



SEASON 1, EPISODE 1: INTRODUCING THE BLK IRL PODCAST

<https://www.blkirl.com/episodes/introducingblkirl>

FULL EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

BLK IRL 0:00

Hello, I am Anuli Akanegbu and you are listening to the BLK IRL podcast.

MUSIC 00:10

[Intro music: "Wild" by Garth.]

BLK IRL 0:24

Welcome to the first episode of the BLK IRL podcast. The BLK IRL podcast is an audio docuseries that explores the business of "influencing" and the power dynamics at play in the act of cultural exchange. Each episode dissects themes related to race in the influencer marketing industry. The episodes in each season will be released bi-weekly (that's every other week) and will feature researched commentary from me, ya girl, and intimate interviews with predominantly Black content creators, scholars, entrepreneurs, marketing experts,

BLK IRL 1:00

and cultural critics. The BLK IRL podcast is the first offering from the BLK IRL project which is a larger multimedia research project that I started with a desire to showcase the expansiveness of Black identity and Black creativity in today's Internet culture. In this first short episode of the BLK IRL podcast I am going to share a bit of background information about who I am and why I started the BLK IRL project. I'll also introduce you to some of the themes that will be covered in season one of this podcast. Let's get it!

BLK IRL 1:46

Okay, so a bit about me. Again, my name is Anuli. That is spelled A-N-U-L-I in case you're wondering. I go by she, her, and hers pronouns.

BLK IRL 2:00

I am a transdisciplinary scholar and media maker. I am also a PhD student in the cultural anthropology program at New York University. I describe myself as a transdisciplinary scholar because I'm keen on bringing together knowledge from various academic and non-academic sources and ultimately transcending the boundaries of a disciplinary perspective. My doctoral research examines the racialized politics of the influencer marketing industry in the United States with a focus on Black social media content creators. I come into this work with years of experience in the marketing industry, where I worked primarily as a brand planner and a



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strategist for all sorts of multinational companies. So I've experienced the influencer marketing industry from the brand side. Now I want to better understand it as a scholar from the perspective

BLK IRL 3:00

the influencers themselves. I see the work that I produce as belonging to the people, most of which are outside of academia. While I can appreciate the professional utility of a journal publication, I most enjoy creating experimental projects across mediums that are accessible and legible to the public. So that is a little bit about me. If you hang on tight, I'm going to wrap up with a quick preview of season one of the BLK IRL podcast.

BLK IRL 3:41

The first season of the BLK IRL podcast will chronicle how Black content creators have had to balance the pressures to speak out for human rights while maintaining their revenue streams, online and offline relationships, and personal peace of mind. Each episode of the Black in Real

BLK IRL 4:00

Life podcast will be grounded in research and intimate conversations to probe into questions such as "What does it mean to be an influencer?", "How has Covid-19 impacted the ways that digital content is produced?" and "How do Black content creators working in the United States negotiate issues of race in the influencer marketing industry?" The stories that I want to share through the BLK IRL Podcast are stories that are often overlooked in coverage of the influencer marketing industry and social media in general. They are also often left out in the scholarship about influencers because it is rare that scholarship discusses influencers with race in mind leading to a lot of work that is focused on White women by default with less attention paid not only to Black people, but to the nuances of Blackness which include gender,

BLK IRL 5:00

identity, class categorizations, physical ability, age and nationality. When discussed, Blackness is often covered as a monolithic identity and content creators are only presented in relation to their online content without the offline context that informs it, BLK IRL aims to change that, one episode at a time. Stay tuned and remember the people you follow online are also Black

BLK IRL 6:00

in real life.

BLK IRL 6:10



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You have just listened to a production of the BLK IRL podcast hosted by Anuli Akanegbu. Developed by Anuli Akanegbu. Scripted by Anuli Akanegbu. Editing work done by Anuli Akanegbu. With research support by Anuli Akanegbu. The music was graciously provided by Garth, whose single "WILD" can be streamed on anywhere you can find music. Thank you. And remember, the people you follow online are also BLK IRL.

BLK IRL 6:18

[Outro music: "Wild" by Garth.]