

Duncan

continued from page 2

KW: What is your guiltiest pleasure?
MCD: Cheesecake! I just had some Cinnamon Chocolate Cheesecake, some German Chocolate Cheesecake and some Pineapple Upside-Down Cheesecake at The Cheesecake Factory the other night. So, I had to work my butt off the next day, because I'm trying to get in shape for my new television series, "The Finder."
KW: When you look in the mirror, what do you see?
MCD: An accomplished actor who was homeless twice. A person who was down on his luck in Chicago in 1996, crying his eyes out on the lakefront. I see a guy who told himself: There ain't no use in crying because nobody cares. You can either be a bum or follow your dream and try to make it. Today, I see a successful person when I look in the mirror.
KW: The Ling-Ju Yen question: What is your earliest childhood memory?
MCD: [Chuckles] My earliest memory is of the Christmas my mother bought me an Aurora race car set. That was the only gift I got that year, but I was the happiest kid in the world when she bought me that. I didn't care about anything else. But that was back in the day, I don't even know if Aurora's still in business anymore. That and Electric Football were my favorites when I was a kid
KW: Tudor Electric Football! I had that, and an HO-scale race car set, too.
MCD: See, you know what I'm talking about, Kam. I can reminisce with you without sounding weird.
KW: If you could have one wish instantly granted, what would that be for?

MCD: That's a no-brainer. Just to have my mother's health restored. Arthritis and other ailments have taken their toll, and she's not as vibrant as she used to be. My wish would be to have her health back the way it was in the Sixties when she would play catch with me, throw a football with me, and teach me how to hold a bat. Yeah, my wish would be for my mother to have excellent health.
KW: The Columbus Short question: Are you happy?
MCD: Yes, extremely happy. You gotta remember I was homeless. Whenever I think I have something to complain about. I go outside, walk across the street and look at my home, and remind myself of the time I was living on the damn lakefront in a car full of garbage bags with clothes, and ask myself, "What do you possibly have to be upset about?" Kam, I have nothing to complain about. A friend of mine was just murdered, shot five times last Thursday as he was driving on a freeway entrance ramp. The last thing he did was dial 9-1-1. Another thing my mother told me as a child was, "Always wake up with a smile on your face, because a lot of people who went to sleep last night are not with us this morning." So, I'm extremely happy, Kam.
KW: Looks like your mother has given you a lot of sound advice over the years.
MCD: Yeah, she's never steered me wrong. I remember when Martin Luther King was shot and people started rioting in Chicago. My mother whacked me on my butt just because I balled up a piece of paper and threw it out the window. She asked me,

"Why did you do that?" I said, "Because they killed Martin Luther King." She said, "just think, where are we gonna buy our groceries, if they burn all the stores down?" I hadn't thought of that.
KW: I had the impulse to riot when King was killed, too, but I was lucky to have a teacher who suggested that maybe I should channel my energy constructively and become a revolutionary student instead of a rioter.
MCD: And look what happened, from those words to you now. That teacher had a profound impact on the way you think by saying that one phrase. And then you went on to Ivy League schools. Growing up back then, people cared about you. If you misbehaved, the elders in the neighborhood would pull your coat. You got all your degrees because of the way that your parents, your teachers and your community raised you and helped you get there. You probably had some excellent teachers who inspired you whose names you can still recall to this day, just like I did.
KW: Yep.
MCD: Did you know that Secretary of Education Arnie Duncan is from Chicago? His mother ran a center for underprivileged black kids in the hood. I told him to let me know whenever he wants me to speak on behalf of education. I believe that teachers committed to the community are the ones who deserve to earn the top dollar, a starting salary of a quarter million dollars a year, because they're the ones that get the Michael Clarke Duncans and the Kam Williams ready for our careers. I'm sorry



Michael Clarke Duncan

for going a little off topic, Kam.
KW: No need to apologize.
MCD: Believe me, Kam, I'm the biggest sports fan there is, I love sports, but I'm still convinced that it's teachers who deserve the big salaries, not athletes. When I reflect on my childhood, I could always count on my mother and my teachers the most.
KW: The Teri Emerson question: When was the last time you had a good laugh?
MCD: I try to have a good laugh every day. Every day, Kam!
KW: Well, thanks for another great interview, Mike.
MCD: Hey, much love, Kam, and give your wife and son my regards.
KW: Will do, brother.
MCD: Take care, man.

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