



For Immediate Release

GreenLight Women Celebrates Acclaimed “*Mr. SOUL!*” Filmmaker Melissa Haizlip as 2021 Grant Recipient With Star-Studded Panel on October 17th

Award-winning Filmmaker Melissa Haizlip Becomes the Third GreenLight Women Filmmaker Grant Recipient. Her Work Will Be Honored With A Panel Event Featuring Blair Underwood, Beverly Bond, Laurens Grant, Anna Maria Horsford, Chaz Ebert, Thomas Allen Harris, Lalah Hathaway, Robert “Kool” Bell and Karen Horne

(LOS ANGELES, CA. October XX, 2021) Revolutionary women’s organization **GreenLight Women**, a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization which supports and advocates for women innovators age 40 and over, will award its 2021 Filmmaker Grant to acclaimed writer/producer/director **Melissa Haizlip** for her film “*Mr. SOUL!*” The award-winning documentary was acquired for distribution by **Warner Media** in August of this year and is currently streaming on the **HBO Max** platform. There will be a panel discussion this **Sunday, October 17th from 5-7pm PDT** via zoom on the Eventive platform. The **GreenLight Women Filmmaker Grant** is awarded to female filmmakers who have devoted their talents and energy to creating exceptional films demonstrating significant artistic talent in the visual arts and industry-related fields, and who display innovative skills and a level of excellence, to complete their films by, for or about women.

GreenLight Women President **Iris Grossman**, of **Echo Lake Entertainment**, will be presenting the grant at a virtual event curated by the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion/Grants arm of **GreenLight Women** together with **Shoes in the Bed Productions**. The event, supported by **HBO Max** and **The O’Shaughnessy Foundation**, will take place via zoom on the Eventive platform, and there is no charge for admission.

There will be a Zoom panel discussion this **Sunday, October 17th from 5-7pm PDT** on the Eventive platform with Director **Melissa Haizlip**, which will be moderated by **Black Girls Rock! Beverly Bond**. The panel discussion will include an introduction by **Blair Underwood** (“Quantico,” “Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.”) and will feature panelists **Anna Maria Horsford** (“The Last O.G.,” “The Bold & the Beautiful”), who worked on the original production of *SOUL!* in the 60s; five-time **Grammy**® winner **Lala Hathaway**, who sings the theme song *Show Me Your Soul*; consulting producer **Laurens Grant** (“Freedom Riders”); executive producer **Chaz Ebert** (“Death of Innocence,” “Passing”); **Thomas Allen Harris**, cast member, Yale University professor /NAACP award winner; **Robert “Kool” Bell** from *Kool and the Gang* (Kool and the Gang made their first television appearance on *SOUL!*); and **Karen Horne**, Senior

VP of Equity and Inclusion, **Warner Media** and Diversity pioneer and pipeline builder. To RSVP for this event go to [GreenLightwomen.org](https://www.GreenLightwomen.org).

Melissa Haizlip is an award-winning filmmaker based in New York. Her work responds to pressing social issues at the intersection of racial justice, social justice, activism, and representation. Her goal is to advocate and amplify the voices of women and people of color. **Haizlip's** feature documentary, "**Mr. SOUL!**" was nominated for three *NAACP Image Awards* and won the 2020 *Critics Choice Documentary Award* for Best First Documentary Feature. "**Mr. SOUL!**" received 32 nominations and won 19 awards, including 14 film festival awards. She's currently co-executive producing a docuseries on women in hip-hop for **Netflix**.

"We are thrilled to award Melissa Haizlip a 2021 GreenLight Women Filmmaker Grant, and to celebrate her remarkable film *Mr. SOUL!* Ellis Haizlip was in the vanguard of African-American culture in the 60s, and was perhaps one of the greatest unsung artistic revolutionaries in American culture. By curating black artists, poets, political commentary and music for the public, he created an energetic safe space for Americans to view the outstanding talent that was emerging in the African-American community. Melissa Haizlip has encapsulated this important cultural history in this beautiful and meaningful film. We are honored to help her illuminate the story of Ellis Haizlip and cannot wait to see more work from this very talented and important filmmaker," shares **Iris Grossman, GreenLight Women President**.

Before **Oprah**, before **Arsenio**, there was **Mr. SOUL!** From 1968 to 1973 the public television variety show **SOUL!**, guided by the enigmatic producer and host **Ellis Haizlip**, offered an unfiltered, uncompromising celebration of Black literature, poetry, music, and politics—voices that had few other options for national exposure and, as a result, found the program an improbable place to call home. The series was among the first to provide expanded images of African Americans on television, shifting the gaze from inner-city poverty and violence to the vibrancy of the Black Arts Movement. With participants' recollections and illuminating archival clips, "**Mr. SOUL!**" captures a critical moment in culture whose impact continues to resonate, and an unsung hero whose voice we need now more than ever to restore the **SOUL** of a nation.

Founded in 2018, the **Greenlight Women** Film Completion Grants Program awards financial support and encouragement to female filmmakers who demonstrate significant artistic talent in the visual arts and industry-related fields, and who display innovative skills and a level of excellence, in order to fully complete their films by, for or about women. Earlier in the year, **GreenLight Women** awarded its second Filmmaker Grant to producer **Alice Doyard** for her film "**Colette**," which subsequently went on to win the 2021 Academy Award® for Best Documentary Short. Later this year, the organization will set up the **GreenLight Women** and **Colette** Film Impact Campaign which will keep the film alive in academic settings, high schools, colleges, museums, and organizational discussions. The campaign will explore the advantage of multi-generational friendships, and the importance of mentorship. It will also deal with the nature of human trauma, how to confront it, and the healing that comes with facing a buried fear. Cochairs of the diversity equity and inclusion arm are **Kimberly Ogletree** and **Romell Foster-Owens** and Chair of the Grants Committee for GreenLight Women is **Lucy Webb**.

During the COVID 19 crisis **GreenLight Women** mobilized to provide daily phone call support for the residents at **The Motion Picture and Television Fund Home**, meals for **The Alexandria House**, a transitional residence for homeless women and children, conducted the first in a series of town hall conversation focusing on systemic and institutionalized racism moderated by **Kimberley Ogletree** (“A Beautiful Soul”) with special guests acclaimed filmmakers **Julie Dash** (“Daughters of the Dust”) and **Neema Barnette** (“Queen Sugar”), and has continued support for all **GreenLight Women** members via a weekly virtual chatroom.

“There is no substitute for experience” is **GreenLight Women’s** maxim for all these revolutionary women.

About GreenLight Women

GreenLight Women is the first and only 501(c)(3) non-profit organization by and for an alliance of accomplished and creative professional women in the entertainment industry to focus on the needs and challenges of women over the age of 40. Founded in 2016, our purpose is to fight ageism and provide a community of support and encouragement for the thousands of women who are navigating getting older in a youth-oriented business; to help each other achieve our individual goals, to promote diversity, to share our knowledge and experience and to change attitudes about aging. GreenLight Women’s commitment to change is reflected in our programs, services and activities including Sunday Salons, Zoom Talks with industry icons, Black History Month yearly tributes, screenings, the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee's Town Hall Conversation Series, "I See You, I Hear You," the Connection Committee's member career support, workshops, a grants program and community outreach.

Where to follow **GreenLight Women** at [GreenLightWomen.org](https://www.GreenLightWomen.org)

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