

Tariq Gordon's Incredible Journey

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From Jamaica to Filmmaking

By ML Ball (AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2018, EDITION 27)

Photos: The Art Effect

GREAT FILMMAKERS HAVE TO come from somewhere, right? Why not Poughkeepsie? In Tariq Gordon's case, that may well prove to be true. It actually makes sense that Tariq's passion is filmmaking because in many ways, his own life reads like a movie.

Born in Spanish Town, Jamaica, Tariq came to the United States in 2009 at the age of nine. His parents had emigrated years earlier, leaving him and his two siblings to be raised by grandparents. After bouncing around a few cities, they settled in Poughkeepsie and sent for their children.

This meant that when Tariq was nine years old, he met his parents for the first time. It was a tough time in his life, he said recently, and it took him a long time to settle in. But after attending Warring Elementary School and recently graduating from Poughkeepsie High School, Tariq is now headed to the Kanbar Institute of Film and Television at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts.

Wait...what? Isn't it almost impossible to go from Jamaica to NYU? No, not really, if you have a fiercely dedicated group of people guiding you, encouraging you and, most importantly, believing in you. For Tariq, he found those people at The Art Effect.



Formed in 2018 by the merger of two Poughkeepsie arts organizations—Mill Street Loft and Spark Media Project—The Art Effect offers courses in drawing, painting, photography and film. In 10th grade and for the following two summers, Tariq took classes from Spark Media, a division of The Art Effect, and discovered his life's passion: filmmaking.

"They taught us everything: how to write a script, use a camera, set up microphones, how to light, how to edit," Tariq said. "It was right down the street from my house, and I never knew."

When the 2017 summer assignment was to make a film, Tariq chose the Buddhist principle of nirvana as the basis for his. "It's a state where you're happy, you're content. I wanted to explore that topic in a different way because I was lost and very unhappy. The Art Effect drove me to a monastery two hours away so I could interview a Buddhist monk for my film, which I named *Nirvana*. It's about me, and the monk narrates it as he guides me to help me find my purpose."

When Tariq's film was shown at the conclusion of the summer session, the audience was stunned.

"Everybody was telling me, 'You did a good job, your message is powerful.' On my way home I was thinking, maybe I should do this for a living. Maybe I do have a gift," he said.



Next, at the urging of Mary Ellen Iatropoulos, The Art Effect's director of experience, and Todd Poteet, director, Tariq submitted *Nirvana* to NYU. This April, he got accepted.

And with that, a life is changed.

Now, the question is, when Tariq makes it big, will he give a shout-out to The Art Effect? "Definitely," he said. "They've done so much for me, the least I can do is spread the word and help them grow."

And there's your happy ending.

For more information about The Art Effect, visit www.feelthearteffect.org.

