

The Originals Slate

Eighteen projects in development — scripted, unscripted and documentary.

Black Ruby Media is the production company founded by Dwayne Ballen, built by a journalist and run on reporting. Every project below starts with a real question and refuses to answer it cheaply. This document lists the whole slate in one place: what each project is, what form it takes, and where it stands. Full development packages, treatments and pitch decks are available to qualified buyers and partners on request.

SCRIPTED

Party at Punk's · Harlem Renaissance · The Vare Machine · Kidnapping Pearl · The Blackhawk of Wall Street · Title Card

DOCUMENTARY

Charles Scott: First of His Class · A Game Above All Others · The Autism Project · Field of Activism · The Souls of Beach Music · aMAZEing · Peel Slowly and See: The Story of Album Covers · The Rilly Big Shew! · Pauli Murray: Social Justice Warrior · A Thousand Words or More

UNSCRIPTED

No Brown M&Ms · Second Whistle

WHAT THE STATUS LINES MEAN

Pitch ready Materials are complete and ready to send.

In development Actively written; core materials exist.

Proposed — in development Concept and research in progress.

Format available A repeatable format, ready to be built to order.

All titles are working titles and all projects are proposed concepts in development. No talent, rights, archive access, financing, distribution or partnership is attached or secured. Participation by any person, school, conference or network named is proposed only. Kidnapping Pearl is a work of fiction; its characters are invented and are not based on any real person. Historical projects distinguish documented fact from dramatised material in their development materials. Tonal references are cited as tone only and imply no affiliation.

Slate list current as of October 2026.

Scripted

6 projects

01 Scripted In development

Party at Punk's

An hour-long drama/comedy set at Punk's Patio, the Atlantic Beach nightclub where Black performers of the fifties and sixties found respite after playing segregated Grand Strand rooms — told through a young employee of the club.

02 Scripted Proposed — in development

Harlem Renaissance

A premium serialized period drama set in Harlem between the wars, where a generation of Black writers, musicians and organisers builds the most consequential cultural movement in America — and fights over who owns it.

03 Scripted Proposed — in development

The Vare Machine

A political period drama about the brothers who built a contracting business, a ward organisation and finally a city — the Vares of South Philadelphia, and the machinery of urban power in the first decades of the 20th century.

04 Scripted Proposed — in development

Kidnapping Pearl

A contained dark comedy set across one night: a bookseller who has written a novel nobody will read, the friend whose devotion curdles into a crime, and the talk-show host they take — who turns out to be the only person in the room in full command of herself. An original concept by Dwayne Ballen.

The Blackhawk of Wall Street

A premium historical limited series on Jeremiah G. Hamilton (c.1806–1875) — a Black financier who built a fortune inside antebellum New York, survived a death sentence, a bankruptcy and a lynch mob at his door, and was barred from the stock exchange by name for his colour. Dwayne Ballen attached as proposed executive producer.

Title Card

A scripted dramedy set inside the crew that puts a live sporting event on air for a major network — the producers, commentators, field reporters and control-room operators whose names never reach the broadcast. The engine is the personal anxiety and neediness the polished broadcast cannot show, carried by a fictional on-air announce team and by an incredibly controlling producer whose need to run the broadcast is what keeps breaking it: a play-by-play voice who cannot stop performing, a colour analyst whose expertise is his only argument for staying, a field reporter whose access is her ambition, and a widening circle of characters around them. A core ensemble carries the series, and the format opens a lane for real sports and entertainment figures to appear as themselves each episode. Tonal reference: HBO's The Larry Sanders Show. The title is the card the audience sees at the top of every game — the moment the announcer welcomes them in.

FEATURED DISTRIBUTION CASE

Title Card

Scripted series — half-hour dramedy

The Larry Sanders Show, inside the broadcast booth.

THE TITLE

The title card is what the audience sees at the top of every game — the moment the announcer welcomes them in. It is a promise of polish. The series lives in the gap between that promise and the people keeping it.

THE ENGINE

A fictional on-air announce team and an incredibly controlling producer whose need to run the broadcast is what keeps breaking it — a play-by-play voice who cannot stop performing, a colour analyst whose expertise is his only argument for staying, a field reporter whose access is her ambition, and a widening circle of characters around them.

THE GUEST LANE

Real sports and entertainment figures appear as themselves each episode — in the booth, on the sideline, in the green room. A core ensemble carries the series; the guests renew it.

THE DISTRIBUTION CASE

No sports rights required. The drama lives in the headset, not in game footage — no league windows or clip clearances hold up delivery or limit territories.

A one-sentence pitch. The tonal reference is instantly legible to buyers and audiences in any market.

A guest engine. Each episode brings a new name — a fresh marketing and press beat, every week.

A contained cost profile. Booth, truck, control room; single-camera; one sport. A shape that supports co-production and international sales.

A format that travels and recasts. Every territory broadcasts live sport; character profiles are built to adapt.

DEVELOPMENT STATUS

Pitch ready — full pitch deck available on request.

Tonal reference only: HBO's The Larry Sanders Show. No affiliation, attached talent, network, rights or financing is implied.

THE SLATE

Documentary

10 projects

07 Documentary Proposed — in development

Charles Scott: First of His Class

A documentary feature on Charles Scott — the first Black scholarship athlete at the University of North Carolina and, more significantly, the first star Black athlete at any major white university in the South — whose dignified presence and success challenged established norms across the entirety of Dixie, from Ole Miss to Kentucky to Georgia to LSU to Florida to Alabama. In one of the most pivotal and turbulent times in American history, he became an agent of change. Dwayne Ballen attached as proposed executive producer.

08 Documentary Proposed — in development

A Game Above All Others

An hour-long documentary on the 1974 ACC Tournament final — NC State 103, Maryland 100 in overtime — and the season of probation, rivalry and one-bid math that made a conference championship feel like a national elimination game. Dwayne Ballen attached as proposed executive producer.

09 Documentary Proposed — in development

The Autism Project

A hosted documentary special on autism in America — the research and its limits, the services families actually use, the college programmes, the lives of autistic adults told by autistic adults, and a father's own account delivered in a small room. Dwayne Ballen proposed as host and executive producer.

10 Documentary Proposed — in development

Field of Activism

A feature documentary on twenty years of athlete activism — from a speed skater giving away his Olympic bonus in Torino in 2006 to the kneels, walkouts, lawsuits and campus fights that followed, and the organised backlash that met each of them. Dwayne Ballen attached as proposed executive producer.

11 Documentary Proposed — in development

The Souls of Beach Music

A feature documentary on the two souls of Beach Music: the Black jump blues, R&B and soul that built it, and the white Carolina dance floors that adored it under Jim Crow — including the segregated touring circuit and the refuge of Atlantic Beach. Dwayne Ballen attached as proposed executive producer.

12 Documentary Proposed — in development

aMAZEing

A feature documentary about the most devoted audience in American popular music: Maze featuring Frankie Beverly, a band with no new album since 1993 that filled arenas for another thirty years — and the crowds who sang the songs back. Dwayne Ballen attached as proposed executive producer.

13 Documentary Proposed — in development

Peel Slowly and See: The Story of Album Covers

A feature documentary on album art as music's visual language: the artists, designers, photographers and fans behind covers that turned a record sleeve into a cultural statement, from intimate portraits to provocation and protest.

14 Documentary Proposed — in development

The Rilly Big Shew!

A feature documentary exploring The Ed Sullivan Show as a shared stage for twentieth-century American culture — from variety acts and musical breakthroughs to the show's fraught relationship with race, taste and television gatekeeping.

15 Documentary Proposed — in development

Pauli Murray: Social Justice Warrior

A feature documentary about Pauli Murray, the legal thinker, writer and Episcopal priest whose work crossed the fights for racial and gender equality — and whose personal life complicates any simple account of a trailblazer.

16 Documentary series Proposed — in development

A Thousand Words or More

Three photographs per episode. The photographers, subjects and witnesses take us behind images that shaped how we see the world — revealing the circumstances, choices and human stories the frame cannot show on its own.

THE SLATE

Unscripted

17 Unscripted series Proposed — in development

No Brown M&Ms

A light-hearted documentary series investigating the surprising requests in entertainment contract riders — and the practical needs, personalities and backstage stories behind them. Each case is reported and verified rather than taken at face value.

Second Whistle

A premium interview series exploring the lives of former athletes in myriad different endeavors and walks of life — from business to entertainment to politics to civic life and all points in between.

WORKING TOGETHER

Request a full treatment.

Tell us which project and what you need — a treatment, a one-sheet, a pitch deck, a rights and research summary, or a development plan.

Requests go through the Originals page on dwayneballen.com, where you can also describe your genre, audience and development interests and have the slate matched to them. Deeper development materials are shared with qualified buyers and partners under NDA.

WHAT A FULL PACKAGE CONTAINS

Treatment. The premise, the argument and the shape of the series or film.

One-sheet. The pitch in a single page, ready to forward.

Pitch deck. The full case, built to send to a buyer.

Cast and contribution plan. Who we want in front of or behind the camera, and why.

Rights and research notes. What is documented, what is dramatised and what still needs clearing.

Development status. Where the project stands and what the next step is.

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