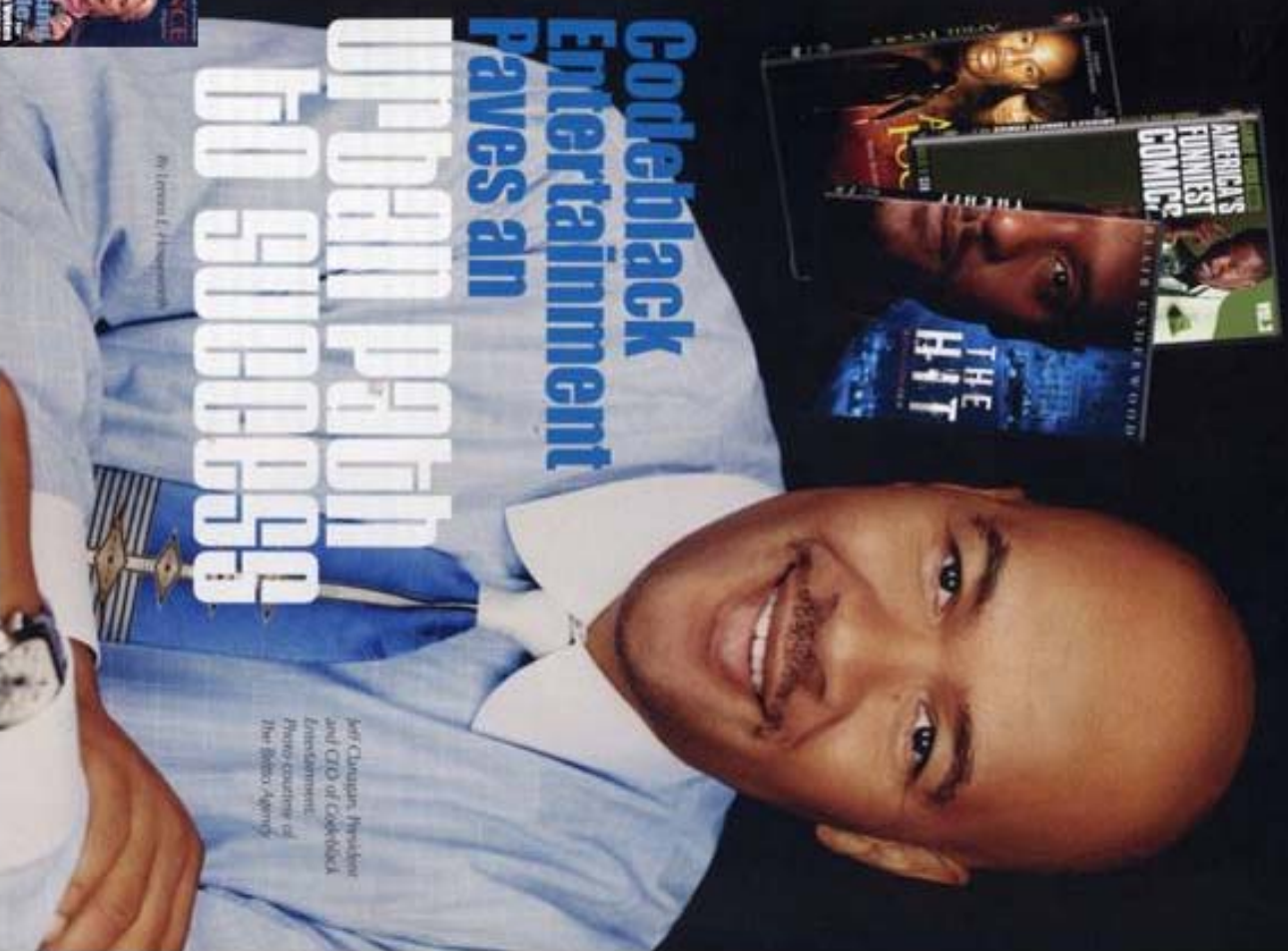


ENTERTAINMENT & INFLUENCE



When the Sugarhill Gang's seminal "Rapper's Delight" rap song blared from speakers beginning in 1979, few recognized the impact the urban community would have on the entertainment industry. Today, nearly 30 years later, hip hop music is a billion-dollar influence that has saturated mainstream clothing, film and other lucrative business ventures.

Now, meet a man behind the movement and one of Hollywood's best-kept secrets, Jeff Caranigan is President and CEO of Codeblack Entertainment, a multimedia film and television firm targeting the urban market. As the first independent, vertically integrated African American-owned film studio, Codeblack is digitally equipped to produce, distribute, acquire and market multimedia content, while maintaining its mission to uphold the integrity of the urban community through positive, quality programming.

Debuting in 2005, the Los Angeles-based entertainment firm generated \$12 million in gross sales last year and projects \$21 million in sales this year. Caranigan and his company are responsible for such Hollywood and hip hop projects as "Sew Harvey: Don't Trip...He Ain't Through With Me Yet" and "Shadowboxer," the directorial debut of Lee Daniels, who produced "Monster's Ball." Codeblack is also responsible for more than \$20 million in DVD sales in 2006 alone.

"We as a people are one of the largest producers and consumers of entertainment content, yet we do not control any distribution channels. Codeblack Entertainment is the first Black-owned film distribution company. Being the only Black-owned distribution company is groundbreaking," said Caranigan.

Now a 20-year veteran in the business, Caranigan began his career promoting national concerts for Run DMC, LL Cool J, NWA, The Fatboys and Will Smith; he found continued success promoting legendary music acts, including The Isley Brothers, Luther Vandross and New Edition. Since then, he has produced the hit stage plays "The Diary of Black Men" and "A Good Man Is Hard to Find."

As president of No Limit Films, Caranigan oversaw rap mogul Master P's film projects and helped the company grow into a powerful, \$40 million multimedia company. He also has produced three selections for the BET cable network, and successfully promoted the popular "Def Comedy Jam" Tour, which showcased thriving stars Bernie Mac, Martin Lawrence

and Chris Tucker. From there, Caranigan became president of UrbanWorks Entertainment and helped solidify the company's reputation in urban home entertainment.

Nowadays as CEO of his own company, Caranigan continues to raise the bar for Hollywood with his innovative business strategies. This year, "1 Thud," a straight-to-DVD movie starring rap group Bone Thugs-N-Harmony, will release a new marketing model designed by Codeblack Entertainment. The model is designed to leverage record labels' promotional budgets while creating an additional revenue stream for the artist. This new, groundbreaking model addresses industry concerns about declining record sales and digital piracy.

"Creating this piece of product with already allocated marketing dollars for key albums is a way for record companies and artists to create and generate incremental revenue," said Caranigan in an interview.

Codeblack has also developed a multi-picture partnership with media conglomerate 20th Century Fox under the company's new distribution division, FoxSix, which will produce six films targeting the growing African American faith-based market. One of the first projects is the film adaptation of the hit gospel musical "Maana, I Want to Sing!" starring R&B superstars Ciara and Patti LaBelle. The film is slated for release next February.

"I'm thrilled to be a part of this exciting new project with Codeblack Entertainment," said Ciara. "It's refreshing to now have the chance to do so through film, alongside such an innovative, enterprising company."

In an exciting new move to take Codeblack worldwide, American World Pictures (AWP) will handle all Codeblack projects to international markets. AWP will solicit eight Codeblack projects during the Cannes Film Festival this year, including "Janice Fox Presents America's Funniest Comics VI."

Using his vast industry expertise, Caranigan has developed other distribution and marketing deals with urban broadcaster Radio One and Visual Entertainment, a division of Universal Music and Video. He also has announced the establishment of UrbanFilmClub.com, an online retailer of urban DVDs.

"Codeblack Entertainment is more than a film studio," observed Caranigan. "It is the urban community's foundation for independent thought and creator; a premiere platform for the contributions of a society so commonly ignored and a celebration of African Americans' untapped creativity for generations to come." **UMA**

Lovona E. Houseworth is a staff writer for Urban Influence Magazine.

