

MOREHOUSE MAN RESHAPES 'SLAVERY TREND' IN 'THE RETRIEVAL'

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The now seemingly overdone paradigm of slavery-themed films has taken the modern cinema circuit by storm for the past few years with blockbuster hits like "Django Unchained" and "12 Years A Slave" making massive dents in the box office. While these films have undoubtedly made a magnanimous impact on the perception of the Black struggle in white supremacist Hollywood, many have criticized the works, especially the former, for satirizing and even ignorantly glamorizing the institution of slavery. With much of the Black community losing hope, it ultimately took the help of Tishuan Scott, a fellow Morehouse Man, to diverge from the quintessential image of slave hardships by tackling an untouched angle in the new film "The Retrieval."

That pristine perspective being the coming-of-age story of a 13-year-old fatherless slave, Will (Ashton Sanders), who finds solace in Scott's character, Nate, in the midst of the United States Civil War.

"The Retrieval" follows Will, who is in the care of his bitter and nonchalant uncle, who works under the control of a white bounty hunter (Bill Oberst Jr.). The pair's next assignment is to retrieve Nate, a freed man living in the North.

Set in 1864, the film, written and directed by Chris Eska, unnoticeably boasted limited resources, and fresh faces that resulted in an immensely impressive showcase of raw undiscovered talent and artistic effect. That discerning potency went as deep as the title choice, with another pairing of words set to be used as the project's title in the commencing stages of filming.

"The film was initially called "September Morning,"" said Scott, a member of the Morehouse College class of 2002. "I didn't like the new name, "The Retrieval," until I looked the word up in the dictionary. It meant, "to regain." ... I wanted to reawaken within us a sense of who we are."

Unabashedly passionate about the film and its inadvertent ability to educate the masses on slavery through an unorthodox lens of gradual growth, Scott pulled from a few of his favorite readings and memories of Morehouse to enhance

his performance of Nate.

"My research was reading W.E.B. DuBois' *The Souls of Black Folk*; Ida B. Wells-Barnett's *Georgia Lynch Law*; and William Styron's *The Confessions of Nat Turner*," Scott said. "All of these histories gave me insight to our country at the time."

Further expounding on his inspiration of DuBois' revered work, he recalled residing in W.E.B. DuBois residence hall during his freshman year at Morehouse, where he expressed his distaste for the lack of celebration that the civil rights activist received then and even in recent times.

This attention to scholarly insight and the uncompromising discovery of manhood are what ultimately differ "The Retrieval" from its slave-themed predecessors. Though they are homogenous in outward theory and aesthetic, they vastly differ in their approaches to a modern audience that is tired of the "one trick pony" syndrome that has been applied to the on-screen slave narrative for years.

Will's coming-of-age story, instead of being barred by stagnancy, is further induced when he learns to stand on his own two feet through indirect lessons of manhood trans-

ferred to him by Nate. His name is, furthermore, symbolic in the scheme of the story, prompting a pondering of thought and wonder in the audience.

"Will's name is very philosophical," Scott said. "[A play on] "thy will be done." It leaves the audience asking, "What will Will do?" Will he betray the father figure that he just met, or will he grow up and rebel? ... The film is really about Will!"

While thankfully lacking the elaborate set, staging – and forced plot – of the Quentin Tarantino-directed "Django Unchained," "The Retrieval" represents an articulately executed insightful narrative refining the lesser recognized struggles of the Civil War into a fervent period drama, all created in an air of ingenuity and visual magnificence.

Howard Thurman once said, "Over the heads of her students, Morehouse holds a crown that she challenges them to grow tall enough to wear." Through his riveting performance of Nate, one can assuredly declare that Tishuan Scott is both vastly prepared and qualified for this noble challenge.