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## **AMERICAN BLACK FILM FESTIVAL (ABFF) ANNOUNCES LINEUP OF 2014 ABFF UNIVERSITY MASTER CLASSES**

**Featuring Robert Townsend's "The Ultimate Pitch" and Bill Duke's "Actors Boot Camp," Held at New York City's Metropolitan Pavilion**

--Presented by Time Warner Foundation, in association with the ABFF Foundation--

New York, NY - April 14, 2014 – Film Life, Inc. is proud to announce its lineup of the highly lauded **ABFF University Master Class Series** to be held during the 18<sup>th</sup> annual American Black Film Festival (ABFF) in New York City on June 19-22, 2014.

Aspiring writers, actors and filmmakers have the opportunity to participate in intense workshops led by highly respected film industry leaders and experts such as actor, writer, director Robert Townsend (*In the Hive*) and actor, director, producer Bill Duke (*Dark Girls*).

This year's **Master Class** lineup includes, "**Bill Duke's Actors Boot Camp**," one of the Festival's most anticipated, is a 2-day scene study program where performance and the craft of acting is shaped through hands on direction and supportive critique from Mr. Duke. Session I is scheduled to take place on **Friday, June 20, 12:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.** and session II, **Saturday, June 21, 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.**

"**The Ultimate Pitch**," led by Robert Townsend is designed for those seeking to master the art of pitching. Held on **Saturday, June 21, 9:30 a.m. – 12 noon**, this class will explore techniques for pitching ideas from concept to development, through the different stages of rewrites, pitching to executives at studios and advice on how to close the deal with clarity, precision and confidence. Direct critique will be given to selected class attendees, who pitch their story ideas, idea in order to help refine them.

The "**Writing for Television**" **Master Class**, conducted by Vice President of Programming Talent Development & Inclusion at NBC Entertainment & Universal Television, Karen Horne, will delve into the fundamentals of writing for television - how to structure and write a spec script, as well as how to develop your TV show idea. This class, held on Saturday, **June 21, 1:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**, will also include a special presentation by the Writer's Guild of America East.

**“How to Avoid the Pitfalls of Producing,”** led by SAGIndie National Director Darrien M. Gipson, will cover the creative, executive and technical (line producing and production management) responsibilities in all phases of production and distribution, and will provide an overview of a film producer's core responsibilities, including a look at film financing and funding sources. This **Master Class** will be held on **Sunday, June 22, 9:30 a.m. – 12 noon.**

“Encouraging serious study of the key disciplines of filmmaking is essential to creating quality art and is the most important function of ABFF’s Master Class Series,” said Jeff Friday, ABFF Founder and CEO of Film Life, Inc., “Learning from seasoned professionals who do this for a living is one way to pick up some invaluable lessons.”

"As a global company, Time Warner is committed to lighting up the world with the best storytelling. And that commitment is the inspiration for the mission of the Time Warner Foundation - to discover, nurture and celebrate the next generation of storytellers," says, Lisa Garcia Quiroz, Chief Diversity Officer & SVP, Time Warner Inc., and President of the Time Warner Foundation. "Through innovative partnerships with leading arts organizations we invest in programs that help develop promising talent from all backgrounds. And this is why we are so proud to lend our support to the ABFF Master Class initiative and look forward to the 2014 American Black Film Festival in New York City."

The ABFF is a four-day event dedicated to showcasing quality films by and about people of African descent. Committed to the belief that Black content creators and artists deserve the same opportunities as their mainstream counterparts, Jeff Friday conceived the festival in 1997 as a vehicle to promote diversity in the film and television industry. Today it is widely recognized as an important pipeline bringing new Black talent to prominence both in front of and behind the camera, and is regarded as one of the leading film festivals in the world.

The American Black Film Festival is presented by Film Life, Inc., a multifaceted entertainment company headquartered in New York City. Sponsors to date include: HBO® (Founding and Premier), Cadillac (Premier), Black Enterprise (Premier Media), American Airlines, Colgate, Time Warner Foundation (Signature), Comcast/NBCUniversal, UP (Official Sponsors), and American Family Insurance, CNN, Gentle Treatment, Nielsen (Supporting). Other Media Partners include Filmmaker Magazine, Upscale and Uptown.

Industry and Promotional Partners include Entertainment Power Players, IFP, Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), National Association of Latino Independent Producers, New York Women in Film and Television, NYC & Company, NYU Tisch School of the Arts, Producers Guild of America (PGA), SAGIndie, Woman In Film Los Angeles, and Writer's Guild of America (WGA).

Festival passes and tickets are on sale now and for more information, please visit [www.abff.com](http://www.abff.com).

### **Follow us on our Social Media Platforms:**

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