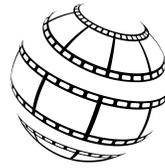


**DEAF TALENT®**  
Media & Entertainment Consulting



**DEAF TALENT®**  
CASTING

TO: The Hollywood industry, Deaf Community, Sign Language Interpreter Community, and other interested parties

FROM: Deaf Talent® Media & Entertainment Consulting (DTMEC) & Deaf Talent® Casting

DATE: September 21, 2022

RE: American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters and their roles in the media/entertainment/sports/technology industries

DTMEC was founded by Jade Bryan with the goal of increasing opportunities and promoting visibility for Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) Deaf Talent® in the media, entertainment, sports and technology industries. DTMEC takes pride in being the watchdog regarding the lack of accessibility and lack of ethics in the screening and hiring of Deaf Talent® for employment in these industries.

DTMEC believes BIPOC Deaf Talent® is an invaluable and untapped market that needs to be showcased in front of and behind the camera, along with below the line crew. DTMEC also espouses that BIPOC Deaf Talent® add a certain level of richness and depth to the acting roles that were specifically written for Deaf characters. To this end, DTMEC supports the hiring of BIPOC interpreters for BIPOC actors at auditions and on studio sets.

It has come to the attention of DTMEC regarding a recent incident involving an ASL interpreter who was originally tapped to provide communication access to a BIPOC Deaf actor auditioning for a Deaf character role. To add insult to injury—not only did the actor not get the role, but he discovered that the same interpreter slated to voice/interpret for him got the role instead.

The purpose of hiring ASL interpreters has always been to provide communication accessibility between the Deaf actors and the producers/directors hosting the auditions. ASL interpreters are expected to abide by a professional code of conduct by refraining from using any of the information gleaned during the course of the interpreting assignment for their own personal benefit or professional gain. This includes auditioning themselves for acting roles intended for Deaf actors, therefore circumventing expected interpreter conduct and curtailing opportunities targeted towards Deaf actors.

ASL interpreters must be cognizant in not using their hearing interpreter privileges to professionally benefit themselves outside the interpreting field. DTMEC fully supports Deaf actors auditioning for various roles—whether written specially for Deaf characters or not. DTMEC also champions those ASL interpreters who do not take advantage of their position and privilege by taking away opportunities intended for their Deaf clients.

In particular, BIPOC Deaf creatives face unique challenges—not only accessibility but also encountering racism. They work hard at auditioning for acting roles, as well as other employment opportunities behind the camera and below the line. BIPOC Deaf creatives deserve the collective respect and support as actors who are serious about their craft and fulfilling Hollywood’s new initiatives supporting the representation of BIPOC Deaf actors on the screen.

People have asked various forms of these questions: “What can be done to prevent this type of thing from happening again?” “What can be done to stop hearing interpreters from taking Deaf roles from Deaf actors?” The answer is simple: Hollywood needs to stop allowing ASL interpreters hired for BIPOC actor auditions from being able to audition for Deaf roles. ASL interpreters must be required to sign Non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) that forbids them from capitalizing on information gained from their professional interpreting assignments to later audition for the same Deaf roles.

BIPOC Deaf consultants, like DTMEC (made up of majorly BIPOC individuals), must be hired to ensure interpreter ethics and code of conduct are appropriately adhered to while providing communication access for Deaf actors in the auditioning and hiring processes. ASL interpreters are not knowledgeable consultants or acceptable substitutes for Deaf actors/character roles.

To reiterate, the ASL interpreters’ only role is to provide communication accessibility. **Nothing more and nothing less.**

\*END OF MEMO\*