

Wesley Snipes: ‘The Player’ Interview

By Kam Williams
For *The Skanner News*

Wesley Snipes is perhaps best known for his role as Blade, the human with vampire genes based on the title character from the comic book trilogy of the same name. The veteran thespian has an impressive pedigree and a resume’ with movies which have grossed over \$415 million combined at the box office.

A master in the martial arts, Wesley was born in Orlando and got his big career break in 1986 when he landed a role in opposite Goldie Hawn in *Wildcats*. He subsequently appeared in an episode of the hit TV series “Miami Vice,” and a year later was cast by Martin Scorsese in Michael Jackson’s music video “Bad.”

Larger roles quickly followed, including co-starring turns in such films as *Passenger 57*, *Demolition Man*, *Money Train*, *The Fan*, *Rising Sun*, *New Jack City*, *White Men Can’t Jump* and *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Newmar*. Among his additional TV credits are outings on “The Days and Nights of Molly Dodd,” “America’s Dream” and “The Bernie Mac Show.”

Wesley has won a couple of NAACP Image Awards (for *New Jack City* and *America’s Dream*). And on Aug. 21, 1998, he had his star added to the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Here, Wesley talks about his recurring role as Mr. Johnson on *The Player*, the new NBC drama airing Thursdays at 10 p.m. ET/PT. (Check local listings)



Wesley Snipes

Kam Williams: Hey, thanks for another interview. I appreciate having the opportunity.

Wesley Snipes: Good morning. Good morning, Kam. I appreciate what you do, too.

KW: What interested you in “The Player”?

WS: Well, first of all, the interesting opportunity to get into the television game, and to work with some talented people behind the scenes, producers who have a track record of success, particularly in a genre that I’m attracted to. And then they sent me one of the better action scripts that I’d read in a long time in which I get to play a cool boss of bosses.

KW: Yeah, it looks like it has feature film quality action sequences.

WS: It’s a heck of an undertaking, but that’s definitely our goal. Where we may not have a lot of quantity, we at least have high quality and some great, great plot twists. Some of the things they have planned this season are really exciting for me as a film actor.

KW: Tell me a little about Mr. Johnson, the pit boss?

WS: He’s the kind of friend you’d love to have. He’s the guy with the best connections, the best hook-ups, the best arrangements. He always has the box seats and the courtside seats... He knows where the body’s at, but keeps his mouth shut, and can help you get rid of it, if needed.

KW: Is there a consistent message that each episode is trying to convey?

WS: Each episode would be a stand-alone event that has some carryover from episode to episode. The underlying message about the various characters—who they are and what their hidden agendas are—will play out over time. But the actual game, the actual wager, will stand alone from week to week.

KW: How do you enjoy shooting in Vegas?

WS: The idea of being around these individual who have \$10 million a night credit lines is very exciting. Watching this show, we can all live vicariously and get a sense of what that lifestyle is like.

KW: Have you collaborated with any of your fellow cast members before?

WS: No, this is my first time working with them.

KW: Harriet Pakula-Teweles asks: With so many classic films being redone, is there a remake you’d like to star in?

WS: [Laughs] We had a pretty good idea of doing not exactly a remake but an evolution of *The Sting*. It would be fun to do something like that with Woody [Harrelson].

KW: The Viola Davis question: What’s the biggest difference between who you are at home as opposed to the person we see on the red carpet?

WS: [LOL] I’d say I’m much more laid back and easygoing at home, and maybe even funnier. People think of me as a pretty serious guy, but my family knows me to be fairly whimsical.

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

WS: For some reason, the guys and ladies who have Cole in their name seem to resonate with me: Cole Haan... Kenneth Cole... For some reason, a Cole always seems to show up.

KW: The Anthony Mackie question: Is there anything that you promised yourself you’d do if you became famous, that you still haven’t done yet?

WS: I, Hmm.... Yes, I promised myself I would take a world tour of all of the world’s best roller coasters, and I still haven’t done that.

KW: The Judyth Piazza question: Is there a key quality you believe all successful people share?

WS: Yes, two: discipline and determination.

KW: What advice do you have for anyone who wants to follow in your footsteps?

WS: [Shouts] Don’t do it! Save yourself! [Chuckles] Live a healthy, normal life. However, if you want to have an exceptional life and want to be an exceptional man doing exceptional things, being in show business is a good way to start. But if you want a normal life, no, no, no, don’t even touch this business. Leave this thing alone.

KW: The Tavis Smiley question: How do you want to be remembered?

WS: I As a great contributor to humanity through my art.

KW: AALBC.com founder Troy Johnson asks: What was the last book you read?

WS: I’ve been too bogged down with scripts to read anything else lately. The last script I read was a crime thriller.

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