

Brother

Canada | 2023 | 129m | 15

Director: Clement Virgo

Starring: Lamar Johnson, Aaron Pierre, Marsha

Stephanie Blake, Kiana Madeira

The beauty and complexity of Black masculinities takes centre stage in Clement Virgo's 2022 feature, *Brother*. This coming-of-age film about two Jamaican-Canadian siblings, Francis (Aaron Pierre) and Michael (Lamar Johnson), made its debut at the 2022 Toronto International Film Festival and tells a tender yet suspenseful story driven by the protagonists' need to feel safe in a world that offers them little protection.

According to writer-director Clement Virgo, *Brother* is the fastest screenplay he's ever written simply because of how connected he felt to the source material. The screenplay itself is an adaptation of the 2017 award-winning novel of the same name by David Chariandy and was altered to identify the brothers as Jamaican rather than Trinidadian. In an interview for Collider, Virgo shares that the book's characters felt like his own family, and it was this familiarity that allowed the movie's script to naturally pour out of him.

The film is split into three intertwining narratives which essentially capture the multidimensionality of Black experiences: the traumas and pleasures, loves and losses. The relentless presence of happiness in the film despite its sombre tone was a

crucial aspect for Virgo, with the director telling the *Hollywood Reporter* that 'Black joy on screen is important and hopefully that sense of joy comes across.'

From the pleasures and ambitions to the pains and sacrifices, *Brother* captures the everyday truths of growing up as a Black immigrant in a single-parent family in Toronto. The film is a breathtaking balance between the need to survive the heartbreak of grief and the desire to bathe in the warmth of unconditional affection. Its exploration of brotherhood amongst the vibrant hip-hop scene of Scarborough makes for a captivating story that remains charged by the creeping feeling that tragedy might always be just around the corner.

'The story is filtered through a familiar gaze that speaks to folks of specific communities while also broadcasting a universal message of what it means to be an outsider,' *Deadline Hollywood Daily*.



Excellent

Fair

Poor

What did you think of the film? Please mark or tear the number.

Please add any further comments here

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Did You Know?

- The movie was adapted from the novel of the same name by David Chariandy and changed the ethnic identity of the protagonists from Trinidadian to Jamaican.
- Clement Virgo was inspired by *The Godfather Part II* and *Manchester by the Sea* for the film's structure.

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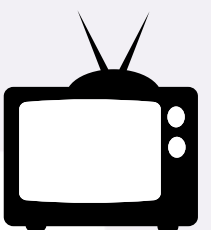
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