

Ejogo

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with. He was so willing to step back and let us do our work without feeling that he had to interfere and tell us what to do just for the sake of looking like a director. He had such confidence in himself. So, it wouldn't surprise me, if he's had experience outside of the business, because he has much deeper soul than that. Working with people troubled in that way could be great training for working with actors who themselves can be a little schizophrenic at times. [Laughs]

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

CE: Oh yeah. A lot. The great fear I've had to overcome, particularly this past year, is the fear of failure. It can be safer to stay in a comfort zone that's not stretching yourself. I tried to overcome that fear playing Sister. You have to be willing to be afraid, if you're going to be an artist.

KW: The Columbus Short question: Are you happy?

CE: Yes. I'm happier than I've been for a very long time, for all kinds of reasons. I'm glad my kids are happy. I'm grateful that my work is going well. I'm happy that this moment in my career arrived at this age, because I'm ready for it in a way that I might not have been at 20.

KW: What is your guiltiest pleasure?

CE: I don't have a lot of guilt.

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

CE: "Darwin's Cathedral." It's about evolution and religion and it's gonna serve me well for "Zero Hour," my new TV show that I start filming soon.

KW: I see that you'll also be starring opposite Tyler Perry in Alex Cross this fall.

CE: That's right! That's coming out in October. That was fun, too!

KW: What is your favorite dish to cook?

CE: I make a really delicious eggplant and squash curry that's inspired by Vij of Vij's Restaurant, a great chef and restaurateur in Vancouver. I like to cook that dish because it's really simple but the flavor is so pungent and intense that I feel like I'm a real chef whenever I create it.

KW: Harriet Pakula Teweles says: You've portrayed Coretta Scott King and Sally



Carmen Ejogo

Hemmings. She's wondering whether there's another historical figure you'd like to play in a biopic?

CE: I'd love to play Betty Davis, one of Miles Davis' wives. She was sort of like Madonna before there was a Madonna. I'd love to play a full-out rocking chick. Like a Sister 2.0.

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

CE: Leaving my first agent was both my best business decision and my worst business decision. It depends on how I want to look at my career because of opportunities that may have come had I stayed with him and because of the opportunities that did come because I had to fight harder for roles.

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

CE: Oh, my goodness me! [Chuckles] A mommy.

KW: How hard is it to balance working and parenting, giving that you and Jeffrey are both actors?

CE: It explains why I haven't been onscreen very much the last ten years. [Laughs] It's very hard. It's been getting easier as I give myself permission to work

again. It's all about my guilt level.

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

CE: That "Sparkle" is a huge hit! [LOL]

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

CE: Summers in Scotland when I was 3.

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

CE: That depends on how you define success. Success for me will be where the body of work I've done afforded me the opportunity to be as good as I can be, and to explore myself and to see what I'm capable of. People like that share a willingness to be scared and to take chances.

KW: The Rudy Lewis question: Who's at the top of your hero list?

CE: Oh man, it's so hard to answer that. In terms of dignitaries, Nelson Mandela's up there. In terms of artists, this will change, but I'm really into a performance artist named Marina Abramovic' right now.

KW: The Sanaa Lathan question: What

'The great fear I've had to overcome ... is the fear of failure'

excites you?

CE: My children.

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

CE: There's a lot of laughter in our house. I get their American/British sense of humor and they get my British sense of humor.

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

CE: Oh my! I'm a bit young to be asked that. [Laughs]

KW: Yes, you are. Sorry. Thanks again for the time, Carmen, and best of luck with "Sparkle."

CE: Thank you, Kam.



Carmen (left) stars as Grace and Maya Rudolph (right) as Verona in Sam Mendes' "Away We Go."

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