



On Screen

New & Noteworthy

WONDERFULLY MADE

Phillip Picardi, former editor of the LGBTQ magazine *Out*, looks into the intricacies of religion in his podcast *Unholier Than Thou*. From harsh treatment of Muslims by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to exploring the sacred role of trans people in some religious traditions, Picardi calls for good-hearted faith.

Crooked Media



Phillip Picardi of the *Unholier Than Thou* podcast.

LIMITED FANTASY

By Da'Shawn Mosley

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Everything that the devil stole, HBO's giving back to me. That's a sacrilegious statement, but sometimes that's how I *feel* when I'm on my couch watching yet another show with a largely Black cast (and sometimes even crew) miraculously greenlit in a sea of Hollywood whiteness by the network titan

that years ago gave us *The Wire* and made many of us notice the likes of Idris Elba.

For what seemed like eons to Black folks eager for visual confirmation that their lives mattered, Black characters on TV were mostly relegated to sidekick or background roles—and Black writers, directors, and showrunners were rare or entirely absent. But from *Insecure* to *A Black Lady Sketch Show*, *Watchmen* to *I May Destroy You*, HBO is perhaps the strongest ally for revolutionary Black artists and creators of color on and behind TV.

It's because of HBO's commitment to showing up that I'm able to watch *Lovecraft Country*, a mystery-horror-supernatural drama set in the 1950s, helmed by the Black woman writer Misha Green and starring the relative newcomer Jonathan Majors (*The Last Black Man in San Francisco*) and the already-a-screen-legend-at-age-34 Jurnee Smollett (*Eve's Bayou*). Focused on a young Korean War vet nicknamed Tic (Atticus) and a prodigal daughter who goes by Leti (Letitia), *Lovecraft* follows what happens when Tic's father goes missing and Tic, Leti, and Tic's uncle leave in search of him, despite the threat of white people who wish them ill.

Speaking of racist souls, you're right to hear *Love-*

craft Country and think of the horror pioneer H.P. Lovecraft, who changed American storytelling but also said in favor of lynching Black people, "anything is better than the mongrelisation which would mean the hopeless deterioration of a great nation." Partially set in a fictional town called Ardhams, Mass., a nod to the town of Arkham that H.P. fashioned for many of his stories, *Lovecraft Country* has monsters and dangers like those Lovecraft dreamed up, but extends that limited fantasy to include the large realness of Black life.

The first two episodes of *Lovecraft Country* are beyond excellent; its third is not as strong (although it features, to the tune of "Take It Back" by the gospel singer Dorinda Clark-Cole, a badass act of Black resistance). But white artists have long been allowed to flounder and find their footing, been given myriad chances to "make 'fetch' happen." Now more Black visionaries are being given that same opportunity—radical racial justice that probably has hell quaking in fury. I just hope God doesn't let Satan take any of it away. ❖

Da'Shawn Mosley is associate editor of *Sojourners* magazine.

Shall Not Be Sold

Appallingly, around the world many people are making money from grueling asylum processes. *Asylum for Sale: Profit and Protest in the Migration Industry*, edited by Siobhán McGuirk and Adrienne Pine, assembles words of resistance from journalists, activists, academics, and especially asylum seekers proposing more humane visions of asylum.

PM Press

One Body

Filled with sharp, moving verse and persona poems in the voice of America's best-known civil rights activist, *Raising King* by Joseph Ross channels the ethos of Martin Luther King Jr. for a year filled with racial injustice, immoral leadership, and death.

Willow Books

