



Halle Berry is on the comeback trail as a mixed martial arts fighter and protective mother in "Bruised," a movie that she also makes her debut as the film's director.

Actress Turns to Directing

Halle Berry shows multiple talents

By DWIGHT BROWN

After the American Black Film Festival named actress-turned-director Halle Berry its official ambassador this year, Berry proudly showcased her directorial debut in "Bruised."

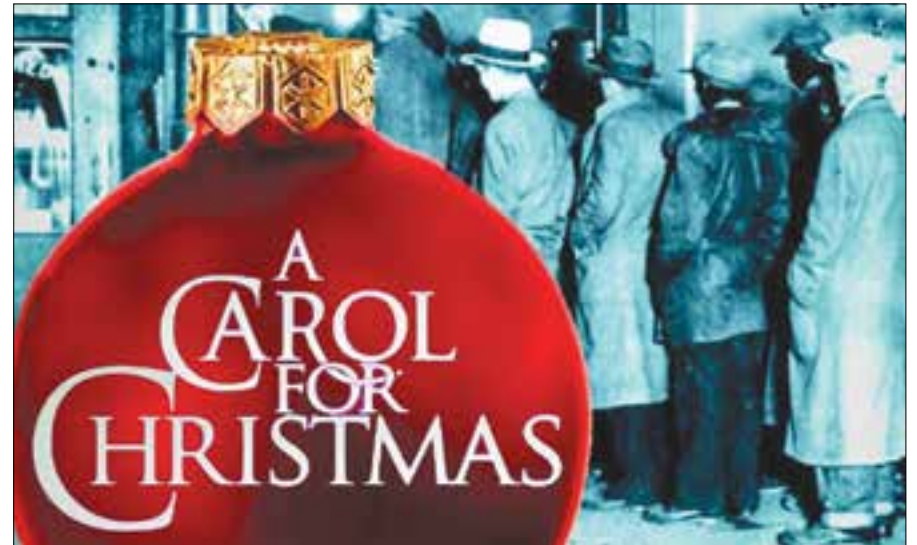
Berry plays Ultimate Fighting Championship legend Jackie Justice as the former New Jersey mixed martial arts fighter and protective mother embarks on a comeback. It's a lot of challenges for the character to digest and a lot of plot devices for an audience to believe. Yet that's what's on the pages of the cliché script (Michelle Rosenfarb) that Berry uses as a blueprint.

It's like Berry's skills behind the cam-

era are a work in progress. In front of the lens, she is a virtuoso. No noticeable makeup, glamor or her trademark sexiness. She looks her age (55), and her face appears as weathered as that of any pugilist who wears her profession's bruises and scars with pride. She gets angry, sad, lost and loving—always playing the emotions deep. Her best acting is reserved for the ring. Body blows, punches and chokes holds—she makes it look like Justice is fighting for her life.

Says Jackie to Buddy. "I have to figure my life out... I have to do it on my own." Similarly, Berry seems very motivated to pursue her goals as a director and shows great promise. She's got it. Netflix audiences will be impressed.

Dwight Brown is a film critic for the National Newspaper Publishers Association, the Black Press USA.



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