

ABC's "The Bachelor" & "The Bachelorette" Face Lawsuit For Racial Discrimination



By Steven Zangrillo

New York, NY – ABC's "The Bachelor" and "The Bachelorette" have another ugly public controversy to deal with. Despite 23 seasons of success, this past year has been tough on executive producer Michael Fleiss, as he is now dealing with his second set of legal issues in the span of a few months. CupidsPulse.com listened in on a press conference yesterday surrounding the impending class-action lawsuit against the popular ABC reality franchise for racial discrimination. The plaintiffs, Nathaniel Claybrooks and Christopher Johnson, are two African-American males who say they were discriminated against during the casting call process.

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The plaintiffs are suing American Broadcast Companies, Inc., Warner Horizon Television, Inc., Next Entertainment, Inc., NZK Productions, Inc., and Michael Fleiss, the executive producer of the franchise, on behalf of all other persons of color who have applied for the role of the Bachelor or Bachelorette but been denied equal opportunity for selection on the basis of race. The case alleges that the Defendants violated both federal and California laws intended to guarantee equal opportunity in business, commerce, and media regardless of one's skin color.

Christopher Johnson, who is an aspiring professional football player, was cognizant of the show's history of white-only contestants. "I knew at the time that there had never been a non-white Bachelor before, but I thought that a minority candidate with my qualifications would at least be considered," added Mr. Johnson. "In reality, it seems they never seriously looked at non-white candidates."

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Never, over 10 years and a combined total of 23 seasons of "The Bachelor" and "The Bachelorette," has either show featured a single person of color—whether African American, Latino, Asian, or any other minority race or ethnicity—in the central role of the "Bachelor" or "Bachelorette." In 16 seasons of "The Bachelor" and seven seasons of "The Bachelorette," every person featured in the lead role on either show has been white.

Jesse Csincsak, winner of "The Bachelorette" Season 4, has had his own issues with Michael Fleiss. As recently as January, Csincsak was exploring the possibility of pursuing his own class-action suit against Fleiss and the producers. When Jesse was asked if he thought his lawsuit has inspired others to do

the same he responded "I've been saying this for a long time. When someone stands up to this guy, other people will start coming forward. It's like rats in a flood."

It's anyone's guess where this will lead.