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**News Weekly**

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**Best Movies of 2014**

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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

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# Louisiana Native Quvenzhane Wallis Makes Big Splash in Hollywood



Dr. Denise Roubion-Johnson (center) is surrounded by participants at a Breast Cancer Awareness event.

By Edwin Buggage

In a few short years Houma, Louisiana native Quvenzhane (Kwuh-Ven-juh-nay) Wallis burst upon the scene in the film *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, where she beat out 3500 other kids, landing a lead

role at the tender age of five. For her amazing performance, she became the youngest actress ever to earn an Oscar nomination. Since then, she's played in the award winning film *12 Years A Slave* and is presently making a splash and has the entertainment industry abuzz starring in the recently released remake of the

musical *Annie*, playing the lead character, the first for an African American alongside award winning actor Jamie Foxx.

Produced by Will Smith and Shawn "Jay-Z" Carter, the film recently opened up during the holiday season at number three at the box office. The movie did well

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### DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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in spite of the controversy with the movie being leaked early as part of a hacking scandal in North Korea; while that may have cut into some of the bottom line, it still is a hit with those who've seen it. The movie is a perfect holiday release and is a feel good story that has gotten many families out to the theater.

Since its release, the film has received mixed reviews, but what has been consistent, is the positive response surrounding the performances of Jamie Foxx and Quvenzhane Wallis. For her role as Annie, Wallis has been nominated for a Golden Globe for Best Lead Actress in a comedy or musical motion picture, an NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Actress in a motion picture and the Broadcast Film Critics Association Award for Best Young Actress.

Wallis is a triple threat, who can sing, dance and act. She is a small town girl with big things ahead for her in addition to her blossoming acting career, she's also already signed a modeling contract with



Armani Jr. The youngest of four, she is from a family where all of her siblings have talent. As noted in a recent cover story in Essence magazine, she says her oldest brother likes to dance, the second oldest is a comedian and the third oldest is a singer and she as the youngest sings, dances and acts.

As we near one of Hollywood's biggest nights, the Golden Globe Awards on Jan. 11, we will see a young girl small in size, but whose large talent has already begun to bear fruit. In her short acting career she's won 19 awards and has a promising career ahead of her. She is truly an inspiration for little girls everywhere, especially those of color. As I watched Annie in the movie theater with my own 6 year old daughter Elise, I saw her eyes light up as she sang and danced along with the songs from the movie. This was on the heels of her own standout performance in a Christmas play where she played multiple roles. After watching the movie Annie she asked how can I do what

she (Quvenzhane Wallis) is doing on screen?

Like the influence she has on my daughter, there are young girls around the world who are inspired by Quvenzhane's rise which is much greater than what she does on the big screen. She is the embodiment of what the combination of hard work, talent, discipline and the right opportunity and support can do to take you to the next level. But the amazing part of this story was that she was a girl of five years old whose talent was identified and nurtured. Now she is on a journey at 11 years old that many dream of as a nominee for one of the film industry highest honors. Quvenzhane Wallis story is a testament that dreams sometimes do come true, and she in her short life she has already made her mark by becoming an inspiration for future generations.

# Data News Weekly is Hiring

Data News Weekly Newspaper, The People's Paper, is hiring for two positions in our New Orleans Office.

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## Sales Manager/Retail Ad Manager

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# 2014's Best Films



Gugu Mbatha-Raw stars in the historical drama *Belle*.



David Oyelowo and Carmen Ejogo co-star in the bio/drama *Selma*, one of THE BEST FILMS OF 2014.



Michael Keaton stars in *Birdman*.

By Dwight Brown  
NNPA Film Critic

As 2104 draws to a close it's a perfect time to reflect on noteworthy films, strong performances and the strides that black artists made this past year. It's also a good time to spotlight the top-quality movies that will vie for Oscars and be released in theaters and on DVD/VOD in weeks to come.

## **Belle (\*\*1/2)**

A mind-boggling story based on fact about a biracial female being raised in a White aristocratic home in 18th Century England. Actress extraordinaire Gugu Mbatha-Raw lights up the screen in a very romantic and surprisingly socially relevant tale. Lavish production elements. Nice acting all around. Strong writing by Misan Sagay. Smart direction by British director Amma Asante.

## **Beyond the Lights (\*\*)**

This ode to chanteuses fighting personal demons (Rihanna-types) is the brainchild of writer/director Gina Prince-Bythewood, who made the most romantic film of the year. A wayward pop/hip hop singer (Gugu Mbatha-Raw, *Belle*) is rescued by a stoic, virile cop (Nate Parker). A sweet, modern love story set in the soul-eating, kinetic music industry. Well written, directed and acted.

## **Birdman (\*\*\*\*)**

It's not like Michael Keaton's career was kaput, but it seems like he raised himself from the dead with this invigorating performance. Mexican director/writer Alejandro González Iñárritu gave Keaton a plum role as a has-been actor and ex-super hero trying to make it big on Broadway.

The line between reality and fantasy is blurred. Excellent acting from all involved including Ed Norton and Naomi Watts.

## **Boyhood (\*\*\*\*)**

Shooting a film over the course of 12 years takes patience and imagination. Writer/director Richard Linklater had that in abundance as he followed the life of a small boy into young adulthood. Patricia Arquette as the stalwart mom is superb and Ethan Hawke as the bungling dad is pretty good too.

## **Dear White People (\*\*\*)**

The narrative follows the plight of four Black students at an almost all-White Ivy League school. Biting satire plays havoc with race relations. Credit filmmaker Justin Simien with a brilliant view of a complex subject and for equating Quentin Tarantino's *Django* with *Birth of a Nation* and *Gone With the Wind*. Bravo.

## **Grand Budapest Hotel (\*\*1/2)**

Wes Anderson's quirky films (*The Royal Tenenbaums*) have been an acquired taste only a few could love until this whimsical story about a snowy mountaintop hotel in the fictional Republic of Zubrowka. To hell with conventional storytelling, just throw in a confusing plotline, a bazillion cameos and wait for the dust to settle. Sweet ensemble acting. Tony Revolori, as the quirky bellboy Zero Moustafa, steals the movie.

## **St. Vincent (\*\*1/2) –**

Something about saying grouch and eccentric and Bill Murray seems redundant. Murray is a Brooklyn neighbor who babysits the vulnerable kid next door. His idea of teaching the boy how to be a man involves betting

on the horses, drinking in bars and beating up the class bully. Cool. Nicely directed by Theodore Melfi. Melissa McCarthy, Naomi Watts and Terrence Howard chew up the scenery in the year's best comedy.

## **Selma (\*\*\*\*)**

It's as if David Oyelowo was born to play Martin Luther King. Same nose, skin tone and cadence. Carmen Ejogo as Coretta is perfectly cast, too. Smartly directed by Ava DuVernay, who steps out of the shadows of small indie filmmaking to create an Oscar-caliber, historical film that depicts the bravery of a civil rights activist and a fiery reverend who out-smarted LBJ and got the Voting Rights Bill passed. Inspiring.

## **Starred Up (\*\*1/2)**

A violent British adolescent (Jack O'Connell, *Unbroken*) gets sent to a tough prison where his dad (Ben Mendelsohn) is a career jailbird. This brutal film makes *Oz* look like *Sesame Street*. Stark realism is so gruesome you can't look at the screen. Director David Mackenzie gets under the grimy skin of prison life in a way that will make you never one want to get arrested.

## **Whiplash (\*\*1/2)**

Who knew band practice could be equated with emotional abuse? Young actor Miles Teller plays a very ambitious drum student at a prestigious music school who is tormented by an instructor (J.K. Simmons), who is more sadistic than Satan. Damien Chazelle's script takes you places you didn't dream you'd go and his direction doesn't give you a way out. You'll stay until the best man wins.

## Honorable Mention

Annie  
Cesar Chavez  
Cuban Fire  
The Drop  
Force Majeure  
Get On Up  
I Am Ali

Ida  
Le Weekend  
Maleficent  
Nightcrawler  
Omar  
Ride Along  
Salt of the Earth

A Stranger  
Among Men  
Think Like a Man  
Too  
Unbroken

## Overrated

**Babadook**  
(Repulsive protagonists handcuff this inventive horror movie.)

**The Equalizer**  
(Empty action film.)

**Foxcatcher**  
(Steve Carell's performance is dull and one-note. Wrestling looks boring)

**The Judge**  
(Robert Downey Jr. is out-classed by Robert Duval.)

**Men, Women & Children**  
(Nice subject matter. Man VS the Internet. Poor execution)

**Interstellar**  
(Space movie spends too much time earth-bound.)

**Exodus: Gods and Kings** (A biblical movie bereft of a spiritual feeling.)

**Snowpiercer**  
(Monotonous train ride to hell.)

**Gone Girl**  
(Two unlikable characters add up to an inconsequential movie.)

## Worst Movies

**Dumb and Dumber 2**  
(The first one was a classic comedy. This one was classless.)

**Hercules**  
(The Rock was good as Herc. Bret Ratner's direction was awful.)

**Magic in the Moonlight**  
(Woody Al-

len phones in another ho-hum movie.)

**A Million Ways to Die in the West**  
(Seth MacFarlane directs a dud western.)

**Nymphomaniac: Part One and Part Two**  
(Remember when sex used to be fun?)

**Sex Tape**  
(A whole movie devoted to a missing sex tape. Really?)

**Tyler Perry's Single Mom's Club**  
(He churns movies out like a sweat shop factory.)



# Lunar and Zodiac Gardening



Edited by LMG Calla Victoria

The concept of planting by the phases of the moon is a very old one that is resurging with vigor. When my father first introduced me to gardening back in 2007 he always made me wait for the full moon before planting. He was an old Mississippi farmer, 95 years old to be exact. He never told me why so I just did as I was told and everything flourished.

The moon has four phases with each phase lasting seven days. The first two quarters are during the WAXING or increasing light cycles between the new and full moon. The third and fourth quarters are after the full moon when the light is WANING, or decreasing. The earth is in a gravitational field which is influenced by both the sun and the moon. During the full moon the gravitational pull is strongest therefore the moon causes high tides, and in the same way it pulls up moisture in the earth. Once while visiting my son in Miami,

Ocean Drive and downtown Miami were all flooded and I could not understand why as it had not rained at all. Then while watching the News that evening the reporter said the flooding was due to high tides because of the full moon. It has been scientifically proven that there is more moisture in the soil during the full moon than any other time of the month. The gravitational pull of the moon causes moisture to rise and fall within Earth encouraging more growth and easier sprouting consequently this is the time that seeds will absorb the most water and the roots of newly planted seedlings will thrive.

The first quarter of the moon is the New Moon, it is when lunar gravity pulls up water to the seeds, and also because of the increased moonlight it creates balanced roots and leaf growth. The second phase of the moon is the Second Quarter, the gravitational pull is less but the moonlight is still strong thus promoting leaf growth.

After the Full Moon, as the moon wanes in the Third Quarter, the energy draws down. The gravitational pull is high thus creating more moisture in the soil, but the moonlight is decreasing putting energy into the roots of plants. Now I know why my dad always told me to wait for the full moon before planting! It is because the soil is then very moist and seeds can absorb the most moisture and it is the perfect time to promote root growth in new seedlings. During the Fourth Quarter (or resting phase) both the moonlight and gravitational pull are at their lowest. This the time for garden maintenance and harvesting, but not planting.

Now that we are clear on the four phases of the moon and how they affect our plantings, let's go deeper and throw the zodiac into the mix. We all know the signs of the zodiac are divided into the four elements-earth, wind, fire, and water; with the moon moving through the zodiac constellations in the heavens

every couple of days. As plants require light, water, and good soil to thrive; which of the four elements would you consider the best for planting? If you chose water signs and earth signs you are on point. The water signs Cancer, Pisces, and Scorpio are excellent for planting because when the moon crosses these constellations the land is very moist. The Earth signs Taurus, Virgo, and Capricorn are also very fertile and good for planting as the root is the part of plants associated with earth signs and encouraging root development. And all plants, with the exception of epiphytes, are nourished through the root systems.

With what you already know about gardening along with this additional knowledge concerning lunar and zodiac planting your garden should be a maximum performance.

**Check out my "Gardening Tip of the Week."**

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## 2014

## Unfair and Unbalanced Media



George C. Curry  
NNPA

Fox News, which mislabels itself as “fair and balanced,” was anything but in 2014, according to MediaMatters.org, the independent media watchdog group. The way that the right-wing network covered the deaths of police officers in 2014 is a case in point.

“The politicization surrounding the killing of two New York Police Department officers over the weekend was amazingly swift. Fox News led the right-wing media charge, immediately claiming Democratic elected officials were somehow responsible for the gun rampage...,” the MediaMatters analysis observed.

“On Fox, hosts and guests were sure who was to blame for the tragedy; not the gunman necessarily, but political and community leaders like President Obama, Attorney General Eric Holder, Mayor Bill de Blasio and MSNBC’s Al Sharpton.

Why? Because the men, to varying degrees, have spoken out about the troubled relationship between law enforcement and the black community, and raised concerns about two recent high-profile cases, Michael Brown and Eric Garner, in which unarmed black men were killed, and police officers responsible were not indicted.”

The watchdog group continued, “...former New York City Police Commissioner Bernard Kerik told Fox News, ‘I personally feel that Mayor de Blasio, Sharpton and others like them, they actually have blood on their hands.’

“Let’s talk about the president as well,” responded Fox’s Jeanine Pirro, suggesting Obama and Mayor de Blasio were to blame. “The two of them have undoubtedly created racial tensions that worsens, not better the situation for law enforcement.”

“Appearing on Fox News, former New York City Mayor Rudolf Giuliani insisted the message from recent Obama ‘propaganda’ was that ‘everybody should hate the cops.’ (No such Obama ‘propaganda’ actually exists.)”

MediaMatters noted, “Yet in stark contrast, as Media Matters has documented, Fox News has routinely paid very little attention to

breaking news stories that feature right-wing, or anti-government, gunmen who target law enforcement officials as a way to deliver their warped political messages.

“And critically, when they have touched on those deadly attacks, Fox talkers have stressed that it’s not fair to blame politics. Note that in 2013, after racist skinhead Michael Page started killing worshipers at an Oak Creek, WI., Sikh temple, and then murdered a police officer, Fox’s Andrea Tantaros stressed that the killing spree was an isolated event that didn’t have any larger implications. ‘How do you stop a lunatic?’ she asked. ‘This is not a political issue.’

“At Fox, that has been the pattern: These kind of deadly right-wing attacks are treated as isolated incidents that are mostly void of politics. Instead, the perpetrators are portrayed as lone gunmen (and women) who do not represent any cultural or political movement.”

To buttress its assertion, MediaMatters stated:

“On a September night this year, 31-year-old marksman Eric Frein was allegedly laying in wait outside the Blooming Grove police barracks in northeastern Pennsylvania, preparing to assassinate state troopers. That night, state police

officer Bryon Dickson was shot and killed as he walked towards his patrol car.

“...In the two weeks after the shooting, as a massive manhunt unfolded in the mountains of Pennsylvania, Fox programs mentioned Frein’s name in just six reports, according to Nexis transcripts. One of the reports mentioned Frein’s hatred of law enforcement, but none mentioned Frein’s vocal anti-government leanings.

“When Frein was finally captured in late October, Fox News covered the stories a handful of times. Again, there was no emphasis on his possible anti-government motivations and why the “survivalist” set out to assassinate law enforcement officers.

“Another police assassination attack unfolded in June. Claiming to be acting under the bloody ‘banner of Liberty and Truth,’ Jerad Miller and his wife Amanda entered a restaurant Las Vegas executed two local policemen while they ate lunch.

“...Fox News primetime hosts Bill O’Reilly and Sean Hannity both ignored the shocking cop-killer story the night after it happened; Megyn Kelly devoted four sentences to it.

Fox has plenty of company on the right.

According to MediaMatters, the “Worst 2014 Smears From Right-Wing Websites” included:

The Daily Caller suggested that Obama’s statement expressing his condolences to the parents of Michael Brown was calculated to boost Black turnout in the mid-term elections.” [Media Matters, 8/12/14]

In November 2014, Breitbart.com criticized the media for not mentioning that President Obama’s nominee for attorney general, Loretta Lynch, “was one of the Clintons’ Whitewater defense attorneys.” But Breitbart.com targeted the wrong Loretta Lynch – the woman they named, a defense attorney for the Clintons, is a California based attorney who has worked on several prominent political campaigns, and is White. The nominee Loretta Lynch became a federal prosecutor in 1990, two years before the other Lynch participated in the Whitewater investigation, was appointed by President Clinton as a U.S. Attorney in 1999, and is Black.” [Media Matters, 11/9/14]

Yes, Black lives matter. And so does the truth.

George E. Curry, former editor-in-chief of Emerge magazine, is editor-in-chief of the National Newspaper Publishers Association News Service (NNPA.)

## Ernest “Dutch” Morial Reinterred at St. Louis Cemetary No.3

On Monday, December 29, 2014, the reinterment of the remains of the Honorable Ernest N. “Dutch” Morial (1978-1986) to the new Morial Family Tomb at St. Louis Cemetery No. 3 at Esplanade Avenue and Moss Street took place. Dutch Morial, served as the first African American mayor of the City of New Orleans passed away 25 years ago on December 29, 1889.

Roman Catholic Archbishop Gregory Michael Aymond blessed the tomb. In addition, several leaders from diverse faith communities were there to offer prayers including Rabbi Edward Paul Cohn, Congregation Temple Sinai; Imam Rafeeq Nu’Man, Masjid Ur Raheem Mosque; and Bishop Emeritus Paul S. Morton, Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship. The biography of Dutch Morial was read by his seven grandchildren. Morial’s widow Sybil Haydel Morial placed a wreath at the Morial Family Tomb.



Marc Morial, former New Orleans Mayor, honors his father and former New Orleans Mayor, Ernest N. ‘Dutch’ Morial, on the 25th anniversary of his death at St. Louis Cemetery No. 3 on Monday, December 29, 2014. (photo courtesy of The Times Picayune)



# Want to Quit for Good?

## Smoking Cessation Trust Offers Free Cessation Help to Eligible Louisiana Smokers Who Want to Quit for Good in 2015

As 2014 draws to an end and many people begin to make New Year's Resolutions, one resolution that consistently appears near the top of many lists is "quitting smoking." Louisiana currently ranks 44th (up from 46th in 2013) out of 50 states for tobacco use according to the recently released 2014 America's Health Rankings® Report from the United Health Foundation. Presently, 23.5% of the state's adult population lights up, well above the national average of 19.0%. Below are five quit steps from the CDC, which the Smoking Cessation Trust believes could help Louisiana smokers ring in the New Year cigarette-free:

### Step 1: Set a Quit Date

Pick a date—like the start of the New Year—within the next two weeks to quit smoking. This will give you enough time to prepare. Really think about your quit date. Avoid choosing a day where you know you will be busy, stressed, or tempted to smoke (for example, a night out with friends, days where you may smoke at work).

### Step 2: Tell Family & Friends that You are Trying to Quit

Telling family, friends and co-workers about a quit attempt can increase a smoker's chances of success. By sharing what kind of support a smoker is looking for—either encouragement or accountability—the loved one can be involved in the process. The more people a smoker has in his corner, the more likely



he is to succeed. Have a spouse or friend who wants to quit too? Do it together!

### Step 3: Plan for Challenges While Quitting

Stopping smoking is not just about dealing with nicotine cravings. Many smokers need to work through the habitual tendencies surrounding cigarette use. By going to a group workshop run by a trained cessation specialist, smokers can learn how to work through cravings and triggers like stress, boredom and nervousness without reaching for a cigarette. Many major hospitals in the area offer cessation counseling, contact the Trust for a full list.

Step 4: Remove Cigarettes and Other Tobacco from Your Home, Car and Work

You will be tempted to smoke during your quit. Stay strong; you can do it! Removing things that remind you of smoking will get you ready to quit. A few good ideas are:

- Throw away all your cigarettes

and matches. Give or throw away your lighters and ashtrays. Remember the ashtray and lighter in your car!

- Don't save one pack of cigarettes "just in case." Keeping even one pack just makes it easier to start smoking again.
- Remove the smell of cigarettes from your life. Make things clean and fresh at work, in your car, and at home. Clean your drapes and clothes. Shampoo your car. You will be less tempted to light up if you don't smell smoke.
- Have your dentist clean your teeth to get rid of smoking stains. Your teeth will look amazing. When you quit smoking, they will always look that way.

### Step 5: Talk with Your Doctor about Nicotine Replacement Therapy or Pharmaceutical Help

Smokers should discuss cessation treatments with their doctor. The Smoking Cessation Trust provides access to all recommended

cessation methods; knowing an individual's medical history, the doctor can suggest and prescribe pharmaceuticals or a nicotine replacement therapy that will work best for each smoker. Doctors can also talk about the benefits of quitting and what to expect.

Programs such as Smoking Cessation Trust can save a smoker hundreds of dollars annually and applying for benefits only takes a few minutes. Louisiana residents who began smoking cigarettes before Sept. 1, 1988 and who are approved for inclusion in the Trust program receive completely free services that include: physician office visits, nicotine replacement therapies (gum, patch, lozenges, etc.), prescription cessation medications (Wellbutrin, Chantix), group cessation counseling, and telephone cessation coaching.

For more information or to sign up for the Smoking Cessation Trust please visit [www.smokefreela.org](http://www.smokefreela.org) or call 1-855-259-6346.

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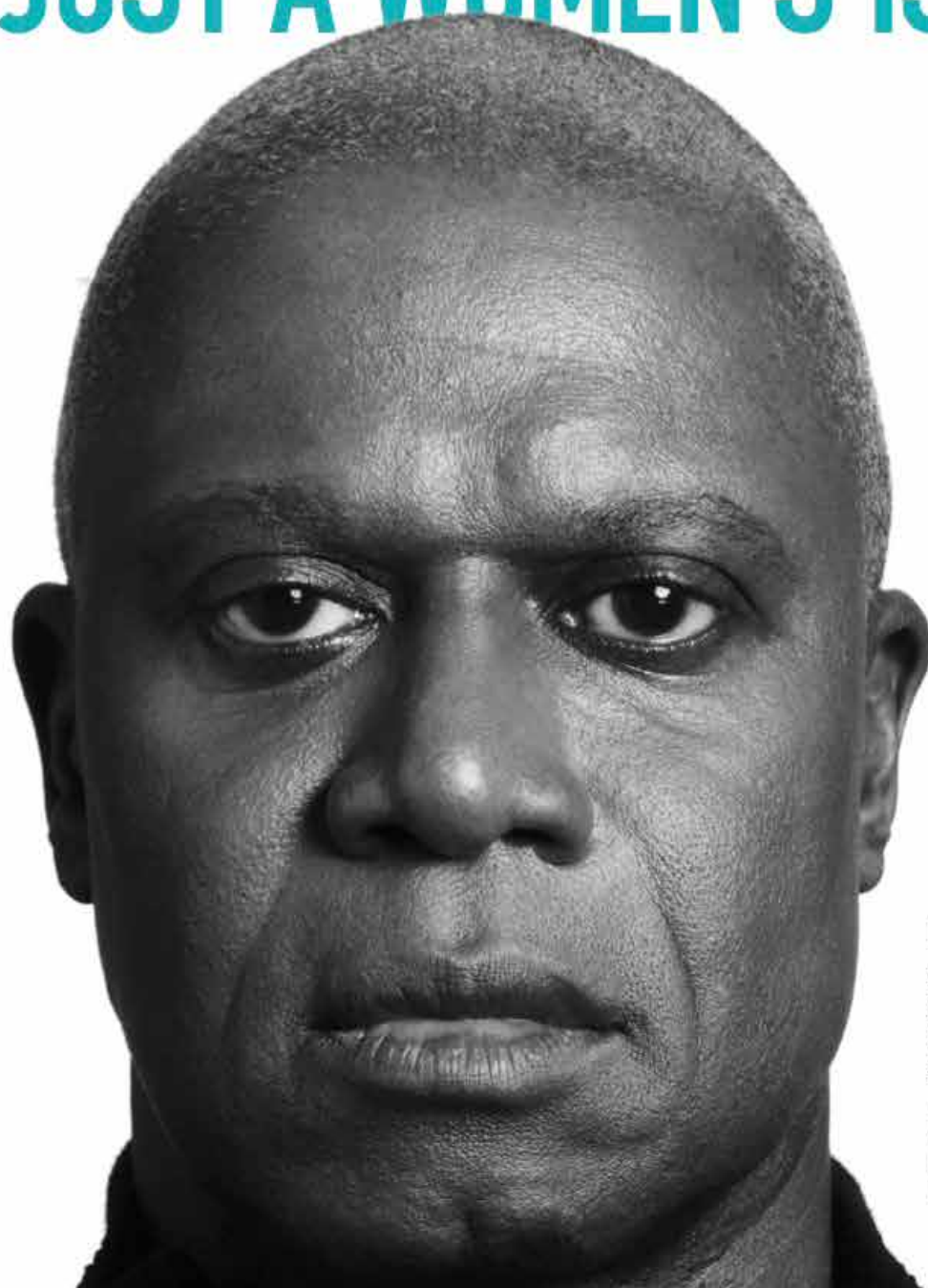
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