New Documentary Series Recognizes, Elevates and Illuminates Unsung Black Voices and Stories with Support from Toyota

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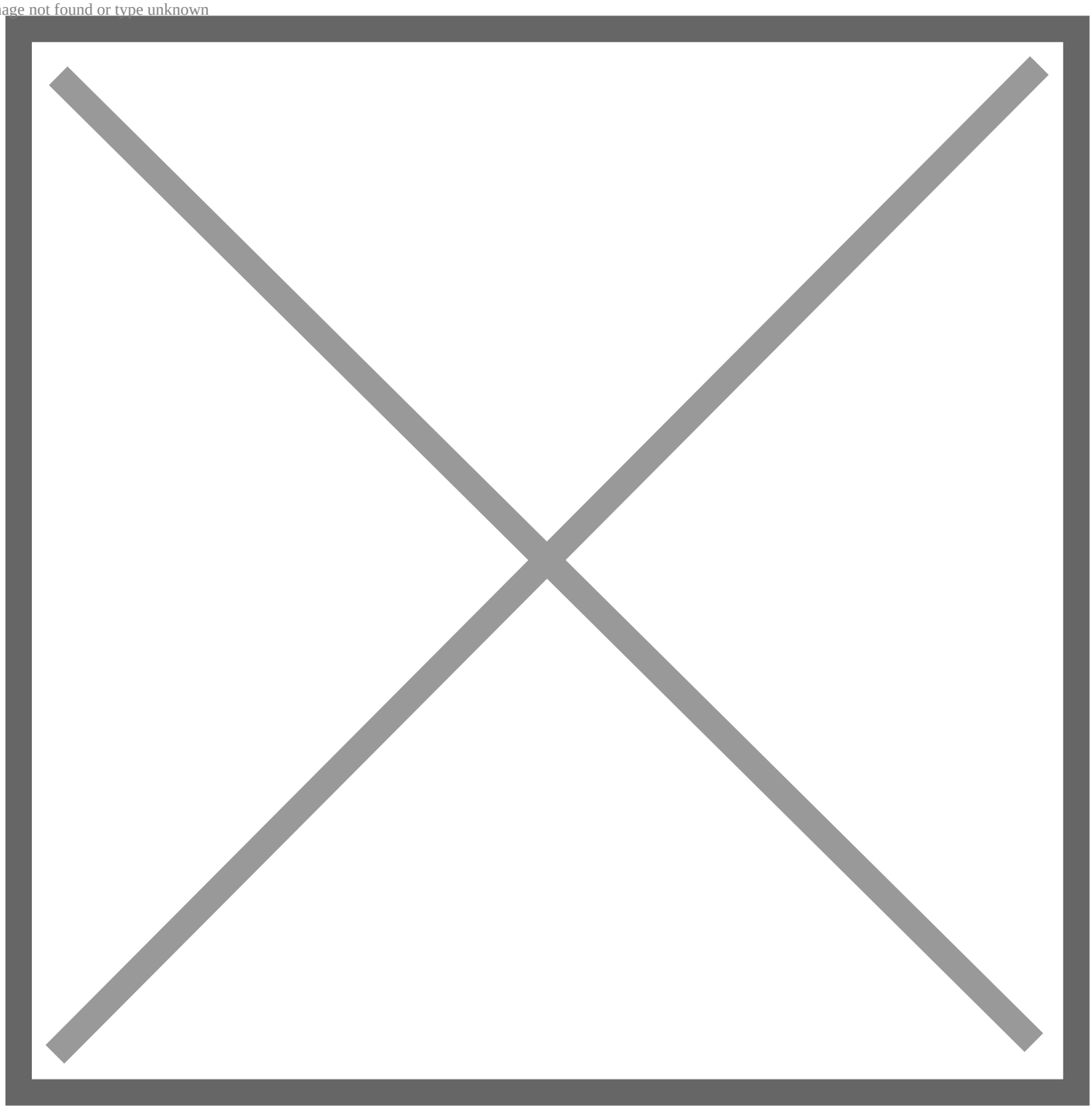

KANSAS CITY, Kan., November 17, 2020 –Toyota announced today the premiere of a new documentary series about the historically Black communities of Kansas City, developed in partnership with content creator Roger Suggs, also known as the rapper 'Vigalantee,' who is the coordinator of Student Activities at Kansas City Kansas Community College (KCKCC). Each episode of the series, titled "TRUTH Mini-Mentary," features Black entrepreneurs, artists and people who are the heartbeat of the community.

The first episode is available for download today at TruthTheReason.com with a new episode released weekly until January. A bundled package will be available after the final episode is released.

Suggs is a social activist for human, civil and labor rights and supports several youth outreach programs in the area. Financial proceeds will support Safe House, a grassroots community program that provides emergency housing for youth and students, a high-quality shared workspace for entrepreneurs with computers, professional printing equipment and screen printers, and a community gathering space for guest speakers, workshops and networking events.

"The journey of creating this docuseries has not only deepened the love I have for my community, city and people, but it has underscored the sense of pride I have in calling Kansas City home," Suggs said. "I've been uplifting Kansas City my entire life because I know its greatness. Producing and directing this 10-episode docuseries, starring people who are hidden jewels, has been a humble honor, and I could easily do many, many more. I'm looking forward to the support from not only Kansas City, but from the country as people watch each amazing story unfold, leaving them wanting more."

"Our partnership with this project is another opportunity to deepen relationships with our customers and the communities where we live and work," said Curt McAllister, Midwest public relations manager, Toyota Motor North America. "Each story in this series highlights the human spirit and I promise you will be inspired to contemplate new perspectives and be deeply moved throughout the episodes."

Suggs, along with Toyota, offered the financial support for filming and editing, and Toyota provided loans of several 2020 Toyota vehicles that are woven seamlessly into the storytelling. Suggs had total creative license to create the series, and he brought his unique approach to storytelling and overall creative direction.

Stories about a community barber and legendary pizza maker, to a heart transplant survivor and several musical geniuses, a list and description of all episodes follows:

1. Surviving Quindaro: The Gary Wilson Story (aired May 2020)
   Gary Wilson runs Wilson's Pizza and Grill, one of KCK's best spots to eat and also the last and only place serving the community of Quindaro Blvd. following decades of social decline and gentrification.

2. Diamond in the Dotte: The Crayge Lindesay Story Norman Brown. Aaron Hall. Lisa Stansfield. Luniz. Most of these artists play wildly different styles of music from one another, but they are united by one common thread: Acclaimed musician and producer Crayge Lindesay. He is behind one of Hip-Hop's most famous songs, "I Got 5 On It," and has mentored plenty of young producers that have gone on to make a name for themselves. Now, he's back on the Dotte to give right back to the community that raised him.

3. The Blueprint: The James Holts Story
   The Kansas City area is home to one of the most underrated Barber Shop scenes in the country, but it seems to be a well-kept secret that most of those barbers learned the ropes from one place.

4. Urban American Outdoors: The Wayne Hubbard Story
   From a single pilot, to a critically acclaimed Emmy award-winning series, Wayne Hubbard and Candice price have built a robust brand in "Urban American Outdoors," by showing people of color engaging in outdoor activities. However, the path to success has not been without challenges, and prejudices.

5. Heart To Heart: The Christopher Williams Story
   A heart transplant is one of the most difficult medical procedures to recover from, and potentially alters one's lifestyle permanently. Christopher Williams has survived it… twice.

6. Survivor of the Fatherless: The Lavance Meeks, Jr. Story
   To grow up without a parental figure, especially a father, can be a soul-crushing experience, and an all-too-common one among youth today. Lavance Meeks, Jr. shares his personal journey of coming to terms with the absence of his father, becoming an author to guide other fatherless people, and ultimately breaking the cycle with his own new family.

7. The Rose That Grew From Concrete: The Talena Acon Story
   There are certain people in the world, the rare few, that have always known exactly what they were made to do. Talena Acon is one of KCK's most talented Emcees, having grown up among music from her first memories and onward. Through trials, tribulations, and an unmatched willpower, she is indeed the rose that grew from the concrete.

8. America Patton: The Man, The Mentor, The Musician
   With acclaimed jazz musician and bagpipe master Rufus Harley as his father, America Patton comes from a heritage of pioneers. Although a force to be reckoned with on the Trumpet, America's latest endeavor involves teaching and encouraging the youth at the historic, but unfortunately forgotten Vernon School. Alongside Mr. Luther Smith, America seeks to bring long-deserved attention to the Quindaro Ruins, and their rich history with the underground railroad.

9. FBOE: The Little Engine That Could
   How does a Hip-Hop artist, with no degree, and up against doctors and renowned activists for a job on campus, go on to win the spot, and create a wildly popular and successful College Program? Roger Suggs came onto the KCKCC campus with an unshakeable vision of a program created to guide and mentor college students, as well as give them the aid and support he rarely had at their age. Even through the naysayers, and with some unexpected support, Fringe Benefits Of Education has now been a KCKCC staple for more than 13 years and counting.

10. The Rise of the Entrepreneur
    With a rapidly changing economy, shrinking job market, and college degrees not holding the same value they used to, many have turned from the traditional job structure, and have instead chosen to carve their own path. In Kansas City, Kansas alone, there are hundreds of people starting their own business venture, from authors, to restaurants, clothing, and so much more. These are just a handful of the stories told every day, from our rising entrepreneurs.