

# National Geographic premieres *Genius: MLK/X*

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***Genius: MLK/X*** stars Kelvin Harrison Jr. ('The Trial of the Chicago 7') as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Aaron Pierre ('The Underground Railroad') as Malcolm X, Weruche Opia ('I May Destroy You') as Coretta Scott King, and Jayme Lawson ('The Batman') as Betty Shabazz





The series also marks one of the last roles for Emmy-winning actor Ron Cephas Jones ('This is Us')

***Genius: MLK/X* premieres 5 February 2024 on National Geographic**

The newest installment of National Geographic's Emmy Award-winning anthology series, *Genius*, returns this February. For the first time, the docu-drama series explores the lives of two iconic geniuses: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X. *Genius: MLK/X* will premiere on National Geographic (DSTV 181, StarSat: 220) on Mondays at 19:50 (CAT) from 5 February 2024, with two brand new episodes double-billed each week.



*Genius: MLK/X* follows both Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (Kelvin Harrison Jr.) and Malcolm X (Aaron Pierre) from their formative years, where they were molded by strong fathers and traumatic injustices, to their rich, parallel stories as they

shaped their identities and became the change they wished to see in the world. Influenced as children by different upbringings and experiences, King by the Jim Crow-era South and life in the church before finding his voice at Morehouse and Boston University, and X growing up under the constant, deadly violence of the Klan and falling into a life of vice and incarceration where he was introduced to the Nation of Islam and found his voice. The two visionaries ultimately rose to pioneer a movement.

The docu-drama series offers an intimate look into their complex lives as husbands, fathers, brothers and sons, taking them off the iconic T-shirts to show their humanity. *Genius: MLK/X* brings their wives, Coretta Scott King (Weruche Opia) and Betty Shabazz (Jayme Lawson), who are often portrayed as peripheral figures, to the forefront and shows them as formidable equals of the Movement. Episodes will explore the moments between the monumental historical events we've come to know and shine a light on how each leader and those closest to them questioned their resolve and decisions as they navigated the rigors of balancing a public persona with a private life. While King and X met only once and often challenged each other's views, neither would have been as successful without the other.



For Undisputed Cinema, Reggie Rock Bythewood, Gina Prince-Bythewood and Francie Calfo are executive producers. For Imagine Television, Brian Grazer, Ron Howard and Kristen Zolner are executive producers. Raphael Jackson Jr. and

Damione Macedon are showrunners and executive producers. For Madison Wells, Gigi Pritzker and Rachel Shane serve as executive producers. For EUE/Sokolow, Sam Sokolow is executive producer. Jeff Stetson ("The Meeting") penned the pilot and is executive producer. Channing Godfrey Peoples ("Miss Juneteenth") directed the pilot episode and also served as co-executive producer. Crystle Roberson is co-executive producer and directed episodes 402-406. Ambassador Shabazz served as a consulting producer.

Three previous seasons of *Genius* (*Genius: Einstein*, *Genius: Picasso* and *Genius: Aretha*) are currently streaming on Disney+.

#### **Episodes include:**

##### **Episode 401, "GRADUATION"**

The childhood and young adult experiences of Michael King Jr. (later Martin King Jr.) and Malcolm Little (later Malcolm X) are compared and contrasted as we explore the early days of two men who would become leaders of the Black community, their generation and a movement.

##### **Episode 402, "WHO WE ARE"**

Martin and Malcolm each work to shape their identities and become the change they wish to see in the world. Martin takes a pastor position in Montgomery and marries Coretta Scott. Malcolm purges his past and devotes himself to the NOI, becoming the leader of the Harlem Temple.

##### **Episode 403, "PROTECT US"**

Martin and Coretta begin their family as the Montgomery Bus Boycott propels MLK into national headlines as the leader of the Movement. Malcolm proposes to Betty Saunders as he ascends to become the National Representative of NOI.

##### **Episode 404, "WATCH THE THRONE"**

As the president of SCLC, Martin struggles to find a balance between active and passive resistance, relying on his faith for guidance. Malcolm is absorbed in his work, which creates strife for Betty and challenges his relationship with Elijah Muhammad.

##### **Episode 405, "MATRIARCHS"**

Pressures and expectations take a toll on Coretta and Betty. They each question their resolve and decisions as they navigate the rigors of a public persona and private life.

##### **Episode 406, "THE AMERICAN PROMISE"**

Two monumental 1963 events—the March on Washington and the Kennedy assassination—have lasting effects on both men. Martin becomes the moral leader of the Movement, while Malcolm is suspended from the NOI.

##### **Episode 407, "THE SWORD AND THE SHIELD"**

The two leaders meet briefly in DC while supporting the passage of the Civil Rights Act. Martin wins the Nobel Peace Prize. Malcolm forms two new organizations. Both men are under scrutiny and surveillance.

##### **Episode 408, "CAN YOU IMAGINE"**

Malcolm's fate is sealed after he criticizes the NOI. Martin's political views lead to his ultimate sacrifice for the Movement. The two leaders are assassinated, but their legacies continue to inspire.

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### **How to tune in:**

DSTV: Channel 181

StarSat: 220 on DTH, 220 on DTT (249 on DTT in Uganda)

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- **National Geographic honours WWII soldiers of colour with 2 new specials** 16 May 2024
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