

Idris Elba, David Oyelowo, Lupita Nyong'o Talk Lack of Diversity In Hollywood

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Oscar nominations were announced more than a week ago, which sparked a lot of controversy and outrage from viewers and actors in the entertainment industry.

While the Academy President posted a long statement on [Twitter](#) expressing her sorrow and frustrations in regards to the lack of diversity with the nominees and the pending #OscarsSoWhite hashtag, that did not stop famous faces in Hollywood from stating their opinions.

Spike Lee is one actor who fiercely spoke up about the lack of diversity issue.



Lee wrote in an [Instagram post](#) on Monday morning, January 18th his frustration with the lack of diversity in this year's Oscar nominees: "Mean No Disrespect To My Friends, Host **Chris Rock** and Producer **Reggie Hudlin**, **President Isaacs** And The Academy.... But, How Is It Possible For The 2nd Consecutive Year All 20 Contenders Under The Actor Category Are White? And Let's Not Even Get Into The Other Branches. 40 White Actors In 2 Years And No Flava At All. We Can't Act?! WTF!!"

On Wednesday morning, while promoting the documentary about the legendary **Michael Jackson** on GMA, he also stated that he "never said to boycott the awards, he is just not going."

Spike Lee is not the only actor who has expressed his opinions about the lack of diversity for a second year in a row at the Academy Awards.



While presenting an award to the Academy President, **Cheryl Boone Isaacs**, at a gala honouring Issacs Monday night, **David Oyelowo** gave his two cents about the #OscarsSoWhite problem.

Oyelowo says that he met with Isaacs privately to discuss why he was not recognized for his role as Dr. Martin Luther King in the powerful film, *Selma*: “A year ago, I did a film called *Selma*, and after the Academy Awards, Cheryl invited me to her office to talk about what went wrong then,” he said. “We had a deep and meaningful [conversation]. For 20 opportunities to celebrate actors of color, actresses of color, to be missed last year is one thing; for that to happen again this year is unforgivable.”

He also urged people to recognize the importance of this problem: “The reason why the Oscars are so important is because it is the zenith, it is the epitome, it is the height of celebration of artistic endeavor within the filmmaking community. We grow up aspiring, dreaming, longing to be accepted into that august establishment because it is the height of excellence. I would like to walk away and say it doesn’t matter, but it does, because that acknowledgement changes the trajectory of your life, your career, and the culture of the world we live in.”

The state of the Academy today: “This institution doesn’t reflect its president and it doesn’t reflect this room. I am an Academy member and it doesn’t reflect me, and it doesn’t reflect this nation.”

Oyelowo also noted that two of the top films that were at the box office this week were led by black actors: “We have a situation whereby currently the biggest movie in the world and of all time [*Star Wars: The Force Awakens*] is led by a black man. That film was knocked off the top spot this weekend by a film led by two black men, *Ride Along 2*. The biggest TV show on the planet is led by black people, *Empire*.”

He wants everyone to pray for Cheryl Isaac: The Academy is an institution in which they all say radical and timely change cannot happen quickly. It better happen quickly. The law of this country can change in a matter of months. It better come on. The Oscars is on February 28. Cheryl needs us to pray that by that date, change is going to come. We need to pray for Cheryl, we need to support Cheryl, we need to love Cheryl. We cannot afford to get bitter, we cannot afford to get negative. But we must make our voice heard.”

Similarly, **Idris Elba** [gave a powerful speech at UK's Parliament](#), talking about the need for greater representation and diversity in British TV and film

He started off his speech with this remark: "I'm not here to talk about black people." He continued, "I'm here to talk about diversity. Diversity in the modern world is more than just skin colour — it's gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, social background, and — most important of all, as far as I'm concerned — diversity of thought."

***The Beasts of No Nations* star talked about the lack of diversity on British television:** "People in the TV world often aren't the same as people in the real world. And there's an even bigger gap between people who make TV, and people who watch TV," he said. "I should know, I live in the TV world. And although

there's a lot of reality TV, TV hasn't caught up with reality. Change is coming, but it's taking its sweet time."

He revealed his frustrations with being type-casted in the industry as a black male: "None of us are just one flavour or one colour. If we were, we'd be one-dimensional. And that's what used to drive me mad as an up-and-coming actor. My agent and I, we'd get scripts and we were always asked to read the "black male" character or 'the athletic type'. And that was just *Crime Watch*... But when a script called for a 'black male', it wasn't describing a character. It was describing a skin colour. A white man – or a caucasian – was described as 'a man with a twinkle in his eye... I realized I could only play so many 'best friends' or 'gang leaders'. I knew I wasn't going to land a lead role. I knew there wasn't enough imagination in the industry for me to be seen as a lead... I don't think of myself as just a 'black actor'. I'm an actor, not a number. Just like anyone else."

He [tweeted](#) on January 18th that it was "THE most important speech he has ever made." Check out the full speech click [HERE](#).

Lupita Nyong'o also posted a picture to Instagram on Wednesday morning, expressing her sadness and frustration about the Oscar nominees this year.

She states: "I am disappointed by the lack of inclusion in this year's Academy Awards nominations." She goes on to say that she "stands[s] with her peers who are calling for change in expanding the stories that are told and the recognition of the people who tell them."

I am disappointed by the lack of inclusion in this year's Academy Awards nominations. It has me thinking about unconscious prejudice and what merits prestige in our culture. The Awards should not dictate the terms of art in our modern society, but rather be a diverse reflection of the best of what our art has to offer today. I stand with my peers who are calling for change in expanding the stories that are told and recognition of the people who tell them.

-Lupita Nyong'o

Photo Courtesy of @lupitanyongo/Instagram

George Clooney even discussed the problem during an interview with *Variety*.

“I don't think it's a problem of who you're picking as much as it is: How many options are available to minorities in film, particularly in quality films?” he said. “I think that African Americans have a real fair point that the industry isn't representing them well enough. I think that's absolutely true. There should be 20 or 30 or 40 films of the quality that people would consider for the Oscars. By the way, we're talking about African Americans. For Hispanics, it's even worse. We need to get better at this. We used to be better at it.”

These fine actors and actresses weren't the only ones that were frustrated about this problem. A slew of celebrities expressing their opinions on the lack of diversity in the 2016 Oscar nominations such as Rashida Jones, Jada Pinkette Smith, and even Golden Globes 2016 host, **Ricky Gervais**, gave some advice to Oscar host, **Chris Rock** tweeting “If I were @chrisrock, I wouldn't be considering boycotting The Oscars. I'd be thinking ‘this shit is live. I can do some serious damage.’”

What do you think of the #OscarsSoWhite problem? Tweet us your thoughts at [@popandpress!](#)