

BY C.L. LANEY

TYLER PERRY

MEDIA MOGUL



CHAPTER 1

Who Is Tyler Perry?

Making it in Hollywood is hard. Few find fame. Some try for years. They may get a big break. But this doesn't happen often. Others make their own success. That is what Tyler Perry did.

Tyler Perry is an actor. He also writes, produces, and directs. His work includes plays, movies, and TV shows. The star had a tough childhood. Now he is a media giant.

Perry is best known for one character. That is Madea. She is a bold grandmother. Her first appearance was in a play. This role was played by Perry. He went on to write more Madea plays. Later, he directed Madea movies too. People find these very funny. Many like their messages about faith.

So far, 11 Madea movies have been made. They have earned over \$670 million. Perry's other projects have also been successful. In 2019, he opened a film studio. It is in Atlanta, Georgia. Several hit movies have been made there. The casts included mostly Black actors. Some now call the city Black Hollywood.



Tyler Perry has played the role of a no-nonsense grandmother named Madea in over 20 plays and movies.





Perry created and produced the television sitcom *House of Payne*, which premiered in 2006. In this photo from 2007, one of the show's sets can be seen in the background.

Perry's rise to fame has not been easy. He faced many challenges. **Poverty** was one. **Abuse** was another. For a while, he even lived in his car.

Today, Perry is a billionaire. The filmmaker tries to be an example for others. He wants to create opportunities for Black artists. His work is doing just that.



CHAPTER 2

The World of Hollywood

Many people dream of fame. But most never make it big. Success in Hollywood is a long shot. The odds are lower for people of color. Some progress has been made. There are more opportunities today. Still, most lead roles go to white actors.

UCLA is a university in Los Angeles. Some people study the film industry there. Each year, they run the numbers. The results are shared. This is called the *Hollywood Diversity Report*. In 2020, it showed some startling facts. People of color make up over 40 percent of the U.S. population. But they got only 27 percent of lead roles. That was in 2019. Just 5.5 percent of directors were Black. Most studio heads are white. Only 9 percent are people of color.

Inequality in show business is a problem. People of color have less **representation**. This is true both on-screen and off. Talented actors try for parts. They might be overlooked. Qualified directors go out for jobs. But they may not get them. The same is true for writers.

Awards for actors are often unequal too. This includes the Academy Awards. These are also called the Oscars. They're Hollywood's highest honor. A group of people votes on them. All are in the movie business. That means nominees are voted on by their **peers**. Winning is a big deal. Actors might land bigger roles. Their pay may go up too. Some earn around 20 percent more after a win.

The Oscars began in 1929. Over 3,000 awards have been given out since then. As of 2021, only 43 had gone to Black people. Just seven people of color had been **nominated** for Best Director. Only one had won.

Perry sees the need for change. The star was once an **underdog**. Today, he owns a media empire. This gives him power. He can make dreams come true.



Oscar winners receive statues commemorating their win. The first awards were given out on May 16, 1929.

New Orleans, Louisiana, sits between Lake Pontchartrain to the north and the mouth of the Mississippi River to the south.

