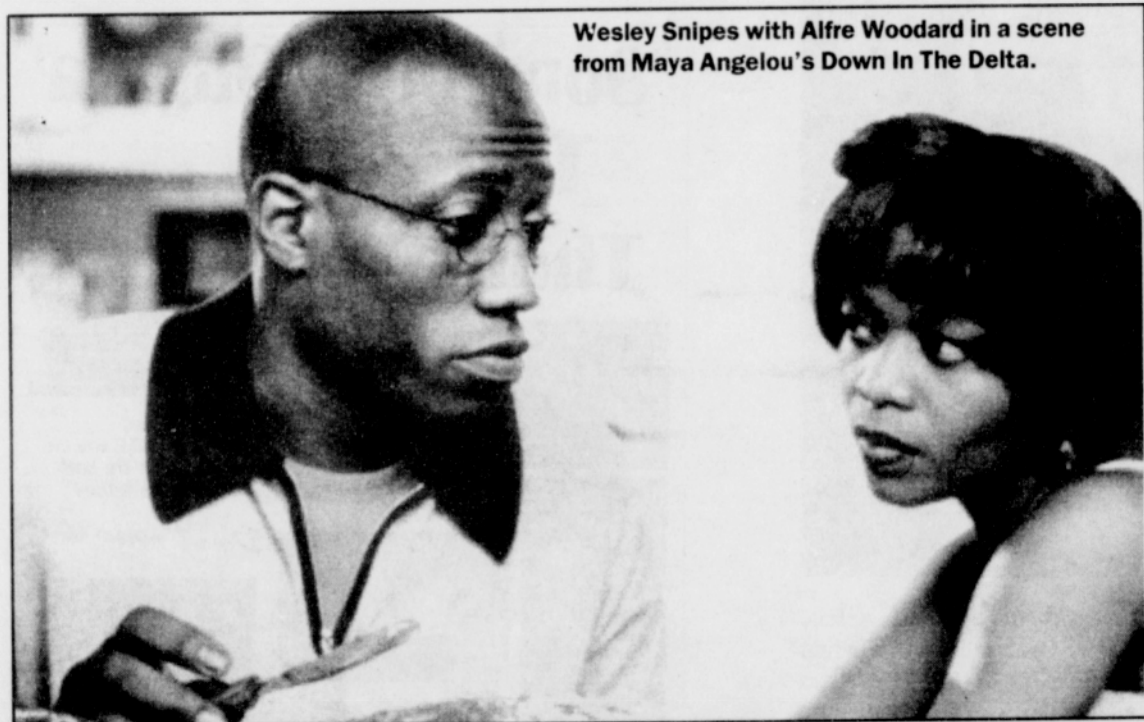


# Down In the Delta



Wesley Snipes with Alfre Woodard in a scene from Maya Angelou's *Down In The Delta*.

One of the pre-eminent literary voices of our time, Maya Angelou, transports the raw emotion, power and poetry of her storytelling to the motion-picture screen with *Down In The Delta*. In her career, Angelou has given voice to stories in song, dance, theater, prose, poetry and television; *Down In The Delta*, written by Myron Goble, marks her feature-length directing debut. Screened to audience and critical acclaim at the 1998 Urbanworld Film Festival, and soon to be seen in the 1998 Toronto Film Festival, Angelou's first film transports us into the same emotional territory that has been re-plendent throughout her body of work - most emphatically, the themes of love, struggle and redemption among family.

"The family is not only the cornerstone of a community, but the foundation upon which an individual stands and looks out upon the world," says Angelou. "A family has the power to heal as well as to damage, to strengthen and build up as well as to tear down. I have always been drawn to stories that affirm life-enhancing relationships. What better place to find those stories than within the structure of a family?"

She continues, "In all of my work, I try to tell the human truth - what it is like to be a human...what makes us stumble and fumble and fall and somehow miraculously rise and go on from darkness into light. The message of my life's work is that human beings are more alike than different. Every-

one in the world wants a good job, to be paid a little more than they're worth, to be loved and to accept love in return. Everyone wants safe streets and for children to be healthy. This is what drew me to *Down In The Delta*. It is a story of these very kind of human truths, a story to remind us that, as human beings, we are all more alike than different."

Both emotional and riveting, *Down In The Delta* is a story where big city meets small town, young meet old, parents reconnect with children, and life for everyone becomes something they never expected. The film opens in Chicago, where Loretta (Alfre Woodard) lives with her mother and two children.

Loretta is headed down a destructive path as she succumbs to the drug and alcohol-ridden streets of her neighborhood. In efforts to pull her daughter and grandchildren (newcomers Mpho Koaho and Kulani Hassen) out of harm's way, Loretta's mother Rosa Lynn (Mary Alice) pawns her most valuable and prized family heirloom, a candelabra known as "Nathan," and moves the family back to their ancestral home in the Mississippi Delta. From there, *Down In The Delta* unfolds as a lyrical ode to the notions of family, responsibility and pride in one's ancestry.

When Myron Goble, a first-time screenwriter and Georgia native, wrote *Down In The Delta*, his work was honored with a Nicholl Fellowship Award. The subsequent journey to bring the project to the screen

was a collaborative effort involving a gifted team of producers and film industry professional. Goble's work initially caught the eye of Terri Farnworth, a development executive at actor-producer Wesley Snipes' Amen-Ra Films.

Farnworth called the script to the attention of Snipes and Amen-Ra producer Victor McGauley. An option on the screenplay was then purchased by the prestigious Chris/Rose Production team of Bob Christiansen and Rick Rosenberg. Together, this gifted group, along with producer Reuben Cannon joined forces to produce *Down In The Delta*.

The next step was finding a director who could translate the richness and humanity of Goble's work to the screen. Cannon had one such voice in mind - Dr. Maya Angelou. His idea met with unanimous approval, and Cannon, Christiansen, Rosenberg and Goble journeyed to the author's home in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, to present the work. "Down In The Delta is a story about women, and the experiences of black women in particular. If there is anybody who has an understanding of what the experience is to be both a woman and black, it is Maya Angelou," says Snipes. "Her life has been such a hodgepodge of everything - she is a true maverick. We knew she would have the sensibility to direct the film, and that she is successful in everything she ever does."

## What To Watch

### Top Ten Movies &

#### Weekend Gross

- |                                     |                               |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 Star Trek: Insurrection<br>\$22.4 | 8 Babe: Pig in the City \$1.8 |
| 2 A Bug's Life \$11.0               | 9 Meet Joe Black \$1.6        |
| 3 Jack Frost \$7.0                  | 10 Elizabeth \$1.3            |
| 4 Enemy of the State \$6.6          |                               |
| 5 The Rugrats Movie \$4.5           |                               |
| 6 The Waterboy \$4.3                |                               |
| 7 Psycho \$3.8                      |                               |



Also check out *You've Got Mail*, starring Tom Hanks & Meg Ryan

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