

## Michael Ealy: 'Think Like a Man' Interview

**Kam Williams**  
Special To *The Skanner News*

**B**orn in Silver Spring, Maryland on Aug. 3, 1973, Michael Ealy majored in English at the University of Maryland before heading to New York City where he performed in several stage productions, including the off-Broadway hits "Joe Fearless" and "Whoa Jack." After finding his breakout screen role as Ricky Nash in "Barbershop" and "Barbershop 2," Michael rapidly rose through the ranks as one of Hollywood's emerging young actors.

Since then, he's starred opposite Kate Beckinsale in "Underworld Awakening" and opposite Matt Dillon, Idris Elba and Hayden Christensen in the action flick "Takers," and he was personally picked by Will Smith to play his younger brother in "Seven Pounds." He's also portrayed a Buffalo Soldier in the Spike Lee World War II epic "Miracle at St. Anna," and appeared in "For Colored Girls" with Kimberly Elise, Janet Jackson, Thandie Newton, Whoopi Goldberg and Phylicia Rashad.

On television, Michael is set to co-star in the new detective series, "Common Law," which debuts on the USA Network on May 11. His other TV credits include stints on "The Good Wife," "Californication" and "FlashForward." As for accolades, a stellar performance on the Showtime miniseries "Sleeper Cell" earned him a Golden Globe nomination.

In addition, he was cast by Oprah Winfrey to star opposite Halle Berry in the made-for-TV movie "Their Eyes Were Watching God," landing the first of his three NAACP Image Award nominations for his sterling performance in the picture. Here, he talks about playing Dominic in his latest picture,

"Think Like a Man," Steve Harvey's battle-of-the-sexes comedy which is currently number one at the box office.

**Kam Williams:** Hi Michael, thanks for the time.

**Michael Ealy:** Hey, Kam, how's it going, dude?

**KW:** Great, thanks. What interested you in "Think Like a Man?"

**ME:** Honestly, it was the first romantic comedy that I liked. I'd kind of avoided them for awhile because I never felt that any of them were really smart enough. But when I read this script, I genuinely fell in love with the characters, especially my own.

'Yes, the cast is predominantly African-American, but color is never really an issue in the film'

So, I just wanted to be a part of it.

**KW:** Harriet Pakula Teweles asks: How flattering or unflattering to the image of the black male are the "types" that the actors are asked to portray in this film?

**ME:** That's another great thing about this picture. Yes, the cast is predominantly African-American, but color is never really an issue in the film. It's rarely brought up since, at the end of the day, these guys are going through universal relationship issues that anybody can relate to. So, while the characters like "The non-committer," "The Player," and "The Dreamer" might be recognizable as common stereotypes, color isn't involved.

**KW:** Attorney Bernadette Beekman asks: Did you do any preparation for your role as



Ealy, right, starred in Spike Lee's 'Miracle at St. Anna' with Omar Benson Miller and Italian child actor Matteo Sciarbordi.

a food service worker by spending time in restaurants?

**ME:** The irony is that I spent five years as a waiter at a restaurant in New York City at the beginning of my acting career. So, I had a little bit of experience in food service. Fortunately, I didn't actually have to prepare anything on camera in the movie, which saved me from having to take any cooking classes. [Chuckles] But I always appreciate a good chef.

**KW:** How did your parents feel about your becoming a struggling actor after help putting you through college? Did they ever pressure you to abandon acting for a more practical profession?

**ME:** No. my parents, God bless 'em, were very supportive of me and my decision to pursue acting. Their dream for me and

my sister was that we graduate from college. And as soon as I fulfilled that, they were extremely supportive of what I wanted to do next. I will always be grateful to them for that, because I wouldn't be where I am today without their help and encouragement.

**KW:** How hard was it working with an ensemble cast with so many big stars? Was it hard to get a little elbow room to do your thing?

**ME:** No, it felt a lot like my first movie, "Barbershop," which was also an ensemble film, and which was also directed by Tim Story. So, it was sort of like a ten-year reunion.

**KW:** Tell me a little about your new TV

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