

“Uncle Drew”

By Helen Lutz

It’s funny to think about the various stages of life. I remember being really young conversing with my mother about being old. I just couldn’t imagine living beyond the age of 40. She just smiled and assured me that I would probably change my mind someday. She was right.



The new basketball movie “Uncle Drew” brings to life the statement that “You don’t stop playing because you get old. You get old because you stop playing.” Dax (Lil Rey Howery) loves the sport of basketball. He was one of the star players in school until his game-winning shot was blocked by his nemesis Mookie (Nick Kroll). Losing his nerve Dax now works at Foot Locker dreaming of what could have been and what could still be.

Harlem hosts a street basketball tournament each year in Rucker Park with a substantial prize. Dax invests all his cash into entering, fielding and coaching a winning team lead by an awesome player, Casper (Aaron Gordon of the Orlando Magic). He makes promises, like expensive shoes from Foot Locker, which his checkbook (and charge card) has problems keeping. Just his luck, Mookie shows up taking his team, his girlfriend (Tiffany Haddish) and the shoes.

While in the barber shop Dax hears stories of Uncle Drew (Kyrie Irving of the Celtics). Back in the 1970’s Uncle Drew and his team were the stars of the Rucker and then mysteriously disappeared. Rumor has it that Uncle Drew still shows up from time-to-time to teach the “young bloods” a thing or two. Dax is intrigued and goes in search of the illusive Uncle Drew finding him on a neighborhood court; the young bloods have a good time teasing the septuagenarian. However, when Uncle Drew challenges their star to a one-on-one; he shows he still has a move or two ... or three, or four...

Convinced that Uncle Drew holds the solution to his team problems, Dax asks Uncle Drew to head up his team. Drew makes it perfectly clear that it won’t be Dax’s team, but Uncle Drew’s team and the road trip is on. Joining Uncle Drew in his retro van the two take off to build a team but not without conflict regarding the choice of tunes and temperature; it’s Drew’s van so Uncle Drew rules. First stop is finding Preacher (Chris Webber) whose lovely wife Betty Lou (WNBA star Lisa Leslie) has no intention of letting him go on any road trip or messing with any basketball team and has a baseball bat to enforce it. Next stop on the trip is Lights (Reggie Miller) who thinks he can still shoot in spite of being practically blind. Boots (Nate Robinson) is another sought after team member who hasn’t had a hair cut or been out of his wheelchair for years. Final member is the Big Fella (Shaquille O’Neal) who has a long time bone to pick with Uncle Drew.

Director Charles Stone III delivers humor and silliness as these old timers show the young bloods a thing or two as they are all about teamwork, friendship, family and playing the game for love of the game – Dax has a thing or two to learn. On a scale of one to four Hart Beats I give “Uncle Drew” ... TWO HARTS. It’s predictable, it’s silly, and it’s a feel good story; and seeing Shaq in his gaping hospital gown just adds to the fun.