

Spike Lee Blasts Shortage Of Black Interviewers

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Film director Spike Lee denied reports that he would grant interviews only to Black reporters about his new film, titled *X*, but he accused the news media of failing to create jobs for minorities.

“I have never said I only want Black journalists to interview me about *X*,” Lee said last week.

“Many non-Black journalists have interviewed me and continue to interview me. I said I would prefer to speak to African-American journalists because Malcolm X is such a part of the African-American psyche and experience [that] African-American journalists will be that much more sensitive to the subject matter.”

Lee’s film about Malcolm X is scheduled to be released in November. The movie, starring actor Denzel Washington in the title role, will chronicle the life of the slain Black Muslim leader.

“I’ve been burned by recent articles, written by white journalists, which I know are unfair,” Lee said.

“No Black journalist is going to ask me, ‘Spike, do you have any white friends?’ But my asking for African-American journalists points out a much greater problem: the embarrassing lack of Black writers at these various media institutions. Some have one or two Black journalists, but in most cases, these publications have no Blacks on their staffs.”

The director added, “According to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Blacks comprise only 4.8 percent of the professional newsroom staffs nationwide.

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"I ask: What crime have I committed by asking for qualified professionals who will be sympathetic to the film and myself? My efforts to control the representation of my art and my image [are] nothing extraordinary, but rather, commonplace and traditional in respect to Hollywood's standards," Lee's statement said.

He added: "Movie stars often flex their muscles and pick and choose [whom] they wish to deal with. Again, I ask: why the triple standard? I'm sick and tired of this 'Spike Lee Hates Your Cracker Ass' image. I don't feel like that, never have, never will."

He referred to a headline used in a recent *Esquire* magazine article.

"Instead of questioning me, the white media should take a hard look at its own hiring practices and ask, 'Where are the African-Americans, the women and the other minorities,'" Lee said.

Lee's previous film credits include *Do the Right Thing*, *School Daze* and *She's Gotta Have It*.

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of a long history of preferential treatment for Jews, fought with their neighbors for several days.

Rosenbaum, 29, who was studying the Holocaust, was beaten, kicked and fatally stabbed by a group of Blacks shortly after the Aug. 19, 1991, accident.

The defense said Nelson was a victim of a police frame-up. Prosecutors said Nelson was caught moments after the attack with a bloody knife in his pocket, that he was identified by Rosenbaum before he died, and that he later admitted to the stabbing.

But several jurors, who deliberated over four days, said they had trouble believing the police testimony, comments that stung the city's new police commissioner.

"If that jury's decision was made because they did not believe the testimony of police, then not only is there a problem for police but there is a problem for society as a whole," said Commissioner Raymond Kelly.