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### **Diary Date**

**What:** Free Screening of hit US show '*The DL Chronicles*'

**When:** 25<sup>th</sup> of June 2008, 6:30pm for 7pm start

**Where:** Ritzy cinema, Brixton

**How:** Book online at [www.gmfa.org.uk/bigup](http://www.gmfa.org.uk/bigup) or by calling 020 7738 3712

### **PRESS RELEASE**

#### **BLACK GAY MALE SEXUALITY ON SCREEN**

***Big Up @ GMFA celebrates Pride 2008 with a free screening of 'The DL Chronicles'***

LONDON, 23 May 2008 – Big Up, the Black gay men's project at GMFA, are hosting a screening of two episodes from the controversial American TV hit, 'The DL Chronicles' on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June. 'The DL Chronicles' is an entertaining and sexy exploration of the lives of a group of Black American

men as they explore their own sexuality and experience sex on the 'downlow'. The screening will take place at the Ritzy cinema in Brixton and will be followed by an audience and panel discussion and a drinks reception. Tickets for the event are free and can be booked online at [www.gmfa.org.uk/bigup](http://www.gmfa.org.uk/bigup), or by calling 020 7738 3712.

The 'downlow' is a term used, particularly in the US, to describe the behaviour of Black men who have sex with men but who may not identify as gay, and many of whom also have sexual relationships with women. Data from the Gay Men's Sex Survey in the UK suggests that Black gay men were more likely to also have sex with women than white gay men<sup>1</sup>. The TV series 'The DL Chronicles' has sparked dialogue in the US around the need felt by some Black men to hide their sexuality from others. The US show has not been broadcast on UK television so for many viewers it will be the first chance to see this sexy show.

"For me, seeing a show of this quality, dealing honestly and wittily with the sex lives of Black men who have sex with men, is like a breath of fresh air," said Jaime Sylla, project manager for Big Up. "Although 'The DL Chronicles' is set in the US, the topics relate closely to the experience of men in the UK. The directors of the show have successfully managed to explore very delicate issues with intelligence, humour, sexiness, and in a way that rings true to the experience of many men who struggle with their sexuality".

Black gay men in the UK have higher rates of HIV infection than any other ethnic group<sup>2</sup>. Big Up is a community project, funded by the Big

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<sup>1</sup> 17.4% of Black men who were homosexually active were also heterosexually active. 12.4% of White British men who were homosexually active were also heterosexually active. Source: GMSS 2005.

<sup>2</sup> 11.1% of Black gay men had been diagnosed HIV positive, compared to 6.4% of white British gay men. Source: GMSS 2004.

Lottery, which is gathering information on the particular sexual health needs of Black men who have sex with men. Over the next few years Big Up will utilise this research to create a range of HIV prevention campaigns specifically for Black gay men.

“Black gay men often experience homophobia within the Black community and racism on the gay scene,” said Matthew Hodson, Head of Programmes for GMFA. “‘The DL Chronicles’ deals with issues such as these in an entertaining and provocative way, so it’s an excellent opportunity for us to spread the word about the Big Up project and get more Black gay men involved in the work.”

Black gay men are particularly encouraged to participate in the Big Up project at GMFA. GMFA welcomes all people, irrespective of ethnicity, sexuality or HIV status, to get involved as volunteers. If you are interested in getting involved in Big Up or volunteering for GMFA, contact: [newvol@gmfa.org.uk](mailto:newvol@gmfa.org.uk).

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#### **Notes to editor:**

The Big Up group at GMFA is supported by a grant from the Big Lottery fund.

#### **About GMFA:**

GMFA was established in 1992 and is the UK’s leading charity dedicated to gay men’s health. GMFA’s mission is to improve gay men’s health by increasing the control they have over their own lives. We believe that the best health promotion for gay men comes from gay men themselves, and so we use the knowledge and ideas of our 170 volunteers (most of them gay men) to design and plan our thought provoking sexual health interventions. We have received international acclaim for our Sex and Sexual Health website ([www.gmfa.org.uk/sex](http://www.gmfa.org.uk/sex)). Our other websites include a detailed listing of sexual health services available for gay men in London

([www.gmfa.org.uk/londonservices](http://www.gmfa.org.uk/londonservices)), an information resource for HIV positive gay men ([www.gmfa.org.uk/positive](http://www.gmfa.org.uk/positive)) and a guide to gay sports and social groups in London ([www.gmfa.org.uk/theguide](http://www.gmfa.org.uk/theguide)). All of our sites can be accessed at [www.gmfa.org.uk](http://www.gmfa.org.uk). GMFA produce a range of advertising campaigns, leaflets, postcards and booklets. Independent surveys have concluded that our campaigns reach up to 60% of the London gay population and we are the most reliable agency at reaching gay men. In addition to this we distribute our own health magazine, FS, free to London's gay bars and clubs to further educate gay men about relationships, their bodies, general health and STIs. Over the last fourteen years we have provided courses for over 10,000 gay men, providing safer sex education, life skills and stop smoking courses. We currently provide a range of groupwork interventions across England and Wales. GMFA has Big Lottery funding to create sexual health interventions for Black gay men in London.