

cut Jan. *to* Genesis

Jan Genesis is a seasoned multi-camera director with two decades of experience in live entertainment. He is known for his exceptional work in music and entertainment. Trusted by global icons like *Usher*, Eminem, *Diana Ross*, and brands such as *Mercedes F1* and *Netflix*, Jan's creative vision has captivated over a billion viewers worldwide. His work spans prestigious events like the Birmingham Commonwealth Games Closing Ceremony and notable awards shows, including the 56th *NAACP Image Awards* Pre-Show. With a portfolio that includes collaborations with over 200 artists and major live events, Jan's unmatched expertise continues to shape the entertainment landscape.



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Jan, you've built an incredible career as a BAFTA-nominated multi-camera director with experience across some of the most iconic events in entertainment and sports. What inspired you to pursue a career in directing, and how did you get your start in this competitive field?

I stumbled into directing - I never had a grand plan to work in this industry. Growing up, I loved watching family entertainment shows and was deeply involved in sports, especially football. I never imagined I'd one day merge those two worlds. After a serious ankle injury sidelined me during a season, I picked up a camcorder. I began filming my team's journeys to matches, capturing everything from pre-game banter to on-field highlights. I'd edit the footage late at night and release it the next day. The response was overwhelming. Players couldn't wait to see the videos - it created a buzz and filled a gap that wasn't being addressed at that level.

At university, I pivoted from a computer and network technology course to media technology and digital broadcast, which felt more aligned with my emerging interests. That shift introduced me to video editing and the fundamentals of sound and vision in broadcast operations. My big break came

when I landed a competitive internship at Bloomberg. Out of over a thousand applicants, I was selected, and it was there that I had my first real exposure to live television.

Two weeks into the 10-week internship, I was offered a full-time position. 18 months later, an internal Director role became available. I applied, and my manager then took a chance on me. At 23 years old, I became a staff Director at Bloomberg, the youngest in the company worldwide. That role opened the door to participating in the official BBC Multi-Camera Directors' training course. That experience ignited a passion and drive that has fuelled every step of my journey since.

You've directed live events and unscripted television for some of the biggest names in entertainment, from Snoop Dogg and Usher to Stormzy and Wizkid. How do you approach directing such high-profile performances and events, and what's your secret to making them stand out?

When directing high-profile performances and events, there are many moving parts - multiple stakeholders, creative teams, and of course, the talent themselves. My approach always begins with two core elements: the event and the artist. I take the time to deeply understand the purpose of the show - what we're trying to say or celebrate - and then I immerse myself in the artist's creative vision.



“After a serious ankle injury sidelined me during a season, I picked up a camcorder.”

My role as Director is to bridge the two and collaborate with producers and talent to bring that vision to life in a way that resonates with the live audience and the global viewer.

With Snoop Dogg, for example, performing a 25-minute set at Hip-Hop's 50th anniversary in Yankee Stadium, the focus was on capturing a legendary moment. The broadcast had to pull the audience into the atmosphere - feel the bass, the nostalgia, the energy. In contrast, directing Wizkid's Made in Lagos performance required an intimate lens. It was about his artistry, his presence - every frame needed to keep our eyes on him.

There's no one-size-fits-all formula. It's about building a clear vision, communicating it to every department, and then staying flexible enough to adjust in real time. Collaboration is everything.

Your work on high-stakes live broadcasts, such as the Birmingham Commonwealth Games Closing Ceremony and the Global Citizen Festivals, has been viewed by

millions worldwide. What challenges do you face when directing these large-scale events, and how do you maintain the creative vision under pressure?

Directing high-stakes live broadcasts viewed by millions - sometimes billions - requires a unique balance of creativity, leadership, and diplomacy. The bigger the talent and the broader the reach, the more stakeholders there are to satisfy: artists, management, event producers, broadcast partners, sponsors, and of course, the audience in the venue and at home. As the Director, you're the central hub - responsible for distilling everyone's priorities into a unified, executable vision.

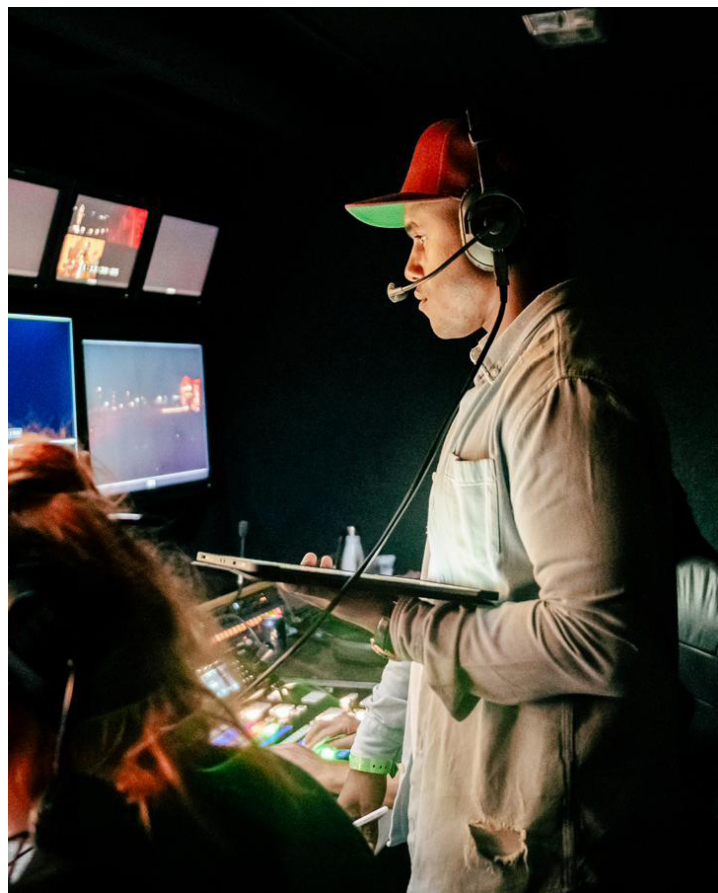
One consistent challenge is balancing the live audience experience with the needs of the broadcast. Often, the best camera position for the viewer at home is also the best seat in the house, so there are trade-offs. Another challenge is maintaining variety and creative integrity when working with multiple artists. It can be tempting to play it safe, but a great team and meticulous

planning allow for innovation, even under pressure.

The key is communication. When every department understands the creative vision from day one, they're empowered to find smart, sometimes safer, ways to execute it. Creativity isn't a solo act - it's a team sport. And the best results come from building a team that's aligned, prepared, and inspired.

As the founder of Genesis Media Productions, how has your experience in directing shaped your approach to running your own production company? What do you want your company's legacy to be in the world of live entertainment?

As a Director, I've had the privilege of working with production teams and creatives worldwide. That exposure has given me a wide lens on how different systems operate - what works, what doesn't, and where real innovation lives. My background as a football coach taught me early on that people perform at their best when they feel comfortable, safe, and empowered



to express themselves. I've carried that philosophy into directing and how I lead Genesis Media Productions.

My approach with Genesis Media Productions is about creating a culture, on a broader scale, where people feel seen, heard, and valued. We apply high-level broadcast storytelling to entertainment and branded content, taking the lessons learned from the biggest stages and applying them across industries.

Ultimately, I want our legacy to be about excellence and representation. I spent many years in the industry without seeing a production company led by someone who looked like me. I wanted to change that narrative and be a home for premium storytelling with soul, culture, and world-class execution. Because creativity deserves investment, and representation deserves excellence.

You've worked with numerous artists and brands in music and sports. How do you bring out each artist or brand's unique essence while ensuring the production maintains its quality and creativity?

Every artist and brand has its own story, values, and essence—and that's always the starting point for me. Whether I'm directing a performance or producing a creative piece for a brand, I begin by asking: Who are they? What do they represent? And what are we trying to communicate? Once that's clear, I layer in the context—what's the show or event, what are the creative objectives, and what tools and resources do we have to deliver?

Time, scale, and budget are also crucial. Some artists might only have a two-minute slot, while others have a full 30-minute set. Each moment requires a tailored approach. In brand work, tone is everything. Launching a car after winning a championship feels very different from launching the same car after a loss. A new fragrance campaign? The viewer can't smell it, so we must convey its mood, energy, and intention purely through visuals and sound.

My experience in unscripted television, music, and live events allows me to draw from different storytelling techniques—whether cinematic, documentary-style, or full sensory performance. Ultimately, it's about honouring the uniqueness of the subject while delivering something elevated and unforgettable, while continuing to shoot with the principles we use in high-end TV.

You've mentioned the importance of building a performance-driven working environment focused on meaningful



human connections and well-being. Can you expand on how this philosophy influences your team dynamics and the success of your projects?

There were moments in my career when I felt completely isolated and was often the only person who looked like me on a production or had a similar experience. I've been in environments where everyone above and below seemed connected in ways I wasn't, and when issues came up, I didn't feel like I had anyone to turn to. Those were the worst days of my professional life - and they became the catalyst for founding Genesis Media Productions.

I wanted to build something different: a space where no one feels excluded based on race, gender, or background, a place rooted in team spirit and mutual respect. While we operate in a creative industry, our success comes down to performance, economics, and impact. Every show, campaign, or live event relies on investment or sponsorship,

which only comes if the end product delivers value.

I focus on building a performance-driven environment where people feel safe, empowered, and connected. When people are at their best - creatively and emotionally - it shows on screen. That's what creates value. At the heart of it, this industry runs on people, and I believe we do our best work when we create spaces that allow everyone to truly belong.

Your work has a global reach, from live events in New York to Accra and Detroit. How do you tailor your approach to directing for different audiences and ensure your work resonates across cultures and continents?

My approach is rooted in honouring the identity of the artist, the energy of the location, and the cultural context of the event, and bringing all of that to life through the lens. For example, directing Global Citizen in Accra's Black Star

Square wasn't just about filming a concert. It was about showcasing that we were in Ghana - its spirit, vibrancy, and people. That meant collaborating with the event, production, and production design teams on the look of the set and framing shots that captured the 25,000 people, the stage, and the iconic Black Star monument all in one visual.

Similarly, the city becomes part of the performance in New York Central Park. A skyline shot with a diverse crowd communicates both location and cultural dynamics. In Detroit, for Live From Detroit: A Concert at Michigan Central, I framed moments with artists such as Diana Ross and Eminem so viewers could feel the emotion of the artists while also taking in the majesty of the restored Michigan Central building lit against the sunset and night sky.

Each event becomes a visual story that connects people globally because we're not just showing a performance but what it means in that place and in that moment.

With your extensive experience, what advice would you offer to young Black directors or those looking to break into the live entertainment industry, particularly in spaces where representation is still growing?

First, you have to love what you do - deeply. Directing can look glamorous on screen, but behind the scenes, it's long hours, unpredictable conditions, early mornings, and sleepless nights. What keeps you going isn't the image; it's the passion. This industry demands resilience. Work isn't always consistent, so your mindset and commitment must be.

My biggest advice is just to start. Use what you have. Shoot something on your phone. Edit it. Learn how to tell a story and solve creative problems before the pressure is on. That builds confidence—and a process that's yours.

Surround yourself with a network of creative peers - producers, DOPs, editors. People who are just as hungry. That's how you create opportunities and grow together. Also seek mentorship, ideally from someone a few steps ahead of you. You'll gain relevant insight that's still close to the ground.

Finally, think beyond your immediate environment. Collaborate across cultures. Travel if you can. Our stories are global, and the more we open up, the more we elevate our work, voice, people, and culture.

Looking ahead, what are some of the projects or collaborations you're most excited about, and how do you see the future of live entertainment evolving in the next few years?

It's a strange but exciting time in the industry, and I'm genuinely optimistic. We're shifting from traditional TV viewing to a digitally driven world where creators have more freedom and there are fewer gatekeepers. This means broader, more authentic stories are being told. I'm excited about building deeper roots in the U.S. and the U.K. and expanding globally, especially through series that blend my experience across unscripted, live, and reality formats.

One area I'm particularly drawn to is the intersection of sport and entertainment. Having directed Formula One shows for Channel 4 and the Mercedes F1 team launches since 2021, I've seen how storytelling has transformed the sport. Series like Drive to Survive have humanised drivers, attracting new audiences beyond purists, proving the power of narrative.

Looking ahead, I see live entertainment evolving alongside social platforms. Multi-camera events designed specifically for mobile devices are becoming the norm. Podcasts are evolving into structured live shows with audience interaction and cross-genre guests. Music, sports, film, and fan culture are converging. And I'm excited to be at the centre of that creative fusion, pushing boundaries in new ways.

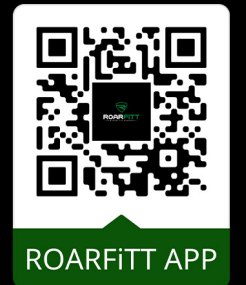
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