

HOLLYWOOD IS LAGGING BEHIND

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Hollywood awards season is upon us! This week we saw the Golden Globes and the release of the nominations for the Academy Awards, aka the Oscars. At both, several LGBT people were recognized — and that's important, since a major part of the fight for equality is about visibility and being treated equal in all areas.

But, if I was to grade Hollywood now, it most likely would not pass. Let's take a look at not only what LGBT-related films and television shows have recently been produced, but how they are promoted — and there lies the shame of Hollywood.

For an example, look no further than this year's British film import: "Pride" — a great film about the LGBT community's effort to help striking Welsh miners, based on an incredible true story, one that has captured the hearts of anyone who has seen it.

So the question is, how many of you actually have heard of the film? Chances are you haven't, since it wasn't publicized much in the LGBT media. Then, when it was released on DVD, the original cover of the package was stripped of any LGBT references.

There are several reasons this is just wrong and discriminatory. First, the film's backers ignored the community that is most affected by the film and, second, they deprived LGBT media of advertising dollars. That might be personal, since I'm a publisher, but I must admit I get angry when I see a film affecting the African-American community being promoted in the community's local media, and the same for Hispanic films, but why not us? It's called equality and it's economic discrimination by the television and movie industry.

They expect our editorial departments to give them free press, but there they even limit our participation by leaving the big-name interviews for the mainstream press.

The best example is HBO's "Looking." Again, how many of you know it's out there? It's an HBO series about the lives of gay men in San Francisco, but you might not know about it since it hasn't been promoted to you. Backers occasionally advertise in San Francisco or Los Angeles but seem to forget that our community lives in more places than those cities. And to add insult to injury, to set the tone of the series, the first scene was of one man giving another man a hand job in a public park.

I asked Todd Evans, who represents LGBT media in advertising sales, about Hollywood advertising to our community.

"Hollywood needs to be concerned that gay media should not be taken for granted ... for who are the real 'movers and shakers' in the LGBT community? Well, it starts with the publishers and editors of LGBT media," he said. "Today, spending matters more than ever, especially for courting that ever-elusive editorial content."

Have you seen "The Imitation Game?" It tells the real-life story of Alan Turing, the gay man who invented the computer, and saved about 14-million lives by shortening the second World War by two years. It's one of the best depictions of a gay man whose tremendous contributions were not honored by his society because of his identity. It's LGBT history. But there has not been one promotional ad in any LGBT media.

Get it together, Hollywood.

Mark Segal, PGN publisher, is the nation's most-award-winning commentator in LGBT media. You can follow him on Facebook at www.facebook.com/MarkSegalPGN or Twitter at <https://twitter.com/PhilaGayNews>.
