its strategic placement in a Black neighborhood. However, this is beginning to change. There is a lot of gentrification occurring in the Shaw-Howard community. The nearby residents often complain about noise levels coming from the students. They also complain about college students exhibiting normal college student behavior. Howard University administration even sent out a mass email calling students 'embarrassments.' The administration claims students are tarnishing the Howard brand.

Howard University is a school that is known for its lively culture. These nearby residents' complaints are causing events that contribute to this brand, such as Yard Fest, and the parties to be taken away. This upsets many Howard students. For example, when I asked Matisse James how he feels about the nearby residents' complaints and how Howard administration reacted, she said, "Howard is trying to reform in order to be accepted by the white residents. And I don't know why, because Howard has been here longer. We've been on this hill for over 150 years!" Howard students feel that the nearby residents have no right to call the cops when everyone acts the same way.

I asked another student, by the name of Corey Taylor how he feels about noise complaints. He responded by saying "I don't know man. Whenever they call the cops, I'm always like 'why?' We work hard; we're just trying to celebrate all of our accomplishments. Class is stressful man." His friend shook his head in agreement. He chimed in by saying "Oh my gosh it's terrible. Ho Chi even renovated on us. But as long as they're still serving the same wings, it's all good." HoChi, also known as Howard China is a restaurant that many students love. Its open late nights and after parties, students often go there to purchase a six wing platter with fries and mumbo sauce all over. It is known for its ruggedness, with its bare interior and cracked windows. Recently, it was renovated. It has a new sign, comfortable, shiny chairs, and even an ATM inside. It's old look was charming to students. It was familiar. And because even beloved HoChi has changed, students feel like everything around them is changing.

In fact, if you walk down Georgia Ave you can see the obvious change. There is a store that is always blasting go-go music, a sound that was originated by DC's Black population. A student said "When they stop playing go-go music on the corner, then you know DC has been all the way gentrified. This won't be Chocolate City anymore, and Howard won't ever be the same."

News Story

St.Luke's Festival

St. Luke's Episcopal Church is the first independent, historically African American Episcopal church in the Washington D. C. area. Father Alexander Crummel founded St. Luke's in 1880 during a time period when blacks were being denied their right to worship. Black Episcopalians could only worship at churches in Georgetown where they were confined to one section. Crummel, sick of the segregation, decided it was time for a change.

Today, St. Luke's is thriving under the leadership of Rev. Raymond Massenburg, PhD. Rev. Massenburg and members of the congregation thought it important to hold an event that would engage their community. On the weekend of September 9, 2016- September 11, 2016, the church held a festival to celebrate the legacy of their founder.

Angela Wright who is the Jr. warden of the vestry grew up worshipping at St. Luke's. She has noticed how the community has completely changed over the years. She said " This festival is important because we want to reach out to the community. Now, the community is filled with people who are constantly moving, and in the midst of all that, the church is still here. We are hosting this festival to let people know we're apart of the community, and that we would like them to be apart of our church community as well."

During the weekend of September 9th – 11th, St. Luke's parking lot was packed! Many people stopped by and were intrigued by the many performances, the diverse dining options and the also the other amenities. Rev. Massenburg said, "This weekend we have come here to solidify the community. We will eat, dance, and be blessed."

Friday and Saturday were family fun days. On Sunday, September 11, 2016, the festival came to an end with a church service and guest sermon by Dennis D. Patterson Jr. When asked why he felt it was important to preach on such an important weekend, Patterson said, " It is always important to preach. For me, it helps us to remember where we've been , to reflect, and to know how God is working."

Besides Dennis Patterson Jr., members of Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church, Foundry United Methodist, and St. Thomas Episcopal joined St. Luke's to celebrate.

Following service, there was a blessing for first responders, such as police and firemen to honor them on the historical date of September 11, 2016.

Overall the festival was a success. Eddie Neal, Sr. Warden at St. Luke's believes the weekend was a success. When asked what the next steps were so the festival becomes an annual event, Neal said " The festival can definitely become an annual event. First, the members of St. Luke's have to dig deeper, find out what the community needs and how to address them so that the church and the surrounding community can become one."

Strategic Communications Plan

1. Research: Background

TIDAL is a popular music streaming service that is currently available in 52 countries. It provides a platform for music and entertainment artists and brings together a network of music fans throughout the world. TIDAL holds over 46 million songs and 175,000 videos. TIDAL values its universal selection of music and excellent video quality. TIDAL is owned by a number of prominent music artists. To name a few, artists include Jay-Z, Beyoncé, Alicia Keys, Damian Marley, Rihanna and Nicki Minaj. Its users should receive both exclusive digital content and unique real-life experiences carefully catered to their musical preferences.

TIDAL's overarching goal is to promote full artistic freedom and provide fair compensation for artists. TIDAL is a space where the artist has the freedom to create music, videos, documentaries and more to then share these projects freely with subscribers. The goal is to create a connection between artists and fans that can't be found at any other streaming service or company.

Primary and secondary research has found that current trends among music listeners include streaming music and music festivals. 32 million people go to at least one U.S. music festival a year, 14.7 million (about half) of those who attend these festivals are millennials. Research has found that millennials value experiences as opposed to owning things and that they care deeply about personalized experiences. This explains the attendance of millennials to music festivals as they provide a unique experience that combines everything millennials love.

Another trend found among music listeners is streaming music. In its annual "Music 360" survey, Nielsen has found that streaming in all various formats combined surpasses the use of radio. Music listeners prefer on-demand services (Tidal, spotify, apple music etc.) 12% of the time, programmed audio (Pandora) 11% of the time, streaming video (YouTube) 10% of the time and streaming live radio (iHeart Radio, TuneIn) 4% of the time. Traditional radio is the preferred source of music only 27% of the time. According to Forbes, on-demand streaming is used for 51% of younger millennials' daily listening whereas when considering all ages, on-demand streaming only accounts for 24% of daily listening.

2. Situation analysis:

The recent growth in popularity of music streaming and music festivals serves as an opportunity for TIDAL. We will differentiate our brand through promoting its exclusivity. This will entail exclusive listening events, pop-up shops, event volunteer opportunities, raffle prizes and more that will be of access solely to our subscribers. We want to provide our subscribers

with experiences that make them feel exclusive and to feel reassured in the money that they are spending.

A potential difficulty would be an increase in competition from competitors. In seeing our approach of pushing exclusivity, competitors may try to incorporate that theme and create subscriber benefits that may be more appealing than ours. It is important that we fully capture what our target audience desires and that we provide a unique subscription experience in order to yield the best results.

3. Core problem/ opportunity

Kanye West is a controversial star, and it may be hard to push his music.

4. Goals and objectives

The goals of this event are:

- to raise brand awareness
- increase engagement with our audience (millennial music lovers)

We have three main objectives here at Tidal:

- We would like to increase brand visibility and affirm Tidal as the leader in its music industry.
- We want to develop a relationship with millennial music lovers and increase interactivity with them as well.
- We want to inform our audience through providing education about music streaming and industry trends.

5. Strategies and tactics

We will have a transit takeover, a social media campaign, pop up parties, release a TIDAL Kanye's Best playlist, and other exclusive perks for TIDAL subscribers.

6. Calendar and budget

-Calendar-

The campaign will be a total of 8 weeks, and run from May 1, 2018- July 6, 2018.

Week 1- During the first week we will release clips on social media platforms. The clips will feature TIDAL artists, and messaging will center around TIDAL values and missions. Doing this will draw attention to TIDAL as a brand.

Week 2 - We will have a TIDAL pop - up party that focuses on the quality of TIDAL's video technology. The main purpose of the party is to have fun, and celebrate TIDAL. At the party, attendees will be allowed to create their own music videos. A kiosk will be provided, equipped with TIDAL's exceptional video technology.

Week 3- In Week 3, we will begin to focus on Kanye West. On Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook we will post Kanye West's various album covers, and ask people which album is their favorite? We will also be releasing a "Kanye's Best" playlist.

Week 4 - We will release a promo video for Kanye West's upcoming Yeezy Season 3.

Week 5- We will implement a 'transit takeover' and billboards.

Week 6- We will have a call for volunteers to work the upcoming Yeezy Season 3 production. Volunteers will also get exclusive backstage access to show and also time spent with Kanye West. This offer is only available to TIDAL subscribers. We will also continue to promote on social media, billboards, and transit ads.

Week 7- We will have an exclusive early listening party for a few TIDAL subscribers. Since Kanye's project is to be debuted at the Yeezy Season 3 show, they are a few of the first listeners. At the party, there will be no recording allowed, to make sure nothing is being leaked.

Week 8 - With Yeezy Season 3 being next week, we will continue promotion efforts. This week messaging will include the fact that the concert is only one week away, and we will continue to urge people to subscribe to TIDAL, and buy tickets for Yeezy Season 3 upcoming show.

-Budget-

The proposed budget is \$1.5 million.

Social media promotion - Instagram average CPM is \$6.70 per thousand views. If 15 million people view our video that is at least \$100,500. \$50,00 budget for snapchat filters.

The initial promotion video for TIDAL (week 1) will cost about \$5,000. Video should be able to be produced in house because we will use already existing TIDAL footage. The new promo video for Yeezy Season 3 (week 4) will cost about \$342,000 if created by an outside advertising agency.

The pop-up TIDAL party (week 2) and Yeezy Season 3 listening party (week 7) will cost about \$200,000 in total, including venue pricing, food and drinks, decor, and free giveaways, etc. for each party.

Transit takeover - Large billboards can be up to \$5,000 a month so if we have 40 large billboards in the NYC area that is up to \$200,000. Ads on subway platforms are \$60,000 to have coverage in 300 stations. Ads on subway cars are \$44,000 to cover 25% of ad spaces.

In total, this campaign will cost \$1,002,000- \$1,500,000.

7. Communication and Confirmation

-Our key public consists of millennials and music consumers.

-Our objective is to raise brand awareness, subscriptions and site traffic.

-Our self interests directly align with our overall goal; to gain more subscribers and increase site traffic, ticket sales and engagement.



-Primary Messages include: “Support your favorite artist”

-“Subscribe to Tidal”

-“Get more for less”

Our opinion leader for this project is Kanye West, music star and Tidal artist. His talents in both music and fashion will help bring a wide audience as well as his current fan base.

Our strategy is to target millennials through their platforms and campuses. Young adults nowadays don't watch commercials or other forms of typical advertisements, so we will bring our company to them, advertising on popular social media platforms and bringing physical advertisements to college campuses or trendy spots throughout cities. Typical advertisements such as billboards and commercials will still be implemented to reach a broader audience.

Tactics will include Social media engagement (clips, promo videos, graphics), pop up shops, listening parties, advertising on campus and throughout cities on billboards, posters, etc. and TV commercials.

8. Evaluation and criteria tools: Analytic capabilities of social media platforms.

With implementation of these strategies and tactics, the results should harbor at least a 40% increase in subscriptions, sales and traffic to the site.