

Undefeated

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said, we never shy away from the race and class dynamics that are very prevalent in the film. I would hope that after being emotionally drawn into the human aspect of the story, the film can inspire a greater dialogue about the serious divide between the haves and have-nots in this country, as well as looking at the ties between race and class and how they affect each other.

KW: How do you feel about the possibility of becoming the first black director to win an Academy Award?

TJM: First and foremost I'm extremely honored for such recognition. At the same time, I would have a hard time claiming such an achievement since I'm half black. My experience navigating the world is night and day different than that of someone whose parents are both Black. I personally, identify much more with being mixed race. It would be hard for me to accept such an achievement without also acknowledging my Native American, Scandinavian, Chinese and Jewish roots as well! I definitely think it warrants a greater conversation. I wonder if there's some kind of designation for being the first mixed race director to win for best documentary? Probably not.

KW: Is there any question no one ever asks you, that you wish someone would?

TJM: Do you identify as being Black?

KW: The Tasha Smith question: Are you ever afraid?

TJM: Yes, all of the time. Every time I reach a new stage in my career or in my life, I'm completely terrified!

KW: The Columbus Short question: Are you happy?

TJM: Good question. I'm not sure I can quantify happiness.

KW: The Teri Emerson question: When was the last time you had a good laugh?

TJM: When I saw that I was nominated for an Academy Award.

KW: What is your guiltiest pleasure?

TJM: Not sure I can put it in print.

KW: The bookworm Troy Johnson question: What was the last book you read?

TJM: Norwegian Wood by Haruki Murakami.

KW: The music maven Heather Covington question: What was the last song you listened to?

TJM: Can't answer it. I have music playing all of the time. It's continuous.

KW: What is your favorite dish to cook?

TJM: A little stir fry that I like to call "World's Famous." No one else thinks it's famous, let alone good.

KW: Dante Lee, author of "Black Business Secrets," asks: What was the best business decision you ever made, and what was the worst?

TJM: The one thing I'm really bad at is making money. I think my best business decision is still to come and I'm sure my worse will follow shortly after. [Chuckles]

On TV: Black History

Sharon Malone will star in the upcoming 90-minute PBS documentary "Slavery by Another Name." The wife of U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, Dr. Malone tells the heartbreaking story of her uncle Henry, one of thousands of Black men pulled back into a forced labor system in which they were arrested – largely on trumped up charges – and compelled to work without pay as prisoners.

With Laurence Fishburne narrating and Sam Pollard directing, "Slavery by Another Name," premieres Monday, Feb. 13, 2012 at 9 p.m. ET on PBS.

The film is based on the eye-opening book by Douglas A. Blackmon, which exposes a part of American history that most folks

either had no clue existed, or didn't know existed to the extent that it did. Prisoners were virtually sold to private parties – like plantation owners or corporations – and the practice was tolerated by both the North and South, but largely ignored by the U.S. Justice Department.

"I want people to understand that this is not something that's divorced and separate, and this doesn't have anything to do with them," Dr. Malone told EURweb at the Television Critics Association press tour last week. "If you were a black person who grew up in the South, some way or the other – whether or not you were directly involved in the system as my uncle was – you knew somebody who was, or your daily lives were circumscribed by those circumstances."



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