



Asian Pacific Americans in Prime Time:

Lights,
Camera
and
Little
Action



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ABOUT US



National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium

The National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium (NAPALC) was founded in 1991 and is headquartered in Washington, DC. NAPALC works to advance the human and civil rights of Asian Americans through advocacy, public policy, public education, and litigation. NAPALC is one of the nation's leading experts on issues of importance to the Asian American community including: affirmative action, anti-Asian violence prevention/race relations, census, immigrant rights, immigration, language access, and voting rights. The Asian Law Caucus and the Asian Pacific American Legal Center are affiliates of NAPALC.



Asian Law Caucus

Founded in 1972, the Asian Law Caucus (ALC) was the nation's first nonprofit law office serving Asians and Pacific Islanders. ALC's mission is to promote, advance, and represent the legal and civil rights of the Asian and Pacific Islander community in Northern California. Annually, the Asian Law Caucus consults with and oversees cases of over 1,500 clients and provides legal information to over 5,000 people on workers' rights, immigration, housing issues, voting rights, and hate crimes.



Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California

The Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California (APALC) was founded in 1983 and is the largest organization in the country focused on providing multilingual, culturally sensitive legal services, education, and civil rights support to Asians and Pacific Islanders (APIs). APALC's mission is to advocate for civil rights, provide legal services and education, and build coalitions to positively influence and impact Asians and Pacific Islanders and to create a more equitable and harmonious society. APALC works on a range of issues affecting APIs and immigrants, including workers rights, consumer rights, immigration, citizenship, domestic violence, hate crimes, health care, language access, and voting rights.

INTRODUCTION

This study was commissioned by the NAPALC with funding provided by the IW Group. Since 1999, as the Chair of the Asian Pacific American Media Coalitionⁱ (APAMC), NAPALC has worked with the NAACP, National Hispanic Media Coalition, and the American Indians in Film and Television to increase opportunities for minorities in front of and behind the camera, as well as in corporate offices. In terms of influencing people's attitudes and perspectives about the world around them, television is one of the most powerful mediums available. The images and character portrayals seen on television have a profound impact on how people perceive and react to the world around them.

Over the previous five years, the APAMC has released an annual report card evaluating ABC, CBS, FOX, and NBC, the four major television networks, on their progress in seven key areas: total number of Asian Pacific Islander American (APIA) actors, writers, directors, development contracts, and executives, as well as procurement from APIA-owned companies and the level and scope of their outreach efforts.

NAPALC commissioned this study to look beyond the raw numbers analyzed and graded in the annual report card and evaluate the type, quality, and complexity of characters portrayed by APIA actors, as well as APIA actors of mixed ethnicities.

The team of researchers, composed of doctoral candidates from the Department of Sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles, is committed to broadening the scholarship of Asian Pacific Islander American culture.ⁱⁱ The lead researcher, Nancy Wang Yuen, M.A., C. Phil., has published a study on Asian American actors (2004); her current dissertation research is a comparative study of the experiences of Asian American, Multiracial Asian American, and white actors in Hollywood.ⁱⁱⁱ

In March 2002, APIA population numbered approximately 12.5 million, or 4.4 percent of the total U.S. population.^{iv} Compared to their actual population, APIA characters have been traditionally underrepresented in the world of prime time television. Past studies have found APIAs to consistently occupy 3% of total characters and 1% of regular, or opening credits, characters.^v

Studies have discovered that people tend to rely on characterizations from film and television to formulate beliefs about groups to which they do not belong and with whom they may be less familiar.^{vi} Consequently, representations of APIAs on prime time television programs may impact the perception and treatment of APIAs in real life. In addition, APIA actors continue to face structural and professional barriers in their struggle to portray non-stereotyped roles.^{vii}

This pioneer study, *Asian Pacific Americans in Prime Time: Lights, Camera and Little Action*, systematically investigates the portrayal of APIAs on prime time television. Because series' regulars characters are the most desirable roles for television actors and the types of characters that audiences identify and connect with most, this study analyzes the regular characters for each series, drawing on the networks' own promotional web pages as well as actual recorded episodes. In addition to comparisons of characters by race and gender, this study takes a unique approach by comparing roles portrayed by monoracial versus multiracial APIA actors. This sampling procedure captures a variety of characters (APIA, ethnically ambiguous, and white) and allows for a more open interpretation of racial/ethnic categories in terms of representations of the APIA community on prime time television.

Key Terms	Definitions
Asian Pacific Islander American (APIA)	Person of Asian or Pacific Islander descent
Monoracial APIA	Person of a single or multiple Asian or Pacific Islander ethnic background
Multiracial APIA	Person of Asian or Pacific Islander plus one or more other non-Asian racial background(s) (white, Latino, African American, etc.)
Regular Characters (Regulars)	Characters that are listed on the network website and are integral to the series plot

STUDY HIGHLIGHTS

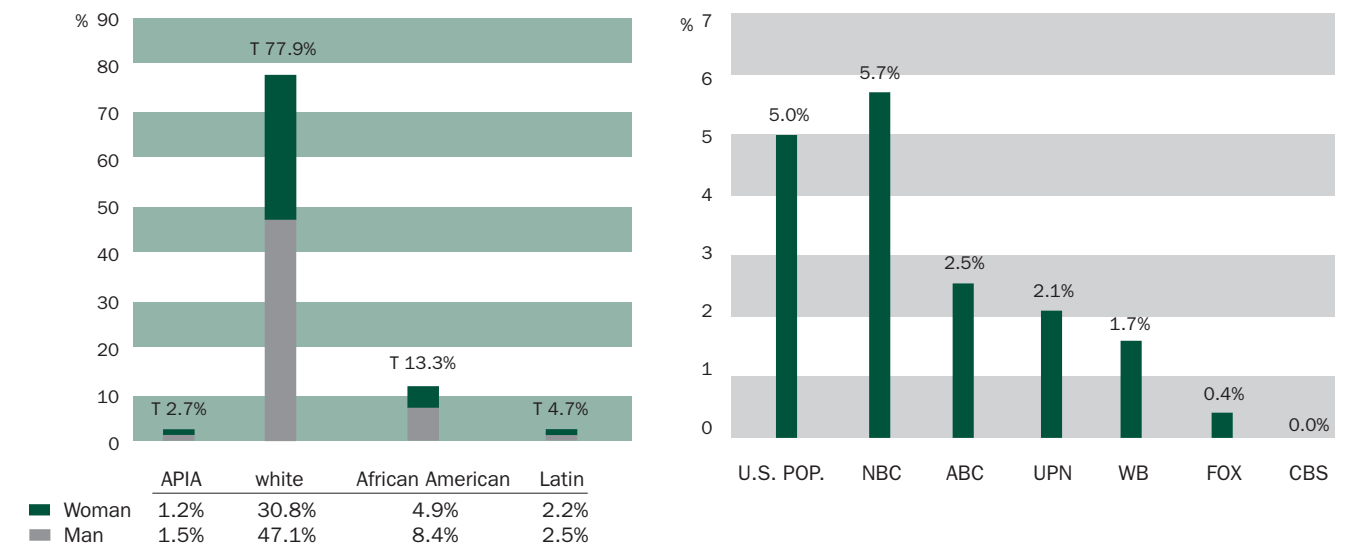
- ❖ The population of regular APIA actors on prime time television amount to less than half of the actual APIA population percentage in the United States while white males remain the principal subjects of prime time television.
- ❖ Majority of the programs that claim an APIA actor among its regular cast feature only one APIA actor.
- ❖ Regular characters portrayed by APIA actors are absent from heavily APIA-populated cities such as San Francisco and Los Angeles, and severely underrepresented in places like Hawaii and New York City.
- ❖ Given that situational comedies generally feature family and domestic settings, the invisibility of APIA actors in this genre may contribute to an image that APIAs do not represent the “American family.”
- ❖ On average, non-APIAs have four times as many romantic or familial relationships as APIAs, characterizing APIAs as asexual and isolated.
- ❖ In general, APIA actors feature less prominently than non-APIA actors, with significantly lower screen times (sometimes the lowest) compared to non-APIA regulars.
- ❖ Multiracial APIA actors fare better than monoracial APIA actors in nearly every measurement of character prominence and quality.
- ❖ Male APIA actors fare better than female APIA actors in nearly every measurement of character prominence and quality.

NUMERICAL REPRESENTATION

This portion compares the numerical representation of APIAs in the U.S. population to the numerical representation of regular characters (portrayed by APIA actors) by race and gender, television network, individual program, and program setting.

APIA Regulars by Race

- ❖ White regular characters remain the principal subjects of prime time television.
- ❖ While regular characters portrayed by whites and African Americans are overrepresented compared to their population percentages, Latino (at 4.7%) and APIA (at 2.7%) actors are represented below their population percentages of 13.3% and 4.4%, respectively.^{viii}



APIA Regulars by Race and Gender

- ❖ The dominance of white male characters persists in prime time television.
- ❖ Male regular characters are overrepresented compared to females across every racial group despite the higher population of females (51%) compared to males (49%) in the United States.^{ix}

APIA Regulars by Network

- ❖ Except for NBC, all other networks' representation of regular APIA actors amount to less than half of the U.S. percentage of the APIA population.

APIA Regulars by Program

- ❖ Among 113 prime time programs, only 13 feature at least one APIA actor.
- ❖ Only three programs (*ER*, *Hawaii*, and *Lost*) include more than one APIA actor among their regular cast, while ten programs feature only one APIA actor as a regular.
 - ❖ NBC cancelled *Hawaii* in October 2004 after only eight episodes.

Table 1. APIA-Portrayed Regular Characters, by Network, Program, Mono/Multiracial Status, and Gender

Program	Network	Total Regular Actors	APIA Actors	APIA Monoracial		APIA Multiracial	
				Male	Female	Male	Female
1. <i>Boston Legal</i>	ABC	7	1	-	-	-	1
2. <i>Lost</i>	ABC	14	3	2	1	-	-
3. <i>NYPD Blue</i>	ABC	8	1	-	-	1	-
4. <i>MADtv</i>	FOX	11	1	1	-	-	-
5. <i>North Shore</i>	FOX	8	1	-	-	1	-
6. <i>Crossing Jordan</i>	NBC	6	1	1	-	-	-
7. <i>ER</i>	NBC	10	2	-	2	-	-
8. <i>Hawaii*</i>	NBC	7	3	2	-	-	1
9. <i>Law & Order: SVU</i>	NBC	9	1	1	-	-	-
10. <i>Third Watch</i>	NBC	7	1	-	-	1	-
11. <i>Enterprise**</i>	UPN	7	1	-	1	-	-
12. <i>Gilmore Girls</i>	WB	6	1	-	1	-	-
13. <i>Smallville</i>	WB	7	1	-	-	-	1
Total		107	18	7	5	3	3

* Cancelled in October, 2004

** Scheduled to be cancelled at the end of the 2004-2005 Season

APIA Regulars by Geographic Setting

- ❖ APIA actors are absent or underrepresented even in cities with large APIA populations.
- ❖ No programs set in San Francisco, CA (where APIAs comprise over 30% of the population) report APIAs among regular cast members. A similar trend is found for programs set in Queens, NY (APIA pop. 17.7%); Seattle, WA (APIA pop. 13.6%); and Los Angeles, CA (APIA pop. 10.2%).
- ❖ In Honolulu, where the vast majority of residents (63%) are APIA, programs featuring APIA regulars amount to just over a quarter of the total.

Table 2. APIA Prime Time Population Compared to U.S. Population by City

Location	APIA Census Figures*	APIA Series Averages
Honolulu	62.7%	27.0% (n=16)
San Francisco	31.3%	0% (n=11)
Queens	17.7%	0% (n=7)
Seattle, WA	13.6%	0% (n=9)
Los Angeles	10.2%	0% (n=37)
New York, NY	9.9%	2.3% (n=92)

*Compiled from 2000 U.S. Census

VANISHED WITHOUT A TRACE: MISSED OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS

Shows like *Without a Trace* (CBS), are set in densely APIA-populated cities but count no APIA regular actors among their casts. Several programs in the Fall 2004 lineup were set in major U.S. cities with sizeable APIA populations and communities. Most notable are programs set in San Francisco (*Half and Half*, on UPN and *Charmed*, on WB), which has a reported APIA population of 31.3%, but count not one regular APIA actor among their collective casts.^x Similarly, *King of Queens* (CBS), set in Queens, New York (17.7% APIA) and *Life As We Know It* (ABC), set in Seattle (13.6% APIA) do not feature any regular APIA characters. In addition, all seven programs set in Los Angeles (10.2 % APIA) are missing regular APIA characters. They are *Joey* (NBC), *The Bernie Mac Show* (FOX), *The George Lopez Show* (ABC), *LAX* (NBC)^{xi}, *All of Us* (UPN), *Girlfriends* (UPN), and *Second Time Around* (UPN). Interestingly, many of these shows are “ethnic” shows with racially/ethnically homogenous casts of Latinos (*The George Lopez Show*) or African Americans (*The Bernie Mac Show*, *All of Us*, *Girlfriends*, and *Second Time Around*). However, the APIA community is blaringly absent. Finally, programs set in New York City (9.9% APIA) also fail to represent APIAs, with the exception of *NYPD Blue* (ABC), *Third Watch* (NBC), and *Law and Order: SVU* (NBC). The shows set in New York City with no APIA regulars are: *Less Than Perfect* (ABC), *Without a Trace* (CBS), *Everybody Loves Raymond* (CBS), *Clubhouse* (CBS), *CSI: NY* (CBS), *Law and Order* (NBC), *Law and Order: Criminal Intent* (NBC), *The Apprentice* (NBC), *Will and Grace* (NBC), *Tru Calling* (FOX), and *What I Like About You* (WB).

Even when APIA characters are present, television fails to convey a realistic portrait. For instance, Honolulu, boasts a population that is 62.7% APIA; *Hawaii* (NBC) and *North Shore* (FOX), the two programs based in the area, average only 27% APIA. Thus, though many regions in the U.S. have established ethnic communities and/or a dense concentration of APIA individuals, this presence is not reflected on prime time television. In addition, the regular characters portrayed by APIA actors on shows based in Hawaii have lower screen times than characters in shows based in areas with less APIA density. Noteworthy is the cancellation of *Hawaii* after eight episodes in October 2004.

The following chart shows which production companies missed opportunities to accurately represent APIAs in shows set in densely APIA-populated settings. As seen, Paramount Television, Universal Television, and Warner Brothers Television have the highest number of missed opportunity programs (although Warner Brothers Television is also responsible for two of the “Exemplary” shows, highlighted in the case study section).

Production Company	Missed Opportunity Shows
20th Century Fox Television	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>North Shore</i> (FOX) ▪ <i>The Bernie Mac Show</i> (FOX) ▪ <i>Tru Calling</i> (FOX)
CBS Productions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>CSI: NY</i> (CBS) ▪ <i>King of Queens</i> (CBS) ▪ <i>Half and Half</i> (UPN)
Mark Burnett Productions in association with Trump Productions LLC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The Apprentice</i> (NBC)
Paramount Television	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Clubhouse*</i> (CBS) ▪ <i>Girlfriends</i> (UPN) ▪ <i>Second Time Around</i> (UPN) ▪ <i>Charmed</i> (WB)
Talk Productions [us] Home Box Office (HBO) [us] Where's Lunch [us] Worldwide Pants Inc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Everybody Loves Raymond</i>
Touchstone Television	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Less Than Perfect</i>
Universal Television	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Hawaii*</i> (NBC) ▪ <i>LAX*</i> (NBC) ▪ <i>Law and Order: Criminal Intent</i> (NBC) ▪ <i>Law and Order</i> (NBC) ▪ <i>Will and Grace</i> (NBC)
Warner Bros. Television	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The George Lopez Show</i> (ABC) ▪ <i>Joey</i> (NBC) ▪ <i>All of Us</i> (UPN) ▪ <i>What I Like About You</i> (WB) ▪ <i>Without a Trace</i> (CBS)

* Cancelled shows as of January 2005

GENRE/CHARACTER REPRESENTATION

Television Genres

Genres act as an important navigational tool for television audiences since they offer recognizable visual elements, plot conventions, and character types.^{xii}

- ❖ APIA actors are featured only in one-hour television dramas, with the exception of Bobby Lee of the sketch comedy *MADtv*.
- ❖ APIA actors playing regular characters are present in various forms of one-hour prime time dramatic programs: police/crime/detective, science fiction/fantasy/supernatural, medical, and teen.
- ❖ APIA actors are missing from situational comedies, television news magazines, musical programs, and as hosts of reality programs and sports programs.
- ❖ Given that situational comedies generally feature family and domestic settings, the invisibility of APIA actors in this genre may contribute to the following stereotypes:
 - ❖ APIAs do not represent “the American family.”
 - ❖ APIAs are missing from the American social fabric, not even seen as neighbors or friends of families.

Names & Ethnicity

One determinant of APIA ethnicity used by researchers and audiences alike is character names. This section explores this dimension.

- ❖ Monoracials
 - ❖ Of the twelve regular characters portrayed by monoracial APIA actors, all have at least an ethnic first or surname, if not both.
 - ❖ All monoracial APIA actors portray characters of their own racial/ethnic background, with the exception of Iraqi character “Sayid” on ABC’s *Lost*, portrayed by South Asian actor Naveen Andrews.
- ❖ Multiracials
 - ❖ Characters with European-origin first and last names are often played by multiracial APIA actors.
 - ❖ Three of the six multiracial APIA actors on prime time television portray white characters; two additional actors are ethnically ambiguous, and only one is identified as APIA by her name.
- ❖ We commend networks for casting Multiracial APIA actors in a range of roles with many multiracial APIAs portraying characters with European origin first and last names. We suggest adding a greater range of characters, highlighting characters of APIA mixed race, to more accurately reflect the presence of multiracial APIAs in the United States.

Table 4. Names and Ethnicities of Actors and Characters, Fall 2004 Prime Time Television Lineup

Actor	Show	Character	Actor Ethnicity	Character Ethnicity
Rhona Mitra	<i>Boston Legal</i>	Tara Wilson	Multiracial APIA	white
Ravi Kapoor	<i>Crossing Jordan</i>	“Bug”	South Asian	South Asian
Linda Park	<i>Enterprise**</i>	Hoshi Sato	Korean	Japanese
Ming-Na	<i>ER</i>	Jing-Mei	Chinese	Chinese
Parminder Nagra	<i>ER</i>	Neela Rasgotra	South Asian	South Asian
Keiko Agena	<i>Gilmore Girls</i>	Lane Kim	APIA	Korean
Aya Sumika	<i>Hawaii*</i>	Linh Tamiya	Multiracial APIA	APIA
Cary-Hiroyuki Tagawa	<i>Hawaii*</i>	Terry Harada	Japanese	Japanese
Peter Navy Tuiasosopo	<i>Hawaii*</i>	Kaleo	Samoan	Pacific Islander
B.D. Wong	<i>Law & Order: SVU</i>	George Huang	Chinese	Chinese
Daniel Dae Kim	<i>Lost</i>	Jin	Korean	Korean
Naveen Andrews	<i>Lost</i>	Sayid	South Asian	Iraqi
Yunjin Kim	<i>Lost</i>	Sun	Korean	Korean
Bobby Lee	<i>MADtv</i>	(various)	Korean	Korean
Jason Momoa	<i>North Shore</i>	Frankie Seau	Multiracial APIA	<i>ambiguous</i>
Mark-Paul Gosselaar	<i>NYPD Blue</i>	John Clark, Jr.	Multiracial APIA	white
Kristin Kreuk	<i>Smallville</i>	Lana Lang	Multiracial APIA	white
Anthony Ruivivar	<i>Third Watch</i>	Carlos Nieto	Multiracial APIA	<i>ambiguous</i>

* Cancelled in October, 2004

** Will be cancelled at the end of the 2004-2005 Season.

Occupations & Status

Though some racial stereotypes may imply a “positive” characteristic about a group, these are still inherently problematic because they generalize attributes of some members of the group and assume they are true for all members. The occupations of APIA-identified characters on prime time television are uniform in their high statuses.^{xiii} APIA-identified characters are only found in dramas in which all characters occupy professional occupations. Nonetheless, the exclusion of APIA identified characters from other genres may reinforce the “model minority” stereotype.

- ❖ The vast majority of APIA characters hold high status positions. Of the identified APIA characters with known occupations, 100% have positions that highlight their intelligence and/or require advanced degrees, often in the sciences.
- ❖ While only one character has an official ranking that puts him in a position of power over other regular characters, most of the others have occupations with authority and responsibility.^{xiv} Four are medical professionals; another four are involved in law enforcement. Even the one APIA student character on prime time television is described as the “brainy friend” of one of the principal characters on her program.

Table 5. Occupations of APIA-Identified Characters on Prime Time Television

Actor	Show	Character	Occupation
Ravi Kapoor	<i>Crossing Jordan</i>	“Bug”	Medical Examiner
Linda Park	<i>Enterprise</i>	Hoshi Sato	Linguistic Specialist
Ming-Na	<i>ER</i>	Jing-Mei	Doctor
Parminder Nagra	<i>ER</i>	Neela Rasgotra	Doctor
Keiko Agena	<i>Gilmore Girls</i>	Lane Kim	“Brainy” Student
Aya Sumika	<i>Hawaii</i>	Linh Tamiya	Police Officer
Cary-hiroyuki Tagawa	<i>Hawaii</i>	Terry Harada	Police Captain
Peter Navy Tuiasosopo	<i>Hawaii</i>	Kaleo	Police Officer
B.D. Wong	<i>Law & Order: SVU</i>	George Huang	Forensic Psychiatrist
Jason Momoa	<i>North Shore</i>	Frankie Seau	Bartender/Nightclub Owner
Anthony Ruivivar	<i>Third Watch</i>	Carlos Nieto	Paramedic
Daniel Dae Kim	<i>Lost</i>	Jin	unknown
Yunjin Kim	<i>Lost</i>	Sun	unknown

Character Settings

Given that domestic settings tend to surround central characters (with supporting characters often visiting the central characters’ homes or confined to the workplace), an examination of character settings uncovers mixed results.

- ❖ Since most of the programs are dramas, most characters (across racial groups) tend to be confined to the workplace, though a few shows show all characters in their own homes.^{xv}
- ❖ In *Enterprise* (UPN) and *North Shore* (FOX), non-APIA characters are shown in their private homes or in social public spaces, while monoracial and multiracial APIA actors portray characters confined to workplace or workplace-related domains.
- ❖ Of all characters played by APIA actors, only two (both played by APIA multiracials) were shown in private settings.^{xvi}

Relationships

Intimate relationships (romantic and familial) add to a character’s complexity and draw an audience into that character’s development throughout the episode and series. A comparison of the percentage of intimately involved characters portrayed by APIA actors to those portrayed by non-APIA actors reveals that APIA actors portray characters that are largely isolated relationally from other characters.

- ❖ On average, non-APIAs have four times as many romantic or familial relationships as APIAs, characterizing APIAs as asexual and isolated.
- ❖ Fully 83% of the multiracial APIA actors (all portraying white or ethnically ambiguous characters) are involved in romantic heterosexual relationships (all with white love interests); the only multiracial APIA actor who is not involved in an intimate relationship portrays a definitive APIA character (“Linh Tamiya” on NBC’s *Hawaii*).
- ❖ Out of the nine APIAs in romantic or familial relationships, five are females and four are males.
- ❖ Except for two monoracial APIA characters (a married couple), all other relationships involve a romantic interest with a white character.
- ❖ All romantic relationships involving APIAs are heterosexual.

Table 6. Regulars in Romantic or Familial Relationships (Fall 2004)

Network	Program	APIA		Non-APIA	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
ABC	<i>NYPD Blue</i>	1	12.5%	-	0.0%
ABC	<i>Boston Legal</i>	1	14.3%	2	28.6%
NBC	<i>Crossing Jordan</i>	-	0.0%	3	50.0%
UPN	<i>Enterprise</i>	-	0.0%	3	42.9%
NBC	<i>ER</i>	1	10.0%	2	20.0%
WB	<i>Gilmore Girls</i>	1	16.7%	4	66.7%
NBC	<i>Hawaii</i>	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
NBC	<i>Law & Order: SVU</i>	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
ABC	<i>Lost</i>	2	14.3%	4	28.6%
FOX	<i>MADtv</i>	-	0.0%	9	81.8%
FOX	<i>North Shore</i>	1	12.5%	7	87.5%
WB	<i>Smallville</i>	1	14.3%	4	57.1%
NBC	<i>Third Watch</i>	1	14.3%	3	42.9%
Series Averages		9	8.4%	41	38.9%

Language

Since the APIA community is composed of immigrants as well as native-born individuals, prime time television has an opportunity to demonstrate the presence of foreign language and accented English speakers, as well as native English speakers with no accents. Overall, programs exhibit evidence of all three:

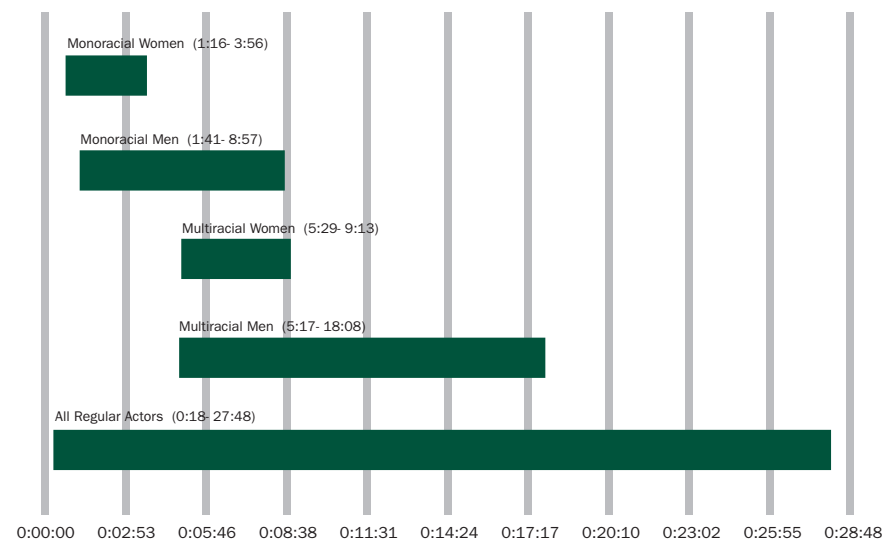
- ❖ Most APIA characters appear to be linguistically integrated into mainstream America. The majority speak fluent English with no trace of an accent; almost all of those with accents (all of whom are South Asian actors) have British accents.^{xvii}
- ❖ The only actor who uses an East Asian accent is Bobby Lee, parodying William Hung (of *American Idol*) for one skit on *MADtv*. In all other sketches he speaks fluent English with no accent.
- ❖ One innovative twist on language involves “Jin” and “Sun,” the monolingual Korean-speaking couple on *Lost* who speak in Korean with English subtitles (a rare feat in fictional prime time television programming).

Screen Time

Screen time measures the prominence of the characters in the narratives of their respective programs.^{xviii} Several factors were considered to assess the screen time of APIA actors including: ranges of screen time by APIA/non-APIA status, by mono/multiracial status, and by gender; and ranking of each APIA actors’ screen time relative to the other cast members. The results show lower screen times for the majority of APIA actors compared to non-APIA actors.

Ranges of Screen Time

- ❖ In general, APIA actors feature less prominently than non-APIA actors, with significantly lower screen times than other non-APIA regulars.
- ❖ APIA multiracial actors have significantly more on-screen presence than APIA monoracial actors. The lowest screen time for an APIA monoracial actor is more than 4 times lower than the lowest screen time for an APIA multiracial actor. The highest screen time for an APIA multiracial actor is about twice as much as the highest screen time for an APIA monoracial actor.
- ❖ APIA women actors, especially those who are monoracial, have less screen time than their male counterparts. For instance, the highest APIA male screen time is nearly twice as much as the highest APIA female screen time; both of these actors are multiracial.



Screen Time Rankings by Program

- ❖ For programs including APIAs, white characters hold the highest screen times; the majority of these characters are males (83.3%).
- ❖ Half of the APIA monoracial actors are either last or second-to-last in screen time ranking within their respective programs.^{xix}
- ❖ Men tend to rank higher on screen time than women.

Table 7. Screen Time Rankings by Program

	Men			Women		
	Show	Name of actor	Screen Time Ranking	Show	Name of actor	Screen Time Ranking
APIA Multiracial	<i>Third Watch</i>	Anthony Ruivivar	2/7	<i>Smallville</i>	Kristin Kreuk	4/7
	<i>NYPD Blue</i>	Mark-Paul Gosselaar	2/8	<i>Boston Legal</i>	Rhona Mitra	4/7
	<i>North Shore</i>	Jason Momoa	7/8	<i>Hawaii</i>	Aya Sumika	5/7
APIA Monoracial	<i>Mad TV</i>	Bobby Lee	3/11	<i>Gilmore Girls</i>	Keiko Aguila	5/6
	<i>Lost</i>	Naveen Andrews	8/14	<i>Lost</i>	Yunjin Kim	9/14
	<i>Lost</i>	Daniel Dae Kim	10/14	<i>ER</i>	Parminder Nagra	9/10
	<i>Law & Order:SVU</i>	B.D. Wong	6/9	<i>ER</i>	Ming-Na	10/10*
	<i>Hawaii</i>	Cary-hiroyuki Tagawa	6/7	<i>Enterprise</i>	Linda Park	7/7*
	<i>Hawaii</i>	Peter Navy Tuiasosopo	7/7*			
	<i>Crossing Jordan</i>	Ravi Kapoor	6/6*			

*Last screen time ranking

EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS

Among all 13 programs with APIA regulars, three programs stand out for their representation of more complex and nuanced APIA characters: *Gilmore Girls*, *ER*, and *Lost*.

Gilmore Girls

(Executive producers Amy Sherman-Palladino and Gavin Polone; Warner Brothers Television)

The *Gilmore Girls* character “Lane Kim,” played by actress Keiko Agena, is one of the few monoracial APIAs actively pursuing a romantic relationship. In this particular episode, after declaring her romantic interest in a white male friend, “Lane” waits for some reaction, but grows increasingly frustrated when he avoids the issue. After being confronted, he admits he is interested in her as well; they decide to consider a relationship. In addition, unlike the majority of APIA characters on other programs, viewers also see “Lane” in both her own home and workplace. Rather than just being “Rory Gilmore’s” best friend and relegated to a traditional “sidekick” role, these personal dimensions give “Lane’s” character far more depth and potential for growth in future storylines. This study recommends featuring Keiko Agena more prominently in terms of screen time and plot.

ER

(Executive producers Christopher Chulack, Michael Crichton, John Wells, Dee Johnson; Warner Brothers Television)

Already in its eleventh season, *ER* also explores the personal and professional lives of the two APIA characters featured on the program: “Jing-Mei,” played by Ming-Na, and “Neela Rasgotra,” played by Parminder Nagra. While these characters have the two lowest screen times of all regular cast members in the episode, the plotline specifically details ways in which the personal and professional lives of the characters collide. For example, “Jing-Mei” discusses with her friend “Pratt” the burden of caring for her father, who is ill and demands constant medical attention. Viewers also watch as “Neela” toils over the menial tasks of working at a convenience store, only to decide by the end of the episode to take up her old position at the hospital. However briefly these characters appear in the program, these glimpses into their personal lives add to the complexity of these APIA characters that go beyond “model minority” stereotypes. This study recommends featuring Ming-Na and Parminder Nagra more prominently in terms of screen time.

LOST

(Executive producers J.J. Abrams and Damon Lindelof; Touchstone Television)

Lost, one of this season’s biggest TV hits, has one of the largest and most ethnically diverse casts. Of the fourteen regular characters, three (21%) are portrayed by APIA actors. In addition to featuring APIA actors prominently (comparatively high screen times), particularly commendable is the program’s effort to represent well-developed and multifaceted APIA characters. Of all the programs with APIA regular characters, *Lost* is the only program to feature two mono-racial APIA characters speaking in a foreign language and in a romantic/familial relationship. While characters “Jin” and “Sun,” played by actors Daniel Dae Kim and Yunjin Kim, speak Korean amongst each other, English subtitles are also displayed to translate the dialogue. Interestingly, when these two characters attempt to communicate with the other non-Korean speakers, the subtitles are not provided, thus highlighting the cultural barrier that non-English speaking APIAs face. In addition, *Lost* is one of the few programs that address the complexity of race and APIA identity in its plotline. In one episode, several racialized comments directed toward the Korean couple misidentified their ethnicity. For example, in one instance, the character “Harley” incorrectly refers to the couple as “Chinese.” Additionally, consider the following exchange between three of the other stranded passengers:

Sayid: “Give us the water now.”

Sawyer: “Don’t touch me again.”

Sawyer: “Do you really think I stole your damn water?”

Sayid: “We know you gave two bottles to the Koreans.”

Sawyer: “I don’t give nothing to nobody.”

Kate: (in the background searching for water) “It’s not here.”

Sawyer: “I traded Mr. Miyagi the last of my water for a fish he caught. We worked it out caveman style.”

In both instances, race is utilized as a marker; despite character idiosyncrasies^{xx}, Korean race/ethnicity clearly demarcates the couple from the rest of the group. Moreover, these incorrect references as Chinese and Japanese by white males demonstrate the problem of ethnic homogenization which implies that all APIAs are the same, disregarding the diversity and complexity of the APIA community. Only Sayid, a Middle Eastern character played by an APIA actor, correctly identifies the couple as Korean.

EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS = EFFECTIVE RANKINGS FOR NETWORKS

Among the exemplary programs discussed, two of the three programs are regularly ranked in the top 20 prime time television programs as reported by the Nielson Media rankings. For the week of October 18-24, the coded episode for *Lost* was ranked #13, drawing 16.8 million viewers. While the episode coded for *ER* did not place in the top 20, examination of the previous and following weeks reveal that the program averages between 16.1 and 17 million viewers respectively. Certainly the inclusion and depiction of complex APIA characters does not deter viewers from tuning in each week. Moreover, with such overall success and wide viewership, these programs have the most potential to explore and expand the roles of APIA characters and actors in television while influencing the largest audience. In addition, Warner Brothers Television is the production company for two of the programs, *Gilmore Girls* and *ER*.

CONCLUSION

The impact of television programming must be underscored in terms of national and global perceptions of the APIA community. The disturbing, but hopeful picture painted by the results of this study should serve as a guide for future prime time television programming. To remedy the underrepresentation of APIAs across networks, all networks must labor to increase their number of APIA regular characters. In addition, the glaring absence of APIAs in cities like San Francisco and Los Angeles can be amended by intentional casting of APIA actors. Furthermore, television creative personnel can remedy the simplistic portrayals of APIAs as isolated and asexual by developing romantic and familial plots surrounding APIA regulars, and increasing their prominence with additional dialogue and screen time. As seen, shows that do this best (*Lost* and *ER*) are ranked nationally among the highest-viewed shows. Consequently, increasing the number and quality of APIA regular characters is not only important in terms of accurate representations of the American racial and gender landscape but also a financially sound decision on the part of network executives.

METHODOLOGY

This study examined the network websites and one episode of each prime time series airing in Fall 2004 on the six national broadcast networks. Since the study focused on ongoing programming that viewers may watch on a regular basis, the study did not include single-showing made-for-TV movies or specials. Programs were recorded between September 29, 2004 and November 19, 2004. Since this project focused on 2004 series programming, only first-run episodes were recorded. Programs in the sample aired between 8:00 PM and 11PM PST each night, with the exception of one program which aired between 11PM and midnight (*MADtv*). Coding was based on one episode of each show identified as having a regular APIA character.

Regular characters were determined from the network's own websites of their prime time shows. Consequently, any characters missed would be the fault of the network's lack of promotion. In addition, multiracial APIA actors were identified first by coding the websites for actor phenotype and surname as well as character surname. In addition, insider knowledge gathered from researchers, confirmed by data from the internet movie data base (www.imdb.com), was also applied.

All content was subjected to two levels of analysis:

1. Macro-level analysis examined program characteristics including genre, network, and program setting (all information was obtained from network websites, and where information was lacking, actual episodes were reviewed).
2. Micro-level analysis identified each regular character and examined characteristics such as race, gender, occupation, intimate relationships, character setting, language and screen time of characters (race and gender of characters were obtained from network websites while all remaining information were obtained from one recorded episode for each program).

All content was coded, analyzed, and reported by Christina Chin, Meera Deo, Jenny Lee, Noriko Milman, and Nancy Yuen (Doctoral students in the Department of Sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles). To ensure reliability between coders, 8% of the sample was coded by each of the coders independently. The observed frequency of agreement, based on the calculation of kappa, was at 95%.

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ⁱ The Asian Pacific American Media Coalition consists of the following organizations: Asian American Coalition for Total Inclusion on the Networks, Asian Law Caucus, Asian Pacific American Legal Center, East West Players, Media Action Network for Asian Americans, National Asian American Telecommunications Association, National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium, National Council of Asian Pacific Americans, Organization of Chinese Americans, Visual Communications

ⁱⁱ The researchers are Christina Chin, Meera Deo, Jenny Lee, Noriko Milman, and Nancy Wang Yuen.

ⁱⁱⁱ Nancy Wang Yuen, "Performing Race, Negotiating Identity: Asian American Professional Actors in Hollywood," in *Asian American Youth Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity*, eds. Jennifer Lee and Min Zhou (New York: Routledge, 2004), 251-267.

^{iv} Terrance Reeves and Claudette Bennett, *The Asian and Pacific Islander Population in the United States: March 2002, Current Population Reports*, (Washington, DC: US Census Bureau, 2003).

^v These figures hold for 2001-2003 according to Children Now, "Fall Colors: 2003-2004 Prime Time Diversity Report" (Oakland, CA: Children Now, 2004).

^{vi} Robert M. Entman and Andrew Rojecki, *The Black Image in the White Mind: Media and Race in America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 146.

^{vii} Nancy Wang Yuen, "Performing Race, Negotiating Identity: Asian American Professional Actors in Hollywood," in *Asian American Youth Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity*, eds. Jennifer Lee and Min Zhou (New York: Routledge, 2004), 251-267.

^{viii} Even though African Americans are overrepresented population-wise, they are largely relegated to all-black shows and missing from other shows [Alison Hoffman and Chon Noriega, *Looking For Latino Regulars on Prime-Time Television: The Fall 2004 Season* (Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Center, 2004), 6]; Population percentages of Latinos and APIAs come from the following two reports: Terrance Reeves and Claudette Bennett, *The Asian and Pacific Islander Population in the United States: March 2002, Current Population Reports*, (Washington, DC: US Census Bureau, 2003); and Roberto R. Ramirez and G. Patricia de la Cruz, *The Hispanic Population in the United States: March 2002, Current Population Reports* (Washington, DC: US Census Bureau, 2002).

^{ix} Percentages compiled from the report on the Annual Demographic Supplement to the March 2002 Current Population Survey; U.S. Census Bureau.

^x Since the beginning of the season, *Half and Half* has added Alec Malpa, a Filipino actor, as a regular. However, even counting Alec Malpa, the San Francisco-set APIA series average would still be a dismal nine percent. *Half and Half*, in TV Tome [database online] (cited on September 20, 2004); available from http://www.tvtome.com/tvtome/servlet/EpisodeGuideSummary/showid-10891/Half_Half/.

^{xi} *LAX* has been cancelled since January 2005.

Season (Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Center, 2004), 2.

^{xiii} APIA characters are identified based on character name and program plotline.

^{xiv} See Cary-Hiroyuki Tagawa's character, Police Captain "Terry Harada" of *Hawaii*.

^{xv} In police/crime detective series such as *Law and Order: SVU* (NBC) and *Hawaii* (NBC), regular characters are present at crime scenes and/or the police precinct. Similarly, in the medical drama *ER* (NBC), characters are only found within the hospital. The characters in *Smallville* (WB) and *Gilmore Girls* (WB), including those played by APIA actors, could be found in domestic settings. The other program that displayed setting consistency was *Lost* (ABC), as all characters are stranded on a desert island.

^{xvi} In *Third Watch*, the racially ambiguous character "Carlos Nieto" (played by the multiracial APIA actor Anthony Ruivivar) is the only cast member to make an appearance in a private home. Also, multiracial actor Mark-Paul Gosselaar's white character "John Clark, Jr." of *NYPD Blue* has an opening scene in a lover's apartment.

^{xvii} Ravi Kapoor, Parminder Nagra, Naveen Andrews, and Rhona Mitra are APIA actors who speak with British accents.

^{xviii} UCLA Bunche Center for African American Studies, *Prime Time in Black and White: Not Much is New for 2002* (Los Angeles: UCLA Bunche Center, 2003).

^{xix} APIA monoracial actors hold the lowest screen time for four of these programs: *Crossing Jordan*, *Enterprise*, *ER*, and *Hawaii*.

^{xx} We recognize that the "Harley" and "Sawyer" characters are deliberately belligerent and politically incorrect.

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