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## **THE 17<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL AMERICAN BLACK FILM FESTIVAL (ABFF) ANNOUNCES FINALISTS IN THE COMEDY WINGS COMPETITION**

### ***FOUR EMERGING COMEDIANS WILL COMPETE FOR TOP SPOT AT ABFF IN JUNE***

New York, NY (April 22, 2013) – Film Life, Inc., producers of the American Black Film Festival (ABFF), announced today the selection of the four finalists who competed in **The Comedy Wings Competition** semi-finals round held last night at the world-famous Comedy Store in Los Angeles, CA. The four finalists, who received the highest scores out of nine semi-finalists, are: LA's own **Raneir Pollard**, Bronx native **Trev Houston**, **Michael Head** from Cleveland, OH and New York City's **Zainab Johnson**. Selected from an incredibly talented group, these charismatic and gregarious comics will travel to Miami Beach to take the stage in front of a lively festival audience in the final round of the **The Comedy Wings Competition**. Sponsored by HBO, the final round will take place on Friday, June 21<sup>st</sup> from 9:30PM – 11:00PM in the Main Hall at the Ritz Carlton, South Beach Hotel.

The participating comics were judged by the industry's foremost artists and industry experts, including Anthony Anderson, Brely Evans and Affion Crockett, casting director, Robi Reed and "Def Comedy Jam" producer Bob Sumner, along with senior talent executives from HBO, NBCUniversal, Nickelodeon, TBS and Comedy Central, on their overall performance, originality of material and audience reaction. The show was attended by some of the top names in comedy, including Damon Wayans and Robert Townsend.

"One of our goals is to highlight new talent in creative and relevant ways, both in front and behind the camera," states Jeff Friday, ABFF Founder and CEO of Film Life, Inc. "The Comedy Wings Competition is an extension of this goal, with hopes of creating pathways to opportunities within the industry for emerging comedians." He adds, "The concept of this competition and the talent discovered through this process is unique and transfers to other mediums, such as television and even as a web series."

**The Comedy Wings Competition** is one of several platforms innovated by the ABFF designed to uncover talent and introduce them to a broader audience. ABFF has always participated in the cultivation of Black talent and has provided a stage over the years for dynamic performers such as Kevin Hart, Cedric the Entertainer, Craig Robinson, Tommy Davidson and Bill Bellamy.

### **About The American Black Film Festival (ABFF):**

The American Black Film Festival (ABFF) is a five-day retreat and international film market dedicated to strengthening the Black filmmaking community. Established in 1997, the core mission of the ABFF is to promote cultural diversity within the motion picture industry. Through its film showcases and special contests, it annually introduces the top echelon of emerging artists to the film and television industry.

### **About Film Life, Inc.:**

The ABFF is a property of Film Life, Inc., a multi-faceted entertainment company headquartered in New York City. The company was founded in 2001 by Jeff Friday, a veteran of the consumer product marketing and advertising industries. While best known for creating the American Black Film Festival (ABFF), Film Life's operations center on developing/licensing innovative content across all forms of media and providing strategic advisory services to a wide range of companies in the entertainment, media and consumer product industries.

HBO (Founder and Premier), Cadillac (Premier); American Airlines, GMC TV, CNN, Codeblack Entertainment, Comcast/NBCUniversal, Nickelodeon (Official); American Family Insurance, BET, Grab Media, Nielsen, and Stella Artois (Supporting); Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau (GMCVB), Southeast Overtown/Park West Community Redevelopment Agency, Miami Beach Visitor & Convention Authority (VCA) and Miami-Dade County Tourist Development Council (Host Sponsors); GIANTlife.com and Macy's (Promotional Partners); Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), One Village Entertainment, SAGIndie, Writers Guild of America West (Industry Partners).

Media Partners: HuffPost/AOL Black Voices, Black Enterprise and Uptown Magazine (Official Media); Precious Times and Upscale Magazine (Supporting Media).

For full details on this year's festival, please visit [www.ABFF.com](http://www.ABFF.com).

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