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Hollywood is telling San Bernardino nonprofit founder Kim Carter's story

Directed by Taraji P. Henson, 'Pepcy & Kim' is one of seven segments in an upcoming anthology project



Time for Change Foundation founder Kim Carter, left, with Andrea Iervolino, Taraji P. Henson and Jennifer Hudson on the set of "Pepcy & Kim," a film about Carter's life journey from addict to advocate. (Courtesy of Time for Change Foundation)

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Before she became the Kim Carter those in Southern California know as a philanthropist, advocate and all-around dynamo, Kim Carter was "Pepcy."

Pepcy is on drugs, Carter said this week, using present tense to describe past addictions.

Pepcy is going to prison.

Homeless.

Kim, on the other hand, is amazing, Carter said. Transformative.

"Bold in her advocacy," she said, "and willing to step out and do things contrary to being popular."

Pepcy and Kim will be featured on the silver screen in the near future.

Carter, who founded Time for Change Foundation in 2002, will be portrayed by Academy Award winner Jennifer Hudson in "Pepcy & Kim," a project based on Carter's life directed by Academy Award winner Taraji P. Henson.

"Sometimes I can be overly blessed, blessed to where I'm in a position I never would've asked God to give me that," Carter said in a July 7 phone interview. "Give me a new car, get my credit right, but I don't be asking to be on no big screen. I would never think to ask God that, and that's how you know it's truly a blessing, because this had nothing to do with my skills or ability to make it happen.

"People have dreams to do all types of things," Carter added, "and I'm living in someone else's dream right now."

A former addict living without a home in San Bernardino, Los Angeles and San Francisco counties, Carter spent the better part of a dozen years – from ages 18 to 30 – in and out of prisons and jails.

In the past, Carter has credited a stint in a rehabilitation program for turning her life around. She became an accountant, and in 2002 founded [Time for Change Foundation](#) in San Bernardino to help women transition from homelessness and incarceration to self-sufficiency.

In addition to helping more than 1,700 women reclaim their lives, the nonprofit, which Carter expanded into the Bay Area in 2018, also has reunited more than 300 foster children with their mothers.

"It all changed with Time for Change Foundation," Carter, whom CNN named [a Top 10 Hero](#) in 2015, said. "People are to be reminded that no matter how far on the scale you've gone, there is a comeback, a way up and out. We continue to use our experiences and platform to shed light to other women that it's not over, that you can come out of abusive relationships, homelessness, incarceration and build a better life.

"I'm living beyond my wildest imagination," Carter added. "I have been so overpaid that I'm afraid to not continue to do this work to help other women."

About three years ago, writer and "Thirteen" director Catherine Hardwicke approached Carter after seeing a CNN clip chronicling her journey.

Carter, who in 2017 [received a pardon](#) from then-Gov. Jerry Brown's office and the parole board, had drawn interest from Hollywood before, she said, but once-promising opportunities always vanished as quickly as they appeared.

"Holly-weird" she now calls Tinseltown as a result.

Nevertheless, Carter opened up to Hardwicke, sharing a few of her life changing experiences. While Hardwicke expressed interest in writing a script about Carter's come-up, she still had to find financing and complete other tasks to get the project greenlit.

But she liked her chances.

Then, nothing.

"I let it go as Hollywood is Holly-weird," Carter said.

It wasn't until early last month that Hardwicke emailed Carter with the news her project had been given the go-ahead and would be included in a seven-part anthology made by and about women called "Tell It Like A Woman," produced by the Los Angeles-based nonprofit film production company We Do It Together.

And, Carter learned, someone else would assume directorial duties.

"I met Taraji on Zoom, in a meeting, and I'm there pinching myself," Carter recalled. "I'm truly a fan and probably a groupie too. Oh my god, I was tickled to death. Every time she called me I'd be giddy, like a girl meeting a guy she likes for the first time."

In an ensuing Zoom meeting, Henson asked Carter which actress she wanted to portray her.

"Whoever God wants you to," Carter recalled responding.

"Next Zoom, I look up," Carter said, "and there's Jennifer Hudson."

Within two weeks, Carter was in Burbank, on the set of "Pepcy & Kim," watching two Oscar winners tell her life story.

"We laughed, we cried, we hugged, healed," Carter said. "It was one amazing situation. All amazing."

"Pepcy & Kim" was the last segment of the "Tell It Like A Woman" anthology to wrap filming.

Other segments star Eva Longoria, Cara Delevingne, Margherita Buy and Marcia Gay Harden.

A release date has not been announced.

"I'm a San Bernardino hometown girl that's not just made it big, but made it possible for others to do so too," Carter said. "The more I help other people, the more I'm being rewarded for it. That's the whole kick behind this whole thing, I'm being blessed because I'm being a blessing."

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Brian Whitehead is a reporter for The San Bernardino Sun, covering Colton, Fontana, Grand Terrace, Rialto and San Bernardino. He previously covered prep sports and the cities of Buena Park, Fullerton and La Palma for The Orange County Register. A Grand Terrace native and Riverside Notre Dame alumnus, he earned his journalism degree from Cal State Fullerton in 2010. Since joining The Sun in late 2017, he has reported on development, education, homelessness, marijuana, political strife and the myriad issues facing San Bernardino post-bankruptcy.

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