

Tamala Jones: The 'Castle' Interview

Kam Williams
Special To *The Skanner News*

Tamala Jones has created a varied career based on her prodigious talent, working steadily in comedic and dramatic projects for both film and television. At 20 she made her feature film debut in "How to Make an American Quilt" as the great-grandmother of Maya Angelou's character. That same year, she racked up television roles in "The Wayans Bros.," "The Parent 'Hood" and "The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air," as well as a recurring role as Joanie on "ER." From there she joined the regular cast of the ABC drama "Dangerous Minds," which gave her a chance to show her dramatic chops as a teenage mother facing parenthood and an abusive spouse.

In 1997 Jones landed a supporting role in the popular comedy "Booty Call" and a recurring turn on "Veronica's Closet." She was next featured in the teen comedy "Can't Hardly Wait." That same year she was cast in a more grown-up role as a divorcee on "For Your Love," showcasing a winning combination of irreverent moxie and surprising sweetness.

Jones was featured in both the romantic drama "The Wood" and the action comedy "Blue Streak," then was seen in the musical drama "Turn it Up" and the comedies "The Ladies Man" and "Next Friday." On television, she amassed credits that included a turn as Lucille of rock song fame in the biopic "Little Richard."

In 2001 she renewed her focus on the big screen in supporting roles in the African-American ensemble features "The Brothers" and "Kingdom Come," which gave her the opportunity to create characters while working alongside more experienced performers. Later that year Jones was one of the women being schooled in the management of men by Vivica A. Fox's savvy but stumped character in the comedy, "Two Can Play That Game," and in "On the Line" she had a turn as an ambitious and controlling advertising executive who clashes with the idealistic hero, portrayed by *NSYNC's Lance Bass.

In 2003 she worked opposite Chris Rock in "Head of State" and had a co-starring role as the wife of Traci Morgan in the self-titled "Traci Morgan Show." Since then, Jones has co-produced an independent movie, "Nora's Hair Salon," and starred in several more films, two of which were "Daddy Day Camp," with Cuba Gooding Jr., and "Janky



Tamala Jones

Don't feel like you have to change who you are to be successful. As long as you're true to yourself and you never give up, you will succeed

Promoters," opposite Mike Epps.

In late 2009 she appeared on the big screen in the Oscar-nominated feature "Up in the Air," with George Clooney. In 2010 she completed post production on another independent film she co-produced entitled "35 and Ticking," in which she also stars alongside Nicole Ari Parker, Keith Robinson and Wendy Raquel Robinson.

Kam Williams: Hi, Tamala, thanks for the interview.

Tamala Jones: My pleasure!

KW: What interested you in Castle?

TJ: Playing a doctor because it was something that I'd never done before. And Nathan Fillion. I'd watched him and followed his whole career. He's a great guy!

KW: Tell me a little about your character, Dr. Lanie Parish.

TJ: She's sassy, she knows her stuff, and she doesn't play around.

KW: What type of research did you do to prepare for the role?

TJ: I read a lot of coroner books and I also watched a lot of reality crime shows like "Dr. G: Medical Examiner," "The First 48" and "Forensic Files."

KW: During the show's third season, Lanie had a relationship with Detective Esposito, but they later broke up. Is there another romance in store for her this season?

TJ: I really don't know. [Executive producer and screenwriter] Andrew Marlowe is very secretive about what he has in store, so I have to wait and see what's going to happen along with all you guys.

KW: You've done a lot of movies and TV shows. Which is your preference?

TJ: I love them both; I don't have a preference. I wish I could do them both at the same time.

KW: How about drama versus comedy?

TJ: I love comedy, because I'm naturally a very silly person.

KW: Who would you like to paired opposite in a romantic comedy?

TJ: Bradley Cooper!

KW: What film director would you like to work with?

TJ: Steven Spielberg. I love him. I respect him. And he gave us E.T.

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

TJ: Yes. I'm afraid that I won't do a good job when I go into an audition.

KW: The Columbus Short question: Are you happy?

TJ: Yes!

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

TJ: Just the other day. A friend of mine made me watch a video on Youtube, "Hot Cheetos and Takis." I don't know what a Taki is but those kids were rocking out and that was so funny to me.

KW: What is your guiltiest pleasure?

TJ: Laying in bed and sleeping all day.

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

TJ: "The Alchemist" by Paulo Coelho.

KW: The music maven Heather Covington question: What was the last song you listened to?

TJ: Tammi Terrell's "All I Do Is Think about You."

KW: What is your favorite dish to cook?

TJ: Macaroni and cheese.

KW: The Sanaa Lathan question: What excites you?

TJ: Hopping on a plane and going to discover a new island I haven't been to before.

KW: The Uduak Oduok question: Who is your favorite clothes designer?

TJ: I love Yves Saint Laurent. I love Chanel. And Versace! Such beautiful gowns!

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

TJ: I made the best business decision at 14 when I decided to get into acting. The worst was owning 2 homes at the same time.

KW: The Michael Ealy question: If you could meet any historical figure, who would it be?

TJ: Abraham Lincoln. I really want to talk to him and understand why he wanted to free the slaves. The real reason, not the one stated in history books.

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

TJ: A silly, crazy girl living in a woman's body.

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

TJ: To end hate and world hunger.

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

TJ: Making up stories and playing them out in the backyard. That was my favorite pastime.

KW: The Kerry Washington question: If you were an animal, what animal would you be?

TJ: A Tiger!

Read the rest of this story online at www.theskanner.com



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 December 14

NIGHTTIME AT THE BEACH. Bring your family and friends for a beach adventure by flashlight. This program is for adults and families with children 6 and older. Please dress for the weather. \$5 per person. 9- 11 p.m. Discovery Park Environmental Learning Center, 3801 W. Government Way.

SEATTLE CIVIC CHRISTMAS SHIP – MEYDENBAUER BEACH PARK. Come with family and friends together to marvel at the parade of boats as they come by the beach. 8 p.m. Meydenbauer Beach Park, 419 98th Ave. NE.

Saturday December 15

BIZARRE BAZAAR. Come down and feast your eyes and pocketbooks on all of the cool things that the Canoe Members make and sell. 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. Canoe Social Club, 417 E. Loretta Pl. Free for all to enjoy and shop.

YO HO HO! HOLIDAY FEST. Snoqualmie Ice Cream & The Pirates of Treasure Island are hosting a food & toy drive for the SeaFair Holiday Treasure Chest. Ice Cream, hot cocoa, music, activities and much more. 1 new toy or 3 cans of food gets you a free soft serve ice cream cone. Noon

– 4 p.m. 21106 85th Ave. SE Snohomish, WA FREE

Tuesday December 18

WALK WITH A DOC. Join neighbors and community members for a fun walk in the park. Hosted by Dr. Ken Elam. The doctor will speak for a few minutes then will walk with everyone. 10 a.m. – 11 a.m. University Playground, 9th Ave. NE & NE 50th St. Seattle.

Saturday December 22

SEE SANTA. Join us at the Seattle Children's Museum as we welcome Santa. We've added some activities and decoration to the mountain to make him feel more at home. 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. \$4.50 per adult, \$6.50 per child and \$6.50 per grandparent. 305 Harrison St.