

Hacked e-mail shows Affleck asked PBS to censor ancestry

A hacked Sony e-mail posted by WikiLeaks Friday reveals that **Ben Affleck** demanded that the PBS show "Finding Your Roots" remove the fact that one of the actor's ancestors owned slaves. In a July 22, 2014, e-mail, the show's host, Harvard professor **Henry Louis Gates Jr.**, asked Sony USA boss **Michael Lynton** what he should do about Affleck's request: "One of our guests has asked us to edit out something about one of his ancestors — the fact that he owned slaves. Now, four or five of our guests this season descend from slave owners, including **Ken Burns**. We've never had anyone ever try to censor or edit what we found. He's a megastar. What do we do?" Lynton advised that the revelation be removed. "I would take it out if no one knows, but if it gets out that you are editing the material based on this kind of sensitivity then it gets tricky." Gates says the show's producers know, as well as Affleck's publicist and agent. In an e-mail back to Lynton, Gates wrote "To do this would be a violation of PBS rules. . . . It would embarrass [Affleck] and compromise our integrity. . . . Once we open the door to censorship, we lose control of the brand." The episode, which aired last October, included no mention of the slave-owning ancestor. PBS issued a statement late Friday, saying: "It is clear from the exchange how seriously Professor Gates takes editorial integrity. He has told us that after reviewing approximately ten hours of footage for the episode, he and his producers made an independent editorial judgment to choose the most compelling narrative

of
op
Ni
da
Pa

How do you weigh in on the following article that has been the talk of the Genealogical World?

Boston Globe April 19, 2015