

Kaluuya and Fishback tackle social justice in ‘Judas and the Black Messiah’



Photo: Warner Bros. Pictures / Courtesy of Warner Bros. Pictures

Daniel Kaluuya as Chairman Fred Hampton and Dominique Fishback as Deborah Johnson in ‘Judas and The Black Messiah’

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Lead actor Daniel Kaluuya stars in the upcoming film *Judas and the Black Messiah*. Kaluuya takes on the life of revolutionary Black Panther leader, Chairman Fred Hampton while supporting actor, Dominique Fishback plays the role of his girlfriend, Deborah Johnson.

Much like the recent killing of Breonna Taylor, officers of the Chicago Police Department assassinated Hampton while he was unarmed and sleeping in his apartment. The brutal assassination was witnessed by Hampton’s pregnant girlfriend who attempted to shield him before making the decision to protect the life of their unborn child.

In comparison to her character being in a position where she could do absolutely nothing, Fishback tackles the narrative of the many black women who have lost Black men to injustice and police brutality.

“This seems to be the requirement for Black mothers. Because they are killing their loved ones, their partners, they are killing their children. Black mothers are forced to go up on a podium and be strong for everybody else and say what you can do and how you can help. Don’t let my child xyz be in vain.”

As it relates to the recent police killings of unarmed Black men, the Black Lives Matter movement, and the killing of Breonna Taylor, Kaluuya tackles his thoughts on what the Chairman’s

message would be to historically Black college students if he were still living.

“The first speech of the movie is where my mind goes to, ‘Awaken yourself from the system you are currently in,’” said Kaluuya.

“You want to use it as opposed to it using you. You know, is something that I feel really resonates from that speech, where he is actually talking to Black college students.”

The actor expresses his opportunity to truly embody the character of Fred Hampton and better understand the ideologies of the Black Panther Party. In addition, what the Black community can do to better emulate those ideals.

“Pouring into your own and pouring into your community, in a really function-

al way, and creating systems in order to help people.”

“My whole career has been leading to this point,” says Kaluuya as he acknowledges his gratitude for the opportunity to portray a prominent figure during the Black Panther Party movement.

The actor also acknowledges and honors his humble beginnings as both an actor and person of color.

“If you understood where I come from, it’s mad that I’m on this call right now, in these kinds of fabrics right now, you know what I’m saying. It’s nuts.”

The film *Judas and the Black Messiah* captures some of the many social justice atrocities yet present in the world today. Be sure to watch the film premiering February 12th, 2021.