

# TWENTY4SEVEN

ENTERTAINMENT EVERLASTING MAGAZINE

ISSUE #43  
2018

## JAKE ALLYN

+ Nelson Estevez. T'Juan "The Mystery Kid".  
Brett Gray. #AWrinkleInTime. Bettye LaVette.

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I pride myself on having a good memory. My memory isn't necessarily good in regards to remembering what I did with my keys when I got home the day prior but more so in what life was like for me at the age of 5, names of entertainers or significant moments in my life that taught me a valuable lesson whether good, bad, big or small.

The photo above is significant to me because I took it around the time I started my first company while in college (2006). I was majoring in graphic design and was also pursuing the music business as an artist. As part of my curriculum, I had to take classes for photography, web design, film, etc. and I began using those skills to get things done for myself. Prior to, I wasn't interested in photography and hadn't even thought of filming or web design but being pushed into wearing many hats was probably one of the best things to happen to me.

With that being said, I've definitely completed 10,000 hours (word to Malcolm Gladwell) a few times and although I believe I'm damn good at what I do, there is always room for improvement and I'm learning everyday. 2018 will be also be a significant year for me in many ways and I'm looking forward to sharing a few things with you all. Stay tuned....

*Tyrone Davis*



## TWENTY4SEVEN

ENTERTAINMENT EVERLASTING MAGAZINE

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# "The Mystery Kid"



WORDS + INTERVIEW BY:  
KRYSTAL LUSTER

*T'Juan 'The Mystery Kid' is an upcoming recording artist who is bold in his faith, his art and takes pride in those closest to him. T'Juan is father and mentor to 7 year old TJ Sauce Kid, who is a recording artist as well.*

**Tell us about home-life in Jacksonville, FL.**

Growing up in Duval was life preparing. It will always be home for me. I grew up as the eldest of 4 brothers, raised by a single-parent mom. GOD bless her soul (RIP SYK). I feel like Duval prepared me for the world. If you can live there and become somebody, I think that you can take that same grind anywhere in the world and at least survive.

**How long have you been with No Compromise Records?**

I've been with No Compromise Records now for 9 years. We've been through a lot together. I started interning for the label and the rest was history. I connected with one of their producers at the time who also happened to be my youth pastor. We were playing around on his keyboard one day and created a song called, "Crank dat Church Boy". I then became a priority for the label. A few months later, I signed. I never saw it coming because at the time I was a transitioning from the streets and doing underground street records. Lol, GOD has a sense of humor, man. Today, I find myself as the VP of A&R with some ownership in the company. Huge blessing.

**How did the group 'The eXgang' come together?**

Both the label and I had a desire to incorporate more talent to the brand so it only made sense to form a group. I shared my heart with the team and we started working together. We built a studio and signed Phats Traxx; a producer, and eventually TJ, Pluto. The rest of the youngins would come hang out from time to time. One thing lead to another, and before I knew it, everyone had records and a following. I took a step back and realized that every talent around us was a bi-product of me. They watched me for years and all of them were family. Everyone's music was on the same wave/vibe and we all shared the same synergy. We all wanted to make a difference. We all wanted to be better "eXamples". So there it was, the eXample gang! eXgang! WE are the eXample!

**When did you realize that your son TJ had musical talents?**

He's been around music all of his life. I recall late night studio sessions holding him in my arms while I recorded. Lol, he's always been my biggest fan. I was actually out of town when I received an email from Pluto (producer) that contained a recording of my son rapping a hook that he wrote. I had TJ on a few tracks doing intros and talking, etc. but it wasn't until I received that email that I knew the kid was seriously inclined with music. He even nailed his first video shoot with little to no guidance. I knew TJ was a star and I never doubted his ability to be successful, no matter what he decided to do. He works hard at everything and he does it with his entire heart. Shout out to the Kid!

**Were you ever hesitant to introduce him to the music industry? Why or why not?**

No, I was never hesitant. I knew that I'd be there every step of the way to guide and protect him from the "beast" of the industry. I knew that if I'd introduce him to anything that it would be the music BUSINESS and not the industry. This is just fun for him and I'd never like for him to be robbed of that fun. Whether things last another week, month or year, I will regret nothing because it's about me supporting him throughout his journey of discovering himself. The industry will never be able to control anyone who knows the business of it. I make it a point to talk royalties, streams, etc. with him because it will prepare him for life ahead. No matter the field, he'll know what it means to do what you love, love what you do, control it and never to let it control you.

**Would you say his style is similar to your own, or has/is he developing into his own style?**

He started off looking/acting just like dad, but just a cooler

version of me though. He's definitely coming into his own. The kid is special. Between me and Michael Jackson, he's bit enough from us both to be on his way to becoming a great. I often forget he's 7 because he's so sauced up, lol.

**Is it difficult being a single father?**

Not at all. I love my kids. Raising my son has been the highlight of my entire life. It has its challenges, yet it's truly an honor and a blessing beyond measure. Being held accountable and responsible for shaping and molding another life is a gift from GOD. Being a single father is the greatest position I can ever be in.

**What do you enjoy most about making music? How has it changed your life?**

I enjoy the entire process. Especially the opportunity to connect and vibe with other creators. It's the sweetest joy next to raising my kids. I'm a creator, so any time I get a chance to exercise my creativity is a blessing. I believe that I was created to create. Music listens to me. I listen to music.

**What are you currently working on album-wise?**

Currently, I'm working on a project of mine titled, "The New Kanye". I'm taking my time with this project so expect every genre to be on it. I'm also song writing for a lot of artists. I've recently launched the "The Hit Shop" through The Ink Club which is a music artist boutique. Be sure to check it out at [www.thainkclub.com](http://www.thainkclub.com)!

**What is something that you learned from last year that you're incorporating into 2018 goals?**

I learned that I am worthy. I'm worthy of the respect, the integrity, the appreciation and the check I'm due. I realize that I am a very gifted and valuable young man who has much to offer the world. Nothing in this world is FREE, including me, thanks to 2018.

**Do you remember the feeling you had when you found out you made Billboard's Top 30?**

Boy do !!! I'll never forget it. I felt like I was finally getting results. All I remember doing is giving GOD all praise! It proved to me that it could be done, no matter what anyone said. Millions of records are produced every year and mine just so happened to be one of the top selected. Absolutely humbling. I'm shooting for a top 10 now! So, please go stream my latest project, "SummerFall Est. 1689". I promise, you'll love it!

**What would you say is the overall message in your music?**

Love GOD. Love people. Love life. Love yourself and be the BEST you that you can ever be! Mind, body, spirit and soul.

**Who would be featured on your dream project?**

WOW! Good question! I'd love to work with Bruno Mars, Toni Braxton, Pink, Keirra Sheard, Chris Brown, Dark Child, MJ, Patti Labelle....Lord the list just goes on and on. Lol. Heck, everybody that wants to work! #PositiveVibesOnlyTho, my only rule.

**How can people find you on social media?**

Please follow me on Facebook and Twitter @tjuan and on Instagram @tjuanpix.

**Any last words?**

If you've ever supported me or the eXgang in anyway, allow me to take this time to say thank you. Expect for me to continue to keep growing as a father, son, artist, visionary, creator and young businessman. Thank you for your platform! I am truly honored and I appreciate it. Shout out to my publicist, Mrs. Tia Culver for connecting us. Much respect.

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# "Easy Daze on my Block" w/ Brett Gray



PHOTOS BY:  
JAI LENNARD

STYLIST:  
JAMES JEAN

GROOMER:  
MARGINA DENNIS

WORDS + INTERVIEW BY:  
KRISTAL LUSTER

*Meet Brett Gray. The Philadelphia native talks about his love for "Black Mirror", acting and music, the importance of enjoying life OFF the internet and the upcoming Netflix original "On My Block".*

**Tell us about your hometown/growing up.**

I grew up in a spot called *Mount Airy* in Philadelphia. We call it *Uptown*. It's a cool area. Growing up was great! There were so many families in Mount Airy that every household had someone my age inside. I had a ton of friends and we all got into so much stuff growing up. It was a great time.

**How old were you when you first got into acting?**

I was 7 years old and I was shy, awkward and skinny. Clearly, not much has changed. I had always complained about wanting to get into the TV, so I remember my mom taking me to an acting school called *Freedom Theater*. I was NOT having it. I was like, "Take me back to summer camp." But, I met one of my first mentors there, a teacher named Ms. Cynthia. She helped guide me to shed that self-consciousness and really start to appreciate and take care of my talents.

**In the short film "Metrocard", is Henry the person who is losing something or the one who finds something?**

You know what? I think sort of both. He loses his metro card for sure, but I think he also finds that he's a little nuts.

**Tell us about the upcoming Netflix original, "On My Block".**

*On My Block* is an original comedy coming to Netflix following four teens entering high school in South Central, LA. Things get a little sticky when one of the "Core 4" gets involved with a gang and the others scramble to save their friend.

**What is your character's role in the series?**

I play Jamal Turner. He's an over-the-top nerd who can't keep a secret, but is surrounded by secrets. He's weird, neurotic, super loyal and probably everyone's favorite..... just saying.

**Netflix is killing the game right now. Which "Netflix Originals" are your favorite? Name 3.**

This is too hard! I definitely love *Black Mirror*. That'd be my top choice and followed closely by *The Get Down*. I love the color in that show and how different it was from everything out. Plus, a bunch of my friends worked on it. I'm going to say third is *Beasts of No Nation*. I know that's not a show, but Idris Elba.....nuff said.

**What film can you watch over and over without getting tired of it?**

*Coraline!* I love it. There's nothing better.

**Who are your "Top 5" celebrities from Philly?**

My dad.....Will Smith, Jill Scott, Kevin Hart, Jazzy Jeff, and Boyz 2 Men. They've all influenced me so much.

**Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter or Instagram: Pick One.**

INSTAGRAM! I don't really like social media much, but Instagram is so much fun. I feel it's calmer than the others in terms of rapid fire conversation. Also, something about an Instagram page feels more like a home than a feed.

**Do you believe technology is doing more harm than good in terms of communication? Why or why not?**

Yes! I was an "outside kid", I played with friends, got in trouble and lived in the moment. I'm still so bad with my phone and social media because I love just sort of connecting. GO OUTSIDE, GO SEE A MOVIE OR A CONCERT, WAKE UP AND GO TO THE COFFEE SHOP AND TALK TO THE PRETTY LADY YOU LOOK AT EVERY MORNING!

**Who/What inspires you?**

I don't know. It is changing all the time and I like that. It causes my insatiable hunger to try new things because I never know what will inspire me. Right now though, Sabrina Claudio. I turn her on and anything is possible.

**Is there another career path you are in pursuit of outside of acting?**

Music, but I'm trying to balance both. Outside of those.... maybe stand up? I don't know. Something artistic. I'm not good at anything that involves stillness, calmness or a cubicle.

**Tell us about your upcoming EP. How would you describe your sound?**

My EP is called *Easy Daze*. It's a sort of a modern retelling of my childhood. My sound is like a fusion of nostalgic R&B and Dance Hip-Hop. Hopefully, it's fun, connects to people and brings them back in time a bit. I just want to dance with people, to be honest.

**How important is music to you, overall?**

It's everything. You walk outside and there is music in the wind. There is music and rhythm in lines in a script even. It's everywhere, if you listen.

**What song (other than your own) best describes you on a good day? On a bad day?**

On a good day? *Finesse* by Bruno Mars. There's no such thing as a bad day so I'm going to say also *Finesse* by Bruno Mars. Either way, I'll finesse it.

**What are your goals for 2018?**

To take better care of myself. Sometimes, I work way too hard and have to remind myself to be in the moment.

**Where would you like to be in your career in 10 years?**

Anywhere, really. As long as I'm rich.

**How can people find you on social media?**

Instagram and Twitter @iambrettgray.

**Any last words?**

Be easy on yourself.





# ART IMITATES LIFE: INTRODUCING JAKE ALLYN

WORDS + INTERVIEW BY: TYRONE DAVIS

*Jake Allyn is a budding young actor from Dallas who currently stars as the All-American quarterback BoJohn Folsom in the BET drama series "The Quad". We learned a lot about him, including his background as a football player, his college experience, why diversity is important and his love for his hometown.*

## ***How was growing up in Dallas?***

I grew up in Dallas playing football in the fall, basketball in the winter and baseball in the summer. I was a sports kid, Twenty4Seven. If I wasn't playing sports I was probably playing in the creek by our house or making "World War II" home movies with my big brother.

## ***I visited Dallas the year they hosted "Super Bowl XLV". One thing that stood out to me most about the city was that there was a lot of diversity as a whole, especially between Blacks and Latinos. They were in a lot of the same places in groups bigger than I have ever seen anywhere in the Midwest. What was your experience like?***

I would agree, Dallas isn't a perfect city but it was a wonderful place to grow up and certainly provided a great deal of diversity. I'm very proud to have gone to Jesuit High School, which was the first school to integrate in Dallas in 1955. The Jesuit motto is "men for the others," so it'd be pretty hypocritical to live by that oath and not also be a man that welcomes diversity.

## ***I just wanted to throw out there that while on that trip, it snowed pretty hard and the city trucks were putting sand on the street instead of salt. It just made the snow and ice muddy, lol. Aside from that, it was one of my favorite cities I've been to." What do you like most about Dallas?***

When I first read the above question, I said "Uh Oh, I bet you dealt with that terrible ice storm". On behalf of Dallas, I apologize. My favorite thing about Dallas are the memories, friends and family it gave me. No matter where I live now, whether it's Los Angeles or Atlanta while I shoot BET's *The Quad*, I will always call Dallas my home. It's a part of what raised me, like a third parent or sometimes, a good buddy. My brother, dad and I have a production company and we named it "Margate House Films" because the street my brother and I grew up on was Margate Drive...That should put it into perspective for you how much home means to us.

## ***You went to Cornell, correct? What were some of the pros and cons about college? Also, did you live on campus?***

I did go to Cornell. I only lived on campus freshman year. The biggest con was just how far it was from Dallas. I definitely got homesick. I missed everything, from my hometown barbecue sauce to being unable to watch the Dallas Cowboys. But, once I realized I could stream Cowboys games and found a grocery store that carried by favorite BBQ sauce, everything got easier. I played football and was in a fraternity, so the pros were definitely all the amazing friendships I made. As much as I love playing football, there's no doubt all my best football memories were in the locker room after a 5am practice or hanging in the hotel before an away game. I still live with one of my fraternity brothers in LA. Playing football all four years while at an Ivy League school was definitely one of the hardest things I've ever done in my life, but wow did it prepare me for how hard a career in acting would be!

## ***For many Americans, student loan debt is a huge burden. What is your take on it?***

I think for so many young people and especially considering how competitive the current US job market is, the burden of student loans really starts graduates in a hole. I was lucky to have family support which allowed me not to have such burdens right out of the gate, but even I took a steady job

that wasn't my absolute dream for the first year after college just because I was so worried about going into debt just as I started an acting career. So, I feel for graduates who step off the podium, throw their graduate cap in the air and then BAM, are immediately hit with student debt. It makes it really tough for young people to pursue passions and dreams when those type of loans hang over you so early.

## ***How did you get into acting?***

I should have known I wanted to be an actor when I was a young kid. I mean, I still remember watching *Cool Hand Luke*, *Papillon*, and *On The Waterfront* when I was maybe twelve years old. Who does that? That should have told me something but I really didn't start studying acting until I was in college. My older brother, Conor is a film maker and I shadowed him one summer during pre-production of one of his films. By the end of the experience I knew I wanted to start taking acting classes back at college. So, I did!

## ***Tell us about your character BoJohn Folsom in the BET series "The Quad".***

BoJohn is a very complicated kid on the interior of an incredible simple exterior. He is this All-American looking stud quarterback who loses all his college scholarships and must attend a historically black college on his last chance for a future in football. The amazingly great challenge with BoJohn is that aspect of being on his last chance Twenty4Seven. So, no matter who he is talking to, what's happening on or off the field, no matter where he is, there is always that nagging feeling in him that at any one moment, one slip up could cost him his career. He has also come to school with an intense amount of pressure from his father and that also carries on BoJohn's back no matter the circumstances. It's a pressure that will either break BoJohn completely or turn him into a man so I really enjoy walking that tight rope and hope audiences do too.

## ***What was the hardest scene you had to film during season 1 and why? What about season 2?***

Episode 8, season 1. In the scene, my father tries to get me to transfer schools. It's the first time BoJohn stands up to his bigoted father and tells him he wants to stay, but instead of his dad respecting my decision, he hits him for it. It was the hardest scene because I wanted to carry all that hope of a kid wanting his father to be proud of him and finally respect him as a man, but instead he gets smashed for it. It was about showing a lifetime's worth of hope explode in a single moment.

In season 2, it was episode 9. Bo is on the brink of expulsion and feels like he has no one to trust at school so he turns to the only person in his life that, for better or worse, has always been by him, his dad. There's one big rule in acting, "never judge your character". I kept wanting to judge BoJohn. Obviously, I the actor know that Bo needs to trust the people at this school, the people that have become his friends and mentors and the people that never hit him but Bo's not perfect and he makes mistakes like the rest of us. I can't judge him for that. I just needed to understand why he might make that mistake. As hard as it was to shoot, I think when people see that scene and the material that follows after with my father, they will hopefully understand as well and carry some empathy for this struggling kid.

PHOTOS BY:  
TOMMY DINGWALL





**Being a minority (of any kind) in any situation can be awkward. Overall, what do you think we can do as humans to make life more peaceful between us?**

Take the time to learn about each other before we judge each other. It is a lot easier to hate someone if you don't know anything about them. I've been lucky in my life to have traveled, lived in many different places and interacted with people from all over the world. The one thing I've learned after I lived in Indonesia for a year, safaried in places like Botswana and spent tons of time in Central and South America is that all people laugh and cry the exact same way. I don't care what color you are, what language you speak or wherever you are on the planet, everyone laughs and cries the same. So, I think if we all just spent a little more time getting to know each other, I bet we'd find out we have a lot more in common too.

**Is there anything you learned about black people while filming the show that you may not have known prior to? Is there anything in particular that your co-stars learned about white people from you?**

I don't think I ever fully comprehended the idea of racism within race until my time on *The Quad*. Racism is not literally just a black and white thing. Both in the world of *The Quad* and through cast mates and friends I've met in the last two years, there can be serious racism within the black community over how dark or light your skin is or simply where you come from. There's a wonderfully harsh line in the pilot referring to President Eva Fletcher's (Anika Noni Rose) character as "not black black", because she's from a wealthy back East family as opposed to the deep South. There's another line in the pilot when Cedric Hobbs (played by Peyton Alex Smith) gets into a fight outside a concert and gets called "a light skin". Seeing how deep names like that can hurt someone really informed me on just how many layers there are to racism. On my end, I hope I illuminated that white people can have great sneaker game too. I take pride in my Jordan and Nike collection, so hopefully everyone on *The Quad* knows I've got some serious shoe swag.

**Who is your funniest co-star and why?**

Miles Stroter. He has already lived a million lives so nothing surprises him. He's seen it all before. It makes for some pretty damn funny stories. The world moves slower for him as opposed to me where I can barely keep up, so his dialogue on circumstances on set or in the world comes from an enlightened and hilarious point of view. We also spend the most time together of anyone on set so once you get to know someone that well, you get to know each other's ticks and

what makes each other laugh.

**What was your experience working with Jasmine Guy like and is there anything you picked up from her that will stay with you throughout your career?**

I worked with her a few times during season 1 and it was always fantastic. She's super easy and fun to work with. I picked just that up from her...acting can be fun! She always brings something fun and unexpected to her performances that I hope I can utilize in my own work.

**Being a military brat, I remember going to the theater on the Army base I grew up on to see "Black Hawk Down". There were a lot of soldiers there in uniform and I remember thinking, "Why would they want to see this?" being that this was right after 9-11 and the war was on at that point. What was your overall experience working on "Drone Wars" and what did you learn?**

I learned to wear a mask at all times when you're around a set of an apocalyptic movie. There was so much dust, I could feel it in my lungs for weeks after I wrapped.

**Tell us about "Overexposed".**

*Overexposed* is a great pride in my life. Conor Allyn (my older brother) wrote, directed and produced the film and I acted in it. It's a small-town murder mystery but at the heart is this very tough love story about two people enduring grief, guilt and massive secrets. I played a character dealing with the death of his younger brother and the deep guilt that comes with it. Obviously, I have a brother and to lose him would absolutely destroy me, so literally my only goal with my role was: if anyone who has actually lost a brother watches this movie, I want them to believe me on screen as someone who lost a brother too. It is so simple but it really gave me such a clear drive and through line.

**When you're not acting, what do you like to do?**

I'm still big into sports so probably playing in a flag football league, working out at the gym or watching NFL or college football. I'm also an actor who got into this business because I absolutely loved movies and TV. So, if I'm not working, I'm usually catching up on recent movies or TV shows. I'm binging the mini-series *WACO* right now and it's spectacular!

**I grew up listening to a lot of Texas music and some of my favorite artists are from Houston and Dallas. Who are your "Top 5" favorite artists (any genre) from Dallas?**  
Hmm, my top five musicians from Dallas probably go 1.

Steve Miller Band (Technically they formed in San Fran) 2. Stevie Ray Vaughn 3. The Dixie Chicks 4. Old 97s 5. I'll throw Vanilla Ice on there for kicks.

**I'm going to throw a few hashtags out there. Say whatever comes to mind:**

**A) #beasuperhero**

A wonderful charity that helps strengthen kids physically and spiritually.

**B) #MichaelCaine**

Acting O.G. I also read his book, "Michael Caine: Acting in Film", and it really gave me a new evolved thought process on the craft.

**C) #metoo**

A movement giving and showing the power that can come when a group bands together in full commitment against an injustice. I think it's also a movement that showed how social media can give strong voices and a platform to people that may have felt alone before.

**D) #aidanallyn**

My absolute inspiration. Aidan is my two year-old nephew and he is a complete stud. His birth really drove me to work harder. I want him to grow up proud of his Uncle Jakey.

**Tell us something about yourself that most don't know.**

I was named Jake after the Kevin Costner character in the Western, *Silverado*. The movie came out just before I was born and my parents were looking for a very all-American name. If they ever remake the movie or turn it into a TV show, I will probably hound the producers and Kevin until they let me read for that part.

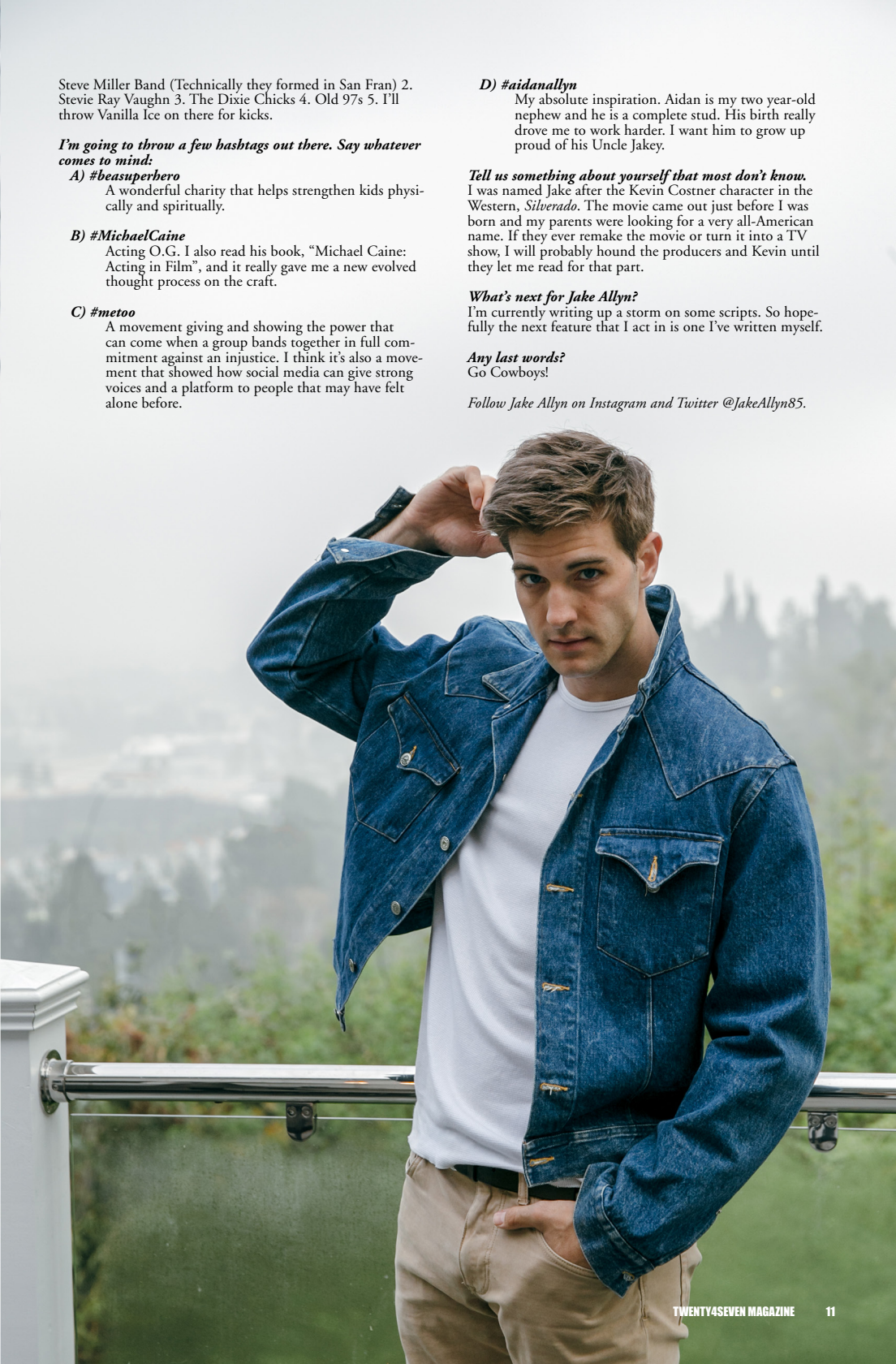
**What's next for Jake Allyn?**

I'm currently writing up a storm on some scripts. So hopefully the next feature that I act in is one I've written myself.

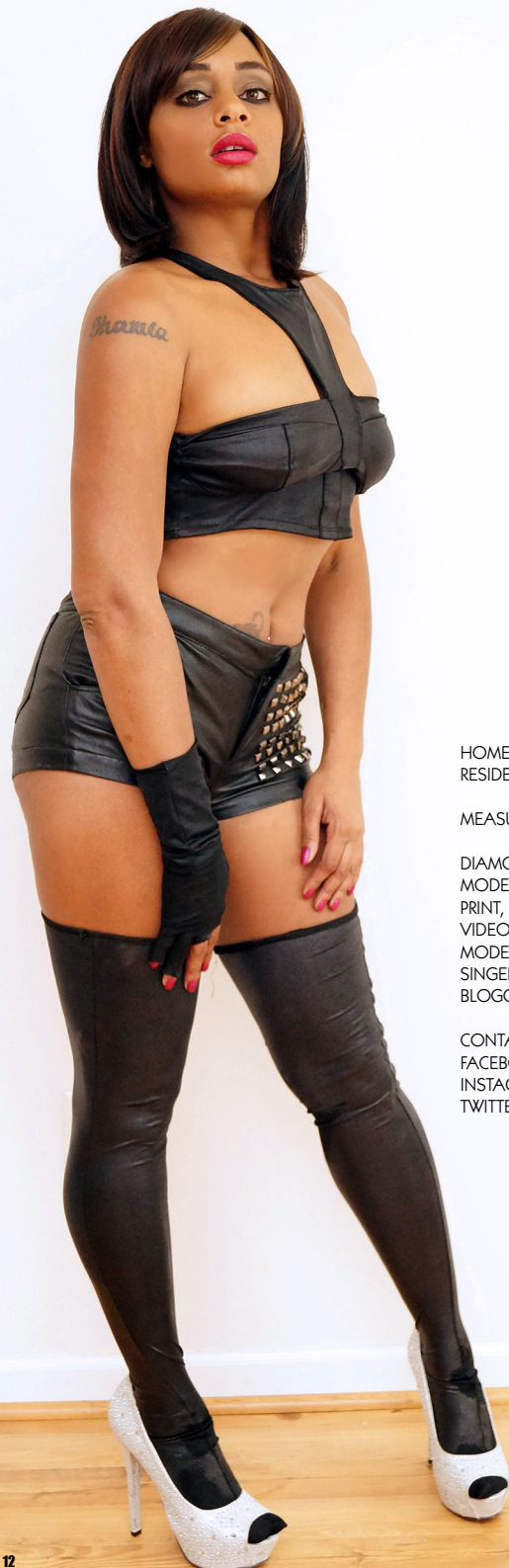
**Any last words?**

Go Cowboys!

Follow Jake Allyn on Instagram and Twitter @JakeAllyn85.







HOMETOWN: MIAMI, FL  
RESIDENCE: ATLANTA, GA

MEASUREMENTS: 34-29-40

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## TWEET DAT!

**@lilduval:** Nicole Simpson was a full fledge hoe outchea.

**@CariChampion:** In this current environment if you're bringing down another woman and you're a woman...you're canceled!!!

**@steveo:** Hard to believe it's been an entire decade since I've had a drink or a drug. I just can't put into words how grateful I am for @realjknnoxville and the rest of the guys who locked me up in a psychiatric ward on March 9, 2008, where this journey began. Thank you, dudes, I love you.

**@allJACE:** Who want the bracket fade?

**@DanielCaesar:** I remember when I told the kids I wasn't going to university I was just gunna do music and they clowned me like you wouldn't believe lol life is crazy

**@realmcaren:** Be positive, thank God for all you have.

**@JaiTheLioness:** Y'all are just trying to find reasons to hate Bruno Mars.. if he's not your cup of tea then he's not your cup of tea but to say that he isn't talented and appropriates black culture to validate your argument is wack.. just say you don't like him and move on

*\*ALL CONTENT HAS BEEN PUBLISHED EXACTLY HOW IT WAS WRITTEN. SUBMIT MATERIAL FOR THE "TWEET DAT" SECTION TO TWENTY4SEVENMAGAZINE@GMAIL.COM OR @TWENTY4SEVENMAG IN YOUR TWEETS.*



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## THE BARBERSHOP



## #AWRINKLEINTIME

**@cezanneab:** Dang @ava - there's a whole theatre of adults ugly sobbing at **#AWrinkleInTime**! There was so much joy, so much sadness, so much... goodness on that screen! Thank you for giving us that.

**@naima:** We gotta keep the same **#BlackPanther** energy for **#AWrinkleInTime**, ya'll. The books are a wonderful, magical mix of science, psychology and spirituality. Take a young one with you, or just go yourself!!

**@biblioscientist:** I just cried non-stop for nearly two hours. Thank you, thank you, thank you @ava for so expertly sharing a story and a vision that 11-year-old me needed, and 27-year-old me needed even more. **#AWrinkleInTime**

**@ScottMendelson:** Fun fact: 2 days ago, **#AWrinkleInTime** had around 500 user ratings on IMDB, with an average score of 4.7/10 and a deluge of 1/10 scores. As of yesterday, those scores are gone and it has no user score as of this moment. Me thinks IMDB isn't going to itself get trolled this time.

**@ConnorFilm:** While I'm not shocked that **#AWrinkleInTime** is getting bad reviews, that doesn't mean I'm happy about it. DuVernay is the first black female director to helm a movie with a budget of over \$100M. I hope this doesn't stop Hollywood from continuing to give opportunities to POC.

**@MsMallork:** **#AWrinkleInTime** was magical. I felt pure joy like I haven't felt since I was a child. What a masterpiece.

## DOPE!

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GENE FREEMAN

# NELSON ESTEVEZ: BETTING ON YOURSELF

WORDS + INTERVIEW BY: KRYSTAL LUSTER

*No matter the cards you're dealt, be sure to make the most of each play that comes around. Nelson Estevez sheds light on the importance of persistence, faith and appreciating those pesky lemons life is so fond of dealing out. Whatever your dream, don't take for granted the small stepping stones because they could very well be building your staircase to greatness.*

## ***Tell us what life was like growing up.***

I grew up in New York City (mainly in Inwood), which is on the northern tip of Manhattan. I spent high school in Cardinal Spellman in the Bronx. I was born to two first generation immigrants from the Dominican Republic who worked extremely hard to provide food on the table and a roof over our heads. I am the oldest of two and I have a younger sister.

Growing up around our neighborhood we all made the best of what we had and what we could afford. I was fortunate to have both of my parents while growing up and to this day. No matter what the situation was, they always managed to give us the essentials. I was pretty much a level headed kid with a lot of energy; my dad introduced me to baseball as an outlet because of it.

## ***What made you decide you wanted to become an actor and how did you get started?***

My sister and I had a VHS when we were kids and we would record our favorite music videos, commercials, TV and film scenes and we would act them out and even build the "sets" with cardboard and/or sofa pillows. We would direct each other to make sure that we were able to mimic the scenes or moments to the best we could and would spend hours doing this!

My sister pursued theater throughout high school and I pursued sports (baseball, football, track). A couple of years after graduating college with a degree in business, I was presented a job to work as background for a scene in a movie (*Hitch* with Will Smith). At this time I was still working a 9-5. I remember watching him (Will) and Kevin James performing and improvising scenes, all while having so much fun doing it. Soon after I started looking into working more background jobs and the rest is history.

## ***Tell us about the upcoming Tyler Perry film "Acrimony" and the character you play.***

*Acrimony* is about a faithful, devoted wife, Melinda (Taraji P. Henson) who becomes sick and tired of standing by her deviant husband Robert (Lyrq Bent). She then becomes enraged when she finds out that she has been betrayed. This is when Melinda unleashes her wrath and goes after what she feels is payback. I play the character Casey, who is a grounded, supportive husband of one of Melinda's sisters, June (Jazmyn Simon). Casey tries to be a voice of reason throughout Melinda's wrath by either consulting his wife and sister-in-law hoping she snaps back to the loving, happy person we all know.

## ***Is this your first big break on the silver screen?***

It is! I have been blessed to work on TV series and have been working more on independent films for festivals, but this is my first break on the silver screen for a major production. I can't wait to have you all check it out and support!

## ***Were you at all nervous working with Taraji?***

I was more excited than nervous to be working with her. I knew that she would bring the best out of everyone in every scene since she is one of the best in the industry. This excited

me because I knew something new, real and interesting would be happening in every take. She is so free and confident in her choices while performing and I knew that if I just listened and stayed true to my intentions of the scene, it would be very exciting and genuine on camera. The entire cast was really solid and being around such seasoned actors and actresses allowed me to grow and excel in my craft.

## ***Do you remember how you felt when you were told you got the part?***

I was very excited to have booked a job, but I had no details or clue as to who or what the project was for since production was keeping everything confidential. During the audition process all I got were the sides, character breakdown/description, casting director name, movie title and the time and location of the audition. Within a week I was on my way to Atlanta to Tyler Perry Studios. This was when I was briefed about who hired me, who was directing and who was starring; which we now know is *Acrimony* with Taraji P. Henson.

## ***How does LA life compare to New York life? What do you miss most about the city that never sleeps?***

What I truly miss the most is my friends and family who I know have my back. LA life can be a little more laid back but I try to keep my New York speed and since everything in LA is more spread out than NY (and traffic is worse), you can't accomplish as many tasks as you can in New York. So, time management and execution is important. These beautiful beaches and palm trees can be a huge distraction for me! Then again, there is always something happening in New York and there is truly no other city like it.

## ***How long have you been trained in martial arts?***

I started training in martial arts in 2012. It has always been a great outlet for me, mentally and physically. I started with Tae Kwon Do and then found a Kung Fu school that has been my sanction. The goals are to be a black belt at both arts. I still have a ways to go with training, forms and flexibility but I love it!

## ***Dope! What is your favorite martial arts film and why?***

That is a great question and a tough one. If I had to narrow it down to one film or a franchise I would have to say *Rush Hour*. I love how Jackie Chan uses his surroundings to maneuver, block and attack his way throughout the film. I also enjoy the comedic elements he brings, as well as Chris Tucker. Jackie does it with such fluidity and it's amazing to watch. I remember just rewinding the sequences to see how certain moves were timed and executed. If I would have to compare myself to an action star, I would say I am more like a Jason Statham. He is very rough, raw and usually uses his surroundings as well.

## ***Choose your destiny: Jet Li, Bruce Lee, or Jackie Chan. One is your disciple, one is your master and one is your opponent.***

Bruce Lee is my disciple because then I would be a legend, Jackie Chan is my master because then my legend status would go up to a SUPER legend and when I fight Jet Li, I would be considered a martial arts icon.





PHOTO BY:  
MICHAEL ROUD

**How do you typically prepare for a role you're auditioning for?**

It depends how much time I am given. In a perfect world with enough time, I'll read over the script numerous times. I'll make sure that I understand my objective for the scene, my long-term objective as well as the other character(s) in the scene. I'll also determine or create a before and after if it is not given to me. This means that I'll try to figure out what was I doing before the scene and where I was emotionally as well as after the scene, depending on whether or not I reach my objective.

I also love to underline significant words in each line in order to emphasize certain intentions, line by line. I like to highlight my lines so they stand out on paper. I read over the actions while underlining and making notes of certain key actions. My script looks like chicken scratch at the end of my auditions. I like to give it a rehearsal with a partner if time and schedule permits before an audition as well. You need to hear and see it for yourself in order to make corrections. A great scene partner will give you different perspective. If I have time, I usually like to watch previous episodes or films of the writer for the film or TV series I am auditioning for in order to hear the cadence and style of it.

**Are you a binge watcher? If so, what show(s) are you currently keeping up with?**

I am not much of a binge watcher due to my attention span, but I will finish it through! Right now I'm really enjoying a comedy series called, *The Mick*. I need to catch up on *West World*. Surprisingly, I do enjoy *Ash vs. The Evil Dead*. It's over the top but it makes me laugh.

**Who would you enjoy working with most if given the opportunity?**

Director: Martin Scorsese. Actor: Denzel Washington. These are two legends and I would love to see both of these individuals in the process of their craft.

**What are 3 life rules you abide by and why?**

One) Be a man of your word. Two) Trust your instincts. If something doesn't feel right, then speak up or just don't do it. Most of the time, you are right and if you are wrong with the situation at least you stood your ground. Three) Evolve. The world is constantly changing. Do not be afraid to learn something new or try something new.

**What are your thoughts on karma?**

I strongly feel that whatever action or energy you give out, it truly comes back and sometimes in another form when you least expect it. It can be challenging, especially when there is an opportunity for revenge. I have learned that coming to peace with certain terms or situations will open other doors and will allow you to evolve and grow with situations and people. It's easier said than done.

**Are you currently auditioning or filming in any upcoming projects?**

I am always auditioning on a weekly basis and I am grateful to say that. This week I had a big audition for an upcoming pilot series. I didn't have much time before the audition but I managed to be off book and I felt really good leaving the offices.

I just finished shooting a short film that I co-directed, wrote, starred and co-produced. We will be in post production soon and will be submitting to festivals. I also have an independent feature film that I will be the lead in, plus I'll be writing some scripts in order to pitch for TV (I have to keep everything confidential but it will be up on social media and IMDb soon). I'm just staying busy and letting the creativity flow!

**Any Last Words?**

Thank you for such a great interview and don't forget to watch *Acrimony*, March 30th!

Contact Nelson Estevez via Instagram @nelsonestevex.  
www.acrimony.movie





# CHECK ME OUT

## BETTYE LAVETTE

### THINGS HAVE CHANGED



etry. I didn't find his words to be pretty so much as they are extremely practical or extremely logical. He can work things like 'go jump off a ledge' into a song."

Bettye LaVette has only come face-to-face with Bob Dylan once, at a festival in Italy. Both backstage, Dylan was preparing to go on when his longtime bassist Tony Garnier pointed out Bettye. Dylan immediately stopped, walked over, and grabbed Bettye's face in his hands and kissed her, and headed out to play his show.

Legend recognized legend.

Things Have Changed sees Dylan's songs seriously transformed: "I had never really listened to 'It Ain't Me Babe,' " she says, "But I had to make it more dismissive—not fast and hard, but like a Jimmy Reed tune. And 'The Times They Are A-Changin',' I had to flip that all the way around, so we worked up the groove on a beat box. That just made it extremely surprising."

To pull off these transformations, LaVette needed a producer who was up to the challenge, and, through Executive Producer Carol Friedman, she found the perfect collaborator in Steve Jordan, former drummer in David Letterman's house band, who has worked with everyone from Chuck Berry to John Mayer. "Steve was absolutely brilliant," she says. "He remembers everything he has ever heard in his entire life, and he was able to interpret for the musicians everything I said to him."

Jordan brought in an A Team of musicians, including Dylan's long-time guitarist Larry Campbell, bass virtuoso Pino Palladino, and keyboardist Leon Pendarvis. The group was in such sync that the whole album was cut in just three days. Later, Keith Richards added guitar and is featured on "Political World" and New Orleans ace Trombone Shorty joined for "What Was It You Wanted."

Grammy nominated singer Bettye LaVette has been in show business for nearly six decades. Her first single "My Man – He's A Lovin' Man" was released on Atlantic Records in 1962, when she was only 16 years old. She continued recording until her resurgence came in the early aughts with a series of albums of interpretations, and in 2008 she wowed the audience at the Kennedy Center Honors ceremony with a heart-wrenching rendition of The Who's "Love Reign O'er Me." Her voice is like no other, and taking on the tricky canon of one of the most substantial songwriters alive is no small feat - but if anyone can match the heart of Bob Dylan, it's Bettye LaVette.

Media Contact: Julia Casey - Verve Label Group  
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**March 9, 2017 (New York, NY)** – For her tenth album and first album on a major label in nearly thirty years, legendary soul singer Bettye LaVette takes on the songs of Bob Dylan with the grit and experience that makes her one of the greatest living soul singers. Things Have Changed is a masterpiece of interpretation of one of the greatest songwriters alive, by one of the greatest soul singers alive. Keith Richards and Trombone Shorty guest on the Steve Jordan-produced album, which is set for release on Verve Records on March 30.

Since the great 21st century rediscovery of Bettye LaVette returned her to prominence, she has worked extensively in the rock and folk idioms, with her unique takes on songs by the likes of The Who, The Rolling Stones, Pink Floyd, Fiona Apple, and Dolly Parton. But never before has she devoted an entire album to the material of one songwriter.

Things Have Changed spans more than five decades of Dylan songs, from 1964's immortal "The Times They Are A-Changin'" up to "Ain't Talkin'," the epic final track on his 2006 album Modern Times.

"Other people write songs, but he writes vignettes, more prose than po-

## MIX PICKS



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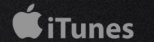
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# TWENTY4SEVEN

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## NELSON ESTEVEZ

+ Jake Allyn. T'Juan "The Mystery Kid".  
Brett Gray. #AWrinkleInTime. Bettye LaVette.

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