The Unspoken Truth

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The Unspoken Truth:
One woman’s search to find beauty within herself in a society that thinks otherwise.

As we see our nation become more multicultural, beauty advertisements, fashion shows, and music videos still overwhelmingly over-represent light skin and European women. I will show my journey as well as other Millennial and Generation X women’s journey to finding confidence in ourselves and exploring standards of beauty within a multicultural society. As the country becomes more multi-racial – we are still seeing the same images that privilege lighter skin. The documentary will follow me as I try to explore why dark-skinned women are still left out of conversations about beauty. I decided to take this journey because my dark skin tone has caused me to feel overlooked for so many years. I believe this is the perfect platform to educate those who are not aware this problem exists, while, challenging the entertainment industry to re-think the faces they choose to put in the media.

In Act 1 the documentary will demonstrate how the media has been problematic in the past. This will be reflected in the popular and widely aired L’Oreal True Match commercial, an advertisement that featured fair-skinned mainstream artists. The commercial was an unfortunate representation of society’s perception of beauty. Within the first few minutes of the ad Blake Lively, a woman with blond hair and blue eyes appears on the screen followed by two women, Beyoncé and Zoe Saldana, with fair skin and long straight hair. I will also have dark-skinned black women within and outside of the industry talk about the shows they watched growing up and how that made them feel. There will also be a discussion on why companies and directors prefer to hire lighter-skinned women.

In this Act, I will be introduced as the main character. As the main character, I will document my journey which will be seen through straight to camera confessionals and narration about my childhood/adolescence up to my experiences now. This will be the first time I have ever publicly talked about insecurities developed from colorism mostly perceived through the media.

The end of Act I will introduce the supporting characters in the film. This diverse set of characters will reflect different walks of life from Generation X to Millennials. The film will start off by dissecting the type of women we typically see on television through interviews from Tori Elizabeth, the co-founder of The Colored Girl, Phylicia Alvarez, creator of CityRepublik and Amani Clotter, a millennial who is passionate about acknowledging colorism. Next, Dr. Yaba Blay will explain observations from her studies on skin bleaching and the turmoil it has caused in the black community.

Act II will further dive into the characters’ experiences with colorism. I will talk about my own experience in high school. Specifically, my prom night where I felt the first significant encounter with colorism. That night, I noticed my light-skinned and Caucasian classmates had dates to prom and I did not. Later that act, I will speak to men at Level’s Barbershop that used to only date light skin women and how they noticed light-skinned women were placed ahead of dark-skinned women in terms of attractiveness.
The second half of this act will explore the insecurities and worthlessness developed from watching television with mostly fair-skinned characters. We will hear Amani share a painful memory where her good friend said he would never procreate with her because of her dark skin tone.

The third Act will explain why these stigmas still exist in the black community and explore some possible solutions to change the narrative for future generations. Dr. Blay explains the connection between skin bleaching and white supremacy and Phylicia and Adrianna will talk about how they create content that not only increases the number of dark-skinned women in the media, but also gives dark-skinned women leading roles. Tori will also explain how she developed campaigns that make women of all ages feel beautiful.

The target audience is black millennials, a group that tends to repost and share problematic commercials and interviews on social media. The documentary will use a lot of archival ads and tweets to provide evidence for the claims mentioned in the film. Similar to Twitter, the film will only use text cards with less than 140 characters to appeal to an audience that tends to use fewer words. The documentary will include talking head interviews, as well as Cinéma vérité b-roll in stores, my apartment and childhood home.