

FAMU Student's 'Dream' Comes True

Contributed by Shaletha Litt - Black College Wire
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SGA vice president writes, directs first film

Florida A&M University's own student body vice president is on his way to becoming a successful screenwriter and director. James Bland, 22, a senior business administration student from Titusville, completed his first film, "Dreaming in Color," less than two weeks ago.

Upon entering college, Bland said he wasn't sure what career route he wanted to take.

Set to graduate in April, Bland had to decide what to do with his life. He developed a strong relationship with Lamont Carswell, co-director and writer of the mini-series "My Brother's Keeper."

Bland's first television acting appearance was two years ago on the show as the character Malik. He said his commitment demonstrated his passion for film.

"I took it seriously," Bland said. "I was always on time, and I always had my lines memorized. I could tell the director liked working with me."

Carswell said Bland demonstrated such an intensity to learn that eventually, he offered him an opportunity Bland couldn't refuse. "With season two, he asked me to help out," Bland said of Carswell. "I wrote the script for episode two!"

That was all Bland needed to see that writing and directing were his calling.

"That was the catalyst that got me into it," he said. "That was pretty much the spark that allowed me to see that film is what I wanted to do."

Bland said the experience and the relationship he developed with Carswell pushed him to write his own film.

"Before the new year, James mentioned to me that he wanted to apply to NYU film school and asked if I could help him get his application packet together," Carswell said. "We were going to submit a very short film with a few scenes but in discussing it, it felt like we were planning a movie, so I was like go ahead and actually do a film."

Bryan Brown, 22, an actor in Bland's movie, said working with the film project was a good experience.

"He's great; he's gonna be a great director, and he's a good writer," said Brown, a broadcast journalism student from Orlando. "Working with him was a great learning experience for the both of us."

With his first movie complete, Bland is feeling more focused these days.

"Now I'm 100 percent sure that I want to pursue writing and directing," he said.

"Dreaming in Color" premieres March 4 in FAMU's Lee Hall auditorium.

{moshaloscan film_dream} Shaletha Litt writes for The Famuan, Florida A&M University's student newspaper, where this article originally appeared. Posted Feb. 25, 2008