

FINAL – FOR ISSUE

CHAIR OF BRITAIN'S BIGGEST BLACK-OWNED BUSINESS AND FORMER BBC PRESENTER LAUNCH "THE MENTOR" PODCAST

Show will offer £15,000 in seed funding for diverse rising stars and drive positive social change

Businessman Ric Lewis and David 'Sideman' Whitely have teamed up for a brand new podcast, "The Mentor", in which Ric will help three young rising stars from underrepresented communities and under-resourced backgrounds achieve their personal and business dreams.

Ric will personally mentor the budding entrepreneurs over 12 weeks, drawing on his +30-year career in business and giving them £5,000 each in backing or seed funding to kick-start their ambitions. Sideman is the voice of the series, weaving together the stories with humour and warmth, and undertaking his own journey with Ric.

The three rising stars each bring their own unique stories and challenges to the series:

- Lois: a 17-year-old from Warrington. She's planning her start at university; aiming to be the first person in her family to go to university
- Solomon: a 15-year-old from Manchester. He's entrepreneurial and wants to start his own clothing line to bring recognition to his City
- Toni: a 21-year-old Cambridge graduate with the world at his feet. At this juncture of his life he wants to make the best possible choices as he enters the world of work

Voted the most influential black person in Britain in the 2019 Powerlist, Ric is Executive Chairman of real estate investment management firm Tristan Capital Partners. He is also founder of The Black Heart Foundation, a charity that provides scholarships to young people otherwise unable to afford higher or further education.

Earlier this year, the Foundation successfully raised over £1,500,000 through the "Each Day. Every Day." crowdfunding campaign, culminating in a £500,000 donation from music icon Stormzy's #Merky Foundation. The campaign has already helped The Black Heart Foundation almost double the number of young people it has helped through its scholarship programme to date, taking the total to 197 scholars at 80+ UK universities and schools.

Manchester audio-on-demand company Crowd Network, in partnership with The Black Heart Foundation, is developing the podcast. All profits from the first series will go to The Black Heart Foundation and Crowd Network plan to take on board and train a Black Heart Scholar, who will work on subsequent seasons of The Mentor.

Ric Lewis said: "When the team told me about their plans for the show it resonated with me instantly. Creating a podcast that is entertaining, rewards ambition but has a big heart and invests real time in people feels fresh and relevant given the challenges we face in our society today. The Mentor is a purposeful antidote to shows like The Apprentice, focussed on thoughtfully coaching a group of outstanding young people through crunch points in their lives, as we help them speed on their path to bigger, better and remarkable."

Sideman said: "I'm happy that Ric hollered at me to work with him on this amazing concept. What Ric is doing with his Black Heart Foundation is phenomenal. The current climate has increased my interest in working with young people to bring about change and opportunities so this is a perfect fit for me."

Mike Carr, CEO at Crowd Network said: "The Mentor is a podcast that will blaze a trail in the industry. It is incredibly entertaining, but its message of social change is so important and one we feel we have a duty to communicate."

“It is a privilege to be working with The Black Heart Foundation who do so much good for our society. When we launched as a company we committed to addressing the lack of diversity in the creative industries and giving opportunities to those from underprivileged backgrounds. This podcast is just one of the ways we are looking to have a positive impact in that space.”

The Mentor launches today with episodes released every Tuesday through Acast and available to download on all major podcast platforms.

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About Crowd Network

We are an audio-on-demand network that specialises in unforgettable stories and personalities.

We make ground-breaking audio that makes people feel part of something bigger than themselves. We use the best presenters, producers and writers to create conversations you have to share.

This is a place that you belong.

www.crowdnetwork.co.uk

About The Black Heart Foundation

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