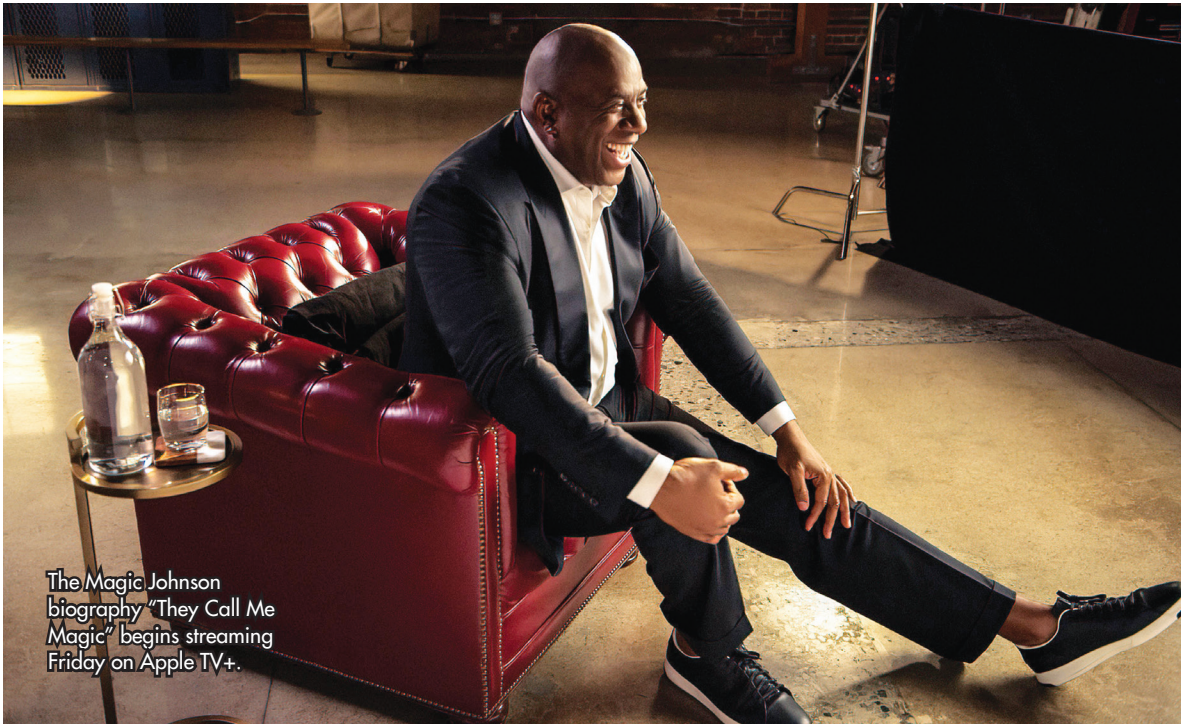


coverstory

BY JAY BOBBIN

Magic Johnson tells his own story in Apple TV+ documentary series



The Magic Johnson biography "They Call Me Magic" begins streaming Friday on Apple TV+.

Over 60-plus years, through personal and professional triumphs and setbacks, his life has been Magic. And often very public.

With contributions from relatives and friends, Earvin "Magic" Johnson tells his story in "They Call Me Magic," a four-part Apple TV+ documentary series that begins streaming Friday, April 22. The program traces his legendary, numerous-record-setting career with basketball's Los Angeles Lakers, which saw him retire upon disclosing his HIV-positive diagnosis, but he returned to the team later as a coach and then as a player again – and then as the Lakers' president of basketball operations.

"People had come to me before and wanted to do something," Johnson says of making the profile, "but I felt the timing wasn't right. Then (the ESPN/Netflix documentary) 'The Last Dance' happened and everybody just said, 'Hey, you've got to do yours.' And I was ready for it. I got a great partner in Apple. I think that this is an amazing journey that I've been on, and we're going to tell that story."

Johnson also has made marks as a media personality and a business entrepreneur, the latter making him an owner of the Los Angeles Dodgers, an insurance company and the cable network Aspire. He believes he shows other athletes how to "reinvent yourself," reasoning that "if

you can remember all those plays ... you're smart enough to really go into being a businessman or a businesswoman."

However, Johnson accepts his health also is a major part of his history. He reflects, "What I tried to do is ask my doctors, 'What do I have to do to be able to live for a long time?' Everything that they told me – take my meds, have a positive attitude, work out – I did those things. And then, (I also had to) be comfortable with my new status. I think that was the main thing. I was giving up the game that I love in basketball, and that was hard for me to do.

"I think at the end of the day, I've done everything the right way. The most important thing, why I'm probably still here, is because of my support system: my wife, Cookie, my kids, my parents, my brothers and sisters.

Still, Johnson notes that in reviewing his life as "They Call Me Magic" was being made, "You always look at it differently. I mean, I've lived it. Whether that was winning championships or crying when (former Lakers owner) Dr. Jerry Buss was dying, whether it was announcing HIV, whether that's when I opened movie theaters in the Black community – it brought back some incredible memories for me to do this documentary. And I'm so proud of it."

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