

Michael Clarke Duncan, RIP: The Final Interview

Michael Clarke Duncan (1957-2012) was born in Chicago where he was raised by a single-mom, before going from homeless to body-guard to aspiring actor to a Hollywood star. His career took off after delivering an Oscar-nomination performance in the pivotal role of gentle giant John Coffey in "The Green Mile."

The towering, 6'5" thespian's resume' reveals a long list of credits, including "Street Fighter: The Legend of Chun-Li," "The Last Mimzy" and "Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby." Among his other film credits are "The Island," "Daredevil," "The Scorpion King," "Planet of the Apes," "See Spot Run," "Bulworth," "The Whole Nine Yards," "Green Lantern" and "Armageddon."

Duncan also lent his distinctive, deep voice to such animated projects as "Kung Fu Panda," "Racing Stripes," "Brother Bear," "Delgo," "Dintopia: Curse of the Ruby Sunstone," "George of the Jungle 2," and both "Cats & Dogs" and "Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore."

His television credits included a lead role on "The Finder," and guest-starring roles on the hit shows "Two and a Half Men," "Chuck," "Family Guy," "The Jamie Foxx Show," "The Fresh Prince of Bel Air," "Weird Science," "Married With Children" and "The Wayans Bros."

I had the privilege of interviewing Bike Mike numerous times over the years. Below is our last chat, which took place in 2011. He leaves behind his beloved fiancée, the Reverend Omarosa Manigault, best known as a contestant on Donald Trump's reality show, "The Apprentice."

Kam Williams: Hi Michael, thanks so much for the time.

Michael Clarke Duncan: Hey,



CELEBRITY INTERVIEW

by Kam Williams

how're you doing, Kam?

KW: I'm fine, thanks. I think the last time we spoke was when you were doing The Island.

MCD: Man, that was a long time ago. But I remember that we share the same birthday. Isn't that right?

KW: Almost. Mine is December 11th; yours is the 10th. But I also have a few years on you.

MCD: That's alright. It's all in your mind.

KW: I have a lot of questions for you from fans, so why don't I jump right into them. Editor/Legist Patricia Turnier says: I think you're a great actor and you should have won the Academy Award when you were nominated for The Green Mile.

MCD: Thank you, Patricia. I have to admit that I agree with her. I think I should have won the Oscar and I believe The Green Mile should've won for Best Picture. It was the best movie made by anybody that year, hands down.

KW: Patricia asks: Is there a movie genre or type of role that you haven't had the opportunity to do that you would like to?

MCD: Yes, what I have not done is play the lead in a romantic comedy. I have a comedic side and I bet people would enjoy seeing me get the beautiful woman in the end. Something like that would definitely work.

KW: Patricia also asks: What advice can you give to young people who want to follow in your footsteps?

MCD: First off, have a plan. Know what you want to do, because if you don't know what you want to do, you'll get stuck. It's not as easy as people think. A lot of kids think they can just go to Hollywood and become an actor or actress. It's not that easy. There are millions of kids who come out here wanting to act. So, you have to have a plan, and you have to stick with that plan, because it's not going to be easy by any means. You're aware of that, Kam, because of all the degrees you have. You had to go to school and study. And aspiring actors need to take acting classes... know your craft inside and out... and get a job when you arrive in L.A. Don't depend on acting as your sole source of income. Work nights, so you can have your days off to attend auditions. Have something to fall back on. That's what my mother taught me, and it's critical in Hollywood.

KW: You play voice of Kilowog in Green Lantern. Did you ever have to be on the set for this role?

MCD: No, I was never on the set, Kam. Martin [Director Martin Campbell] had me in a studio in Burbank. He knew what he wanted and was very specific. He's an excellent director who really drives you and pushes you hard.

KW: Teresa Emerson wants to know whether you enjoy doing voiceover work.

MCD: Oh, of course you have to love it any time you can go to the studio in pajamas, and the only preparation you have to do is take a shower and brush your teeth. You don't even have to memorize your lines. The script is right there in front of you. So, yeah, I love voiceover work. It's right up there with acting.

KW: Harriet Pakula Teweles says: Because of your size, you are often cast in a role of "The Heavy." Since that is not the real you, how difficult is it to assume



Michael Clarke Duncan

that role?

MCD: It's kind of difficult, because once people enjoy you as "The Heavy," they want to see you as that all the time. And if you become pigeonholed, then there are only certain limited roles you can play. To help, I've trimmed my weight down to a solid 275 instead of being over 300 pounds.

KW: Judyth Piazza asks: What is the most important lesson that you have learned working in Hollywood?

MCD: Save your money. Save your money, because you could be very busy for a year, but then have the next one off. That's happened to me, but I put my money in the bank, Kam. I don't splurge. So, my best advice about working in Hollywood is: Save your money!

KW: Judyth also asks: If you could change one thing about Hollywood, what would it be?

MCD: How they do business. Kam, if you shake my hand and tell me we're going to do this or that project together, I'd believe

you. But when I first got to Hollywood, I'd believe all the people who'd tell me they were going to put me in a movie. And I still haven't heard back from a lot of them to this day. I don't like it when someone can look you in the eye and lie to you, or pretend that they're more than you.

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

MCD: [LOL] No, I just like answering the questions posed, because people can really come up with some off the wall stuff.

KW: What is your favorite dish to cook?

MCD: I made myself some pancakes this morning that were off the chain. I have to admit that I love pancakes and vegetarian meatloaf. I am a food connoisseur, although I don't eat pork. I'm lucky my girlfriend is a great chef, since eating is one of my favorite pastimes.

See DUNCAN on page 8

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SEATTLE 2012



If you have an event you want to share with the community, email it two weeks in advance to *The Skanner* at info@theskanner.com

Friday September 7

PHINNEY FARMERS MARKET. There is always a wonderful array of fresh fruit, vegetables and other locally made food as well as several exciting options for on-the-spot enjoyment. 3 p.m. Phinney Neighborhood Center Gallery, 6532 Phinney Ave. N.

Saturday September 8

SEATTLE CENTER BIG BIRTHDAY BASH. We're inviting the entire community to join in the Seattle Center Big Birthday Bash. This Big Bash features an extraordinary array of fun and fanciful activities for everyone. 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. The Seattle Center, 305 Harrison St. Seattle

8TH ANNUAL WOMEN OF COLOR HEALTH AWARENESS CONFERENCE: FIRST LADY OF HEALTH, HONORING MRS. MICHELLE OBAMA. This free community event starts at 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Bethlehem Baptist Church, Family Life Center, 4818 Portland Ave, Tacoma, WA

THE MOUNTAINEERS OUTDOORSFEST BRINGS THE GREAT OUTDOORS TO SEATTLE. The annual day-long event is free and features vendors, workshops and a range of recreational demonstrations and hands-on activities from hiking to extreme camping to climbing on a real basalt rock columns. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. The Mountaineers Program Center in Magnuson Park, Seattle

Sunday September 9

LIVE ALOHA HAWAIIAN CULTURAL FESTIVAL. Celebrate the arts and culture of Hawaii with Hawaiian music, hula, crafts, food and much more. 11 a.m. Seattle Center Armory/Center House Stage, 305 Harrison St. Seattle

Tuesday September 11

SCHOOL YOUR PARENTS NIGHT AT THE SEATTLE PUBLIC LIBRARY. Learn how The Seattle Public Library can help students succeed in school. Many resources for parents will be available for this free event. 4 - 7 p.m. High Point Branch, 3411 SW Raymond St.

Friday September 14

BACK - TO - SCHOOL BLAST OPEN HOUSE. Get back into the swing of things join us for a community Open House BBQ, gym games and much more. Fun for all ages. 6 - 8 p.m. Ravenna Eckstein Community Center, 6535 Ravenna Ave. NE.