

Clark Atlanta Alumnus Premieres Movie on Muslims

Contributed by Rolisha Davis -- Black College Wire
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Film depicts a Muslim growing up in America

A former Clark Atlanta University Mass Media Arts major, Muhammad Qasim Basir, has put together a talented cast for a feature film that depicts growing up Muslim in America.

Evan Ross, who plays the lead character and is the son of singer-actress Diana Ross, stopped by Clark Atlanta University recently to promote the movie that premiered in 10 cities Feb 11. Ross signed autographs and gave students a private film screening of "Mooz-Lum" that features him playing the role of "Tariq," a young man in search of himself.

"Just like any young man or young woman, everybody is trying to find their way and their place in this world and what they really believe in," said Ross in reference to his choice to be a part of the film. "I was actually the first person to sign onto the film," Ross said.

Writer-director Basir also chose Danny Glover, Nia Long and Roger Guenveur Smith for this film. Tariq, the main character, is raised by a controlling and devout Muslim father Hassan Mahdi (Roger Guenveur Smith) who forces him to follow an orthodox, Islamic regimen.

Ross also expressed what message he hopes people will leave with after watching the film. "I think young people should be more open to learning about all different kinds of religions, because the more we are aware the less we become ignorant," Ross said.

In the movie, Hassan wants Tariq to become a scholar of the Koran, despite the wishes of his wife (Nia Long) to let his children enjoy a normal childhood.

Tariq's mother Safiya became unhappy with marriage because she felt Hassan was too strict on the kids and decided to leave Hassan. Against her better judgment, she only took Taqua, leaving Tariq with his father.

Tariq's faith is tested his freshman year in college by alcohol, a girl and the reappearance of his trash-talking elementary classmate, Versailles, who lives across the hall.

The plot thickens when the events of 9/11 erupt on campus. Emotions arise and an ugly mob roamed the campus in search of Muslims to take out their frustrations on. "It was a really good movie," Brittney Taylor, a CAU student, said. "You never get to see the Muslim side of what they went through for 9/11."

Rolisha Davis writes for The Panther, the Clark Atlanta University student newspaper, which originally published this article.

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