

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Harrella Goodwin To Release Second Film Featuring All-Local Cast

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*The Best Choice* is about a man, living in New York City, coming home to St. Croix in search of a woman, because he wants an island woman. -- Harrella Goodwin on her upcoming film, *The Best Choice*

Harrella Goodwin -- the name is ubiquitous in almost every circle in the Virgin Islands. Known as the pioneer of Gospel music in the territory, Harrella has once more broken new ground -- her foray into film.

Harrella intends to turn the tides of the film industry in the USVI beginning with her second feature film, *The Best Choice*, which boasts an all-local cast, including former St.

Croix Avis reporter, Wyndi Ambrose and model, Rhea Jenkins, among others.

*VI Consortium* caught up with Harrella to learn more about her new film, why she decided to venture into an industry in which she had no prior experience, and what her future plans are for film production.

But first, we take a step back to examine how it all began.

Harrella says 2012's *The Root of All Evil* was her first feature release; however, she says a film she calls *Journey* was her first true effort.

"But I didn't go anywhere with that," she said of *Journey*. "So, [*The Best Choice*] is actually my third movie."

"I write scripts. I would sit down, take something and just put it into a story," Harrella explained as her start into film making. "I said to myself, you know, 'Why not put this into a movie'."

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I mean, you have a dream and a vision, sometimes that's what happens. You got to push yourself because sometimes nobody pushes you.

Harrella's path to success, even as it is still unfolding, hasn't been an easy one, but the journey has been blessed by her God. Calling herself a born-again Christian and placing her faith on Him for strength to endure through difficulty.



Gospel recording artist turned filmmaker, Harrella

Goodwin

That reliance on God came into play while filming *The Root of all Evil*, which Harrella says had many false starts because either those in her production crew had to leave the island or had become too busy to continue. As a result, the movie sat idle for two years.

Then, Harrella said she heard from God.

"I'm laying down and I hear the Lord say, 'Get up and do it yourself.' And I'm thinking to myself, 'I don't have the first clue of how I must film it', she confessed. "I mean, I have an idea of what I want, but not to film it. [Nonetheless] I did get up. It was 11:55 p.m., and I got up and went to Google. I searched for, 'How can a dummy make their own movie'."

From there, Harrella began learning how to make films. She even sacrificed her mortgage payment for one month to buy a video camera in St. Thomas. That decision would lead the multi-talented artist to where she is today.

Her mother, Dr. Virginia Ventura, herself a stalwart in the community and founder of Miracle Revival Deliverance Tabernacle, which she still leads today, had a brand-new Mac computer that was not in use. And although her mother warned her not to touch it, Harrella commenced work on the machine that very night.

"I stayed on [computer] until morning. I learned that Mac computer, I learned how to download and edit. [And] I learned how to do all of that in one week."

And I always tell people you don't have to be jealous because somebody else is doing something; you do what you do best, and as you go along and ask God to help, he helps you.

Harrella said she began studying movies and watched carefully what directors did, and with some tips from Oscar Williams, a Hollywood producer, the singer said she was well on her way to releasing her first production.

Yet, it was not something that she planned.

"It just happened. I never, ever thought about filming anything myself. I wanted to put my script into movie, [but] because of the fact [my camera man] had to go away, that pushed me. I mean, you have a dream and a vision, sometimes that's what happens. You got to push you."



*The Best Choice* cover art

"I never even knew that I had this talent in me. Never. Not until God told me 'get up and do it yourself.' And so we've got hidden talents in us. And I always tell people, you don't have to be jealous because somebody else is doing something; you do what you do best, and as you go along and ask God to help, he helps you," Harrella said.

About her upcoming film, *The Best Choice*, Harrella said: "We make choices every day, every second, every minute. You make a choice whether to get up out of your bed,

whether to go take a shower -- you make choices. You make choices whether to go down the road, or to go to a restaurant, you get a menu [and] you make a choice. Do I want to be a vegan, do I want to eat meat -- you know, these are the choices that we make.

"But *The Best Choice* is about a man living in New York City, who comes home to St. Croix in search of a woman -- because he wants an island woman. I know some people who do that. So, his father had given him an offer, and he agreed to the offer but he said, in the meantime, I'm going to look me a [Caribbean] woman," she explained.

Harrella said if viewers really pay attention to the film, almost everything in it has to do with choices.

"Relationships, family, they all have to do with choices," she said.

As a longtime Gospel recording artist, Harrella has only sang about her faith. However, *VI Consortium* wanted to know if she would remain on the same path with film or if new ideas would be explored outside of Christianity.

Harrella says there would be no vying off course.

"Anybody else who wants to do movies, they can do what they want, but my convictions remain my convictions," Harrella affirmed. "And [my films] will always be religious-based movies."

She added: "Whether it is issues we're dealing with right now, or political issues, it will bring you right back to [faith]. So we could talk about it, but the base will be all about God."

*The Right Choice* will have its first showing during a "Dinner and a Movie" event held upstairs at 2+2 Nightclub, on Friday, March 6 beginning at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$20 at the door.

"This is actually going to be a more intimate setting, where you can let me know how you feel about the movie, and you'll also have an opportunity to meet the cast," Harrella said.

The event will be broadcast live on 103.5 FM, from 6 p.m. through 7 p.m.

On March 22, the movie will be shown at Caribbean Cinema in Sunny Isle at 5 p.m. and at 7 p.m. on March 23. It will be released on DVD about one week after the showings.