

## Michael Clarke Duncan, RIP: The Final Interview

By Kam Williams  
Special for *The Skanner News*

**M**ichael Clarke Duncan (1957-2012) was born in Chicago where he was raised by a single-mom, before going from homeless to bodyguard 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," "Dare-



Michael Clarke Duncan

devil," "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, 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

## 'Memphis' in Portland Next Week



Portland Opera Presents Broadway Across America's production of "Memphis," the 2010 Tony Award Winner for Best Musical, opens at Keller Auditorium on Sept. 11, for a limited engagement.

"Memphis" is set in the smoky halls and underground clubs of the segregated 50's, where a young white DJ named Huey Calhoun fell in love with a fabulous Black singer named Felicia. "Memphis" is an original story about the cultural revolution that erupted when his vision met her voice, and the music changed forever. Come along on their incredible journey to the ends of the airwaves — filled with laughter, soaring emotion and roof-raising rock 'n' roll."

The show has won Broadway's top honors including Best Musical, Best Original Score (David Bryan and Joe DiPietro), Best Book (Joe DiPietro), and Best Orchestrations (David Bryan and Daryl Waters). For ticket information go to [www.PortlandOpera.org/Broadway](http://www.PortlandOpera.org/Broadway).

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

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