



Jeff Clanagan Codeblack's CEO Gets Urban Movies To The Marketplace

The lack of distribution options for African-American filmmakers was the genesis for Jeff Clanagan starting his Codeblack Entertainment three years ago. Today, Codeblack holds the distinction of being the first independent, vertically integrated African-American-owned studio.

"[African-Americans] create and come up with content, but yet we don't distribute anything," said Clanagan. "Most independent directors and producers have to go shop for a studio. [Codeblack] distributes to theaters, television and DVD, broadband and the Internet."

Some of his offerings have included *Dirty Laundry*, *Shadowboxer*, *The Salon* and *Steve*

◀ Jeff Clanagan is CEO and president of Codeblack Entertainment, the only African-American film company that handles production and distribution.

Harvey's comedy concert *Don't Trip...He Ain't Through With Me Yet*.

Before starting his own company, Clanagan oversaw Master P's No Limit Films, which was the first company to create the "whole business model of the straight-to-DVD movie," Clanagan said.

Codeblack adopted that same model and is now noted in the straight-to-DVD market. Since he entered this arena, he has been responsible for more than \$150 million in sales, according to the company.

"It just creates more opportunities for filmmakers to get their product out in the marketplace," Clanagan said.

A graduate of the University of Washington, Clanagan admits to sort of "falling into entertainment" while promoting parties in college. Later he found himself doing national tours for acts like LL Cool J, Run DMC, Anita Baker and Def Comedy Jam.

This fall, expect the film *Mama, I Want To Sing*, adapted from the off-Broadway production. Codeblack will produce and distribute the movie. This will be Clanagan's first theatrical release with FOXFAITH, a new division of 20th Century Fox to target the African-American faith-based market.

Recently he optioned ReShonda Tate Billingsley's book *Let The Church Say Amen*.

"I'm taking books and adapting them into feature films," he said. "Then we're going to take the books and movies and create live stage plays and take them on the road. I'm creating a new paradigm."

—Margena A. Christian