

Empire: Because I'm Just Over it.



Alright, I've had it. I'm over *Empire*. Sorry Dr. Dre, but none of your songs are doing it for me anymore and I'm tired of seeing Cookie and Luscious play this back and forth "I put in 17 years for this" love game. She tries to run his relationships, he ruins hers and ultimately they end up having this grand argument that ends in a passionate kiss leading to no clothes.

This season, so far, they've kept their clothes on!

When I first started watching *Empire* I thought, yes, another black sitcom for me and my family to watch every Wednesday night. We danced to the songs, talked about Cookie's ratchet friendly hairstyles and wardrobe.



I loved me some Taraji, that's my girl. Her feisty yet charming role as the matriarch of the family is what I resonated with the most. She gives the show dimension and versatility. She's vulnerable when it comes to her family but she's strong at the same time.

Boy, when she beat Hakeem with that broom, I flashed back to the days my mama would take a belt to me. Of course my scream was a little more girly than Hakeem's, but you get the point.

We watched as egos got in the way of relationships, friendships, and family. We watched Hakeem grow up from a teenager to an older teenager still throwing tantrums, calling on daddy. We watched Jamal overcome his fear of fame while dealing with his new identity as a gay black man.

The show exposed some of the rights and wrongs of the music industry that we normally don't get to see.



I especially loved last season taking a stance against the social injustice going on at the time with their opening episode addressing mass incarceration and Andre's arrest. The show addressed several issues effecting an underprivileged family from the hood who rose to fame; everything from black homophobia to colorism, mental health, drug addiction, the celebrity culture. The storylines were impeccable.

Lee Daniels, you were doing the damn thing. Operative word, "were."

As time went on, the overall vision of the show has shifted from what it used to be. Every episode now is about manipulation, greed, and control. If Luscious is not trying to control everyone's lives, Cookie is trying to be all up in his. Jamal has dropped to this vulnerable low state, where he feels music is the only way he will survive. And Hakeem and Andre are battling their way to the top whether they have to outsell records or kill Luscious to do so.

My point is, the positive reinforcement of a united black family is no longer there. It's been torn apart by money, greed, ego and anything else each cast member feels will make them rise above others. I would like to see the show venture into a more positive direction, telling the narrative of the black family.

Debunking all negative stereotypes not contributing to them.

Lee Daniels let's take it back. They've already taken *A Different World* from us.

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