

Ealy

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series, Common Law. Since it's a cop series revolving around black and white partners, it sounds a little like Psych, which is also on the USA Network?

ME: [Chuckles] It's nothing like Psych. It's an action comedy about two detectives who are really good at what they do. But they have different approaches to the work and to life in general, and that creates conflict and bickering and fights, sometimes. What happens is that their captain decides to send them to couples' counseling in order to keep them together, because they always get their man. They basically just need a little help in getting along. What makes it funny is that the characters end up having a lot of the same issues as the married couples they're in therapy with.

KW: Editor/legist Patricia Turnier asks: If you weren't acting, what career path would you have chosen?

ME: I'd have been a teacher.

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

ME: Wow! That's a good question. [Pauses to reflect] I'm sure there is, but I don't know what that question is right now. [Chuckles]

KW: If you can come up with a good generic question I can ask everybody, I'll call it the Michael Ealy question.

ME: If you don't mind, I'm going to give that some thought and I'll send you one later. I really will.

KW: Much appreciated! The Tasha Smith

question: Are you ever afraid?

ME: Sometimes, yeah.

KW: The Columbus Short question: Are you happy?

ME: Yeah.

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

ME: A couple of days ago.

KW: What is your guiltiest pleasure?

ME: Ooh, sweets.

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

ME: The Power of Now by Eckhart Tolle.

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

ME: An old school classic they played on a radio show I was on earlier today. Sorry, I can't recall the name of the tune.

KW: What is your favorite dish to cook?

ME: I love breakfast. I can make a mean omelet.

KW: The Sanaa Lathan question: What excites you?

ME: Passion, ambition and talent.

KW: The Uduak Oduok question: Who is your favorite clothes designer?

ME: [Laughs] Man, I could get in trouble if I answer that one.

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

ME: [LOL] When I bought my house in L.A., that was the best business decision I



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ever made, until the housing market crashed, and it became the worst business decision I ever made.

KW: When you look in the mirror, what do you see?

ME: I'm aging.

KW: If you could have one wish instantly granted, what would that be for?

ME: Healing for the people in my family with medical problems. Definitely... definitely...

KW: The Kerry Washington question: If you were an animal, what animal would you be?

ME: A lion!

KW: The Ling-Ju Yen question: What is your earliest childhood memory?

ME: My third birthday party.

KW: The Melissa Harris-Perry question: How did your first big heartbreak impact who you are as a person?

ME: This is such a great question. For me, my first big heartbreak is actually sports-related. My senior year, I became the starting wide-receiver on my nationally-ranked, high school football team as a walk-on. We have a good season, make it to the playoffs, and are on the verge of three-peaking as state champs, when the coach decides to go to a two tight-end offense which suddenly makes me a non-factor. Then, the team went out and got spanked on our home field. I'll never forget how I cried after the game, because I'd been denied the opportunity to help the team in the championship game, even though I had played a big role up to that point. It was like the coach forgot what had gotten us there. So, I never got to hold the trophy or savor a state championship. And I'll never forget that first bitter heartbreak. I remember feeling devastated and going to church the next Sunday. My mom spoke to the pastor about it and, from the pulpit, he asked the congregation to pray for me. That did make me feel better, like I wasn't alone. That was my first heartbreak. So, to answer your question, my first heartbreak devastated me, but it was the support of my family and my second family, my church family, that helped me understand that it wasn't my fault, and that everything was going to be alright. That helped me tremendously later in life because in this business, as you surely know, Kam, there are a lot of things beyond your control.

KW: The Judyth Piazza question: What key quality do you believe all successful people share?

ME: [Reflects for a long time before responding] I'd say two qualities: perseverance, because you can not be successful without confronting rejection and, second, studying. You have to know your craft. I find that most people who are very, very

successful know their craft and have done the research.

KW: Two Pastor Alex Kendrick questions: When do you feel the most content?

KW: Between "Action!" and "Cut!"

KW: Secondly: What do you wish other people would note about you?

KW: That I don't think as highly of myself as some people make me out to be. I am so far from arrogant, because I have been through enough to know that everything can go away in a moment. You know, I really don't understand why anyone would want to put me on a pedestal.

KW: Bernadette also asks: What is your favorite charity?

ME: I have a number of charities I work with. I'm a big advocate of two in New York City, the Urban Arts Partnership and the Harlem's Children's Zone. What Geoffrey Canada has built in Harlem is something special. Honestly, he's a hero of mine in a lot of ways. Really!

KW: I've tried to interview him, but have never been able to get him on the phone. Can you hook me up?

ME: Yes, that man's very, very hard to get in touch with. But he's a good friend, so I may be able to help.

KW: What advice do you have for anyone who wants to follow in your footsteps?

ME: Study your craft, first. Then explore the business side.

If you can commit to mastering both, then you're ready to pursue acting as a living. I really want people to understand that you can't take shortcuts.

KW: The Tavis Smiley question: How do you want to be remembered?

ME: One of my heroes is Mr. Sidney Poitier. In his autobiography, "The Measure of a Man," he talks about the difference between being a great person and being a great actor. I'm happiest when I'm acting, and I've dedicated my life to it. Still, as much as I love acting, at the end of the day, I want to be remembered as a great person, first, and as a great actor, second. I believe that acting is a talent while being a great person encompasses so much more: being a good father, a good husband and the ability to show compassion for others. There's nothing more rewarding than making a difference doing charity work or being able to be there for a friend.

KW: Thanks again for the interview, Michael. It's been an honor. Good luck with Think Like a Man and with Common Law.

ME: Thank you, Kam. This was special. Your questions were phenomenal. A lot of people clearly don't do the same amount of preparation as you. So, I really appreciate it.

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