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Introducing Matt James, But We Like to Call Him “First Black Bachelor”

Let the journey begin!



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We feel so privileged to have Matt as our First Black Bachelor and we cannot wait to embark on this journey with him.

-Karey Burke, President, ABC Entertainment, June 2020

Hello Bachelor Nation!

Thanks to the 160,000 of you who signed the change.org petition demanding anti-racism in the Bachelor franchise, we are thrilled to announce that we have been shamed into casting our First Black Bachelor. Our First Black Bachelor is here for the right reasons, ready to find love, and positively swoon-worthy.

We're here now to answer questions we've received from you on social media. So on to the moment you've all been waiting for!

Will the First Black Bachelor be the total package?

Absolutely! First Black Bachelor (FBB) possesses all the qualities you look for in a white Bachelor. Our hunky FBB has strong family values, a great career, and a passion for giving back. He loves God, success, travel, children, and good ol' American football.

But I thought The Bachelor had a “white men only” policy?

No! Juan Pablo Galavis, the sexy single father from Miami, Florida, was the Season 18 Bachelor, and while he may look and be white, he's actually Latino.

And we seriously considered casting romantic-at-heart fan-favorite Matt Johnson (who is Black), but then we had to go with another diverse choice, half-Cuban Peter Weber, after Pilot Pete proved himself to be quite the windmill lover (four times!).

As our executive producer Martin Hilton explained to Entertainment Tonight, we are constantly thinking about how to incorporate diversity “in an organic way.” Like, we'd tune in one season and go, “Wait, how did that happen? There's a Black Bachelor!” And we guess this is that season.

So the timing of this casting wasn't connected with the Black Lives Matter Movement? Or with former Bachelorette Rachel Lindsay's threat to disassociate from the franchise if no one addressed the lack of diversity? Or with the change.org campaign that enumerated

specific demands for anti-racism on a show that pretends only white people are looking for love?

Nope! We actually thought of diversifying the show well before all any Black people did. We were just waiting for the right time and wanted to do it for the right reasons.

Of course, we knew that George Floyd died somehow on May 25th. We knew Rachel Lindsay said *The Bachelor* franchise was “whitewashed” and threatened to cut ties with us because we’re a little bit racist sometimes. We knew people who watched our show were thinking Black lives mattered in some way.

But none of that played into our decision to pick our FBB.

Wasn’t Matt already cast as a suitor on Clare Crawley’s Bachelorette season?

Yes! When we cast Matt, we were sure this 28-year-old athlete, career superstar, and New York philanthropist would be a perfect match for Clare, a 39-year-old unlucky-in-love hairstylist from Sacramento.

But after COVID-19 delayed the taping of Clare’s season, we noticed “something special” about Matt and thought, “Hmm, he’s Black, isn’t he?” So we pulled him from Clare’s season and made him our FBB (sorry, Clare).

Were there no other Black people you could have picked along the way?

As Chris Harrison explained on the podcast *Bevelations*, the franchise has been begging brown and Black people to audition for *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*, but I guess they weren’t all that keen on being part of our color-free show.

So instead of focusing on race, we focused on *quality*. As Chris explained, “At the end of the day, I’m not really as worried about meeting a quota as I am about meeting a quota of *quality* people.”

What, were we supposed to pass over all of our high caliber lonely white applicants?

Did you consider making any other changes?

A Black host wasn’t an option, after Chris declared, “I would rather not lose my job.”

A season with a cast of color was out because we didn’t want all of the unmarried white social influencers to feel unrepresented.

The change.org petition demanded thirteen points of anti-racism action, but that seemed overwhelming. So we looked at the first point on the list — casting a Black Bachelor — and thought “That’s the least we could do! Let’s do that!”

So is The Bachelor franchise really committed to anti-racism?

We understand we can’t undo 24 seasons of systemic racism with FBB. But also maybe we can!

What about the assertion that Matt James was a “safe choice”?

Because he has a white mother and we mention that as often as possible? Because we regularly feature his friendships with white former contestants Tyler Cameron and Hannah Brown? Because we made a big to-do about how our FBB forgave Hannah for using the n* word on Instagram Live?

Naw. He wasn’t a safe choice at all. You know who would have been a safe choice? Chris Harrison.

How will the show be different with FBB?

This will literally be the MOST DRAMATIC SEASON EVER and will still include all of the Bachelor staples, like hot tubs, ballgowns, “I’m not here to make friends” pronouncements, sloppy-ass drunks, interrupted declarations of love, “did they or didn’t they” fantasy suites, and a few racists snuck in for fun.

Let the journey begin!

Lucie Frost is a retired employment lawyer, now ha-ha writer in San Antonio, Texas. You can find in all the places [@luciefrost](https://twitter.com/luciefrost) or at <https://luciefrost.com/>

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