

Aisha Hinds & DeWanda Wise Talk About Shots Fired At Detroit Premiere



Last night Fox held a screening of the *Shots Fired* pilot in Detroit and actors DeWanda Wise and Aisha Hinds were in attendance. *Shots Fired* is a new television show created by Gina Prince-Bythewood and Reggie Rock Bythewood about two racially charged shootings in a fictional North Carolina town. Reggie Rock Bythewood said that seeing George Zimmerman's verdict inspired him to create the 10-hour film. Sanaa Lathan and Preston Terry star as an investigator and prosecutor for the Department of Justice and seek to uncover the truth surrounding both shootings. Hinds and DeWanda Wise were on hand to talk about the show and participate in a panel discussion moderated by Detroit Free Press columnist Rochelle Riley. Hinds on her character:

"I play the role of Pastor Janae James she's a lifelong resident of Gates Station in North Carolina which is a fictitious town that this narrative revolves in. She is a

woman who is in the trenches she is an activist, sheâ€™s a community organizer, sheâ€™s a woman who rolls up her sleeves and is in the trenches to essentially galvanize the community to have a voice. She serves as the voice that bridges the community with the government and trying to get everybody mobilized to fight against the injustice thatâ€™s ravaging the community.”

DeWise explained her role as Shameeka Campbell:

“I play Shameeka Campbell. Shameeka Campbell as you discover in the first episode is a mother in the local houses of a fictional town in the south whose son has been killed by police but no one knows about it yet. So thereâ€™s a bit of a mystery at the heart of Shameeka Campbellâ€™s story.”

Both actresses have roles of great emotional responsibility and theyâ€™ shared the rigors of becoming Campbell and James. Hinds described the described the process:

“Iâ€™m a woman of faith myself, it was certainly a revelation playing this role because thereâ€™s a different space you have to dig to sort of carry the burden for an entire community that reaches beyond just governing your life, your own spiritual walk when you think of life for your own individual journey as opposed to carrying an entire community. I made myself available to what that required I spoke to a number of pastors and just studied what their journeys were I pondered the things one of them said to me in terms of one of the things they struggle with the most is inadequacy feeling that they canâ€™t live up to the call thatâ€™s on their life so here they are functioning in this role with such responsibility but yet theyâ€™re grappling each and every day with feeling inadequate of the thing theyâ€™re positioned to do. So I just allow her passion to live in the same space as her fears, her anxieties and that sense of inadequacy. In terms of her being an activist I

certainly reached back for the people who I think were instrumental in us getting where we are today which are the Malcolms, the Martins, Angela Davis reach back for those voices and read those narratives and their speeches to try to really get a sense of their spirit and what it is they use to encourage the people to actually take these steps and move.”



Wise explained how she took on Campbell's grief:

“I tell you this when youâ€™re training as an actor there are a few plays that you work on and they just tell you that thereâ€™s no comparison, they say Greek tragedy is one of those things and to me this is our modern-day Greek tragedy. I met with a number of the Mothers of the Movement Wanda Johnson in particular, spoke specifically about the PTSD that occurs to those left behind whether the friends of those who are slain, the family of those that are slain, and thereâ€™s no amount of thereâ€™s no amount of research, thereâ€™s no amount of watching these news stories that can really prepare you to invoke that degree of grief so the closest I could come to was my own fury, anger, my own frustration, my own fears, and kind of what Aisha already alluded to which is like opening yourself up and asking God to bring you there

because there's no other force that really will. So I just praise God that I can represent. I'm thankful that this story exists, that I actually have a place for my rage, my hurt, and I hope that when people are watching as opposed to watching the news they're open and entering into the personal lives of these characters in this fictionalized narrative that is truth is stranger than fiction that their hearts too are opened as mine was"

Riley, Hinds and DeWise engaged with the audience after the showing of the pilot which was well-received by the audience. They all hoped that future viewers would find empathy and make a connection to the story because of all the turmoil in the country right now surrounding the issue. *Shots Fired* will premiere on Fox March 22nd at 8PM EST.

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