

MISSISSIPPI WEST

A newly created TV Series by Robb Edward Morris as requested by Global Genesis Group.



Forward

The city of Las Vegas, Nevada in 1955 is highly segregated. Casinos on the strip restrict black staff to back-of-the-house employment. Black celebrities are not allowed to stay in the rooms or gamble in the hotels they perform in. On a rare exception when Lena Horn is allowed to sleep in a room, the sheets are burned. Sammie Davis Jr. jumps in the pool and they drain it.

That's how Las Vegas earned the name, "Mississippi in the west".

This landscape and historical period are the backdrops of the narrative in this proposal where the polarizing ideologies of blacks and whites clash over the issues of racism and segregation.

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PLEASE NOTE: The creation that follows did not infringe upon, interfere with, or extract from the original script provided by Global Genesis Group. It is a wholly original work. This work was commissioned via phone conversation. No contracts or fees were offered or incurred. The resulting IP is the sole property of the writer.

OVERVIEW

To Global Genesis Group (GGG),

When we spoke about this project, you asked me to find a way to expand the concept so that it could grow beyond the opening and closing of the Moulin Rouge into the potential for several seasons, add a Black voice and perspective, and make a Black woman the central character. Your approximate projected budget of \$1-2M per episode was also a guiding factor but only to the extent of scale.

To that end, I approached my analysis with the intent of generating ideas of expansion. I have done this in very broad strokes as well as detailed intricacies.

What I have imagined are pieces and components that could potentially fit into a larger whole culminating into several seasons. It is, however, incomplete, which was never expected, given the time and circumstances.

It will require development and more connective tissue that feeds into the overarching narrative and theme and how that is seen from the perspective of the PROTAGONIST - A Black Woman named CHARLIE MAE BELL. (details to follow)

Several characters and storylines have been created to unfold a rich and engaging narrative. Each of these main characters represents a different perspective of the overarching issue. Each has supporting characters that interconnect with characters in opposing or alternative sides of the issue that arise in the other narrative threads, and most importantly, the objective is to tie all the elements and characters into an intricately weaved tapestry that is connected to the central character and the overarching narrative objective of the series.

In most cases I achieved this objective but there is still a matter of further development.

ASSESSMENT

In this assessment, I will point out the potential of the concept and how to move forward with it. I will also introduce several new characters, and a much broader story arc, potential story components to explore, and the overarching theme that could drive the narrative for several seasons.

I will also share A NEW PILOT TREATMENT WITH 30 PLOT BEATS and some sample scenes I've written to give you an idea of the voice and tone of the series as I conceive it. And finally, after my final thoughts, I will leave you with links to articles and videos of corresponding research that support these suggestions and directions.

CONCEPT

You were right in recognizing the intrinsic value in the core concept.

It's clear to see why GGG would take an interest in developing the concept. It is culturally-relevant, and holds within it a wide swath of narrative possibilities.

The script, in its current state, excels in that it provides a condensed version of salient events and a gathering of relevant historical players all in one accessible document.

However, the submitted draft is embryonic. But that's not breaking news. The great news is that although the concept lends itself to historical context, it has never been done before, at least not from the divisive perspective of a segregated Las Vegas Strip.

Therein lies the golden egg from which an extended series can be hatched. Not from the narrow window of the Moulin Rouge, but from the macro narrative of the segregation and the pursuit of integration on the Las Vegas strip. This is a battle that lasted several years. The Moulin Rouge could be used as a jump-off point.

This was obviously the objective of the screenplay. I commend the writer(s) for tackling such a BIG IDEA. However, 120 pages is not enough space to tell the story. What lies beyond the Moulin Rouge is a broad spectrum from which to craft a series.

OVERARCHING

Like Meth was to Breaking Bad and Prohibition to Boardwalk Empire, Desegregation would be the overarching, underlying, and through-concept that glues together a rich narrative that could branch into several compelling stories over a number of seasons.

The common and conflicting plight concerning the integration of the Las Vegas strip is simple at its core. The blacks want in. The whites want to keep them out. This narrative has many shades of perspective across a broad spectrum of ideologies.

The possibilities are endless.

In Breaking Bad, the anchoring concept is meth. The Global goal of the protagonist and the series is to make meth and not get caught. The meat of the narrative is seeing whether or not that happens.

In Boardwalk Empire, the anchoring concept is prohibition. The global goal of the protagonist and the series is to sell booze and not get caught. The series is always moving closer to or further away from that end.

By comparison, the submitted Las Vegas Moulin Rouge project has an anchoring concept of segregation. The global goal of the protagonist, characters, and the series is integration, which would mean equal opportunity and access for colored people. Their actions will always be moving them closer to or further away from that end.

The integration of the Las Vegas strip is the symbolic culmination of the series goal.

RENAMING

If segregation and integration are the keys to the expansion of the concept, then a renaming of the project would need to accommodate this broadened perspective.

“Mississippi of the West” was the socio-economic description given to Las Vegas during this period because the level of racial prejudice and segregation was on par with Mississippi.

MISSISSIPPI WEST is an abbreviation that encapsulates the expanded concept. This is the suggested working title for the series moving into further development.

This title and the overarching concept and all that it encompasses opens the narrative and allows it to branch out into a number of related narratives for as long as the series is supported.

A NEW CREATION

By the request of Global Genesis Group to analyze and expand the concept and the script about the Moulin Rouge in 1950's Las Vegas, I have created the following:

- A New Title
- Separate loglines for the series and the pilot.
- A Female Black Protagonist
- Several new characters
- A 20-page pilot treatment with thirty plot beats
- Several sample scenes that demonstrate tone and dialogue
- Analysis of the concept and how to move forward with the series after the pilot.

DEFYING THE TROPES

Normally stories set in this time period that deal with race relations in America are about oppressed blacks who are subservient to whites. Although there is plenty of that here, it's not what will drive the narrative.

Accepted tropes will be flipped on their head. By the end of the pilot, Charlie Mae Bell, the protagonist, and her brother, Rufus will do the unthinkable and put the narrative on a precarious dramatic path that defies the tropes.

THE PILOT TREATMENT

MISSISSIPPI WEST

Pilot Treatment

Series **LOGLINE:**

In 1950's Las Vegas, a poor black baker uses her talent and cunning to rise to fame during the fight to integrate blacks and whites on the Las Vegas strip.

Pilot **LOGLINE:**

When an accident prevents a white entertainer from performing at a Las Vegas casino where Charlie Mae Bell works in the kitchen, she convinces her racist white boss to let her perform on stage instead. But soon thereafter, Charlie Mae Bell is arrested and lands in jail where she learns clues about who killed her sister.

MISSISSIPPI WEST CHARACTERS

CHARLIE MAE BELL {Black, mid 20's) is a poor black baker with ambition who possesses an extraordinary gift: an immaculate singing voice. She's in a dysfunctional marriage that can't produce children. But she's been raising her preteen niece ever since her older sister, Sissy was brutally murdered in an unsolved crime.

Charlie Mae knows her place as a poor young black woman in a white-run society but she silently refuses to acquiesce. So she will use what is available to her to rise in a world that has historically held her down: Talent, intelligence, cunning, deceit, stealth, and sex.

Over the course of the series, Charlie Mae will go from “Aunt Jemima” to “Beyonce” but make choices in between that puts her in harm’s way of conflict, danger and dilemma.

RUFUS MANNING (Black, late 20’s) is Charlie Mae’s brother. He has lofty ambitions to be a Las Vegas police officer. He put himself through college and earned a BA in criminology so he’s super smart and appears correct - a good negro. But he has a secret sense of vigilante justice coiled up inside him.

OFFICER STANLEY HICKS (White, late 30’s) is a deadly cop who operates above-the-law as a consummate racist. He’s a single dad raising an 8-year-old little girl whose mother ran away to Hollywood with a Jew.

ARTHUR MANNING (British, late 20’s) is Rufus and Charlie Mae’s MIXED RACE cousin. He grew up in London England in an affluent family where the black situation is not on the level as it is in Las Vegas. He’s a med student studying to be a dentist. He flies into Vegas to spend some time with his cousins and to intern with Dr. James McMillan, a black dentist.

RICHARD “DICK” CALHOUN (White, mid 50’s) A pasty white South Carolina transport with sweaty palms and an expansive girth. He manages the mostly-black staff at the (fictional) Sassy Dolls Casino on the strip with good old fashion plantation values.

MRS. LORETTA CALHOUN (White, Early 50’s), is the stern-faced wife of Mr. Calhoun and the business manager at the Sassy Dolls Casino.

MAMA MAYA MANNING (Black, late 60’s) is Rufus & Charlie Mae’s mother. She lives in Mount Charleston, the rural remote mountainous and forested area thirty miles west of Vegas. Houses and barns blend into the landscape, invisible if you don’t know they’re there and few and far between. Mama Maya is a widow. Her Husband, LAURENCE MANNING (Black, deceased) was a brick mason who built their house and their barn.

ALEXANDER BIRNO (White, late 30’s) Co-owner and co-founder of the Moulin Rouge Casino Las Vegas.

DR. JAMES B. MCMILLAN (Black, mid 40's) The first and only black dentist in Las Vegas, 1950's who eventually becomes the president of the NAACP.

CHIEF JEREMIAH CHESHIRE (White, 50's). The POLICE CHIEF. A progressive-thinking law enforcement official whose actions, however, are still steeped in the segregation Zeitgeist.

REV. NATHANIEL HACKWORTH (Black, mid 40's) An influential pillar in the black community who's an open philanderer. He pastors a black church on the Westside of Las Vegas.

NICKIE NUMBERS (White, mid 30's). A Gangster that keeps an eye on things at the Moulin Rouge. He acts as a liaison for the big ballers running things on the strip who want a piece of the Rouge action.

LEROY BELL (Black, mid 30's) is married to Charlie Mae, but he's not a match. He is her opposite. He accepts his place in society. An ex soldier, he fought in World War II, but he doesn't combat the fate that the color of his skin has dealt him. He knows his wife but can't control her.

MAYOR C. D. BAKER (White, 50's). A no nonsense Mayor with a keen sense of order.

PAUL WILBER (White, 40's). An Anderson Dairy executive.

CORONER BRADFORD COLLINS (White, 50's). Clark County Coroner.

CHARLOTTE HICKS (White, 8-years-old). Stanley Hicks' daughter.

NAY NAY MANNING (Black, 12-years-old) Charlie Mae's niece whose mother, Sissy, was murdered.

CELEBRITIES - (Real and fictional) including: **SAMMY DAVIS JR, NAT KING COLE, THE HINES BROTHERS, FRANK SINATRA**, etc.

MISSISSIPPI WEST - PILOT TREATMENT LINK:

<https://kvisit.com/OQ/64AC>

PILOT SAMPLE SCENES LISTED

MISSISSIPPI WEST - Pilot Sample - 1

<https://kvisit.com/OQ/44AC>

MISSISSIPPI WEST - Pilot Sample - 2

<https://kvisit.com/OQ/5IAC>

MISSISSIPPI WEST - Pilot Sample - 3

<https://kvisit.com/OQ/5YAC>

MISSISSIPPI WEST - Pilot Sample - 4

<https://kvisit.com/OQ/5oAC>

MISSISSIPPI WEST - Pilot Sample - 5

<https://kvisit.com/OQ/54AC>

MISSISSIPPI WEST - Pilot Sample - 6

<https://kvisit.com/OQ/6IAC>

MISSISSIPPI WEST - Pilot Sample - 7

<https://kvisit.com/OQ/6YAC>

FINAL THOUGHTS

This is a goldmine and should be treated as such. There is pure intrinsic value at its core.. No one walks into a goldmine and emerges with a pot of gold on the first day but that should not discourage the pursuit of the treasure buried within.

Rarely does one stumble upon the confluence of such auspicious story components: Originality, untapped historical context, and current relevance.

Considering the current state of affairs, the concept could be allegoricalized, symbolized, or downright borrowed from the Zeitgeist and fueled into the narrative.

MOVING FORWARD

This series as conceived in an expanded version of the original idea would require the standard series creation process. That is a collaborative effort of a pool of writers with relative experience and personal pedigree.

The writer's room would look something like the following:

- A black and white male writer,
- A black and white female writer,
- And perhaps another black female writer to tip the scale in favor of the protagonist.

All of the above would have a demonstrated track record in television writing or at least three samples that demonstrates a high level of screenwriting expertise with a particular lean towards voices in the diversity spectrum. This analyst would also advise having a research assistant on staff.

The submitted Moulin Rouge draft lacks fundamental screenwriting techniques. Careful deliberation is highly advised when considering asking the writer of that draft to be a part of the writer's room.

The proposed pool of writers would not need to be as extensive for a pilot effort, especially if GGG would like to continue along the lines of the narrative presented here.

I would advise having one (or possibly two) writers, and budget for a paid consultant and/or coverage feedback on a couple of drafts to bring the pilot to its highest possible potential.

SOCIAL RELEVANCE

This series is AN OPPORTUNITY to explore, dramatize, and allegorize BLACK LIVES MATTER. A story component of police brutality is weaved into the pilot and the fabric of the overarching concept of the series. Treated properly, it could be a significant contribution to the conversation and ongoing effort for a society of equality that the world would be eager to tune into.

MANDATES

It is the analyst/writer's advice, that considering the polarizing nature of the subject matter, the following mandates be strongly considered:

Create a fictional series, not a documentary
Exercise the right to rewrite history
Remember that this is entertainment

This will ensure freedom of artistic expression without the adherence to social or political agendas other than those that are laid out by the creators of the series.

Not-to-say that the subject matter should or would be treated irresponsibly without respect and sensitivity, but it should not be incumbent on the creators to follow some preordained idea of narrative unfoldment.

In other words, flip the script, employ irony, and write the unexpected.

THANK YOU

Thank you for asking me to evaluate this extraordinary concept - The Moulin Rouge and Mississippi West.

As a middle-aged black man with an education and professional background in screenwriting, acting, singing, dancing, and large-scale stage performance on BROADWAY, I am uniquely qualified to write this pilot and helm a series with this subject matter, as hopefully, the above pages have demonstrated.

I have several ideas of how the narrative continues beyond the pilot.

I would be happy to discuss moving forward.

Thanks again.

Sincerely,

Robb Edward Morris

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[Linkedin](#)

[IMDb](#)

[Coverfly](#)

RESEARCH LINKS

Moulin Rouge / Las Vegas articles

[1950s Las Vegas](#)

[First Black Casino 1954](#)

[Moulin Rouge Vegas](#)

[Vintage photos Las Vegas](#)

[Detailed description of decor, opening night, and history timeline](#)

[What Killed the Rouge?](#)

[Video Vault of inside Moulin Rouge](#)

[Mob ties](#)

[Showgirl Legacy](#)

[Vegas History](#)

[MR Images](#)

[MR Owner found guilty](#)

[Police investigation clip - 1950's](#)

[Las Vegas history](#)

Real People

[William H. "Bob" Bailey](#)

[Dr. James B. McMillian](#)

[MR and Sarran Knight Preddy](#)

[Alexander Bisno](#)

[Anna Bailey - STILL LIVING Dancer at the Moulin Rouge](#)

[Mayor C.D. Baker](#)

Inspiring conversations that can fuel dialogue and dramatization.

[Heated Debate on Segregation](#)

[The right to be human](#)

[Ted talk speech about why blacks are killed](#)

Songs for Charlie Mae

[They Can't Take That Away From Me - Version 2](#)

[Someday You'll Want Me](#)

[Misty](#)

[Willow Weep For Me - Blues version](#)

[Julie London](#)

[Julie is her name](#)

Racism in the 1950's

[Black man interview](#)

[James Baldwin vs William Buckley debate on racism in America - 1965](#)