

National Association of Black Journalists

Winter 2010

NABJ

e-journal

Kathy Times: The President's
vision for NABJ

Maurice Foster: A veteran
executive leads HQ

Michele Norris: *The Grace of Silence*

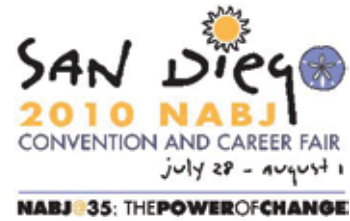
BRIDGING THE

DIGITAL

DIVIDE

NABJ Turns 35: West Coast style

The West Coast hub nicknamed “America’s Finest City” offered the setting for NABJ’s 35th annual Convention and Career Fair. Among the highlights were Special Honors Awards to Paul Delaney, lifetime achievement winner, James Hawkins, educator of the year, Philip Lucas, student journalist of the year,



Founder Paul Delaney receives his Lifetime Award from past award recipient Michael Wilbon.

Paula Madison, legacy award winner, Michael Feeney, emerging journalist of the year, Michelle Singletary, community service award winner, NBC Universal, best practices, and Soledad O’Brien, journalist of the year. NABJ also offered its first Journalism Lab for high school students who were exposed to a cross-platform journalism training experience and future careers in journalism. President Kathy Times gave her President’s Award to interim Executive Director Drew Berry. Members attended events such as an opening reception on the USS Midway and filled-to-capacity events such as the Gospel Brunch with CeCe Winans. The convention ended with a Philly Love kickoff party, red-themed and raucously fun.



Paula Madison of NBC Universal is presented with the NABJ Legacy Award from past president Bob Red.



Vice President-Print Deirdre M. Childress and Vice President-Broadcast Bob Butler present the Best Practices Award to NBC Universal President Jeff Zucker.



FAMU alumna President Kathy Times and Student Representative Georgia Dawkins posed with the Educator of the Year, James Hawkins, FAMU’s SJGC Dean.



Student Journalist of the Year Philip Lucas of Howard University is all smiles as he accepts his award.



(clockwise from top) Interim Executive Director **Drew Berry** receives the President’s Award from Times. **Soledad O’Brien** accepts the NABJ Journalist of the Year award. **Times** greets Emerging Journalist award winner Michael Feeney with Treasurer Gregory Lee Jr.. Berry greets well-wishers.

INTRODUCING  NABJ EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Maurice *foster*

The NABJ Board of Directors hired Maurice Foster as executive director in November after a nationwide search to help lead the nation's largest organization of journalists of color.

"The Executive Board wanted an executive director who could run the office, help change the funding model for NABJ, raise revenue and operate profitable programs, including the annual convention," Vice President-Broadcast Bob Butler said. "Maurice had experience in all those areas and was clearly the best candidate to successfully guide NABJ into the future."

Foster joined NABJ from the National Bar Association, where he served as Deputy Executive Director for seven years. He brought more than 22 years of diversified leadership experience in association and non-profit management. He is an experienced and proven achiever in fundraising and grants management with a successful record of

developing, soliciting, and writing grant proposals, especially in the Washington, D.C. area. He has raised and administered millions in federal grants and contracts, and handled budgets for a variety of organizations and programs.

Additionally, Foster has extensive experience in conference management and has orchestrated and implemented more than 60 conferences and conventions, seminars, and trade shows/exhibits, including international meetings in 15 countries.

Foster is a graduate of Rutgers University, the Antioch School of Law, and has pursued continuing studies education from Yale University.

"Maurice has the experience and vision that we need to help us raise the bar," President Kathy Y. Times said of the appointment.

Within a week of assuming his new duties, Foster held a conference call with the Board of Directors and announced several key fundraising ideas related to membership, the 2011 Convention and Job Fair in Philadelphia this summer and the Hall of Fame Gala scheduled Jan. 27 in Washington, D.C.

"I am excited about joining the National Association of Black Journalists; it is a great organization with a rich 35 year history, and I look forward to the new heights that NABJ will achieve," said Foster. "We are at a pivotal point in time, as the landscape changes in the field of journalism. My first priority is to ensure that NABJ is there to meet the needs of its members and provide training and support to meet those changes."

— Compiled from reports by Associate Representative Aprill O. Turner and Temple University student member Yakira Young.



CABJ hosts workshop with NABJ in Toronto

By Stephanie Smith



(clockwise from top) Michelle Lynch, president of the Canadian Association of Black Journalists, Dwight Drummond, co-host of CBC News Toronto, and Kathy Y. Times, president of NABJ, socialize at the workshop; Dwight Drummond addresses participants; NABJ Region II Director Charles Robinson (center) interacts with CABJ and NABJ members.

The Canadian Association of Black Journalists hosted the NABJ for a series of events, meetings and workshops in Toronto. It was an opportunity to firmly establish the connection between the two groups, said CABJ President Michelle Lynch.

Founded in 1996, CABJ is a small organization based mainly in the Toronto area.

Lynch said she hopes a partnership with NABJ will expand CABJ membership and lead to more job prospects and practical training for members of both groups. Lynch and Vice President-Print Deirdre M. Childress were coordinators of the trip through NABJ's sponsors Tourism Toronto and the Tramar Group.

While in Toronto, NABJ members spoke to journalism students, held workshops and met with Canadian media industry professionals.

"This was the first board meeting NABJ had outside the United States and we consider it a big success," NABJ Vice President-Broadcast Bob Butler said.

"NABJ members were able to share knowledge and skills via the Media Institute with Canadian black journalists and we learned about the rich culture that exists in Toronto."

Butler along with fellow NABJ members Lisa Cox and Ken Knight led a career-building workshop for students at Ryerson University's School of Journalism.

"Students learned the importance of networking starting now," said Sasha-Ann Simons, Student Representative of the CABJ.

"Bob Butler basically gave lazy, graduating students a huge wake-up call!" she said.

CABJ and NABJ members also toured major Canadian media outlets like the Globe and Mail, the Toronto Star and CBC, talking to senior level decision-makers about reflecting diversity in newsrooms.

"During these tough economic times, diversity has taken a back seat in many newsrooms, and we want to make a difference in newsrooms beyond our borders," NABJ President Kathy Times said.

"This visit gave NABJ's board an opportunity to offer and receive

valuable training, and lend support to CABJ during advocacy visits to media companies in Toronto."

Feature reporter for Global Television News Terese Sears said there is clearly a need for sustained support of black journalists and communicators on both sides of the border.

"The sheer size of the black population in the U.S. no doubt helps the NABJ wield a heavier hammer, when it comes to advocacy, job opportunities for members and networking," said Sears, who held a meet-and-greet reception for NABJ and CABJ members at her home.

"While there are fewer of us media professionals in Canada, we must always recognize that even a small hammer wielded assertively can make a loud noise."

But diversity in Canada isn't just a black and white issue. Canadian cities rank high as some of the most ethnically diverse in world.

Lynch said Canadian media managers who understand the business of journalism usually try to accommodate to different cultures, but they don't always do so effectively.

"That's where the challenge exists," she said. "We want to see an increase in talent behind the scenes in levels of management or executive levels, and [provide] training for those who may not be there yet so they can get there," she said.

CABJ members agree NABJ's visit to Toronto boosted their resolve to enhance the services they provide. The Canadian group - whose activities were at a standstill for several years before 2007 - plans to work with NABJ to improve professional development and networking opportunities for media practitioners in Canada.

"Last week's visit by the NABJ board will mark the beginning of a new growth and development cycle for CABJ," said CABJ founding president, Angela Lawrence.

"The future of the CABJ lies in developing our new and existing partnerships, especially our partnership with the NABJ, which has been supportive from our beginning 14 years ago.

"However, [this] visit has shifted our relationship from support to partnership, which I think will prove far more beneficial for everyone," she said.

NABJ MEMBERS



BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Making the *transition*

AS NEWS COVERAGE CONTINUES ITS RAPID MOVE TO DIGITAL PLATFORMS, MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACK JOURNALISTS IN VARIOUS PHASES OF THEIR CAREERS OFFER ADVICE ON HOW – AND WHY – JOURNALISTS OF COLOR NEED TO MAKE THE TRANSITION— NOW.

By Benét J. Wilson



Mark S. Luckie is national innovations editor for the Washington Post, founder of the digital journalism blog, 10,000 Words, and author of the *The Digital Journalist's Handbook*.

Mark S. Luckie, who recently became national innovations editor for The Washington Post, is recognized as a leader who literally wrote the book on the industry's transition, *The Digital Journalist's Handbook*. He is also founder of the recently sold 10,000 Words blog, which he created to teach journalists how to use the tools currently shaping digital journalism. The blog was the basis for Luckie's self-published book.

"There was nothing like it on the market. And there were far too many books and blogs that were more theoretical, had an abstract point of view or had unfocused narratives," he explained. "I tried to create a book that allows journalists to start from point A and concentrate on the skills they want."

Even as this digital transformation continues, many journalists are still slow to embrace the future, and Luckie says he doesn't know why.

"I wish I had the answer. I want to get journalists of color in a room and shake them and say 'This is the future,'" he states. "Journalists of color who have been in the business for a while seem to be more reluctant to change."

But one veteran journalist, and an NABJ founder, saw the handwriting on the wall and decided to make the digital leap. DeWayne Wickham, a columnist for USA Today and the Gannett News Service, has been a journalist since 1973. He says the biggest change he's seen during his career is new technology and how the news is delivered.

"When I started, we typed stories on manual typewriters using carbon copy paper. We had copy boys who would pick up those multiple copies of stories and take them to be edited," Wickham says. "Now with cell phones, you can be anywhere. With laptop computers, you can do research."

"And who would have imagined, back in 1973, that by the time we reached 2010,

newspapers would be like the dodo bird and delivery systems would be as small as a smart phone?" Wickham asked. "I don't know where we're headed, but I do know you no longer need trees to deliver information."

Wickham jokingly blames NABJ member Richard Prince for helping him cross the digital divide. "Back in the early 1990s, I didn't have an e-mail address because I was resisting the notion. Prince started calling me snail mail," he recalls. "He shamed me into joining the World Wide Web and cyberspace, and I became addicted."

In many ways, those who are print-oriented still have not caught up with the ability to compete in terms of delivering news in a rapid fashion, says Wickham. "But now we can deliver the news rapidly. Using technology like web pages or a blog, you can update news in a matter of minutes, sometimes even faster than CNN," he observes.

Wickham says he has found a second career as a journalist as a result of the move to the digital platform. "It's been a wonderful transition that younger journalists won't experience because many of them think technology is journalism. Too many of them have not developed the basic skills of reporting and writing," he observes. "They need to be able to say something and be intelligent about what they're saying."

Too many go on reporting assignments lightly armed intellectually. Just capturing news outweighs their need to report and write."

But Wickham also says he loves the gadgets being used in multimedia journalism. His favorite tools are: a Flip HD Slide video camera; multiple audio recording devices; a Nikon digital still camera; and a wifi card that allows him to go online from anywhere.

But journalists still need to be trained, and some educators are learning right along with their students.

Serbino Sandifer-Walker has been a professor at Texas Southern University in Houston since 1990, where she teaches introductory and advanced journalism courses. She is also vice president of audio-visual and research for NABJ's Digital Journalism Task Force.

"Texas Southern re-did its curriculum this summer to make sure it was training 21st-century journalists," Sandifer-Walker says. "We're testing it out now and it will be in place by fall 2011."

Sandifer-Walker praises her university's administration for understanding that the future of journalism is technology-based instruction. "They allow me to be creative and participate in workshops and panels to prepare our students. It's not like there's a clear way. It's a new frontier and we're developing it now."

The changes are exciting because new content and new ways to teach are being developed, says Sandifer-Walker. "We're doing a lot of exciting things in online journalism. We used to have three different sequences: print, broadcast and public relations," she explains. "We're now moving to multimedia journalism, which will allow us to teach students reporting skills for multiple platforms."

The university is offering courses like using smartphones for reporting, entrepreneurial journalism and new journalism initiatives, says Sandifer-Walker. "We want to offer that emphasis on alternative media, citizen journalism, collaborative journalism and community content," she says. "We want to show our students that they can create new journalism enterprises and want them to think about owning and creating content."

Texas Southern is also offering a social media network correspondent course, says Sandifer-Walker. "It's where students develop their reporting skills by using tools like Facebook, Twitter, Ning, blogs or any other emerging social media platforms. We see them as very important tools that students must learn how to use," she states. "We are already moving toward using social media to tell stories and we want our students to be prepared."

Multimedia journalist Bliss Davis graduated from Bowling Green State University this year with a degree in broadcast journalism. She feels that while she was prepared for the job market, a lot of it was through her own initiative.

"I took an online journalism class and a multimedia class at Bowling Green, but both were electives. So in that sense, it fell short. I know now they are trying to make them required courses," Davis says. The school still has the traditional print, broadcast and PR tracks, she adds.

But Davis says she had an advantage when she started at



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Bowling Green. “I started web development when I was 12, because I had an interest in technology things,” she explains. “At the same time, I was interested in journalism. But it never dawned on me to blend the two until two years ago.”

Davis was on her school’s broadcast track. “I saw I could put both things together and use them in that sense,” she says. “I also learned from internships and jobs to make it work. My biggest thing is I can adapt.”

Bowling Green has a news station and an independent newspaper, so if a student isn’t doing anything, they’re doing something wrong, says Davis. “We were located in a smaller town, so we had the community also using us as a main source of news, which helped a lot,” she says. “I’ve also done everything from being a broadcast producer to being a web producer. I worked at our local PBS station my last year in school.”

In that job, Davis says, she was told when someone was needed to produce or shoot video. “I could switch it up and do what needed to be done and made myself indispensable,” she notes. “You have to give them a reason for them to want you there. You have to be able to do more than one thing.”

Davis has worked as a production assistant at WKYC, the NBC affiliate in Cleveland, since August. “Be-

Digital journalists suggest stepping out and trying something different as a way to open yourself to new chapters in your career.

cause it’s a top 20 market, it’s more difficult for them to let me do whatever I want,” she notes. “When I worked at the PBS station, I did everything. But right now, I do typical PA things, including floor direct and rip scripts.

“But I also spend a lot of time around producers to get a feel of what they’re doing so I can jump into that,” says Davis. “I was a web editor intern at WKYC last year and I’m also trying to jump in on that end.”

All four offered advice to those who are still reluctant to cross the digital divide. Don’t be afraid to step out and do something different, Davis advises. “At our school, the newspaper was on the first floor and the TV studio was in the basement. I wandered into the studio and decided I liked it,” she says.

It is never too late to embrace online journalism, says Luckie. “You can be better late than never. You won’t be ahead of pack, but can still

try and keep up with the pack,” he advises. “Start small by shooting small videos or record audio. The technical knowledge will come as you do that.”

Change is good for students, the university and society, says Sandifer-Walker. “We just have to bring everyone along or we will be left behind if we don’t step up to the plate. The more you embrace it, the more it improves the overall quality of what’s out there,” she observes.

“Get out of the way or get stamped. This is how the next generation of journalists will deliver the news,” Wickham warns. “If you don’t want to change, get ready to retire because news organizations are looking for multitaskers.”

Gone are the days when a journalist could go into a newsroom and do only one thing and deliver news only one way, says Wickham. He cites the example of NABJ member Dexter Mullins, who was editor of his school newspaper at North Carolina A&T University and is currently working on his Master of Journalism in Digital Media at Columbia University.

“He graduated and spent a summer at the Poynter Institute learning how to become a mobile journalist,” says Wickham. “I visited him and saw his set-up. Each desk had a video camera, a still camera and an audio recorder. That is the future.”

NABJ attends Caribbean Media Exchange conference

The Caribbean Media Exchange, a non-profit organization that produces interactive conferences to match journalists from the Caribbean, the United States and other countries, invited NABJ to its conference in Kingston, Jamaica in October. The exchange, led by Bevan Springer, offered a memorandum of understanding with NABJ to Vice President-Print Deirdre M. Childress. It proposed ways to incorporate NABJ more into productive linkages with Caribbean media; exposing Caribbean journalists to North American approaches to covering sustainable development; working together to highlight the value of African-Americans to the Caribbean tourism industry, examine a common African heritage and looking at possible journalist exchanges.



Bevan Springer (above) suggests ways North American and Caribbean journalists could work together. **Associate Member Dawn Roberts (right)** attends a workshop.



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Michele Norris: “The Grace of Silence”

By Bonnie Newman Davis

National Public Radio's Michele Norris was just days into the 34-city tour for her book, *The Grace of Silence*, when discovering that several stories in her memoir about tightly sealed family secrets often were similar to her audiences' experiences.

Many of Norris' stories are seeped in the racially charged era of her parents' youth during the 1940s, including details about her father's shooting by a white policeman in the segregated South, and her grandmother's work as a traveling Aunt Jemima.

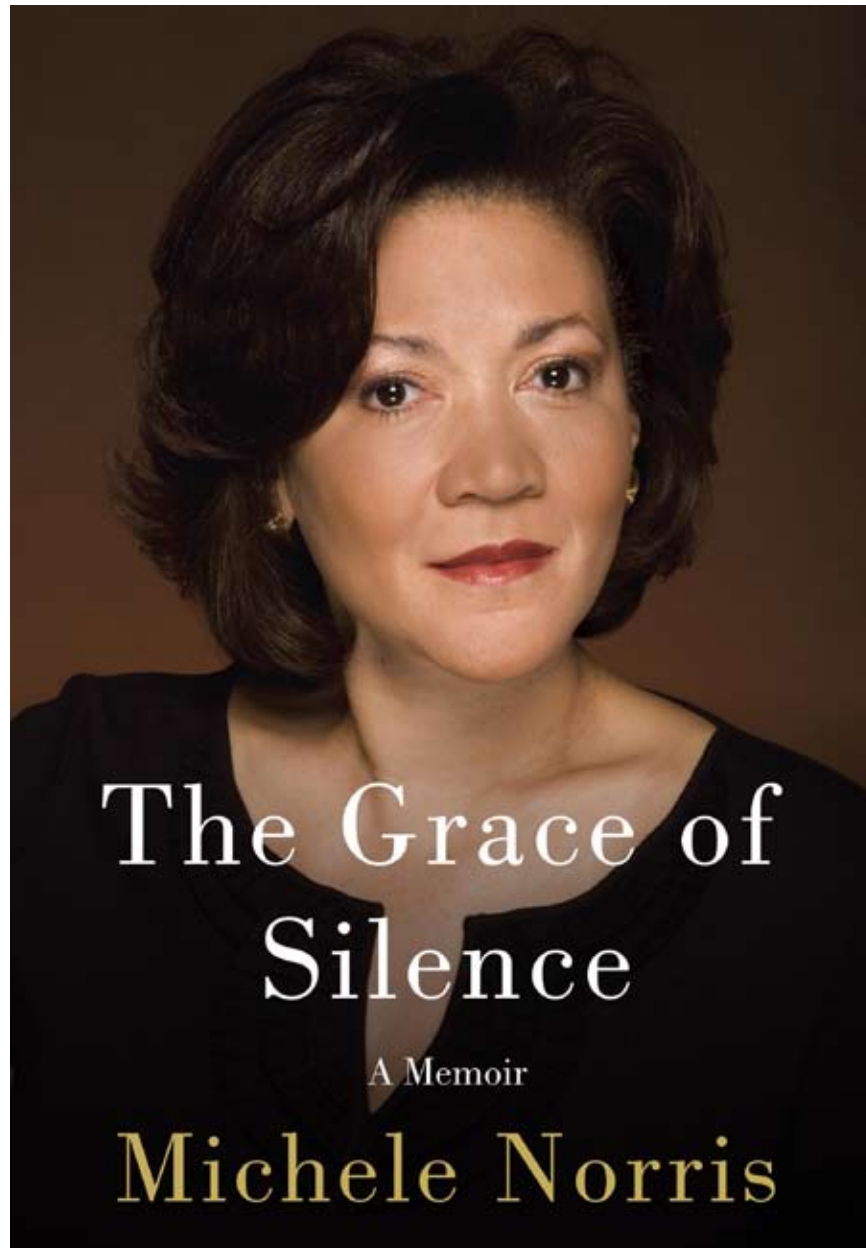
Other tales speak to the silence or slights endured by her parents while integrating a formerly all-white neighborhood in Minneapolis in the 1970s, or the indignities encountered by her strong, independent mother.

Norris notes that her reading audiences throughout the country display “warmth and surprisingly emotional,” reactions to the book. She is gratified by the response.

“They come to hear about my story and they tell me about their stories,” she says. “We slide into open, candid discussions about race and the thread that is America, race and multiculturalism.”

Norris is a veteran, award-winning journalist who has covered presidential elections and routinely informs and provides commentary for NPR's “All Things Considered,” and for multiple network and cable broadcasts. It was President Barack Obama's election as the first African-American president in 2008 that prompted her to write a book about race, she says.

“My intention was to eavesdrop on their conversations and write a book that might enrich our collective dialogue on the thorny subject,” she writes in her book. “Well, the truth can set you free, but it can also be profoundly disconcerting. I realized that pretty quickly when I began listening carefully to conversations in my own family. I had hoped that other people would speak candidly about race for my book, but I soon came to understand that my reporting had to begin with me. The discussion about race within my own family was not completely honest.”



In the chapter where she learns that her father, a World War II veteran, was shot by a white policeman, Norris' cool and calm demeanor familiar to her listeners and viewers is replaced by a powerful narrative voice that screams with anger, confusion and pain.

Throughout the book Norris uses her journalistic skills to provide quick, yet concise history lessons about the role

of blacks in the military, the South's racial and social hierarchy and lingering racial animosity experienced by blacks who left the South. She also provides a fascinating account about the history and commercialization of Aunt Jemima.

Other stories about her own coming-of-age experience in the 1970s as

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The Associate Member Task Force enjoying the Unity Mixer at the Black Fox Lounge in D.C. Gabrielle Maple Lee, Kim Bardakian, Aprill O. Turner, Terry Allen, Dawn Roberts

Media Institute /Unity Mixer *By Rahel Solomon*

On Saturday, October 16, 2010 NABJ members, media professionals, entrepreneurs, and students met at the University of Maryland, College Park campus for a day-long conference. The conference consisted of two tracks, the media professionals track and the entrepreneur track with such presenters as Roland Martin from TVOne/CNN, Vic Carter from WJZ-TV, and host Sheila Brooks of SRB Communications.

Organized by the NABJ Associate Member Task Force and Sheila Brooks, the event brought together professionals from around the country to discuss subjects of importance in social media, crisis management, strategic planning, and raising capital in a troubled economy. “The day

was a huge success. We gathered some of the best and brightest independent journalists and public relations professionals in the country to discuss how they were able to turn their skills into thriving businesses,” said NABJ Associate Representative Aprill O. Turner. “At a changing time in the media landscape for us all, creating the opportunity to engage in dialogue on our experiences in this sector is more important now than ever before.”

Following the Media Institute many attendees traveled to the Black Fox Lounge in D.C. for the Unity Mixer where professionals from nine organizations met, mingled, and networked. Who knew one could fit so much activity into one day? One thing's for sure, the entire NABJ family is excited about the 2011 NABJ Convention in Philadelphia this August.

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a middle-class adolescent — seeing her mother battle breast cancer and leaving an unhappy marriage — illustrate the emergence of challenges with which today's society continues to grapple.

Norris said her book sometimes resonates with older, white males who served in the military or in leadership positions who now wonder about their roles in integration.

What's surprising, she says, is how many of her readers, black and white, say they have had similar experiences.

“For some it's about my mom and her strong desire for independence...her struggle to survive,” she adds. “Today we are so transparent about everything

compared to before when it was all kept inside was painful to talk about.”

Asked whether a second book will be the result of all the stories she's hearing, Norris, who took off four months before completing the book in a year, quickly dismisses the idea.

“I can't even get my head around the thought of writing a second book,” she says. “It took so much out of me. Being organized and being careful how you organize your time really does pay dividends. I sat down to write everyday....sometimes I thought I was writing off subject....I was intimidated by an empty page. There were certain passages written on my Iphone.”

Norris' father died without ever telling her about the police shooting. Her mother, who found parts of her daughter's book “very difficult,” is proud and

happy for her, she says.

Although Norris was accustomed to interviewing world leaders, nobel laureates, Hollywood celebrities, and military leaders, finding sources for her book provided new insight.

“It gave me a better sense of where I come from and taught me valuable lessons about storytelling and listening to people,” she says. “You have to be willing to listen to people from different perspectives.”

“It also made me wonder if I could give voice to the issue of race without it turning into sensationalism,” she continues. “As journalists we are supposed to understand the country and listen to people. We automatically tend to shout and not be heard.”