

Queen Latifah, Common, Paula Patton Are Just Short of ‘Just Wright’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on May 16, 2010 - 2:18pm

- [Bobby Simmons](#) [2]
- [Common](#) [3]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [4]
- [Just Wright](#) [5]
- [Movie Review](#) [6]
- [NBA](#) [7]
- [New Jersey Nets](#) [8]
- [Pam Grier](#) [9]
- [Patrick McDonald](#) [10]
- [Paula Patton](#) [11]
- [Phylicia Rashad](#) [12]
- [Queen Latifah](#) [13]



Rating: **3.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – Romantic comedies are a roving beast in the Movie Zone, one that can never be captured properly time after time, yet never dies either. Queen Latifah and the rapper Common put an interesting and necessary twist on the genre, but still cannot help but fall back on the recurring rom-com clichés that eventually undermines the new film “Just Wright.”

Common is NBA superstar Scott McKnight, guiding the New Jersey Nets towards the playoffs. Queen Latifah is Leslie Wright (as in “Just...”), a physical therapist and rabid Nets who just happens to “meet cute” Scott at a gas station after a game. This leads to an invitation to his birthday party – happens all the time – and Leslie brings her best friend Morgan (Paula Patton) to the celebration.

Morgan has made it her quest to marry an NBA player. She sees her opportunity in McKnight at his party and makes her move, leaving Leslie in the lurch. Scott and Morgan’s relationship blossoms, all the way to engagement, but a wrench is thrown just as the couple finalize their plans.



Triangle Offense: Paula Patton as Morgan, Queen Latifah as Leslie and Common as Scott in ‘Just Wright’
Photo Credit: David Lee for © Fox Searchlight Pictures

McKnight injures his knee in the NBA All-Star game, a seemingly season-ending blow to Nets run to the playoffs. But primarily his engagement falls apart, because Morgan suddenly doesn’t want damaged goods. The one positive element of the situation is that she hooked up Leslie to

run Scott's physical therapy before walking out on him. It is up to the sunny and positive force of Leslie's aura to bring Scott back to the game, while at the same time developing a chemistry that leads to stronger feelings between them.

What makes this story work initially is simply how different it is, especially up against the other romantic comedy situations. Essentially this world of professional sports, and the pressure to keep up the success, is handled honestly within the sincerity of the characters. This is another universe for most people, even the fans of the game, and the essential quality that surrounds the scenario feels probable.

Queen Latifah is a movie star, and develops a good relationship with all of her fellow players. Common's character connects with her in their first scene together, which makes their later therapy sessions take on a condition of slow seduction. Common is a bit too low keyed at points, but his NBA player could be just shy, to allow Leslie to bring out the other elements of his personality.

Where the film doesn't work is in Paula Patton's Morgan character. The actress, so engaging in the recent film "Precious," doesn't have enough material to explain her on-again, off-again approach to the relationship with McKnight and is thrown to the wolves in her attempt to generate conflict towards the end.



Common Goes A'Courtin': Basketball Action in 'Just Wright'
Photo Credit: David Lee for © Fox Searchlight Pictures

And that conflict is where the story breaks down. The coming together and coming apart that Scott and Leslie go through are the mechanical gears of every romantic situation in these types of films, and the narrative didn't have to go there. There were so many other rich subplots – the basketball, the injury and the potential for a comeback. Why do the same thing when there are other options?

In the end, Just Wright joins the romantic comedy club as just another nothing-seems-real journey into the Movie Zone, submitted for another tiresome circular run around the same track and field.

"Just Wright" opens everywhere May 14th. Featuring Queen Latifah, Common, Paula Patton, James Pickens, Jr., Phylicia Rashad and Pam Grier, written by Michael Elliott and directed by Sanaa Hamri, Rated "PG"



[14]

By [PATRICK McDONALD](#) [15]
Senior Staff Writer
HollywoodChicago.com
pat@hollywoodchicago.com [14]

© 2010 Patrick McDonald, HollywoodChicago.com

Source URL (retrieved on Apr 24 2024 - 7:52pm):

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/10682/queen-latifah-common-paula-patton-are-just-short-of-just-wright>

Links:

[1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/hankq>

[2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/bobby-simmons>

[3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/common>
[4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/hollywoodchicagocom-content>
[5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/just-wright>
[6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/review.html>
[7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/nba>
[8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/new-jersey-nets>
[9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/pam-grier>
[10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/patrick-mcdonald>
[11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/paula-patton>
[12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/phylicia-rashad>
[13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/movie-review/queen-latifah>
[14] <mailto:pat@hollywoodchicago.com>
[15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#PAT>