

## Michael Ealy: The 'Unconditional' Interview

**M**ichael Ealy is already back on the big screen, fresh off the phenomenal success he enjoyed earlier this year in *Think Like a Man*, the \$100 million box-office hit that knocked *The Hunger Games* out of the #1 spot. Michael first found fame in 2002 for his memorable performance as Ricky Nash in *Barbershop*.



### CELEBRITY INTERVIEW

by Kam Williams

His other feature films include *Seven Pounds*, *2 Fast 2 Furious*, *Never Die Alone*, *For Colored Girls*, *Miracle at St. Anna*, *Takers* and *Underworld: Awakening*. In 2007, he received a Golden Globe Award nomination for his role in Showtime's *Sleeper Cell*. Meanwhile, on TV, he's appeared in ABC's *Flashforward* and CBS's *The Good Wife*.

Here, the versatile thespian talks about starring in *Unconditional*, an inspirational, faith-based feature based on actual events. In this bittersweet tale of redemption, he portrays Papa Joe Bradford, a guy with kidney disease who teams with a recently-widowed, childhood friend (Lynn Collins) to make a difference in the lives of needy kids in Nashville.

**Kam Williams:** Hey Michael. Thanks for another interview.

**Michael Ealy:** I'm good, Kam. How are ya?

**KW:** What interested you in *Unconditional*?

**ME:** It started with the script. I kind of fell in love with some of the miraculous, lyrical and poetic nature of the writing. Ultimately, I still had to respond to the role. And I did respond to the character. The fact that this guy was a real person, someone who, after turning his own life around, was doing everything in his power to influence the development of youth in his neighborhood made me feel like this was an important movie to do.

**KW:** Did you get to meet the real Papa Joe Bradford in the process of making the movie?

**ME:** Yes, sir, and we're still good friends to this day.

**KW:** Editor/legist Patricia Turnier says she loves your performance in *Think Like a Man* because you made your character really believable. She asks: What does Papa Joe's philanthropy mean to you?

**ME:** It's tough for me to see Papa Joe as a philanthropist because I generally think of philanthropy on a grander scale. For instance, I consider Bill Cosby a philanthropist because of all the colleges and charities he supports. I see Papa Joe as more grassroots. With him, it's not so much about big changes as it is about an individual's daily effort. It's a lot like what a teacher does. When I visit a school, and students get excited, I always tell them, "It's not me you should be listening to, it's your teachers, because they're here every day." It's that sort of commitment that Papa made, even though he had his own family, seven kids. Yet, he still finds the time to be daddy to a lot of other children, too. He's there on a daily basis. I can't give that. That means a lot. That is special. That is extraordinary.

**KW:** Patricia goes on to say that friendship is one of the main themes in *Unconditional* where



Michael Ealy in a scene from 'Unconditional.'

the lead character reconnects with an old friend. She's wondering whether you have a best friend with whom you would like to reconnect.

**ME:** No, me and my three best friends from childhood never stopped being boys.

**KW:** Patricia also recognizes you as the love interest in music videos by both Beyonce' and Mariah Carey. She wonders whether you plan to play the hunk again opposite a pop diva in another upcoming video.

**ME:** No, not really.

**KW:** On a similar note, children's book author Irene Smalls asks: Is being so good-looking ever a drawback because people

try to typecast you in your career?

**ME:** [Chuckles] Yes.

**KW:** Irene would also like to know what's up next for you.

**ME:** I am about to start shooting the remake of *About Last Night*, an adaptation of David Mamet's play *Sexual Perversity in Chicago*.

**KW:** Last time we spoke, I asked you to come up with a generic Michael Ealy question. Did you think of one yet?

**ME:** Yeah, I did, Kam, and I had it emailed it to you.

**KW:** My bad. I don't remember receiving it. Hope they can send it again, because I want to start using it when I interview other celebrities. Let me ask you the Pastor

Alex Kendrick question: What motivates you at this stage of your career?

**ME:** Good question. It's important to me to start challenging myself more as an artist. I'd like to try different genres, and not always take the popular role or the favorite part. I'm highly motivated to be flexible. I don't always have to play the picture's moral compass. And I also want to have a lot more fun.

**KW:** What would make your life easier?

**ME:** [LOL] What would make my life is easier would be being able to keep my private life private as long as possible.

## 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](mailto:info@theskanner.com)

#### Thursday September 13

**QUEEN ANNE FARMERS MARKET.** Find more than 50 vendors, including Washington farms as well as the largest gathering of street food vendors anywhere in Seattle. 3 – 7:30 p.m. Queen Anne Avenue North and Howe Street.

#### Friday September 14

**BELLTOWN COMMUNITY CENTER OPEN HOUSE.**

Please join Seattle Parks and Recreation and your neighbors in celebration as we open the new Belltown Community Center, Music, entertainment, art, food and fun. 4 – 8:30 p.m. 415 Bell St.

**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.

#### Saturday September 15

**6TH ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF FRUIT.** There will be cider pressing, apple tasting & try to identify the different kinds of apples, apple pie off – contest, treats for sale, kids crafts and much more. 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Carkeek Park Environmental Learning Center, 950 NW Carkeek Park Rd.

#### Tuesday September 18

**BELLEVUE JOB FAIR.** Meet companies hiring in your home town. 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Red Lion Bellevue Inn, 11211 NE Main St.

#### Friday & Saturday September 21 – 22

**THE GREAT WALLINGFORD WURST FESTIVAL.** The Great Wallingford Wurst Festival is an Octoberfest style end-of-summer celebration. The festival features rides, games for kids, craft booths, food and much more. St. Benedict School, 4811 Wallingford Ave. N. Friday outdoor hours 4 – 11 p.m. indoor hours 4 p.m. – midnight. Saturday outdoor hours 11 a.m. – 10 p.m. Indoor hours 11 a.m. – midnight.

#### Saturday September 22

**RACHEL HARTMAN READS FROM SERAPHINA AT THE SEATTLE PUBLIC LIBRARY.** Rachel Hartman will read from her new book *Seraphina* from 6 – 7:15 p.m. at the NE Branch Library, 6801 35th Ave. NE The program is free and open to the public.