



A short film written and directed by Rob Eschmann

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Debut Short BLACK BLACK Turns a Private Group Chat Into a Public Reckoning

Rob Eschmann's 15-minute dramedy examines love, family, racial bias, and the painful work of seeing beyond our blind spots.

LOS ANGELES — BLACK BLACK, the debut short film from writer-director Rob Eschmann, follows a Black father whose family gathering is upended when his wife accidentally broadcasts racially insensitive private messages to a room full of guests. The discovery forces an interracial couple to confront what those messages reveal about their relationship — and the harm they may cause their daughter.

Blending comedy with intimate family drama, the film centers on Willy (Antoine Williams), who has learned not to make every encounter with racism into a confrontation. That instinct becomes impossible to sustain when the leaked conversation appears to target his daughter Grace's hair. As Willy and Joanna (Caitlin Duffy) respond to the fallout, BLACK BLACK explores how bias survives inside affection, how private speech becomes public evidence, and whether honesty can open a path toward change.

“We made this film to discover what it takes for people to see beyond their blind spots.”

Eschmann is a tenured professor at Columbia University and a faculty associate at Harvard's Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society. His scholarship examines racism, technology, and resistance; his 2023 book, *When the Hood Comes Off: Racism and Resistance in the Digital Age*, investigates how digital life changes the ways people experience, understand, and respond to racism. BLACK BLACK extends those questions through character, story, and image.

The film ends by invoking W.E.B. Du Bois's writing on “the veil” and double consciousness. Eschmann describes its final image as the beginning of a journey toward understanding and growth — a visual expression of the divide the characters must finally learn to see.

The film will show with [Block 17](#) of the Shorts Program on Tuesday, August 11th from 11am-12:30pm at the Martha's Vineyard Performing Arts Center.

PRESS RELEASE CONTINUED

Festival Recognition



Socially Relevant Film Festival New York

Official Selection — New York, March 2026

Antoine Williams won Best Actor in a Short Film.



Martha's Vineyard African American Film Festival

Official Selection — Martha's Vineyard, August 2026

Academy Award-qualifying festival.



XL Film Festival

Official Selection — Chicago, August 2026

Official selection.

BLACK BLACK was produced by Cristin Lim, with cinematography by Sika Stanton, editing by Ivan Alvaro, production design by Evan Black, and original music by Josué Vera. The cast includes Antoine Williams, Caitlin Duffy, Berkeley James, Tessa Claire Hersh, Dot McDonald, and Tom Downing.

About BLACK BLACK

BLACK BLACK is a color, 2:1 short drama/comedy from the United States. It was shot in Los Angeles on the Alexa Mini and completed November 2025. Runtime 14:57.

About Rob Eschmann

Rob Eschmann is a writer, filmmaker, and educator in New York. He is a tenured professor at Columbia University and a faculty associate at Harvard's Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society. As a scholar-artist, his work interrogates the effects of racism and the choices people can make to resist it. BLACK BLACK marks his directorial debut.

Trailer

vimeo.com/1215994600

Press contact information available upon request.

STORY

Synopsis

Short synopsis

BLACK BLACK is a dramedy about an interracial couple who confront the hidden truths that threaten their relationship — and their daughter.



A family gathering becomes the setting for an unexpected reckoning.

Long synopsis

BLACK BLACK follows Willy, a Black man in an interracial marriage whose world is turned upside down when leaked group-chat messages reveal that his partner Joanna may harbor racist ideas. During a family gathering, Joanna shares a video from her phone to the television, then leaves the room without realizing her device is still connected. Her guests are inadvertently shown a series of racially insensitive private conversations.

Willy is not someone who usually makes a big deal about racism, but he cannot get past messages that seem to target his daughter's hair. The film follows Willy and Joanna through the fallout, asking what love requires when private prejudice becomes visible and how a family begins the difficult work of confronting it.

FILMMAKER

Director's Statement



We made this film to discover what it takes for people to see beyond their blind spots.

Today, growing social and political divisions keep us talking past one another. Ideas and policies that are clearly regressive and hateful to some are viewed as egalitarian by others. Bias and misinformation are being weaponized in ways that threaten art, education, and democracy. BLACK BLACK speaks to this current moment.

The film's credits end with a quote from W.E.B. Du Bois, whose early twentieth-century writing on the racial divide — what he calls “the veil” — and the double consciousness that emerges as a result have influenced more than a century of thinking on race relations around the world. The final shot envisages this veil, the emergence of double consciousness, and the beginning of a journey of understanding and growth.

I have spent the past decade researching how bias shapes everyday life and how we can beat it back. My book, *When the Hood Comes Off: Racism and Resistance in the Digital Age*, investigates the ways technology is changing how we experience, understand, and respond to racism. BLACK BLACK is a deeply personal project that extends the themes and questions that motivate my scholarly work.

I feel deeply grateful to have been able to collaborate with so many talented and dedicated people on this project. I have learned that story and image are better able to plumb the depths of the human experience than any survey or experiment.

Moreover, I have been surprised at the number of collaborators, colleagues, and friends who have shared the ways BLACK BLACK relates to their own personal experiences with race, especially in the context of relationships with loved ones and family members. I hope this film will inspire difficult questions that will make our way forward more clear.

— Rob Eschmann, Writer-Director

FILMMAKER

Rob Eschmann

Writer, director, educator, and author



High-resolution file included in the accompanying media assets.

Rob Eschmann is a writer, filmmaker, and educator in New York. He is a tenured professor at Columbia University and a faculty associate at Harvard's Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society. As a scholar-artist, Rob's work interrogates the effects of racism and the choices people can make to resist it. His book, [When the Hood Comes Off: Racism and Resistance in the Digital Age](#), was released in 2023. Rob makes his directorial debut with BLACK BLACK.

Selected areas of work

- Race, technology, and digital life
- Bias, resistance, and social change
- Storytelling and art as intervention

PRODUCTION

Cast & Crew

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY

Rob Eschmann

PRODUCED BY

Cristin Lim

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

Justine Raczkiewicz; Jelani Julyus; Russell Conda; Rhotunda Conda

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Sika Stanton

PRODUCTION DESIGNER

Evan Black

EDITOR

Ivan Alvaro

ORIGINAL MUSIC

Josué Vera

CAST

Antoine Williams — Willy
Caitlin Duffy — Joanna
Berkeley James — Grace
Tessa Claire Hersh — Eva
Dot Saint-Fleur — Mel
Tom Downing — Arnold

Production Stills

High-resolution JPEGs are included in the accompanying media assets.



Antoine Williams as Willy.



Caitlin Duffy as Joanna.

Production Stills



Willy and Grace arrive at the family gathering.



The family gathering becomes a moment of confrontation.

MEDIA GALLERY

Key Art

Two vertical poster treatments are included as full-resolution PNG files in the accompanying media assets.



LINKS & USAGE

Media Notes

TRAILER

<https://vimeo.com/1215994600?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci>

AVAILABLE ASSETS

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1cwasCEet6nfz6-S3LsaZheruNF5dnbx8?usp=sharing>

- Two vertical posters (PNG)
- Six production stills (JPEG)
- Director headshot (JPEG)
- Three official-selection laurels (PNG)
- Shareable press kit (PDF)

For press, programming, or screening inquiries, contact Rob Eschmann, rob.d.eschmann@gmail.com, 773-480-0771.