

Film Notes

By Rebecca Faulkner

      @FilmBathUK



My Father's Shadow

2025 | 94mins

Director: Akinola Davies Jr.

Starring: Sopé Dìrísù, Godwin Egbo, Chibuike Marvelous Egbo

The first Nigerian film to be selected to play at the Cannes Film Festival, *My Father's Shadow* is a semi-autobiographical story of an estranged father and his two young sons who journey to Lagos during the 1993 election crisis. Set on a single day in the Nigerian city, the film follows the family as they struggle to stick together amid political chaos.

Akinola Davies Jr. co-wrote *My Father's Shadow* with his brother Wale Davies using their collective memories of growing up in the politically tense period of 1990s Nigeria. The election crisis happened after the 12th of June presidential election was annulled by the military, preventing Nigeria from living free from military rule after nine years of no presidency. The film showcases the unrest in Lagos as a result.

Though set in such an intense time, *My Father's Shadow* does not fail to capture the beauty and community of the Nigerian city. The colours and landscapes are all filmed in such a way that it is as if you are transported to Lagos, making this film sentimental to Nigerians.

Dìrísù stated that “I think that people who have been to Lagos found there was a sensory experience to this film...they could smell the cooking in the bukas on the street corner, and they could feel the heat in the textures. It is a wonderful representation of the country” (Hollywood Authentic 2025).

The Davies brothers have created a transformational story that alludes to their own life growing up in Nigeria but keeps just the right amount of fiction for an outstanding piece of cinema. The result is something beautiful to remember their childhood by and a film that shares with the world an important piece of Nigerian history. As Akinola Davies Jr. told GQ, “Everyone has had a father at some point, and the film explores renegotiating that relationship, for better or worse... while some might see this as a Nigerian film, it's truly universal” (GQ, 2025).

‘An elegant and stirring ode to Lagos’

- The Hollywood Reporter



Excellent

Fair

Poor

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

Please add any further comments here

Please detach this from your Film Note and drop it into the box or hand it in at the end of the screening. Thank you!



My Father's Shadow

Did You Know?

- *My Father's Shadow* is Akinola Davies' debut feature film as a director.
- Folarin, the father, was inspired by the Davies brothers' own father who they lost early in life; the brothers have spoken about feeling connected to him through the making of the film.
- Upon filming the beach scene, it was discovered that Chibuike and Godwin Egbo could not swim, their co-actor, Sopé Dìrísù, taught them to swim when they had time away from filming.

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Shaihu Umar (1976)

Set in the end of the 19th Century Nigeria, it follows the story of the first Prime Minister of Nigeria.



Nebraska (2013)

When a father and son embark on a road trip, they both learn a lot about each other.

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