



***DENZEL WASHINGTON, ISSA RAE AND F. GARY GRAY CONFIRMED AS HONOREES AT THE 2017 “BET PRESENTS THE AMERICAN BLACK FILM FESTIVAL HONORS”***

*ACTRESS REGINA HALL TO HOST ANNUAL CEREMONY*

*Show Tapes Friday, February 17 in Los Angeles and will air on BET  
Wednesday, February 22 at 8:00PM ET*

*#ABFFHonors*

Los Angeles, CA – January 31, 2017 – BET Networks and The American Black Film Festival (ABFF) is proud to present actor and director **Denzel Washington** with the “Hollywood Legacy Award;” writer, producer and actress **Issa Rae** with the “Rising Star Award,” and film director and producer **F. Gary Gray** with the “Excellence in the Arts Award” during this year’s “BET Presents The American Black Film Festival Honors.” The awards gala held February 17 at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, CA will air on BET and Centric, Wednesday, February 22 at 8:00PM ET.

ABFF Honors' mission is to celebrate Black culture by honoring individuals, movies and television shows that have had a significant impact on American entertainment, as well as the people who are proponents of championing diversity and inclusion in Hollywood. The annual event will be hosted by actress **Regina Hall**.

This year’s list of honorees includes some of Hollywood’s powerhouses. Denzel Washington is a veteran and iconic figure whose exemplary performances in film and on the stage has been recognized by his peers and loyal fan base. His unforgettable performances have garnered him two Academy Awards, three Golden Globes, a Screen Actors Guild Award and countless others. Denzel’s current project, the critically-acclaimed film adaptation of August Wilson’s *Fences*, in which he produced and directed, also earned him a 2017 Oscar nomination.

Writer, producer and actress, Issa Rae, created her own path by starting out in the online/web space, but has since transitioned to television and is now one of Hollywood’s much-watch talents. Her new show, HBO’s *INSECURE*, took the world by storm this past year with its ridiculously hilarious punch lines, private rap battles and a killer musical selection. It also earned her, her first Golden Globe nomination for “Best Actress in a TV Comedy or Musical.”

F. Gary Gray has been making moves behind the camera since 1989 and has brought some of today’s most buzzworthy and top box office films to the silver screen. Gray directed his first film, the comedy *Friday*, at age 24 and has since gone on to direct some of the biggest names in film, including Academy

Award-winner Kevin Spacey, Academy Award-nominee Samuel L. Jackson in *The Negotiator*, Golden Globe-winner Queen Latifah in *Set if Off*, Academy Award- winner Charlize Theron and Academy Award-nominee Mark Wahlberg in *Italian Job* and Golden Globe and Emmy Award-winner John Travolta in *Be Cool*. Up next, he will direct the eighth installment of *The Fast and the Furious* franchise (*The Fate of the Furious*).

ABFF Honors will be one of the highlights of the Hollywood Awards season and Black History Month. The event is executive produced by ABFF Ventures founder Jeff Friday, Suzanne de Passe and Madison Jones for de Passe Jones Entertainment, Jesse Collins for Jesse Collins Entertainment, and Connie Orlando, Stephen G. Hill and Debra Lee for BET Networks.

The 2017 ABFF Honors sponsors are Cadillac and Prudential Financial Services (Red Carpet Partners), Morgan Stanley (Corporate Partner) and Hennessy (Official Spirit Partner).

For more information about the 2017 ABFF Honors, log on to [www.ABFFHonors.com](http://www.ABFFHonors.com). Also, follow us on our social media platforms:

**SOCIAL MEDIA:**

Twitter: @ABFFHonors  
Instagram: @AmericanBlackFilmFestival  
Facebook: American Black Film Festival  
YouTube: American Black Film Festival  
Website: <http://www.bet.com/shows/abff-honors.html>

For media inquiries and to apply for media credentials for the 2017 ABFF Honors, please log on to <http://abffhonors.com/media/2017-ABFF-Honors-Credential-Application.pdf>.

**ABOUT ABFF**

The American Black Film Festival (ABFF) is an annual event dedicated to showcasing quality film and television content by and about people of African descent. It supports emerging artists to foster a wider range of images, stories and storytellers represented in the entertainment industry. The festival is committed to the belief that Black artists and content creators deserve the same opportunities as their mainstream counterparts. ABFF founder Jeff Friday conceived the festival in 1997 as a vehicle to promote diversity in the motion picture industry, and strengthen the Black filmmaking community through resource sharing, education, artistic collaboration and career development. Today, the ABFF is recognized as the preeminent pipeline to new Black talent, both in front of and behind the camera, and is regarded as one of the leading film festivals in the world. The ABFF is a property of ABFF Ventures LLC, a multifaceted entertainment company specializing in the production of live events, television and digital content targeted to upscale African American audiences.

For additional information about the festival, visit [www.ABFFHonors.com](http://www.ABFFHonors.com).

**ABOUT BET NETWORKS**

BET Networks, a subsidiary of Viacom Inc. (NASDAQ: VIA, VIA.B sted NYSE: VIA, VIA.B), is the nation's leading provider of quality entertainment, music, news and public affairs television programming for the African-American audience. The primary BET channel reaches more than 90 million households and can be seen in the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, the United Kingdom and sub-Saharan Africa. BET is the dominant African-American consumer brand with a diverse group of business extensions: BET.com, a leading Internet destination for Black entertainment, music, culture, and news; CENTRIC, a 24-hour entertainment network targeting the African-American Woman; BET Music Networks - BET Jams, BET Soul and BET Gospel; BET Home Entertainment; BET Live, BET's growing festival business; BET Mobile, which provides ringtones, games and video content for wireless devices; and BET International, which operates BET around the globe.

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