

UNCAGED: NIL Sports Drama Premieres at Pan African Film Festival

Short film 'UNCAGED' explores the unseen mental toll of college athletes navigating NIL pressures. Premiering at PAFF 2025 on Feb. 12.

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, February 10, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- ward-winning director Jay "JYV" Richardson is set to make his highly anticipated [Pan African Film Festival](#) (PAFF) debut with the World Premiere of his short film, UNCAGED, on Wednesday, February 12, at 2 PM at The Culver Theater in Los Angeles.



Uncaged poster featuring current festival selections for the month of February.

In the age of Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) deals, UNCAGED dives into the mental toll that young athletes face—navigating newfound opportunities, survivor's guilt, and the conflicting social issues that linger back home.

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UNCAGED is a story I had to tell to reflect the silent struggles of athletes torn between opportunity and overwhelming pressure.”

Jay “JYV” Richardson

“UNCAGED was inspired by my personal experiences as a student-athlete—being the first in my family to leave home for college and the weight of expectations that came with it,” shares Richardson. “It’s about ambition, sacrifice, and the silent struggles of young athletes beyond the game.”

With powerful storytelling and raw emotional depth, UNCAGED adds to the national conversation on mental

health, sports, and identity.

Richardson, known for his visually arresting and emotionally charged narratives, cites Barry Jenkins, Ryan Coogler, and Gaspar Noé as major influences. The film’s basketball sequence, he notes, was pulled directly from a pivotal moment in his life—a tribute to a close friend who pushed him toward the game but left him navigating grief and anger after his passing.

"This isn't just a film—it's a movement," Richardson adds. "My vision is to develop it into a feature film and eventually a series that explores these themes on a larger scale."

Drawing comparisons to Spike Lee's *New York*, Donald Glover's *Atlanta*, and Paul Thomas Anderson's *San Fernando Valley*, Richardson aims to champion Philadelphia's stories—shedding light on its beauty, resilience, and complexity.

The Pan African Film Festival, founded by Danny Glover in 1992, has a legacy of launching the next generation of Black filmmakers, making it an ideal stage for Richardson's directorial debut.

WORLD PREMIERE SCREENING

- Pan African Film Festival – Shorts Program
- Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at 2 PM
- The Culver Theater, 9500 Culver Blvd, Los Angeles, CA

ADDITIONAL SCREENING

- NewFilmmakers Los Angeles INFOCUS: Black Cinema
- Saturday, February 22, 2025, at 8 PM
- 1139 S Hill St, Los Angeles, CA

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