



DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.
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Riveting and Inspiring



PHOTO BY ATSUSHI NISHIJIMA/PARAMOUNT PICTURES

David Oyelowo as Martin Luther King Jr. and Carmen Ejogo as Coretta Scott King in 'Selma,' the major motion picture that just opened in Portland theaters and across the country. The movie is poised to become of the most critically and popularly lauded films of the year.

'Selma' wisely depicts struggle for civil rights

BY DARLEEN ORTEGA
 (COPY, ITALICS AT END)

I long for more films that attempt to tell the stories of genuine courage and struggle and sacrifice that are the stuff of all the most important gains in civil rights for minorities and women and LGBTQ people and others who are marginalized. Such stories get far less attention than they deserve. But every time a film comes out that purports to deal with such topics, I brace for disappointment. Such films nearly always oversimplify the struggles depicted, so that the villains are

cartoonish or the struggles themselves more easily resolved than they ever can be in real life.

What a treat, then, to watch "Selma"—and by a treat, I mean that I was riveted and inspired, and that I wept through most of it. For once, I found an insightful depiction of what working for social justice looks like. And what it looks like is broken bodies, fear, treachery, risk, mistakes, choices between terrible options, and unthinkable sacrifice. And it involves many heroes, not just one.

The film has an interesting back story. It

OPINIONATED JUDGE
 BY JUDGE DARLEEN ORTEGA

was stalled in development for several years, and several well-known directors signed on and then dropped the project. Its star, David Oyelowo, felt called to play Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. back in 2007, but some of the early directors were not convinced he was right for the role. By the time director Lee Daniels became the fourth director to abandon the project, Oyelowo had been cast, and it was he who convinced the producers to bring on Ava DuVernay as director. She is one of very few women of any color to get the opportunity to helm a major Hollywood studio project

and, if there is any justice in Hollywood (dare I hold my breath?) is poised to become the first African-American woman to win an Oscar nod. And she hails from the world of independent film.

I have to believe that DuVernay's perspective and experiences helped this project. The usual mix of leadership hasn't been able to pull off a film like this; all the cards of how a Hollywood film gets made are stacked against the necessary clarity of vision. The

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