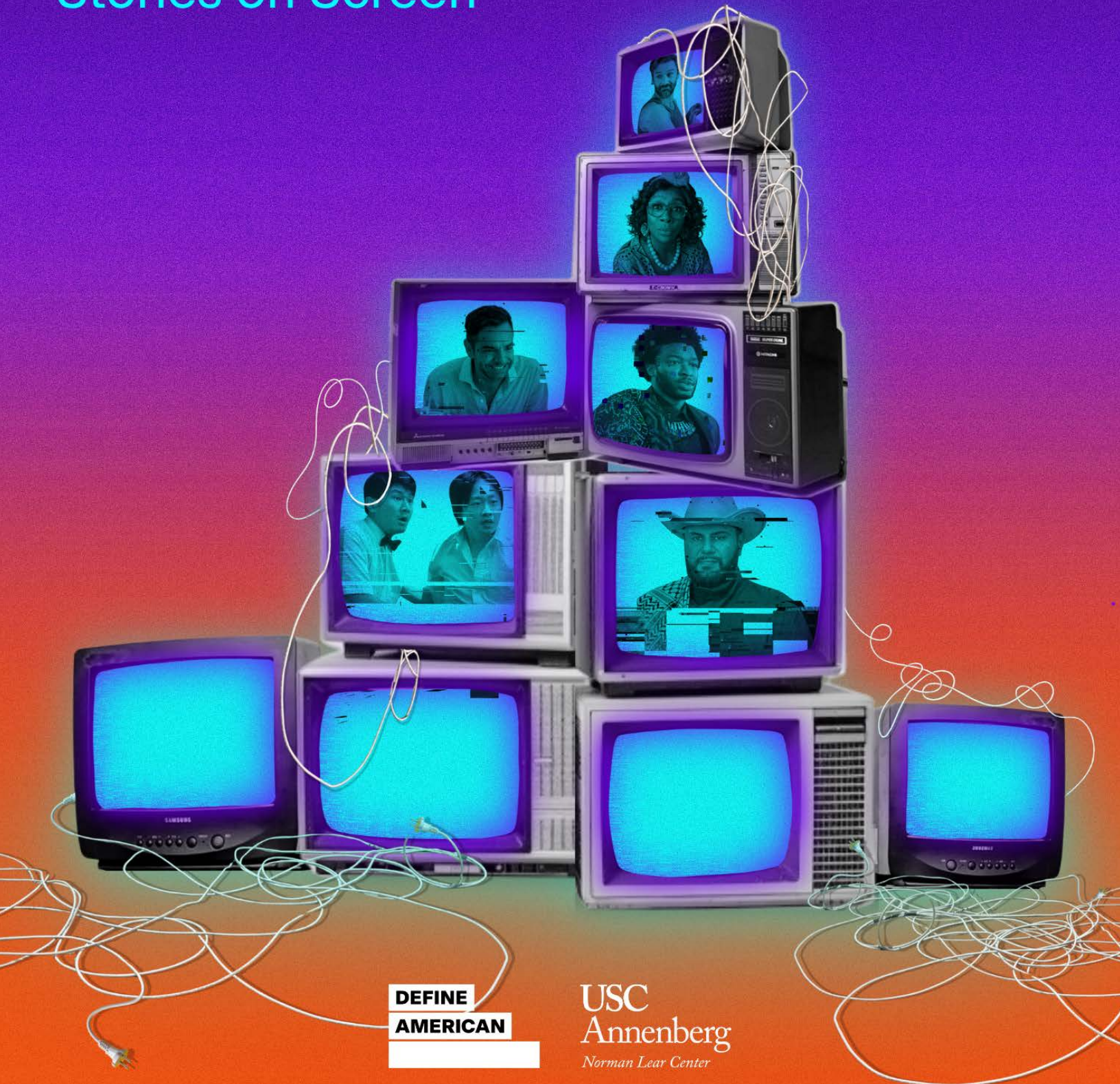


# CHANGE THE NARRATIVE CHANGE THE WORLD 2026

How Hollywood  
Can Fight for Immigrant  
Stories on Screen



**DEFINE  
AMERICAN**

**USC**  
Annenberg  
*Norman Lear Center*

# Executive Summary



Mo / Netflix

# What is scripted TV teaching America about immigrants?

## What we found in the 2023–2025 television landscape.

For this report, researchers at the Norman Lear Center analyzed 201 characters — 172 immigrants and 29 children of immigrants — across 80 episodes of 62 scripted series airing between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2025.<sup>1</sup> They also conducted an impact study examining how scenes from a single episode of the Netflix series *Mo* shaped viewers' attitudes, emotions, and intentions around immigration and asylum.<sup>2</sup>

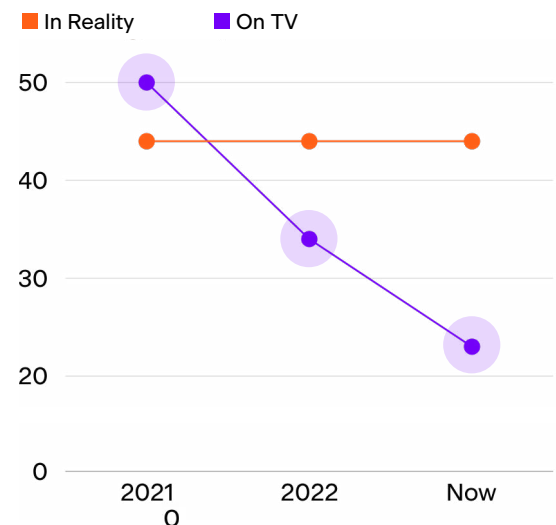
### The Danger of Stereotypes

#### Latine representation is at a record low.

Latine representation continued to drop year-over-year. In 2020, Latine characters comprised 50% of all immigrant characters, in 2022 representation dropped to 34%, and now is at 23%. In reality, Latine immigrants make up 45% of all U.S. immigrants.

#### *FBI* and *FBI: Most Wanted* led Latine representation:

Latine Representation



FBI / CBS

**23%** of all immigrant characters are Latine



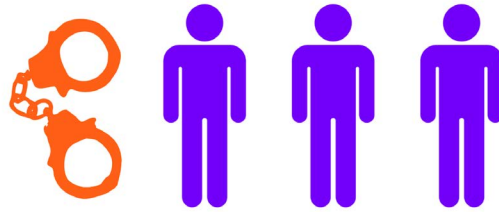
*FBI* franchise

1. Data are collapsed across two seasons for all analyses, referred to in this report as the year they were released: 2026.

2. The full appendices for this report, including methodology, reliability data, and complete lists of shows and characters, are available online. <https://defineamerican.com/research/change-the-narrative-change-the-world-2026/>

## 1 in 4 immigrant characters with a job was a criminal.

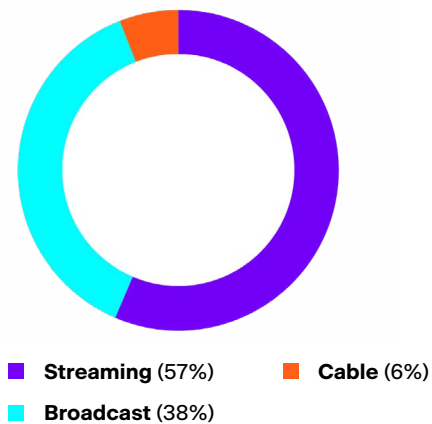
Immigrants and children of immigrants were shown as smugglers, drug dealers, and human traffickers.



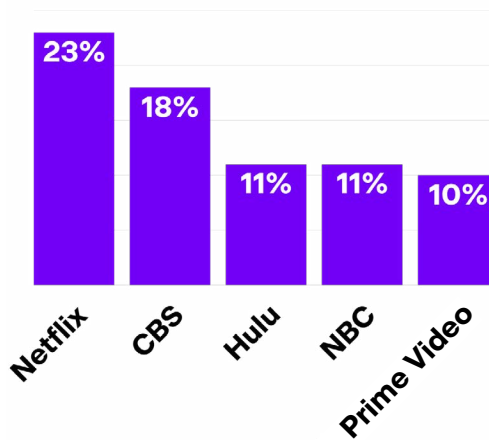
### The Landscape

## Streaming is leading the representation of immigrants and children of immigrants.

Character Representation



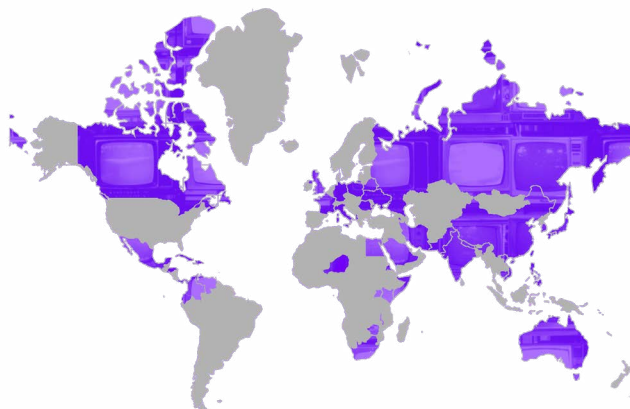
Top 5 Studios for Representation

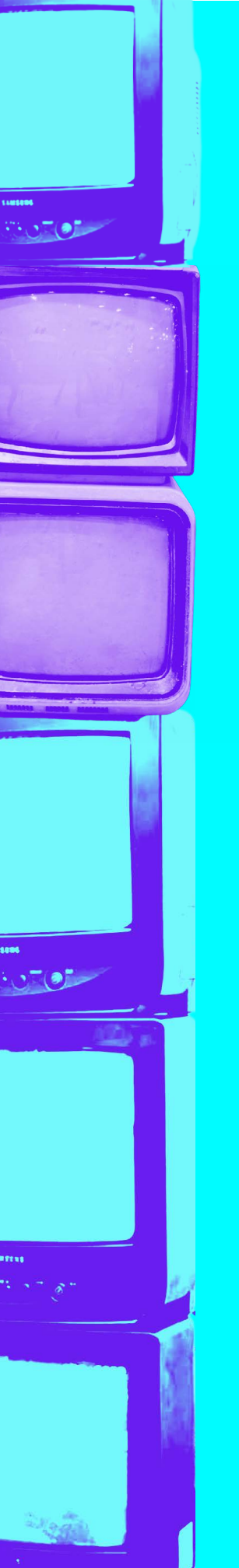


## Breadth without depth: characters of 49 nationalities, most in supporting or minor roles.

Writers depicted more than 49 nationalities and 20 languages. This is a genuine expansion of the global stories television is willing to tell but most characters appeared in a single episode.

Immigrant Character Nationalities





Mo / Netflix

### The Risk of the Single Show

**Mo set the standard for immigrant representation – in just two seasons.**

The Netflix series *Mo* featured more immigrant characters than any other show in our sample — 13 immigrants and 2 children of immigrants — and anchored Middle Eastern and North African representation on screen. The final episode aired in 2025.

**Mo led Middle Eastern/North African (MENA) representation: 16%** of all immigrant characters are MENA



Mo / Netflix



Mo

### Impact of *Mo* on audiences:

**62%** increased their understanding of the challenges immigrants and asylees face in the U.S.

**54%** were more likely to support refugees or asylees in their community.

NOTE: Among those who watched the immigration storyline from *Mo*.

***Bob Hearts Abishola* anchored Black immigrant representation for five seasons.**

The CBS series *Bob Hearts Abishola* made headlines in our 2022 report for creating a surge in Black immigrant character representation. Representation held steady at 17% since that report. The final episode aired in 2024.



Bob Hearts Abishola / CBS

**Impact of *Bob Hearts Abishola* on audiences:**

**34%** increased their understanding of immigrant experiences.

**29%** increased their comfort around meeting a recent immigrant to the U.S.

**44%** increased their understanding of the sacrifices people must make to emigrate.

NOTE: As self reported from our 2022 impact study.

***Bob Hearts Abishola* led Black representation:**



Bob Hearts Abishola / CBS

**17%** of all immigrant characters are Black



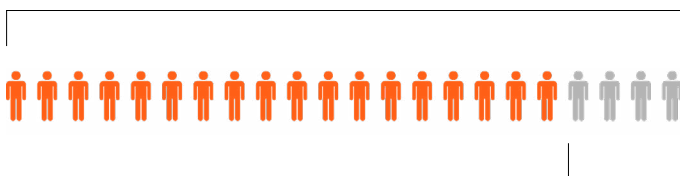
*Bob Hearts Abishola*

***Deli Boys* led Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Representation:**



Deli Boys / Hulu

**22%** of all immigrant characters are AAPI



*Deli Boys*

**Hollywood has proven it can tell compelling, nuanced immigrant stories, and audiences are watching. Now is the time to fight for them.**



# Contact

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