

## In-depth with **INDIVISION**



I wanted to write a nice article that represents her company well, until I saw her responses to my interview questions and felt that it was best to change the format to simple Q & A. Her responses are just too good, I learned from her answers and I pray you will too!

An award winning writer, producer and director, Cheryl Quintana Leader is founder and president of **INDIVISION** Productions. Her Latina-owned company is dedicated to producing quality educational and entertainment related projects depicting positive multiracial images in English and Spanish. The most notable presentations created to date are Women at Work's College/Career Conference, GTE's Telemarketing Fraud, March of Dimes' Prenatal Healthcare, United Way's Homeless Women, ARCO's LEARN, Los Angeles

Unified School District's Parent Community Services, Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund's and the L.A. Commission on Assaults Against Women's Capital Campaigns, among others. While viewing Cheryl's bio alone you can clearly tell she has been around for years serving the Latina/o community through her company **INDIVISION**.

The idea for **INDIVISION** (which is short for Independent Vision) in her words came along when after having won Universal's "Hispanic Film Project" for first-time Latino writers, Cheryl became very aware as to the lack of visual tools targeted toward and available within the Latino community written, directed, produced by or starring Latino/as. It then became her mission to create her own company which would actively seek to hire Latinas and women of all ethnicities (in front of and behind the camera), and to be responsible for creating educational programs. It was the perfect segue after having just created an award-winning short film which was then produced and packaged as the first hour long Hispanic Heritage Month Special to have been syndicated throughout the U.S. by Americans of Latino descent -- "telling our own stories." "To fully empower ourselves and one another, it is important for me to continue to create and tell stories as a means of educating our community with product that directly represents and truly depicts the vast diversity of us all -- in our own voices, in direct reflection of our traditions and culture, and most importantly, in our own image. Actively making the choice to "independently vision" and define **who we are** to others."

**In your opinion, is the film industry doing a poor job in targeting the Latino audience?** In my opinion the film and television industry both have historically done a very poor job in targeting their Latino audiences. This practice of non-inclusion has been fairly aligned with other practices currently going on within this democratic country of ours, and having been somewhat maintained on many levels, for over 200 years on behalf of those in past generations. Inclusion is the key and optimum word. And, having worked within both industries, I have found that it's the formula of not having Latinos or true "risk-takers" represented within the studio and network systems, and/or those that are not without their own personal agendas and "the pie is not big enough for anyone but myself" thought process -- within the Corporate Executive rankings and hierarchy. For it is those armed with the power to "green light" projects or nurture "new talent" that will further fortify the industry's future with the abundant potential of being able to continue to tell good stories, to further expand its very lucrative profits, while simultaneously continuing to launch new careers for talented actors, writers, directors, producers, cinematographers, etc. who just happen to be Americans or International Foreigners of Latino descent (or more than likely of Caucasian-European descent). Having accomplished this, then the industry will not only have naturally targeted the Latino audience (which is comprised of many multicultural, multiracial, multiethnic and multi-economic identities) but fundamentally serviced a very universal and global audience.

**Have you seen an influx of interest in bilingual educational films?** Yes, I have seen an influx of interest in Bilingual Educational Films. Due in large part because we deal within the educational

realm, live in Southern California where there is an influx of the Mexican immigrants and several generations of Spanish speaking Latinos. Thus, those interested in capturing their audiences or delivering necessary information --usually having to do with parents and their children -- acknowledge that these projects need to be produced in English and Spanish as a means of getting one's important message across in the most effective means possible to all audiences.

**Do you receive a lot of support by the Latina/o community?** Like anything else in life, there are always those that are personally empowered, educated and not threatened nor intimidated by the innovation, ideas and vision of others, and from these evolved planes, I am and have been gifted with much positive support from the Latina/o community. However, it is with much disappointment to have realized and experienced that there are those in our lives not willing nor capable of truly supporting Latina/os. And, it has been from my vantage point to have witnessed that this negative resistance generally derives from those Latina/os whom have not fully developed nor mastered true power within their own lives, both internally and externally, or were/are after their own personal financial gains or agendas which clearly was/is not inclusive nor in keeping with the majority or mission for which they represent and stand. After all, it was my own mother, Maria de la Luz Quintana, who lived a life of buried secrets where her children did not know that she had seven brothers and sisters and who had run away from her past to forge a life of "not being Mexican," for fear of not being treated equally, "fitting in," or having continued to be treated as she experienced as an American child (second generation) a mere 60 years ago in Texas, where signs and laws were posted and existed stating "no niggers, no Mexicans and no dogs." When my mother found out that I was dedicated to helping our Latino community, her fearful response was "why are you helping "them?" "they" will only bring you down." To which I replied, "First of all mother, "we" are "them," and wasn't it you who told me that "cream rises?" "No one is able to truly bring down another if their quest is for the righteousness of others, and besides if there is something I can do to ensure that no other young Latina girl grows up in a democracy which makes them feel "less than," and "unincluded" as an American citizen, then I will have made my positive difference in this lifetime." Thus, my concentration has always been in gaining support from those whose mission it is to make our world a better place without fear or negative spirit.

**Who would you like to work with in the future?** I would highly welcome the opportunity to collaborate with America Ferrara (*Real Women Have Curves*); with Jessica Alba (*Dark Angel*), with Seidy Lopez (*American Family*) on another project, and with Sandra Bullock who had the courage and vision to springboard the George Lopez sitcom television show.

**Do you have any words of wisdom for our Mijas out there?**

The words of wisdom (palabras de juicio) I have for all Goddess Mijas out there is to really spend time working on our personal homework...who we are, what our strengths are, what our challenges are, what makes us special and what are the qualities that we have been gifted to do our best in this lifetime. I encourage all of us to truly get to know ourselves, to love and to understand ourselves so that when we have journeyed through all our past pains and personal hurts, that we are ready and able to take on any dream or vision we choose. And, in having done our personal "homework," we will be protected in knowing that our personal power, fortitude, character, integrity, and drive will be our foundation behind our true ability to create any positive outcomes we choose. It is here that we will be unaffected by those who may be negatively charged around us or those whose sole purpose may only be in quest of dousing our flames. To remember that the truest of lights will always shine the most bright.

**Let us learn from your mistakes/Tell us what not to do in this business.**

Being an advocate of positive reinforcement, I prefer to advise on what to do from what I learned through trial and error in operating my business. Always be prepared with a plan, a back-up plan and a legal contract for your own protection. Always be able to deliver on what you say you are going to do -- "walk your talk" (even if others on your team let you down). There are no excuses, when your name and reputation in the industry are on the line. If others choose to not complete

their end of things in any project, it is they who are letting themselves down, and you will have to find a way of not letting your clients down by having had an alternative plan to cover your bases. Don't allow others "bad business practices" encourage you to be less than professional and true to the project. Be prepared to "walk away" if negotiations are not honorable or the "price is too high" in terms of your giving up on your own personal beliefs and integral working practices. Be prepared to stand up for your convictions and not allow others to manipulate their negative will upon you. Build an equally professional and talented team around you who also believe in you and have your vision and best interest at heart and in mind. At the same time, develop truly objective friends and mentors who can positively guide and help you navigate the bumps in the road. Always believe in yourself and never take "no" for answer -- if there's a will, there's always a way! While there are many rules -- be the exception. Be positive, be strong, trust your instincts and intuition; and remember who you are, what it is you're here for and how you can and will best accomplish it. Buena Suerte!

For more information on **INDIVISION** send your email to [indivision2000@earthlink.net](mailto:indivision2000@earthlink.net), their website will be ready January 2005 [www.indivision2000.com](http://www.indivision2000.com).