

NEW PEACOCK DOCUSERIES EXPLORES THE HISTORY OF BLACK NFL QUARTERBACKS

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From Marlin Briscoe to Lamar Jackson, Peacock’s four-part docuseries “Field Generals: History of the Black Quarterback” was released on Feb. 5 and explores the oppression Black quarterbacks have faced since the dawn of the National Football League.

The series begins by contextualizing the resistance against Black quarterbacks in American football.

According to the docuseries, white people in America were threatened by the idea of a successful Black quarterback because they didn’t want Black success to spread to other areas of life. They were terrified of a Black quarterback leading to a Black CEO or even a Black president which would “compromise” their way of life.

The docuseries said Americans widely believed that the role of Black athletes on the football field was to be “grunts,” or players that sacrificed themselves to either defend the quarterback or take down the opposing team’s quarterback. Additionally, Black athletes were thought to be incapable of the playing the more “mentally demanding” positions.

These ideas were prevalent until the 1960s, the turning point of the Civil Rights movement in America.

While Black Americans fought for the right to vote and to enjoy the same public facilities white Americans enjoyed, Black athletes began to fight for the right to play whatever position they desired.

That fight began with Marlin Briscoe.

Briscoe played quarterback at The University of Nebraska at Omaha and was very successful, but he was drafted by the

Denver Broncos to play as a Defensive Back. In Briscoe’s rookie season, the Broncos’ existing quarterback lineup experienced a series of injuries, so they were left with no choice but to use Briscoe.

Briscoe played exceptionally well, setting a record of 14 touchdown passes in his rookie season, a Broncos record he held until 2024. Briscoe was fast, unique and had an exceptional arm that made him impossible to defend against.

Despite his enormous success as a quarterback, Briscoe was not asked to play that position for the next season due to his race. Briscoe fought for the opportunity to compete to be the Broncos starting quarterback, but he was denied and ultimately cut from the team.

While Briscoe was unsuccessful in becoming a quarterback, his story showed that it was possible for a Black quarterback to break into the NFL, despite mounting resistance against non-white players.

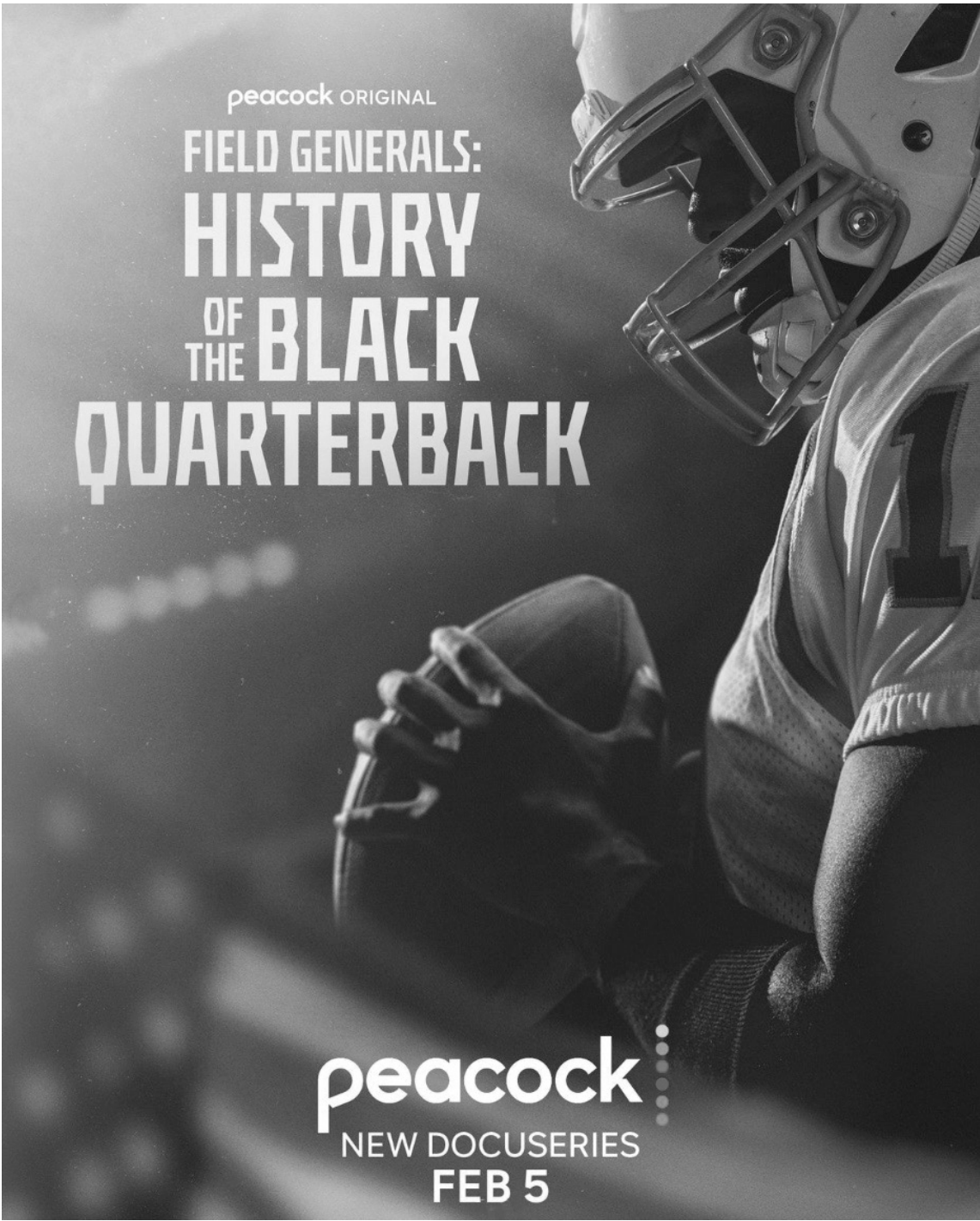
Briscoe’s story was inspiring to many of the other quarterbacks featured in the series, including Warren Moon, Doug Williams and Randall Cunningham.

The docuseries includes commentary from several former NFL quarterbacks, most notably James “Shack” Harris, the first Black quarterback to start in an NFL playoff game.

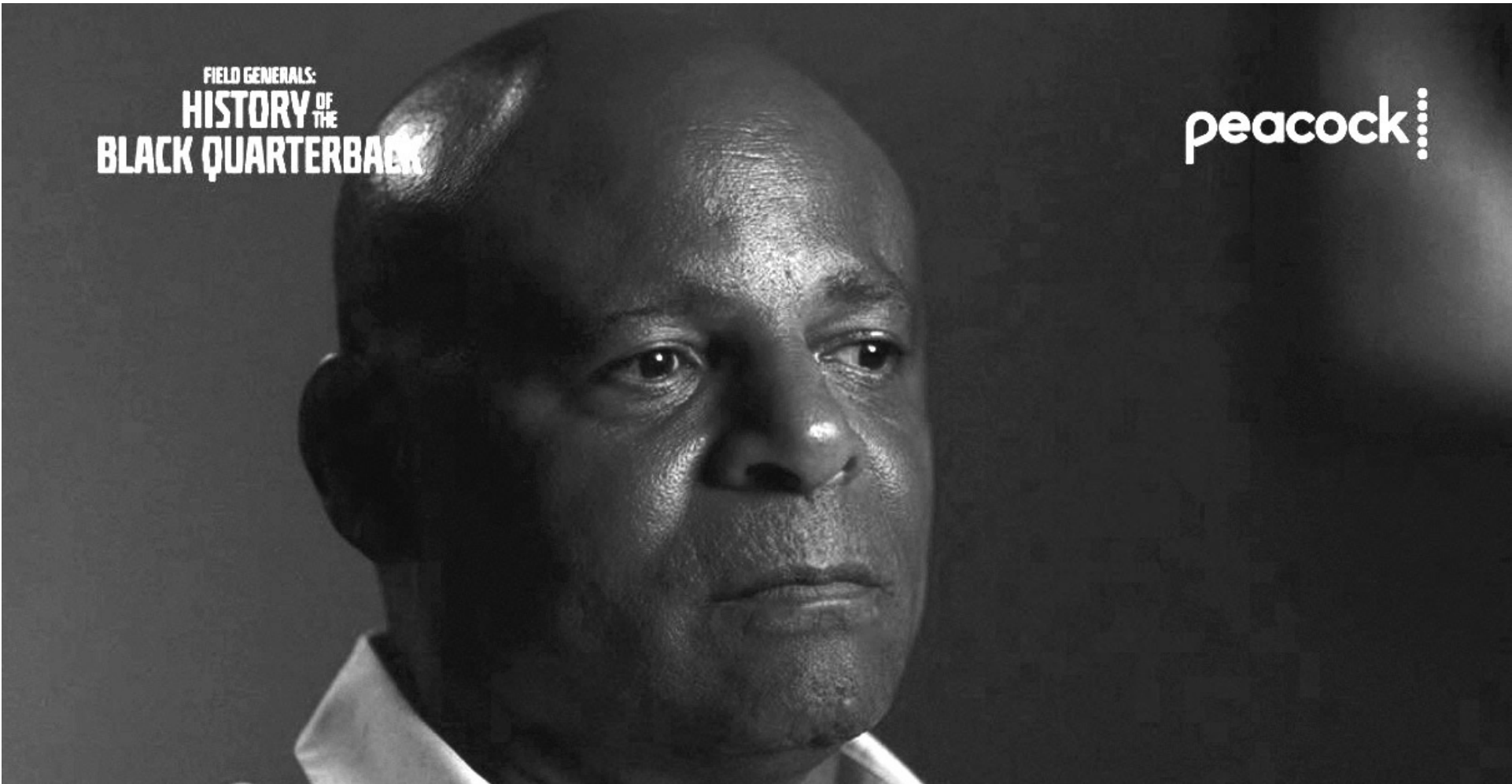
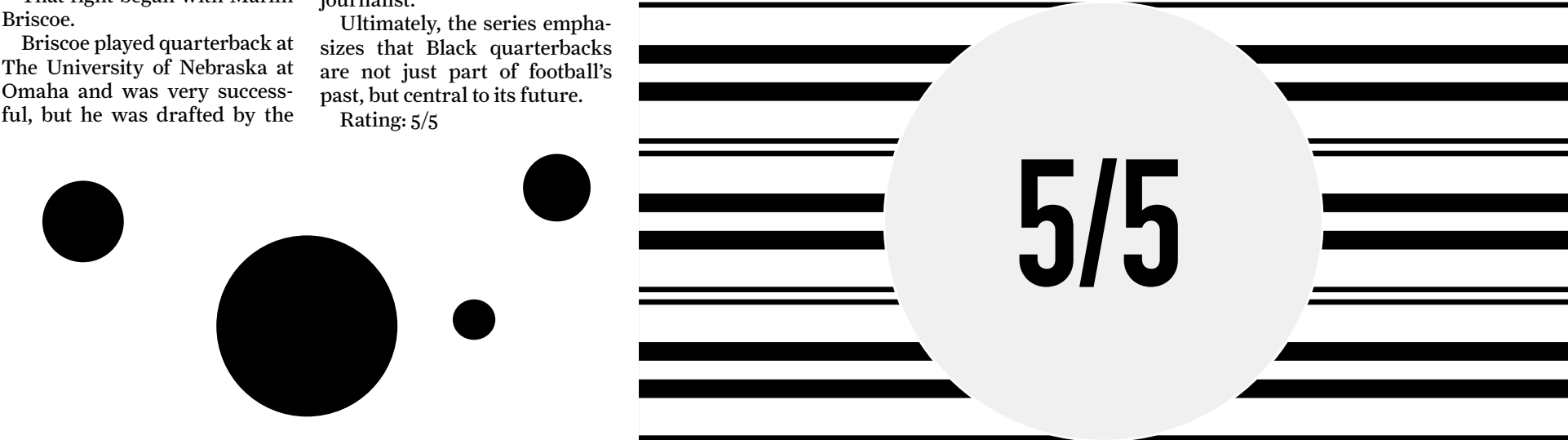
Other contributors include cultural critics, journalists and professors like Michael Eric Dyson, a professor of African American Studies at Vanderbilt University, Michael Wilbon, a reporter for The Washington Post and Jim Trotter, a professional football Hall of Fame journalist.

Ultimately, the series emphasizes that Black quarterbacks are not just part of football’s past, but central to its future.

Rating: 5/5



Promotional image for Peacock’s new docuseries “Field Generals: History of the Black Quarterback.” The series was released Feb. 20 and delves into how Black quarterbacks fought against oppression in the NFL. PHOTO COURTESY OF @THEQGENTLEMAN



Still of Warren Moon in “Field Generals: History of the Black Quarterback.” Moon was the first Black quarterback inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2006. PHOTO COURTESY OF @PEACOCK ON INSTAGRAM