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January 9, 2024

Dear President Yang and Governors of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences:

We write as actors, directors, producers, executives, agents, screenwriters, and other industry professionals. While we applaud the Academy's efforts to increase diverse and authentic storytelling, an inclusion effort that excludes Jews is both steeped in and misunderstands antisemitism. It erases Jewish peoplehood and perpetuates myths of Jewish whiteness, power, and that racism against Jews is not a major issue or that it's a thing of the past.

While many mistakenly believe that Judaism is only a religion, Jews are actually an ethnic group, with varied spiritual practices that not all observe. Jews are an indigenous people to the Middle East with a continuous presence there for over 3000 years. This is not negated by the fact that Jews, like all marginalized groups, have white-passing members. Their colonization and exile led to millennia of persecution, and many Jews still carry the DNA of their foremothers' oppressors. Antisemitic incidents are at an all-time high, with an increase of 400% since October 7—and Jews were already the most attacked minority group in the US per capita, according to the FBI 2022 hate crimes report. Online vitriol has also taken Jew-hatred to a new level. Cutting down perceived Jewish power has been an excuse for abusing Jews for centuries, most notably during the Spanish Inquisition and 1930s Germany.

Systemic racism against Jews in the United States included segregation, redlining, quotas, and gatekeeping, and was the motivation for the founders of Hollywood to start an industry where antisemitism wouldn't harm them. Unfortunately, many of these founders had internalized shame and self-loathing, which meant that Jews in Hollywood often changed their names and told stories about Jews with caricatures, tropes, appropriation, and self-erasure. The first talkie film, "The Jazz Singer," was about a Jew leaving the ways of his people. This dynamic is alive today, in films released as recently as [this year](#). One of last year's Oscar winners, "Everything Everywhere All At Once," cast a Jewish woman to play a stereotypical "Jewish American Princess" called "Big Nose."

The absence of Jews from "under-represented" groupings implies that Jews are over-represented in films, which is simply untrue. There are very few films about Jews, aside from ones about the Holocaust. Moreover, when Jewish characters are featured, they are often played by non-Jews, a rare practice for other marginalized groups. While there have always been Jews working in the industry, the industry has only accommodated a certain type of Jew: the toned-down Jew. A more flagrantly

looking or observing Jew has never had a home in Hollywood. Even with today's increased standards of inclusion and diversity, that Jew continues to not be welcome.

Jewish people being excluded from the Motion Picture Academy's Representation and Inclusion Standards is discriminating against a protected class by invalidating their historic and genetic identity. This must be addressed immediately by including Jews in these standards. In addition, we'd like to propose further changes to the Representation and Inclusion Standards. When films use writers and consultants with expertise, pride, and cultural competency, when casting is done authentically, when film sets are set up to truly accommodate a diverse group of people, then a space of accommodation, inclusion and authenticity is created. These modifications would benefit everyone. A space like this has never existed for Jews in Hollywood, and the Motion Picture Academy has an opportunity to combat Jew-hatred by creating a framework for nuanced and authentic representation.

There is a duty for the entertainment world to do its part in disseminating whole and human depictions of Jews, to increase understanding and empathy in viewers in these dangerous times. We ask the Motion Picture Academy leadership to do its part in advancing a just cause that has been ignored for too long.

Respectfully,

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Brett Gelman
Dan Bucatinsky
David Baddiel
David Schwimmer
Debra Messing
Emanuelle Chriqui
Ginnifer Goodwin
Iliza Schlesinger
Jason Alexander
Jonathan Lipnicki
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