

Nate Parker: The ‘Beyond the Lights’ Interview

Actor and humanitarian Nate Parker first received critical attention for his starring role in The Great Debaters opposite Denzel Washington and Forest Whitaker. Denzel handpicked him to play the troubled yet brilliant Henry Lowe who overcomes his selfish ways to become the team’s leader. Nate received an honorary Doctorate from Wiley College in Marshall, Texas, the school on which The Great Debaters was based.

More recently, he appeared in the action thriller Non-Stop, opposite Liam Neeson and Julianne Moore. Last year, he starred in Ain’t Them Bodies Saints, opposite Rooney Mara, Casey Affleck, and Ben Foster.

In 2012, he was the toast of the Sundance Film Festival when he appeared in Arbitrage opposite Richard Gere, Susan Sarandon and Tim Roth. That year, he also starred as the lead in Red Tails, supported by Terrence Howard and Cuba Gooding, Jr. It told the story of the Tuskegee Airmen, who were the first African-



CELEBRITY INTERVIEW

by Kam Williams

American military aviators in the U.S. Army Air Corps and were some of the finest pilots in World War II. George Lucas funded, pro-

Howard, in Dirty opposite Cuba Gooding Jr., in Felon with Stephen Dorff and Sam Shepard, and in Tunnel Rats with Michael Pare. And onstage, Nate appeared opposite Dustin Hoffman, Annette Bening, Rosario Dawson and James Cromwell in “American

Not only did she write the perfect script, but she was so intentional about her vision coming across, that it made it easy for me to do my job

duced and co-directed this feature.

Earlier in his career, Nate starred opposite Alicia Keys in The Secret Life of Bees, which featured an all-star cast of Queen Latifah, Jennifer Hudson, Dakota Fanning and Paul Bettany. Additionally, he’s been seen in Pride alongside Terrence

Voices” at the Broad Street Theater.

A Norfolk, VA native, Nate studied computer programming and trained his way to become an All-American wrestler at the University of Oklahoma.

He mentors twenty-four children from schools in central Los Angeles and



Nate Parker in ‘Beyond the Lights’

spearheads projects and events with the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. He sponsors a Peace for Kids scholarship fund and works in their afterschool program.

Here, Nate talks about his new movie, Beyond the Lights, while waxing romantic about his career and his life philosophy.

Kam Williams: Hi Nate, thanks so much for another

interview.

Nate Parker: My pleasure, brother.

KW: I really enjoyed Beyond the Lights. What interested you in the project?

NP: Before anything else, it was Gina. I think she’s one of the best directors on planet Earth. And her vision, and her work ethic, and attention to details are so inspiring that when a

project comes up that she’s a part of, you want to be a part of it.

KW: She certainly devoted herself to developing and fleshing out her characters in this picture.

NP: Well, she had the time. You know what they say: “Cheap, fast and good. You can only have two.” This is a woman who takes

See PARKER on page 9

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