

Marlon Wayans: The 'Fifty Shades of Black' Interview

By **Kam Williams**
For *The Skanner News*

Marlon Wayans is a true multi-hyphenate: an actor/producer, comedian, writer and film director. His films have grossed more than \$750 million in domestic box office, an average of nearly \$50 million per outing. As a stand-up comedian, Marlon sells out theaters and clubs alike nationwide.

On the feature film front, he recently starred in and produced *A Haunted House*, which grossed over \$18 million on a \$2 million budget.

On the television front, he'll soon be shooting a pilot for NBC slated to debut next fall.

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Marlon's additional big screen credits include *White Chicks*, *Scary Movie*, *Scary Movie 2*, *Mo' Money*, *Above the Rim*, *Don't Be a Menace to South Central While Drinking Your Juice in the Hood*, *The Sixth Man*, *Senseless*, *Dungeons & Dragons*, *Requiem for a Dream*, *The Ladykillers*, *Behind the Smile*, *Little Man*, *Norbit*, *Dance Flick*,

G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra, *Marlady*, and *The Heat*.

On TV, Marlon has appeared on “In Living Color,” “Children's Hospital,” “Second Generation Wayans,” and “The Wayans Bros,” which was the highest rated comedy on The WB network.

Here, he talks about his latest offering, *Fifty Shades of Black*.

Kam Williams: Hey Marlon, thanks for the time.

Marlon Wayans: How're you doin', Kam?

KW: Where did the inspiration come from to do a parody of *Fifty Shades of Grey*?

MW: Initially, I just wanted to learn something from the

take to extremes.

Playing a really bad lover was a lot of fun.

KW: So, your approach to Christian [Grey] was to flip the script.

MW: Yeah, he goes to extremes. He's a stalker, and it gets uncomfortable.

And he's also an extremely bad lover. I thought, what if he's a great package, with all these tools that excite women — until they get him into bed, where he's just awful.

KW: How was it working opposite Kali Hawk, who plays your primary love interest, Hannah?

MW: Kali was great and a lot of fun.

She was perfect for Hannah because, in the movie Hannah's a virgin and, in real life, Kali's a prude. So, that kinda worked hand-in-hand.

KW: What message do you think people will take away?

MW: I think women were a little upset with *Fifty Shades of Grey* because the female lead was so submissive. *Fifty Shades of Black* is different in terms of that.

Movies are always fun when there's an objective and you meet a lot of obstacles along the way. And in this film, the hardest person to dominate is a Black woman.

KW: What was the most surprising thing you learned about your ancestry when your brother Keenan had your lineage traced by Skip Gates on the PBS-TV series “Finding Your Roots” the other night?

MW: It was interesting to learn I was Asian. I had no idea. I was wondering why I liked sushi so much. [Laughs]

KW: I found it fascinating how strong your ancestors' bonds were even during slavery, with an escaped slave being willing to risk his freedom to rescue relatives.

MW: Yeah, they went back to go get somebody. He thought, “Hey, what's freedom without my family?” For him to go back was awesome.

KW: I see that sort of loyalty as a trademark of the Wayans family to this day. I can't tell you how many actors and actresses have told me over the years that somebody with the last name Wayans gave them their big break. Just think of all the people who got their start on “In Living Color”: J-Lo,



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Jamie Foxx and Jim Carrey, to name a few. And so many others since.

MW: It's funny you should say that. Generosity kinda runs in our family. My dad is a very generous guy, and my mom's always giving advice. So, Keenan was ultimately a wonderful teacher.

He taught me and Shawn and Damon to be the same way. Those jewels are of no value 'til you pass them down. Sound advice is one of the best things you can share with someone. We want to see other people succeed, and I guess that's something we all inherited.

It's just part of our matrix.

Read the rest of the interview at TheSkanner.com

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