

BET Founder Launching Urban Movie Channel

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'Dark Girls'

Toronto Film Festival

RLJ Entertainment's subscription-based digital channel will feature dramas, docs, comedies and stage plays

RLJ Entertainment, created by BET founder **Robert L. Johnson**, is launching the Urban Movie Channel, it was announced Wednesday morning.

The company's proprietary digital channel will feature urban-themed movies as an alternative to conventional subscription-based channels.

"As founder of BET, I have gained a deep understanding and knowledge about the African American and urban consumer and the entertainment content that appeals to them," said Johnson in a statement. "UMC was designed so that the African American and urban creative community could directly reach consumers in a way that removes many of the restrictions associated with the legacy content development and distribution models. As more video is consumed over broadband, we believe that we can quickly become the preeminent provider of quality urban entertainment to what has largely been an underserved, yet highly engaged audience. I am convinced that urban consumers will gravitate to the economic and entertainment value proposition of UMC and that the creative community will embrace UMC as the best way to reach their loyal fans and benefit financially from showcasing their outstanding work product."

The channel's library will include live stand-up performances by **Kevin Hart**, **Jamie Foxx** and **Charlie Murphy**; documentaries *Dark Girls* and *I Ain't Scared of You: A Tribute to Bernie Mac*; features *All Things Fall Apart* and *The Suspect*; and stage play *What My Husband Doesn't Know*, among others. Programs previously released by RLJE under the One Village brand will also be incorporated, as well as titles from RLJE's existing Image independent feature film line.

UMC will launch with a free trial period for subscribers through February 4, 2015, and with a suggested retail price of \$4.99/month or \$49.99/year thereafter, but with a special limited time introductory pricing of \$2.99/month or \$29.99/year to start.

"As one of the largest independent distributors of entertainment content with nascent propriety streaming channels like Acorn TV, we are uniquely positioned to fulfill the vision of our chairman and deliver to the urban audience an unprecedented library of high-quality video content," added **Miguel Penella**, CEO of RLJE. " We are confident in RLJE's ability to acquire, distribute and monetize existing and original content that will appeal to the urban community across the growing number of distribution platforms."

Coinciding with the launch, **Traci Otey Blunt** joins RLJE as corporate evp, marketing and corporate affairs, after serving for six years as svp of corporate communications and public affairs at RLJE holding company, The RLJ Companies.

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