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Harvey Mason Jr. on Yusuf Nasir's Short Film 'Regret to Inform You' and Its Message of 'Fighting Through Adversity'

By Jazz Tangcay



Courtesy of Perception PR

When Grammy-nominated record producer [Harvey Mason Jr.](#) saw an early edit of the short film "[Regret to Inform You](#)," he "was blown away" after just the first two minutes.

[Yusuf Nasir](#)'s live-action short vying for Oscar consideration follows Nasir, a day in the life of an aging male performer and his rejections. A new rejection sets him back into a dance sequence fantasy that becomes a liberating space for him. Said Mason Jr., a producer on the short, "When the dancing started, I learned he choreographed that too."

Nasir, who makes his directorial debut, thought an interesting concept would be to take images that were opposites and see where they land. Nasir explained, “I wanted to structure this in a way to where, in the beginning, you almost don’t know whether to like me or hate me. But, when the dance starts, it makes you reevaluate why I was so angry and frustrated.”

Nasir says he was influenced by black-and-white musicals, particularly the Nicholas Brothers, whose five-minute sequence from “Stormy Weather” is arguably one of the greatest dance sequences ever executed on-screen. He says he was also inspired by tap dancers the Berry Brothers.

The idea had lived in Nasir’s head for months, but when it came to pulling off the actual sequence and workshopping it, with rehearsals and workshopping and filming, “that all took two days,” said Nasir.

Mason Jr. said he saw parallels in Nasir’s journey in the film to the real-life journey of making it. “His dancing in the movie is similar to his talent. He didn’t stop,” Mason Jr. said. “He talked to a lot of people who told him he shouldn’t do that, but he continued and he persevered.”

Nasir’s message for audiences is a simple one: “to just keep going.”

Mason Jr. noted that film is more than just about dancing, it’s about understanding struggles. “It’s about people, being seen and feeling valued. It’s about encouraging people to find their gift, their passion and fight through adversity.”