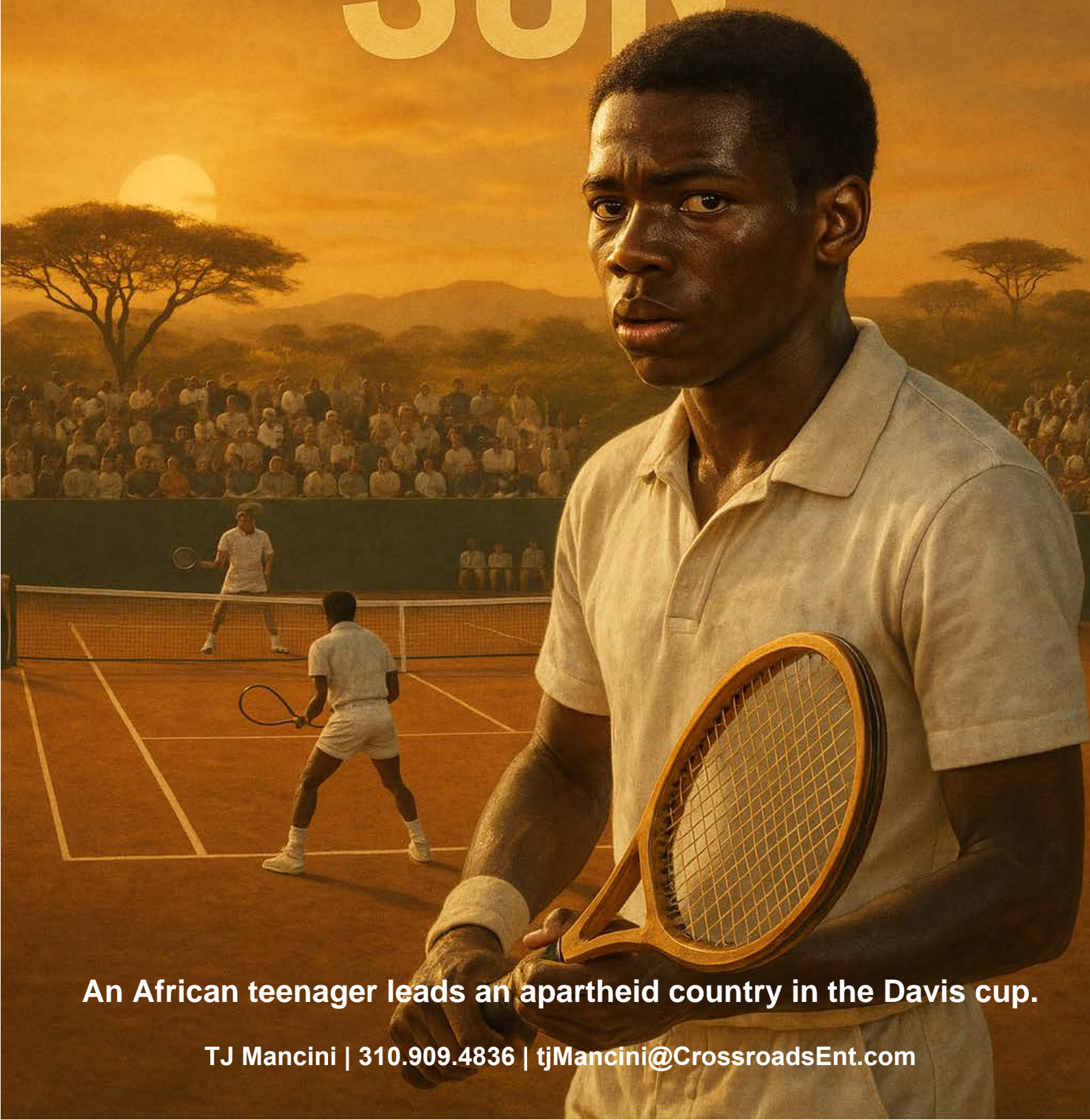


AFRICAN SON



An African teenager leads an apartheid country in the Davis cup.

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‘African Son’

Based on a true story

Project Summary

Genre: Sports/Biography/Drama

Logline: A teenager from Zimbabwe becomes the first black tennis player to represent an African apartheid nation and leads his country in the Davis Cup.

Story: Set in the tennis world of Zimbabwe in the 1980s. For a century, the people of Zimbabwe were divided by skin color and dominated politically, socially, and economically by a minority white population under the apartheid system. The idea that a black African could become a national tennis hero was inconceivable.

PATRICK MLAUZI (11) and his family live in abject poverty in Bulawayo City, Zimbabwe. His mother died when he was five. Patrick’s father, TOM MLAUZI (50), works long hours as a servant for a white family and is rarely home. Patrick is forced to parent TITO, his brother, and three younger siblings. They deal with soldiers, peddlers, and neighborhood bullies. Patrick hustles, grows up fast, and keeps his struggling family together.

Patrick meets destiny when his father hands him a used wooden tennis racket. He falls in love with tennis but quickly learns the game is for whites only in his country. He finds a way to keep playing with the help of VALERIE COHEN (30), a fierce fighter for tennis equality in the townships.

PIKISWA NDEBELE (10), eventual girlfriend, encourages Patrick to enroll at the Founders School, an elite white school known for tennis. Founders coach and ex-marine, DOUG BUCHANAN (30), builds Patrick into a champion the hard way. At 13, Patrick wins both the boys’ and men’s championships on the same day. Patrick’s heart and warrior mentality catches the eye of LARRY KATZ (40), a white Jewish coach and ex-Wimbledon tennis player. He mentors Patrick to become a member on Zimbabwe’s Davis Cup team.

However, the true nemesis is the faceless Zimbabwe Tennis Association. Many of the members retain the apartheid mindset and deny black African players rightful passage to the international stage. They refuse Patrick a place on the Davis Cup team. BASIL KATZ (70), Larry’s father, challenges the association and demands that Patrick play in the tournament. Apartheid must end and it will end on that tennis court. At 17, Patrick becomes the first black African to represent Zimbabwe in the Davis Cup against Nigeria. A continent watches as he makes history, not just for Zimbabwe but for all of Africa.

Characters:

PATRICK MLAUZI (11-17): Head of the family since age five, driven to excel at tennis, Davis Cup hopeful. (Ibrahima Gueye, Maxwell Simba, J.D. McCrary, Alex Hibbert)

TOM MLAUZI (50): Live-in servant, tortured by the absence from his family. (Mahershala Ali, Denzel Washington, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Djimon Hounsou)

VALERIE COHEN (30): White, benevolent, fierce fighter for tennis equality in townships. (Emma Stone, Saoirse Ronan, Emily Blunt, Hailey Benett)

LARRY KATZ (40): Enigmatic coach for Davis Cup, ex-Wimbledon player. (Chris Hemsworth, Channing Tatum)

DOUG BUCHANAN (30): White, ex-marine, hard-as-nails tennis coach who builds Patrick into a champion. (John Krasinski, Richard Madden)

BASIL KATZ (70): Larry’s father, ex-Wimbledon player, fights inequity in the Zimbabwe Tennis Association. (Gary Oldman, Stellan Skarsgard, Hugh Grant)

Directors: Denzel Washington, Reginald Hudlin, Danny Boyle, Steve McQueen, Shaka King, Theodore Melfi