

...NOT IN THISDAY STYLE? THEN YOU'RE NOT IN STYLE

SUNDAY, JANUARY 2, 2022

THIS DAY

Style

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COVER

The growth and relevance of Nollywood in Africa's movie space is very apparent. This is evident in the talent and creative delivery witnessed in stellar acting performances by these wave of actors in movies. They are virtually the best in their generation and are in hot demand from producers and production companies.
AZUKA OGUJIUBA reports

THISDAY STYLE

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If there is any industry in Nigeria that has grown in leaps and bounds, the Nollywood industry will definitely come within the first three sectors mentioned. Some of our leading actors have grown to become global brands. Next to Hollywood, then Bollywood, the Nollywood industry is the third most popular industry worldwide. As Nigerians, we cannot but doff our hats to a sector that has continued to move from strength to strength regardless of the challenges faced in growing a business like this, in such a climate as ours. A few decades back, the world was not ready to hear the African narrative. We were relegated to the background. But not anymore. From music to fashion to arts and now acting, Africans, especially Nigerians, are owning their game and telling their stories...on their terms.

A few weeks back, we featured a new breed of female actresses gracing our screens and it was a hit! This week, we thought it only fair to give their male counterparts the same accolades because like their female peers, they too have graced the screens with captivating performances that have won some of them various awards through the course of their careers.

There's still so much more to see from these young actors, both male and female. They also have some big shoes to fill because there are legends in this sector that have held us glued to our seats from one scintillating movie to another. These new generation of actors have to earn their stripes like those before them did and are still doing.

The role of an actor is never easy. In fact when a role is played so well, it is made to look seamless. It's that seamlessness that separates the wheat from the chaff in an industry that is as consuming as it is ruthless, because their performance or lack thereof is always viewed through microscopic lens.

Regardless, the growth and gargantuan success of Nollywood over the years, is a testimony of the talents in our midst which we hopefully will continue to harness.

Ruth

FASHION DIRECTOR/EXECUTIVE EDITOR

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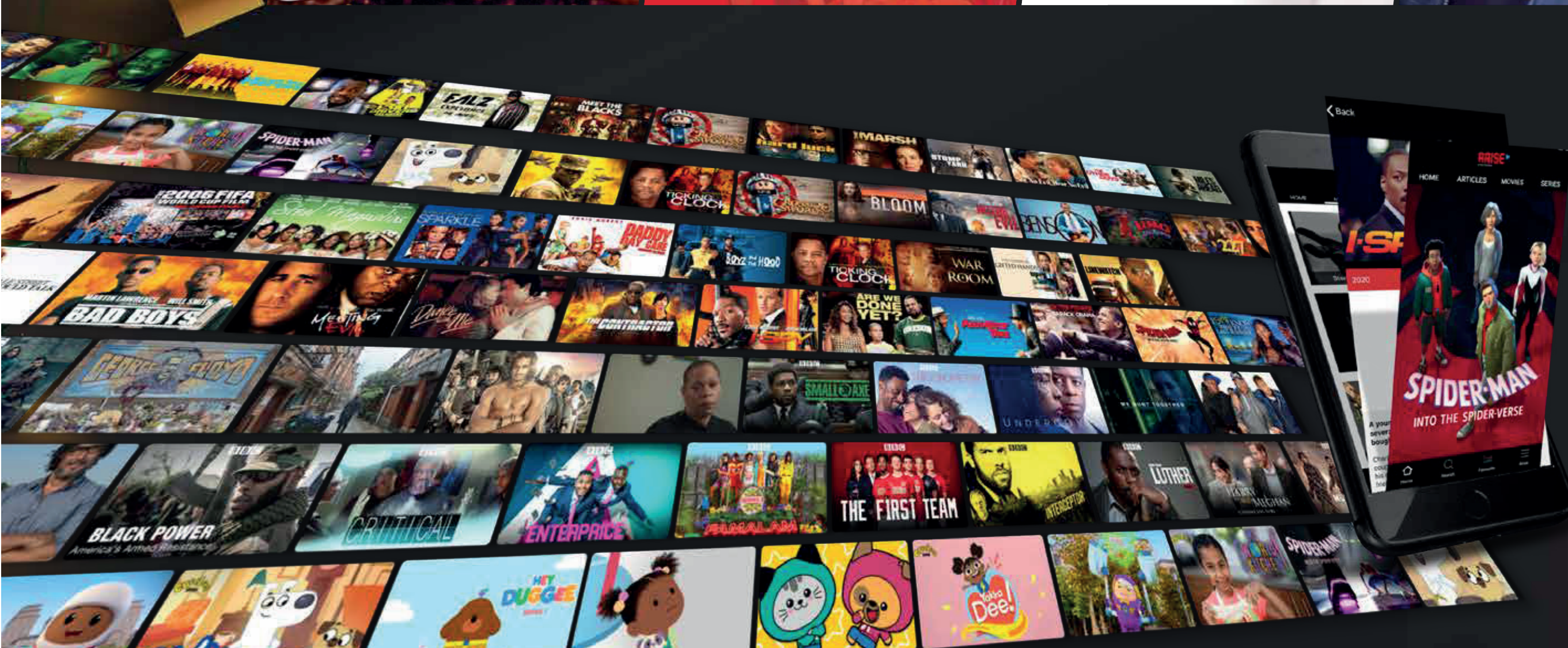
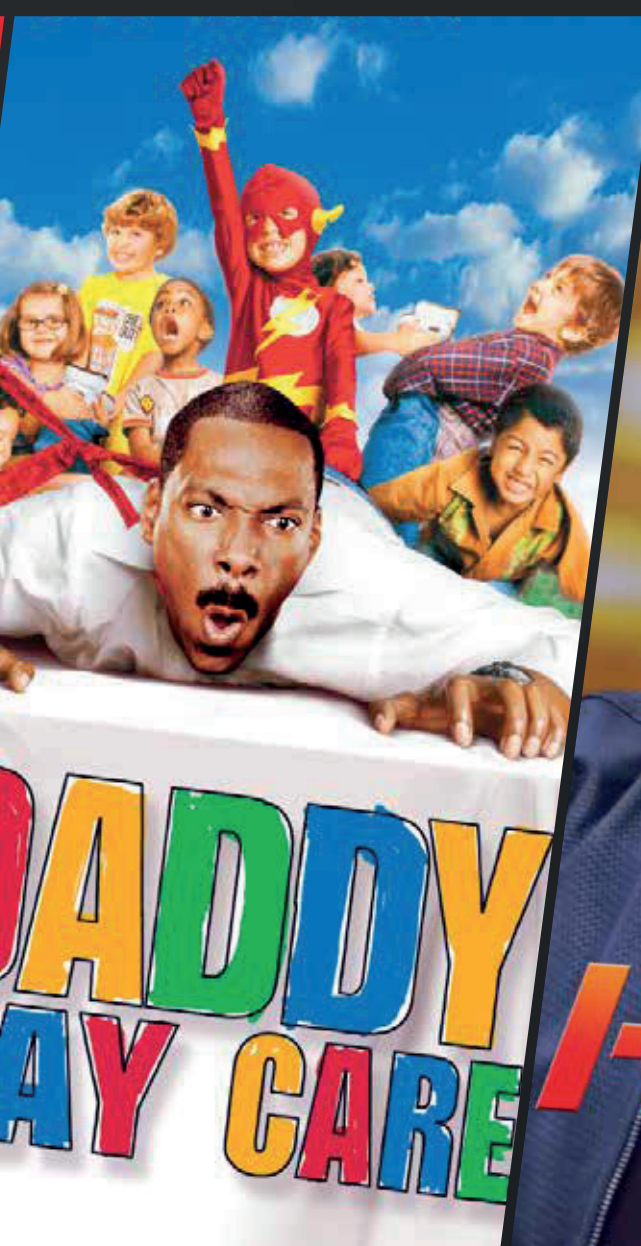
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Olu of Warri Celebrates Christmas with Carols and Colourful Performances

BY USIADE ISIOMA

Recently, the ancient Kingdom of Warri, Delta State was agog with colourful parades, dances, fireworks and cultural entertainment as the Monarch, His Royal Majesty, Ogiame Atuwatse III and His wife Olori Atuwatse III welcomed the world to the maiden edition of the Royal Iwere Christmas Carol and Ghigho Aghofen held at Aghofen, Warri Kingdom.

The Christmas Carol was a night of high praises, traditional renditions and deep ministrations. Guests and indigenes of the Kingdom were thrilled with classic Christmas carols such as Silent Night, Once in Royal David City, The First Noel and the Hallelujah Chorus, all rendered with instruments and intonations that define the rich cultural heritage of the Warri people.

The event was graced with prominent dignitaries; the Ohworode of Olomu Kingdom His Royal Majesty, Ovie Richard Layeguen Ogbon, Ogoni-Oghoro; Former governor of Delta State, Dr Emmanuel Uduaghan, C.O.N; Senator representing Delta South Senatorial District of Delta State, James Manager; Founder, Restoring Issachar's Generation (RIG), Apostle Tomi Arayomi, traditional rulers from across Nigeria, officials from state agencies and other notable personalities who participated in making it a memorable occasion.



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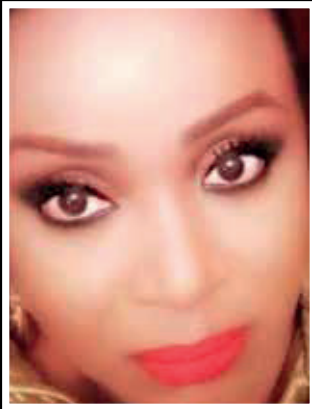
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CAPSULES

“The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds”

The good book tells us that we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers and because of this our response to this orchestrated attempt to pull us down at every point cannot be carnal. We live in a time where fear is fast gaining territory in our minds and we need to be deliberate in the way we respond as living life in fear is not living at all. Whatever occupies our minds occupies our lives as the battlefield of the forces is our minds, wars are fought and lost primarily in our thoughts, once we release our minds to enslavement by negativity, we lose.

We have just opened a new chapter in our journey and it is time to start winning especially against those “ini mini maini mo” spirits that buzz around our thought processes. We may think it cliché to say we have only this one life to live, but we honestly have this one life to live and what we do with it is up to us. I know that the good book also said that the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong but that time and chance happens to them all, but I must insist that time and chance can only assist you in your race and in your attempt to get things done. You cannot sit in one place faffing and drinking and expect that life will propel you to where you need to be, you must learn to contribute your quota in faith and not resign to fate.

We have been through a couple of years that has brutalised our minds with the intensity of its negativity (to quote my nephew kunfade on intensity of brutality) and coming out of this will take a deliberate effort by us to purge our minds with the same intensity to escape from this prison. I watched the film “Jesus of Nazareth” over the holidays again and I spent time musing....how do we daily claim faith if we do not look at life through the eyes of Christ, how can we claim relationship when nothing he does or says influences us to be better.....He is the greatest influencer you know, the greatest direction giver, the greatest way maker, the greatest miracle worker, but do we even understand the things he said in his word, because if we do, why are we afraid? Why are we frustrated and dismayed when the one behind us is called the Lion of Judah, why do we continue to feed our fears and starve our faith by focussing on things that cannot elevate us?

We need to do a soul check and reassess and evaluate, we need to cut ties with everything and everyone that will hinder our journey towards eternity in God. I know there are many who through crisis of faith have lost their faith, and others who believe those who believe are inane. I can understand why many feel this way but it is not too late in the day to pause again to ponder and allow the light that always illuminates to lead you where your soul needs to find rest.

We need to approach things differently because it is critical to our ascending that we change our thought processes. It is not about “peppering” others or about what others think of us, it is about what God thinks of us, we need to latch on to the one who will see us through every storm.

Nobody can change God’s mind about you, so hold on to him. Many have given up on God though they talk the talk they do not walk the talk, even many who walk the talk do it mindlessly, there is no real relationship with the Maker. It’s time to do it differently, it’s time to live the truth of your faith in re-ma not just in logos. It’s time to build a relationship with God not a relationship with church, nothing wrong in going to church and listening to the word that is how you build your spiritual muscle BUT there is a need to BUILD a one on one with God far from the throng.

Happy new year and I pray for a smooth sail for all in 2022.



QUE SERA SERA?

Ever wondered if events always unfold as they were pre-ordained to or if we have the power to shape things? Que Sera Sera, meaning What Will be Will Be, is the title of Doris Day’s signature 1976 song. The chorus goes:

“Que sera sera,
whatever will be will be,
the future’s not ours to see,
que sera sera,
what will be will be.”

In this song, a lady, asks about her future at different stages of her life. As a child she first asked her mother; when she grew up she asked her lover. This chorus was the answer she received from each of them. Ironically, when she became a mother, her children asked her the same question and she repeated this chorus to them.

Have you ever pondered questions like “Would I have avoided that financial loss if I had been more thorough with my research? Would I have been happier married to my first love? If I had followed my instinct would that tragedy have been averted? Or is life just a series of ‘Que sera sera’?

In his biography, Just As I Am, evangelist Billy Graham tells of how he was uncomfortable about President Kennedy’s planned visit to Dallas because of the growing hostility of extreme right-winged conservatives towards what they considered the liberal policies of the JFK administration. On the morning of November 22, 1963, Graham put a call through to the White House to convey one message to the President – “Do not go to Dallas”. The call went through but he was told the President had already left. That afternoon John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas. We have scriptural examples of servants of God reaching leaders to warn them not to take a particular course and their lives being saved because they heeded the message. Such was the case in 2 Kings 6:8-12. The Arameans were at war with Israel and several times Elisha told the king of Israel “Don’t pass that way” because the enemies were waiting to attack. The king of Aram thought there was a traitor in his government but he learnt that by divine revelation, Elisha got wind of their plans and warned the King of Israel.

But we also have instances where events take place because they are destined to and we can do nothing to stop them. Against all odds, on 14 May 1948, Israel became a nation. This regathering of the Jews on their land had been prophesied in Ezekiel 36:8-12.

“The book of Ezekiel contains a dual prophecy to the People of Israel. In its first part, God tells the Jewish People that the land assigned to them will remain desolate as

long as it is occupied by strangers, and they remain in exile. And so it was - a bleak, barren, undeveloped land - for over 2000 years. In the second half of the prophecy, God describes the signs of the incipient redemption - how the land would appear just before the Jewish People would return forever. This part of the promise, too, began to come true, during the decades preceding the establishment of the Jewish state in Eretz Israel. This is the State of Israel, referred to in a Jewish prayer as the “first flowering of our redemption”. From the deep sleep of oblivion in the absence of its sons and daughters, the land finally awakened’ (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel)

But from scripture we also have examples to show that different factors may come into play to sway the hand of events. God sent Isaiah the prophet to tell King Hezekiah to put his house in order because it was time for him to die. The king responded by pleading with God, who extended his life by 15 years (2 Kings 20). In another instance, when the celebrants ran out of wine at the wedding in Canaan of Galilee, Jesus was approached. He said his time had not yet come but he ended up performing a miracle when Mary, his mother, insisted that they do what he said (John 2:1-11). Then we have a classic example of how persistent prayer can get us what we want. To drive home this point, Jesus told the parable of a woman who pestered a godless leader until he changed his mind and granted her request (Luke 18:1-8).

So yes, life sometimes plays itself out to a determined pattern, and sometimes it does not. How then do we know whether we are in a ‘Que sera sera’ place or not? We can ask God and He may tell us. Where we do not know, rather than fold our hands, we can be pro-active and pray, exercise faith and take the responsible, sensible steps. Should events not turn out the way we had hoped, we must ultimately bow, in trust, to His sovereignty because “as for God, His way is perfect” (2 Samuel 22:31).

For daily devotionals follow us @ coloursoflifeministry. We can be reached at contact@coloursoflife.org.

COLOURS OF LIFE SHOW

Our Colours of Life show is back on YouTube @coloursoflifetv. New episodes air Sundays at 5pm (WAT). Last week, for our Christmas special we are joined by Dr Dare Ajiboye and Chief Varshese to talk about the amazing work of the Bible Society of Nigeria. Today, we meet Timilehin Olugbenro, Tamarapreye Okara and Demilade Dutotoye, three remarkable young people doing interesting things. Join us next Sunday for a conversation with Ngozi Princewill-Utchay on Faith and Fashion.

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Wigs are having a major moment in the beauty industry. Just as there are many different ways to style a wig, there are also many different kinds of wigs to style. Frontals, full-face wigs, synthetic units - you've got options. The recently launched Wigs By JJ collections which specializes in custom wig making is currently running an online store. They are taking the ordinary weave styling to a new level. In this exclusive chat with **STYLE CORRESPONDENT, USIADE ISIOMA, Janet** talks about the different ranges of wigs, what differentiates her wigs and maintenance culture.

How many types of hair collections/ranges do you have?

Four different ranges. The Gold, Silver, Platinum and VIP range.

Tell us the price, quality, length, bundles and life span of each range of hair.

So you can have between 180-220. We are currently working on increasing up to 250. With the gold range, it comes in single bundles, you can select the bundles you want, your length and your texture and then decide whether you want a frontal or a closure and the size. With this we manufacture a readymade wig.

The platinum range are ready to wear wigs. You don't select by bundle or by closure or frontal. They come in all in different textures from straight, curly, wavy waterways all the way to kinky, straight Kinky Curly. And we have a range of different density. So, you can have between 180 density to 250 density in the platinum range. The platinum Range gives a lifespan of up to four years. The quality is reliable and the closed and frontals are extremely durable.

The Silver range comes from the same supplier as the Gold but it's amore affordable range in our collection. So, we recommend this for the young person, the students or the woman that prefers to change her hair regularly that's not looking for longevity but looking for something in good quality and the lifespan is three years.

The fourth range is our VIP collection and it's the most affordable product that we have in the entire range.

For their price range let's say for the VIP, 16 inches VIP wig is going for N200,000 naira and the longest which is most affordable in the VIP range is N310,000.

How many bundles do you have for a normal head of hair?

On average, you can use about three, to three and a half. But the unique thing about this range is you can select as many or as little as you want.

What makes the Gold range different from the other ranges?

Gold range has a lifespan of up to five years, but the hair does last more than five years.

After the life span of each hair range, what happens?

After the years guaranteed the quality of the hair over wear and tear, it'll start to disintegrate a little bit. Of course, all of the hair will last beyond our lifetime. But this is where we put our guarantee that you will not have to buy another hair after the years stated.

What is the longest inch you have in all your wigs and what's

the shortest?

The shortest is 12 inches. And on our price list we have up to 30 inches however we can produce any length needed.

The price in the market is very competitive considering the number of people into the hair business, what differentiates your wigs from theirs and what makes your wigs pocket friendly?

So, we have a range in the Gold and the VIP that come glue less. Over the years we have found women react to constant glue and also suffer with hair loss. So we have created a product that doesn't require glue.

If the wigs are glue less, how does it stay on?

It's just how the wig is made. It's made in such a way where it fits quite securely and for the gold range. We use like a six by six or a five-by-five closure instead of the frontal.

In terms of colours, does the client have the luxury of mixing the colours that they want for you to produce or do they just have to buy what you have on ground?

So, with the VIP range, and the Platinum, they come in different colours, the VIP comes in any colour that you want. We have a colour wheel that you can select from. The Platinum range comes in blond as well as natural colours. But the Gold we only sell in the natural colour but we actually specialize in colouring. So, we have a brand reputation for professional colouring services which can be added on to your wig service in your order.

If one were to order now, where would one find your wigs?

At the moment we have somebody that stocks our product so what we are doing is drop off. So, when you purchase a product or you order a product or you want to even test the product, we do a home delivery. And our social media Instagram handle is @Angelshairandbeautysalon. You can also email us at info@janetjoshua.com

What has the reception from your customers been like since you launched your products?

It's been really good. People can see the quality, it's unique, it's different and the packaging is on point. They've been buying without hesitation. We also have a client base in Nigeria from UK branch that has been reaching out for some products as well.

What's the best advice you can give to your clients to best maintain their hair to give them the longest durability?

The best advice I would give is to maintain your hair with a trusted salon and invest in your aftercare by purchasing all of the right maintenance aftercare products, and really learn how to treat the hair properly after purchase.

Do you provide an advisory service to teach your clients how best to maintain their hair?

We definitely offer Advising Service where we would do anything it takes to make sure the clients are maintaining their hair well. My professional background in hair is also in teaching so I love to educate my clients through their purchase, it's important to me. And it also personalizes the experience.

Is that service available?

At the moment we have an article in the wig package where you get a little aftercare card which just gives some outline, basic and general instructions on how to maintain your wig. The aim is to definitely set up here and to have a team on ground so that they can also assists clients on after care as well.

In terms of texture of hair, there are Peruvian, Chinese, Indian hair etc what kind of hair do you have?

We have access to all different textures from Caribbean, Brazilian, Indian Mongolian, but our most popular sellers are usually Peruvian or Indian in our Gold range. Our VIP range is also very popular with the supper double drawn.

How much longer are you going to be in Nigeria to do this promotional campaign for your product?

I've been around for a month and I'll be back again in January for another month. I'll probably come consecutively for the next six months and eventually open a store here.



JANET JOSHUA

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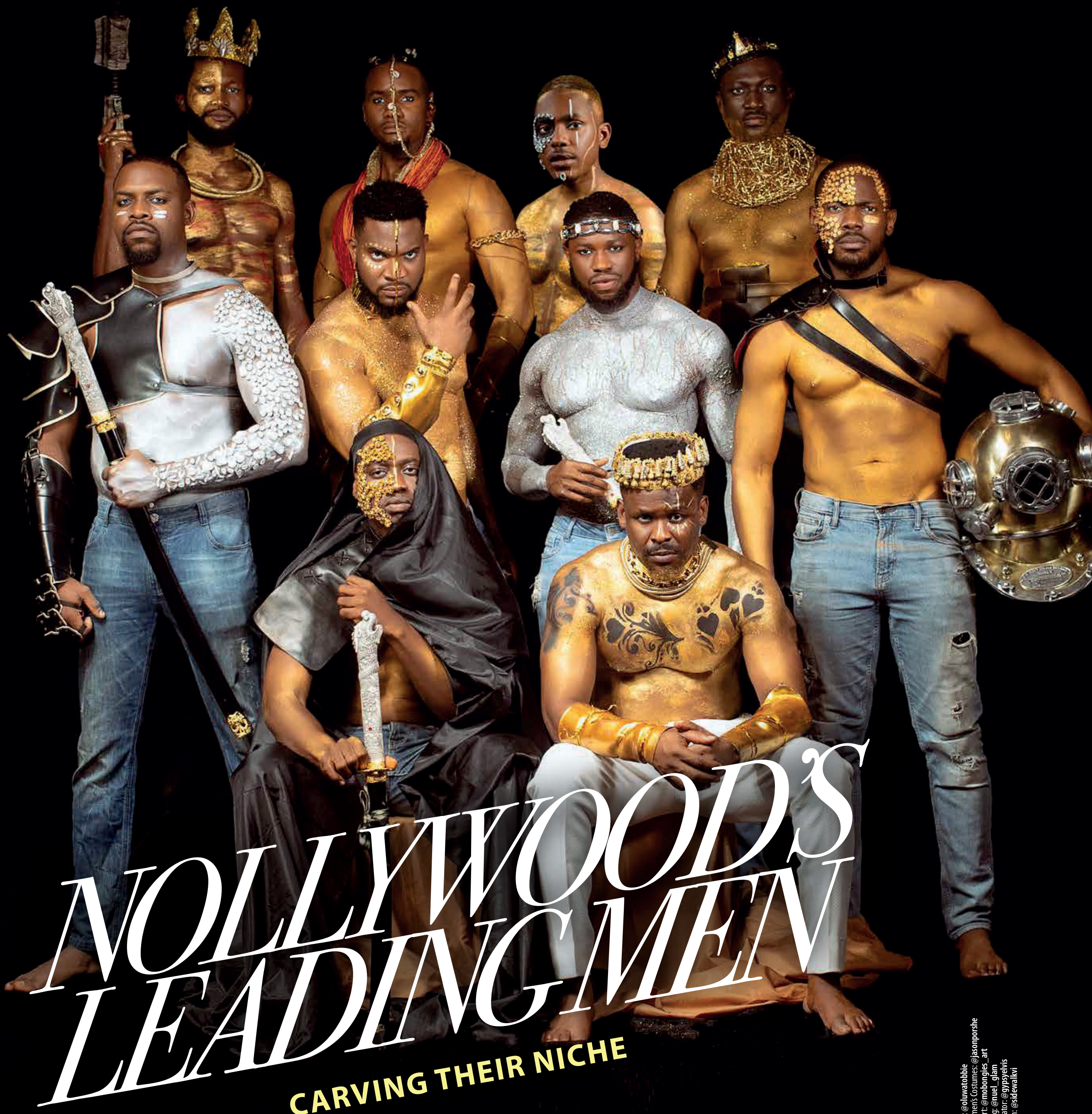
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**NOLLYWOOD'S
LEADING MEN**
CARVING THEIR NICHE

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Look 2: Body Art: @mbongies_art
Male Grooming: @muel_glam
Shoot Coordinator: @gypsyelvis
Shoot Location: @stidewalkr

The growth and relevance of Nollywood in Africa's movie space is very apparent. This is evident in the talent and creative delivery witnessed in stellar acting performances by these wave of actors in movies. They are virtually the best in their generation and are in hot demand from producers and production companies.

From time past, Nigerian actors have always been the cynosure of all eyes and stolen the show whenever they are pitched with their counterparts from other African countries. As a result, their interest has transcended their skills to their personal affairs.

In this riveting interview with AZUKA OGUJIUBA, we have 10 of Nollywood's leading men whose acting delivery have continued to hold viewers spellbound. We satisfy the curiosity of their fans by revealing personal details of their lives. They include Stan Nze, Lateef Adediji, Bucci Franklin, Zubby Michael, Kunle Remi, Efa Iwara, Jide Kene A, Timini Egbuson, Daniel Etim Effiong, and Uzee. A. Usman.

Stan Nze ►

What impact did your time at the Stella Damasus Arts Foundation have in your acting career? Would you say it was a great decision to enrol?

Enrolling for Stella Damasus Art Foundation was one of the best decisions I made starting up my career. At the time, I didn't know my left from my right. I knew I wanted to act, and I was trying everything—I tried auditions and joined a theatre group back in school. You cannot overemphasize the need for training, and so when the opportunity for that came, I auditioned for it.

At the time, Stella Damasus was looking for talented people that she could harness, and I happened to be one of the lucky ones. While at her program, I auditioned for Tinsel, and I got on the show. I had been auditioning before then, but I never got on the show. I got on the show whilst I was training with Stella Damasus.

The foundation taught and opened me up to so much about the craft. Talent is never enough. Yes, I was talented, but I needed the right coaching and guidance, which the platform gave me. I usually go back to the notes I made during my training; it still helps me in my character preparations today, it's helps me in all the prominent roles, and it has helped me throughout my career. It was definitely a great decision, and I do not regret it at all.

Your parents are busy people with business and fashion; how would you describe their support in the course of your acting career?

For parental support towards my acting career, I would say it was 50/50. I'm not going to say they were in full support or not because acting at that time wasn't something you wanted to do as a full-time career. Even I didn't think it was what I wanted to do full time.

It initially started up as something I wanted to do for fun, but my mum decided to take it on fully as my Dad was not very much in the picture at the time. My mum has guided me through the path of growth in this sector. She also thought education was essential and gave me the best of it. While I was in school, I tried to lay my hands on as many auditions as possible, but I didn't really



do anything until I was out of school. My mum would always support me with transport fares to auditions. That was the little she could do. Eventually, when my Dad knew I was acting, it didn't make much sense to him. But I think the goal of every parent is to see their children succeed in whatever sphere or field they find themselves in.

If you are a doctor, succeed. If you are an engineer, succeed. If you are a footballer, succeed. Success is their greatest passion. So, once I did my first job and did the second, they saw a future and became pretty supportive. Right now, they are my biggest fans, so to speak.

Having studied Computer Science at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, what made you foray into acting?

So computer Science, for me at the time, was just me in pursuit of a degree. Before I got into Uni, I was gisting with my cousin, and she said, "E get people wey dey get free lecture days for school well well." I asked her what captures that was, and she said Computer Science. Basically, I was interested in the course because I thought they would have a lot of free lecture days to give me time to act, but that was not the case because it was really tedious when I got into school.

It was almost a struggle through school because it wasn't something I was passionate about, even though I

started enjoying it in the long run.

Acting is what I'm passionate about. Acting is what I do out of ease. So, it was not a struggle to decide to want to become an actor or face Nollywood squarely.

Does acting bring you a sense of fulfilment to life's purpose? And do you see yourself practising Computer Science in any way possible in the future?

Absolutely. Acting brings me the greatest fulfilment ever. Movies generally. I make films as well, so I'm able to tell the sort of stories I want people to see. I'm able to impact lives through my projects.

I have made films where people send me DM's and say lots of fantastic thing about. "Oh, this film changed my life. I am glad I watched it." "Thank you for making this film. Thank you for giving your life to this character."

Especially with Rattlesnake, the Ahanna story, Colourless. I can

go on and on.
So, definitely, I'm fulfilled with acting. I'm so fulfilled! For me, it's a ministry. It's beyond just entertaining people. It's beyond being on screen and being famous, and it's way more than that for me.

It's about touching lives; it's about changing lives, it's about impacting, teaching and empowering.
If I see myself using computer science anytime in the future? Probably. I.T is very powerful. It is a tool you can use for entertainment. I mean - there's youtube, there's IGTV. Most people that watch movies watch from their phones online. So I really think there's so much I can also do in marrying entertainment and IT. In the nearest future, I'm looking at investing in the I.T world. I believe nothing happens by mistake. Nothing happens under the space of the earth that God is not aware of. I'm sure even when I was just studying computer science for the sake of it, God was deliberate about orchestrating these things, so I think somehow in the future, it will all align.

Before your first significant acting role in 2013, you had been on minor roles and guest appearances on TV series; how would you describe that period?
Before 2013, when I got one of my first major films, Murder At Prime Suites, I did a lot of small roles, one scene, two scenes, threes scenes... when I wanted to act, all I wanted to do was act. I didn't care whether it was 'waka pass'. In fact, I recall going to some sets back then begging them to just feature me as anything. I wanted to act so badly. I was tired of telling people I was an actor without anything to show for it. It was difficult.
I got the first role in 2009. The truth is, I got a couple before then but I was not able to do them. You know how film is?. You might audition for it in July, and then they are ready to shoot in two months time when I'm already back at school, so it was hard for me to combine both. I wasn't able to do anything until 2019 during my industrial training in Lagos, when I could now combine auditions and movie gigs. My first role was a small role in a TV series called Private Sector. I did a lot of other small roles afterwards until I got fed up. After a while, I was like, "I am really good at this thing". I am more than just the one and two scenes roles, I wanted more. I started yearning for more, I started developing myself which is why I even went for training. I needed to know the things that the people at the top knew.

How did you feel on set when you finally had the opportunity to express your talent in Nollywood with a role in Murder At Prime Suites?
So when I finally got this major role, it was a big deal! I felt like this is the time everything is going to happen, I'm going to get nominations and all. It was good at the time, but then it didn't make as many waves as I thought it would make. I didn't get as popular as I thought I would be. A lot of things I thought would happen with the role didn't happen. Which brings me to say that my journey so far as the brand Stan Nze can not be attributed to one particular film. God has used a series of different projects to take me to different heights at different times.

There was Tinsel which at the time, was the biggest tv series in Africa and yes, I had a good role. Then there was Murder at Prime Suites. Then my first lead in the TV series came in 2012, The Benjamins. And that's how it has gone on and on. I made my first film as a Producer in 2015 - Bad Drop. Made the second one in 2016. Also in the same 2015 was when I featured in "Just Not Married" which was screened at the Toronto international film festival. So at different points in my career, God has brought different projects that gave me a new level and attributed to what I am today.

You are revered for your role as Ahanna in the remake of the movie Rattlesnake; tell us about that and how it felt working with Ramsey Nouah to achieve that feat?
Ahanna! Ahanna!! So now I like to think that that's my breakthrough role. Prior to the time I shot Rattlesnake; The Ahanna Story, I was relatively popular - I had played

some really huge roles that people liked me for...but there's just something different about Rattlesnakes and the character Ahanna. It brought me totally into a whole new level. I made sacrifices I had never made before in terms of characterization, performance and just going there as an actor. I have always given my best to characters but for this role, I went an extra mile.
Working with the Director, Ramsey Noah is an actor's director...he is every actor's dream. If you are an actor in Africa I'm sure he is someone you want to work with. He is a phenomenal actor so I let every knowledge I had in the past go so that I could imbibe new knowledge from him.
I became a template with which he painted his canvas. So yeah, it's an experience I will not trade for anything in the world.

How are able to achieve that effortlessly switch into different roles in your movies?
So about switching in between different roles in movies, I have always hated stereotypes. In Nollywood, once you do something right the first time and they think that's what you are good at, they never give you anything else.
I got into the industry doing a lot of comedies. My character on Tinsel was funny and people just thought I was a stupid guy. Nobody thought I could be serious and for me it was quite worrisome because I knew that I had more to offer. Drama is my forte. People I really look up to when it comes to character interpretation is Mercy Johnson - she is able to do comedy, drama and all. She's able to cut across different characters and that's the sort of career I was looking at building for myself. At a point, I made up my mind that I didn't want to do comedies anymore or be that stupid guy on TV.
In 2015 I got this character where I played a villain in a short film called The Encounter. People started to take me seriously as an actor after this film. I started coming across as somebody who could really act.

A Director that had worked with me before sent me a message saying "Ah, I didn't know you were this good". It positioned me better.
Quite a number of mean guy roles came after that and I got fed up at some point. I now wanted to be a sweet boy for a change. So from like 2018 into 2019 I started looking for such roles, the good guy, the mal-treated one, the victim, the emotional wreck...
That was the trajectory. If you check from after Rattlesnake, I switched back again to comedy. So from last year up until now, you will see characters like Bonus Okereke in Prophetess , Dotun Adebute in Charge and Bail and most recently, Donald aka Dodo in Aki and Pawpaw which is out in December.

You got your first role as a lead actor in the movie Just Not Married produced by Judith Audu; how did you feel when the movie was screened at the Toronto International film festival the same year it was released?
Just Not Married is one of the testimonies I count in my career. Judith Audu sent me the script and when I saw the title, in my head, I was hesitant. But as I started reading, it turned out to be one of the most amazing scripts I have read throughout my career to date. I kid you not. I chatted her up immediately and was really curious why she chose me for the role because at the time, I had not done so much. It turned out she believed in me more than I would have ever imagined. She said she didn't see any other person for the character.
She pushed the film really hard and thank God for producers like her who will go the extra mile to submit it for festivals, submit it for awards till it got on the TIFF. It placed us on the international map and as a result, people started looking my way.

Having worked with many Producers on several movies, who would you say has been the most challenging Producer and what role has been your most challenging to date?
I wouldn't say I have had the most challenging Producers to work with. Nollywood in general, is a chal-

lenging industry to work and be in. Sometimes we are struggling with budget and other times we are struggling with the quality of script that Producers send. I have done some bad films and I'm not even going to lie! There are times when I felt like returning some Producers' money because I felt I had no business on this project but it's a general thing. It's not easy to make a film in this part of the world.
You struggle with sound, generator noise, you struggle with budget. The only person probably supporting you in the business is your partner who gives you money to make the film.

I understand that it's not easy for everybody so I'm not going to start pointing fingers and calling names. I'm just grateful for everybody who has given me work at some point in time.
But if I am to talk about the most challenging character; I like to think that the most challenging character I have played is Emeka on Iroko tv.
It is indeed one of the deepest things I have done as an actor, and it's based on a true-life story of a guy who lost his father just the day he returns from NYSC. The story is basically about his struggle through depression and finding healing in the end.
Now, why this was difficult for me is that I have never lost anyone aside from my grandparents and they were old and grey, which didn't really hit home as such. I didn't know how to deliver and which is why I always say that the one who helped me deliver my characters is the Holy Spirit. I remembered I prayed to Him and asked Him to teach me what to do and for some reason, every step of the way, He just showed up teaching me how to feel and I literally felt what the guy in the script felt.

Which is more lucrative, acting or producing and if allowed to choose just one, which will you settle for?
Which will I say is the most lucrative and settle for? They are both lucrative in their different ways. You make more money for producing but it is hard work unlike when I'm acting, all I need to do is read my script, come to set... be a diva (laughter)
It's not really your business if the film does well or not but as a Producer, it's a different ball game. The money made from producing here doesn't really add up for all the stress you have to go through you know - finding the right script, finding the right actors to interpret it, finding your locations, employing people and so on. It might seem like the money is bigger but it's not really commensurate to the stress. So, in all, the passion is what keeps you going as a filmmaker. Liked I said before the reason I make films is so that I can tell the sort of stories I want to tell. That is actually enough payment for me. The fact that people send me messages on how their lives were transformed with the story that I told is the payment.
So, if I was going to settle for any role in the end, it will be producing.

What is the motivation behind the 'Kids Can Act' project and what do you intend to achieve with it?
A: The motivation came from people complaining about the lack of child actors in Nollywood. Most times the Producers will just bring relatives to come and act because that's what they have access to. I came up with the project to change that. Right now, I can beat my chest to say we have some of the best kid actors in Africa.
It's a tedious process. Of course, you know kids are not the easiest to manage, but when you eventually see the final project and the amount of talent these kids have, it makes the entire process worth it.
So, what we intend to achieve with this platform is to raise the next generation of Nollywood stars, manage them, nurture them so that they don't end up being the wrong kind of stars basically.

When you are not working, where and how do you relax?
To be honest when I'm not working, I just like to chill at home. Stay home, watch TV under my duvet and

press my phone. Work already is so stressful and I like to relax...relax to the fullest.
Sometimes I go out to the movies or travel. Of course covid has made it even harder to travel nowadays.

You're always beaming, can you share with the source?
The source of my joy is God the author and finisher of my faith...Jesus. He's the only source of my joy. It gladdens my heart to worship God. It blesses my heart to be in church. It might not feel like the orthodox way but that's how I renew myself. That's how I stay joyful. There's

a joy that comes from within that you can't fake. It's only God that gives that.

You recently got hitched.
I got married to the most amazing woman in the world two weeks ago and I must say it's one of the best feelings ever. I feel so fulfilled. I'm living my best life yet to be honest. We dated close to four years. We were friends first before dating. Yes, we had our ups and downs, broke up at some point and got back. You know when it comes to marriage; you have to make the right decision. I don't know who the future holds but I know

the one who holds the future, JESUS. This was my confidence to forge ahead. And after 10 years and beyond, I'm sure that this testimony would still be the same.

Which actor are you starstruck with?
Genevieve Nnaji of course. I'm starstruck by her and cannot wait to share the screen with her. I love her craft so much I feel she's really talented and what I even love the most about her is that she acts effortlessly... that's the chills Genevieve gives me. I really cannot wait to share the screen with her and I'm sure it will happen really soon!

mous Folarin. How did you feel when you realized that your talent was being appreciated?
I was excited, I didn't imagine that Gidi Up would get that much reception especially because it was on the web. I was also sceptical because I was playing the villain but people loved the character so much.
You have a very high work ethic- you have had to double as an actor and Director on some projects. Where do you get such energy from?
Well I have directed myself just once but my directing and acting career co-exist side by side quite comfortably. I am driven by my desire to succeed. Having quit Oil & Gas, my goal is to prove all my naysayers wrong. I am also inspired by my growing family to work hard and be very successful in my chosen field.

What is your affiliation with South Africa- you seem to have done many projects over there?
I studied filmmaking in South Africa and worked there briefly, so I have built a considerable network of business partners and close friends there. Cape Town is also one of my favourite cities in the world, I had my honeymoon there and still have fond memories of the city.

Movies you directed and featured in have won several national and international recognition. Should we expect more from you, or do you intend to slow down a little?
(Laughter) Slow down for who? I have only just started. I haven't even begun to excavate from the depth of creative potential in me. There are loads of amazing stories to be told; "The harvest is plenty but the labourers are few"!

You have featured and played diverse roles in so many movies- Adze in South Africa's "Generations The Legacy" Mike Amenechi on Ebonylife/Netflix Series Castle & Castle I & II (2019 & 2021), police detective ASP Dabara Kurukeme on the highly acclaimed Mnet Series Brethren, how are you able to assimilate these characters so well?
Switching between characters is part of the actor's craft. I study the characters and find a meeting point between my life and the character that I play and then I connect.

What is the one thing you cannot do without?
Family.
What is the pet name for your wife?
Precious. That's what my grandpa called my grandma. Lol.

How many kids do you guys have now ?
Two children
Which actor are you starstruck by and would like to feature alongside?
Denzel Washington

DANIEL ETIM-EFFIONG ▶

You studied Chemical Engineering, what made you switch to acting?
My passion for storytelling influenced my career choice. I've always told stories and as I grew older I witnessed the transformational power of stories in arts and entertainment. I realised late that this was what I really wanted out of life and somehow I found the courage to pursue it.

How do you handle disagreements between yourself and Directors?
When I'm familiar with a Director, I'll talk it through with him/her before or after a scene and iron it out. When it's someone I don't really have a relationship with, I just mind my business. I try to focus on giving the Director what (s)he wants and leave my feelings out of it.

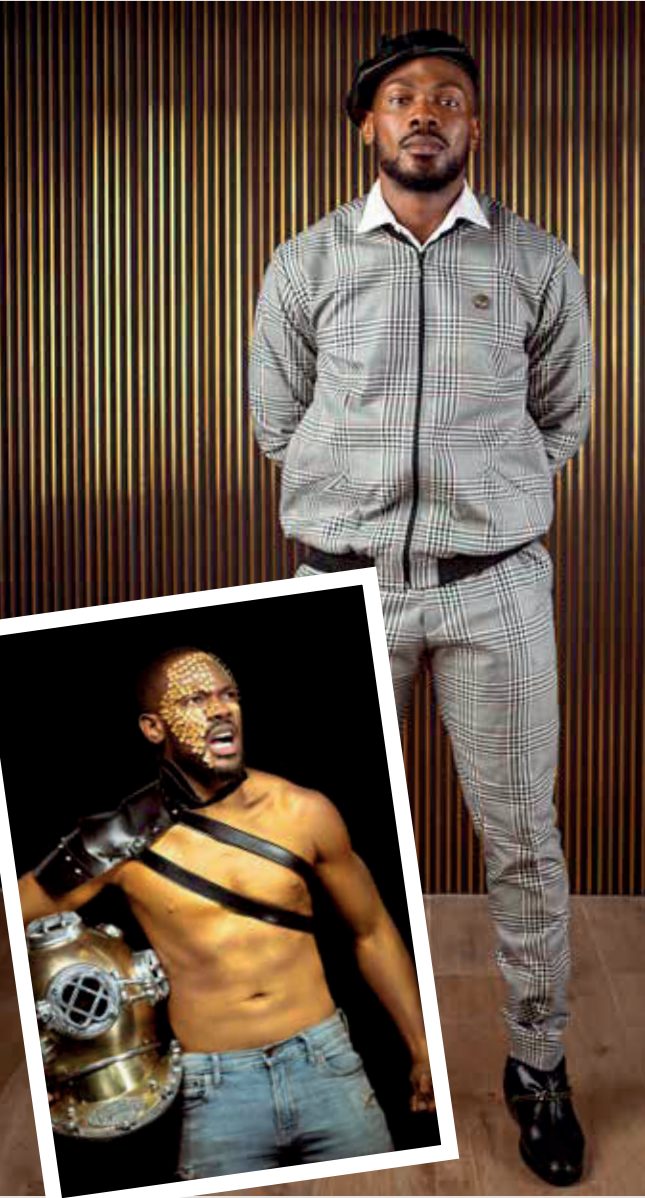
Describe your most challenging role to date?
I play a character in an upcoming film by Mrs Bolanle Austin Peters, called Collision. The character was manhandled badly for several days, shoved into the Lagos lagoon and thrown out of a moving van. We shot through several nights and had several takes on very high emotional levels. It took a toll on my physical and mental health but it was all worth it. Watch out for it, it's coming out soon.

What is the hardest decision you have had to make in life?
Quitting my job in Oil & Gas to go into the arts and entertainment industry full time.

How do you combine and juggle your role as a husband- and an actor?
I try my best really. The secret for me is to decide the things that are most important to you in life and focus on them. What you focus on will grow. When I'm not working, I spend valuable time with my family and make sure there are no distractions.

Sometimes, your schedule can be very demanding, and having some time to relax is very important for our mental health. When you're not moving from one set to another, how do you relax?
I love to read, watch movies and swim. I also love to go to the beach and just chill and listen to the waves pounding the shore. Sometimes I take walks around my estate in the evenings while kids are around. We have yearly family vacations as well, these things are non-negotiable for my mental health.
You are married to a lovely lady. How well has she helped you in the course of your career as an actor?
My wife is everything to me, she has been such a huge inspiration in my career. She's my biggest fan and supports me in everything I do.

What made you decide to go to a film school?
I felt I needed to equip myself for the journey ahead



of me. I didn't want to rely on passion and talent. My thoughts were that if I was in this for the long haul then I had to invest in myself.

Describe the most challenging aspect of your career?
Nollywood is great but there are a lot of distractions. My biggest challenge has been staying focused on the craft while managing other aspects of the industry necessary to thrive like visibility and marketability but not directly impacting the craft.

You have been actively involved in acting since 2011. How would you rate the growth of Nollywood since then, and what advice do you have for the younger generation of actors and actresses?
The Nollywood industry has been growing in leaps and bounds, getting recognition from other film industries across the world. My advice for younger actors would be to focus on growing the craft and developing skills what would make you more competitive on the global stage like language, voice training and even dance.

It is rumored that you had your first break on Ndani TV's web series Gidi Up (2012) as the infa-

UZEE. A. USMAN ►

You have been actively involved in acting and movie making since 2004. Has it been a fulfilling experience for you?

YES !!! But at the early stage; it was not easy but dedication and focus took me to where I am today. At least, if you talk about the top northern actors now, my name must be mentioned so we thank Almighty.

Can you briefly explain your transition from being a makeup artist to becoming an actor/producer?

Being a makeup artist was just the situation at that moment. My main goal was to act and get people to believe in you even though you are from the North. I needed to get to the front of the camera after working behind it for a while as a makeup artiste.

With a considerable level of success in your career, you are still single, any plans of getting married any time soon?

Yes but not that soon because I still want to achieve more career-wise before settling down.

Describe your kind of woman, and also what endears you?

I like darker women with a bit of flesh. Her character must be as attractive inside as she is outside. She must have the patience and trust required to enable be the best of myself.

What is the craziest thing you have had to do in a role?

Being totally nude in a movie which is not out yet! When it does come out, I might need to pack my bags and leave Arewa!

If you could pass one message to your fans, what would that be?

Thanks for supporting and believing in the brand Uzee Usman. Truly appreciate.

You won the Best Makeup Artiste at the African Movie Academy Award for the movie London Boy in 2004. What impact did this have in your career?

That was the beginning of my success as an artist in Nollywood. Everyone that mattered in Nollywood



started taking me serious.

What is the place of the North in the growth of Nollywood, and how would you describe Kannywood's development thus far?

Kannywood is a baby industry and is one of the fastest growing parts in Nollywood but there is room for improvement. I'm using this platform to tell our northern people to invest in the movies so as grow it substantially.

With 17 years of experience in Nollywood, what advice do you have for all the upcoming actors and actresses who look up to you significantly?

A: This question doesn't have one answer. But I'll try in my little way. My process for breathing life into a character is the realization that every new story/character needs their own identity, irrespective of the fact that the fans like a particular version of me or the last character that I played in a previous film. So I don't try to keep giving them one particular vibe. Instead, I try to create a whole new identity in accordance with what the story needs. That way I make all my characters original. But it's not easy to keep creating original interpretations especially when in Nigeria we do a lot of films to stay relevant.

How do you juggle between acting, politics, brand influencing among others? How do you balance all of that?

Acting is something I love to do. Maybe not something I'll do forever, I'm on top of my game on a certain level and I'm riding the waves. Eventually, I'll focus more on matters of state. It's a topic that interests me a lot. Not because it's the corridors of power but because it gives me the platform to lead and implement well. While I'm waiting on that dream to serve to materialize, in the meantime, I do not need to hold an office to be a politician.

Dedication, determination, focus and fear of God.

You studied English and Political Science. Why this course in particular?

I love politics a lot. As a young man, I was involved in local politics one way or the other. Up till now, politics is what I do as a side hustle if am not filming, which explains why I studied it for knowledge and join with my little experience. English was picked because I knew I will go into Acting so it's an advantage for me.

You have won several awards. How do you feel about your works being appreciated nationally and internationally?

If feels good. I am proud of myself and the awards will motivate me to do more.

Describe your childhood experience?

Crazy and complicated.

You have featured in and produced movies that have gone on to appear on Netflix. Would you say Nollywood has evolved to meet global movie standards?

Of course very well.

The Taurarin Zamani is one of the shows you are known for across Northern Nigeria. What does it seek to promote and redress?

The Taurarin Zamani show promotes the cultural value and the glamorous side of the North. We make The Who-is-who in northern elite relax in the show and be themselves. This is what makes it unique and classy.

Where is your favourite holiday spot, and when you're not acting or producing, what do you keep up with?

My holiday best spot is South Africa. Also, if I am not filming, I am reading or on the street for political meet ups.

Which actor are you starstruck by and would love to be in a movie with?

Genevieve Nnaji and Funke Akindele.

If I can mediate for the poor, feed the hungry, guide the blind, shelter the homeless then I am already using my platform (which was given to me by the love of the people and grace of God) to serve my people and help better their lives.

Apart from the characters you portray in movies, tell us a little about yourself; who you really are off the screen?

I am very shy. I am friendly to just about any and everybody. I do not like drama. I like to relax, no rush. I am also a perfectionist and I'm very highly competitive. I believe in family, love, values and loyalty. I don't do much of partying or socializing. I play a lot of video games and I love to write or create. I no sabi form; I rather not make an appearance. I believe in equal opportunities for everyone. I like to be respected and listened That's about it when it comes to my real personality.

What impact are you aiming to make in Nollywood that will better position the industry for global relevance?

A: This one is simple. I hope to help Nollywood get to a place where we can show our movies to the entire world and they don't think it's curated just for Africans.

To be a part of the Nollywood club that goes toe to toe with the rest of the world just like Afro beats is doing now.

You're known to have studied Geography in university, when and where did you learn how to act? Is it inborn?

I've always been a character growing up. But for acting school; I actually didn't go to any. I just really found myself loving to mimic teachers and my classmates suggested I try acting. I remember I registered for a talent show. The judges When I told the judges of my intention to act, they laughed so hard and said I had no business acting but to try comedy. This made me realize I was definitely doing the right thing in a weird way.

Who are your biggest influencers in Nollywood?

Hanks Anuku made me want to act. He brought something new and fresh. Ramsey and Genevieve has also influenced me with the way they have handled their careers and remained heavily relevant, morphing through generations and the times to lead the pack.

Which role has been the most challenging for you to date?

The role of Xavier in the movie Poka Messiah was the hardest because it's the longest film I've ever led. I was given my first lead role by Ernest Obi and I just didn't know if I was even getting it right acting alongside people I only saw on my tv screen. But the most fun to shoot has to be my role as Olisa in Bad Boys And Bridesmaids. It was a fun set and an easy yet entertaining relatable story.

Is life better than a nice movie?

(Laughter? My people say "Na uwa ka nma na feel" which means Life is easier in movies...but I'll take real

KUNLE REMI ►

Growing up, who influenced you the most in Nollywood?

Ramsey Noah.

You versatility is remarkable. People envy you for that. How have you been able to juggle between being an actor, influencer, content creator among other things?

I become that which I need to be, at the time I need to be. I just find a balance.

In 2010 you participated in the Gulder Ultimate Search, and in the midst of 17,000 people you emerged the winner, what impact has that had in your life to date?

The feeling is incomparable. Since then till date, I don't think anything is impossible. I am bolder and more confident.

Man against Rape and Violence (MAGV) one of your charitable projects; kicks against rape, what inspired it? What also inspired your partnership with 'ideas' and 'smiles' supported by 'You Matter to Lagos'?

MARV was inspired by my love for children and teaching. It's no lie that we need to educate the boy and girl child. The world is moving fast and kids are growing with that pace. They say it's easier to correct a child than repair an adult. My strength is in visual entertainment, just as the name "MARV" (which is Man Against Rape and Violence). The generations to come need to be prepared to make better choices in their lives.

- Ideas and Smiles is all about giving/helping the less privileged kids experience holidays in the most fun and memorable ways. That's a partnership that MARV and I



life everytime because the whole world is just a movie set. Only difference is the richer we get; the more we are allowed to direct our own lives but only to an extent.

You were the star of the remake of the 1992 movie Living In Bondage, which raised the bar and set the standard for movies Netflix is coming out with.



are honoured to be a part of.

On set, you're always calm and composed, delivering every time and on every role in movies such as

What should we expect from LIB 2?

Well well well, to be honest, Nollywood is buzzing right now. Indian films are even making Indian version of our stories now. We are collaborating with other industries internationally and getting our own limited series commissioned. This definitely makes any true fan of African cinema happy. Collaborations and not competition. So yes LIB 2 will come and it will be grand. When it will come is what I can't claim to know but surely it will come.

You are signed to the management of Play network, how has it benefited your growth in the industry and how will you describe the CEO of Play network Charles Okpaleke?

Play management is one arm of play network. Play network studios is also the production house for Living In Bondage; Nneka The Pretty Serpent and Glamour girls. They're getting very grounded and we are learning a lot together in the industry and more importantly, winning awards and accolades all round. Charles is the reason I signed. He is such a visionary, I'm learning more than he knows from just being around him. He is a great guy and he treats me as a younger brother and it's all good vibes. But more importantly for me; he really really sees my talent. He pumps me up and we have a lot of work coming your way soon. Thank You Charles!

Which actor are you starstruck by and would love to be in a movie with?

Starstruck? Well maybe Idris Elba or Will Smith. Who knows; we'll see. (Laughter) but I definitely would like to be in a film with the two of them.

When are planning to walk up the aisle?

In a couple of years. I'm big on family, so I'll like to plant my feet in a few works of life before opening that chapter as it is a job that doesn't allow for retirement.

The Prophetess, Mama Drama, Lemonade, Dysfunction among others, how do you achieve that mastery in delivery?

I have the Joy of God. I enjoy doing what I do. And I enjoy the process too.

What is most interesting about being you?

My God-fidence. Unraveling myself daily.

'Falling' one your movies and Forbidden, made it to the Netflix platform and African Magic tv? Do you think Nollywood has grown well enough to benefit properly from a platform like Netflix?

- 'Falling' was only my first film on Netflix years before the platform came to Nigeria. Ever since, I have had more movies on there, from time to time. My work speaks for me and takes me places. That's a great feeling. Nollywood is growing and it's beginning to benefit from Netflix and more platforms to come. It can only get better.

With such good looks, how do you handle interest from your female fans? And who is your kind of woman?

I respect them and don't take the love for granted. Knowing that most people are in love with the idea of who they think you are by characters that I play makes me extra conscious. God has continually helped me. It's love always.

Your fans are curious to know when you will make the big announcement; when the wedding bell is ringing for you. Will that be happening anytime soon?

Curiosity kills the cat! Times and seasons to everything

on earth.

Given an opportunity to choose between being a TV host and an actor, which would you pick and why?
There is no reason to choose. As an actor I ‘become’.

You are revered as the ‘King of Tik Tok’ in Nigeria’s social media space, tell us the process and inspiration behind those contents?
My mind is a creative space. On the go I like to create and entertain. Everything in life is a story and contents are stories. God and Life experience are my inspiration.

When it’s time relax and clear your head, where and how do you relax?
I love to travel, workout and hangout with great

minds. All these helps replenish strength and creativity.

Which actor are you starstruck and would love to act in a movie with?
Will Smith.

You are among few of the actors with a sync in your educational qualification (a diploma in both Acting for Film and Filmmaking/Directing from the New York Film Academy, Los Angeles and New York respectively). When did you know you had a future in the movie/ entertainment industry?
This has always been a dream since I was a child. Now I am just grateful I am living the dream.

How do you feel being brought back to star and host

TIMINI EGBUSON ▶

You are a graduate of Psychology from the University of Lagos, has this course helped in making you key into your roles better or has your sister Dakore been able to influence you in any way?
Every experience prepares you for being an actor. I feel like my understanding of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy has also helped tremendously in creating believable, deeply human characters that people can identify with. It has also helped that I have one of the best Nollywood actors, Dakore Akande as my sister. I have always admired her craft and the undiluted passion she has for the art definitely made Hollywood more alluring. I also think that working as a sales and marketing executive for two years after University has also informed the way that I work with brands.

With such level of success in your career and good looks, how do you handle your female fans?
I have some of the most engaged fans in the world. They are invested in any project I’m involved with and I feel like part of being a successful actor is about cultivating an audience and I have been blessed with a powerful fan base. It is a humbling feeling to wake up everyday to see different organic fans like the Timini Wives Association ion on instagram for example. All of this for me, is just an indication that I am doing something right.

How do you react to news aimed at discrediting you on social media and blogs?
I don’t.

You are considered the face of Nollywood’s new generation of actors, how has the journey been up till now?
That’s a great compliment, thank you. It’s been a very interesting, challenging yet rewarding journey. I’ve come from struggling to find even supporting roles to the present where films are made with me in mind to play the leading man. It’s been a lesson of consistency, determination and persistence and I cant wait to see the what the future holds as I strongly believe that I am just beginning to scratch the surface and the sky is the limit.

Apart from being an actor and Producer, which can be very challenging, what other life challenges have you experienced?
Like everyone else I’ve had to face various challenges in the course of building my career. The first of which was trying to find a way to fully monetize every aspect of my craft. Nollywood is not yet as lucrative for actors as we would like it to be, so I had to spend a lot of time figuring out how I can match my skill set with lucrative opportunities. I have been able to find additional income streams by working on marketing campaigns with some of the biggest brands on the continent, helping them convert my audience into their custom-



ers. With some of the highest conversion rates in the industry, I am a brand favourite. I also curate nightlife experiences that have become very popular with the millennial and Gen Z audience.

How and where do you relax your body, mind and soul when you are most free?
I recently started Yoga and meditation and Investing more time in martial arts has been very good for my mind and body.

Do you have a woman in your life, if ‘Yes’, tell us about the lucky girl, if ‘No’, why?
‘o I don’t. I’m currently focusing o’ m’ personal growthdon’tbel’ming the best version of Timini. I have left God and cupid to send the right woman my way when it’s time and also when I am completely ready.

You gained a lot of recognition starring on MTV’s web series, Shuga. What was that like?
MTV SMTV’swas a really good launchpad for my career. It opened me up to an international audience and the level of professionalism helped me nurture my craft. I was inspired knowing that the likes of Lupita Nyong’o started their acting careers from the same platform here in Africa. Most importantly, using my talent to carry all the messaging that Shuga teaches is still one of the most remarkable things about my journey so far, entertaining, teaching and changing/improving lives at the same time.

the Gulder Ultimate Search 2021 edition as the Taskmaster after the show had been on hold for years? What should we expect from you and the show?
I am honored to be the task master 11years later. This is a dream come true. I am going to enjoy this and I hope everyone enjoys it too! It’s back bigger and better.

You have been actively involved in Nollywood for the last ten years with a lot of stellar acting to your name, what advice do you have for those who are aspiring to become actors and actresses in Nollywood?
Find your Niche, be consistent, disciplined, and professional. The best part of Becoming an actor, is the Process . So enjoy the process and growth.

You have featured in many Nollywood movies and some have gone on to appear on Netflix, do you think Nollywood is well-positioned to benefit properly from a platform like Netflix?
Yes, definitely! Nollywood has always been a breeding ground for incredible talent, from actors to producers, to directors. However one of our biggest challenges has been distribution that can monetize our craft at scale. Netflix’s entry to the African market has begun to Netflixt problem and I’m hopeful that their success in Africa will attral’mmore streamers and further position Nollywood on a global stage.

One of your most recent projects Smart Money Woman series has been doing remarkably well on the streaming platform Netflix, how do you feel about that and what is your process for selecting projects?
Everything I work on does remarkably well to be honest! I think the trick is working with the right kind of Producers/Directors and trusting my instincts. With The Smart Money Woman, I’m good friends with Aresé and her passion from thl’mriting phase led me to be absolutely certain about that person that constantly talks about her dreams and her vision so it’s hard not to get invested even though she wasn’t the movie industry, From the way she handwasn’t r unprecedented Pan-African Book tour, I knew she would approach turning the book into a tv series with the same excellence. It hit Netflix and was no1 in Nigeria and Kenya in 24hrs... as an actor it’s an incredible feeling to be a part of projectsit’s are successful and exceed expectations.

Seemingly, you have a great bond with your sister, Dakore, tell us about it and what she represents in your life?
I can’t possibly talk about my story as an actor withcan’taking reference to her. She has served as a mentor and a teacher at every phase I’ve gone through and I can never take that for gral’ve or understate that. More importantly, she has guided me from Day 1, even before I had any dreams of becoming an actor.

If you could pick a theme song to describe where your life is right now, what song would you choose?
Tough one if I’m honest. It would be more of a compilation of sol’m but if I had to pick one, Feeling by Ladipoe and Buju.

Which actor in the world are you starstruck by and would to act in a movie with?
The list is long but I am definitely fascinated by the life and career of Damson Idris. He is such a talented actor and his journey has inspired.

When is the wedding bell ringing for you?
I have absolutely no idea.

ZUBBY MICHAEL ▶

Apart from being an actor, you are into politics by virtue of your position as a Special Adviser to the Governor of your state. How do you reconcile your position as an actor and a politician?
I don’t like to make noise. The Governor saw what hapdon’t in Onitsha a while back when I came to the spare parts market and wanted to meet with me. He immediately recognized the power that I wield with the youths and decided to give me the SA position to advise him on what the youths want. So I do my job whenever I’m needed and that’s it.

What technique do yol’mse to createthat’sievable character in your roles?
Everybody has their own niche; some are better than the others. I’m not here for phonetics or playing pretend. I dol’m see the script as the main authority, it’s judon’tguideline. So once I take a sneak peek it’sthe Directors say action; I get into the thick of it blessing them with my God given talent.

What interests you the most about acting?
The unending nature of the industry. Wahala no dey finish, so drama no fit finish. It’s something that anyone who is passionate can dolt’s decades on end.

Your fans are curious to know when you would make the big announcement; the choice of a life partner. Tell us about the qualities your life partner must have to possess?
(Laughter). Story story. Biko kwanu. God’s time is the best. After all. divorce is the God’s f the day now. Zubby will marry when I’m ready.

How and when exactly did you realizl’mou had the passion for acting?
So far back I can’t even recall, it’s not when someone blows thatcan’t started actinit’s have tried this thing for a long time; at a point, a very popular Director advised me on a movie set to go and look for something else to do because I can never make it as an actor! But life in itself is a movie and so therefore suspense played its hand and they never saw me coming. Today he pays me and hopes I will act in his film. No love lost.

Every industry is said to be full of stress and pressure; how do you tackle the pressure that comes

EFA IWARA ▶

You studied Geography at the university of Ibadan, how then are you able to act so well, is it an in-born talent?
I will have to say a bit of both. My dad always had us watch movies for pleasure and for research. We would write essays about movies growing up. My brother and I have always played around with acting and directing since we were kids. But that doesn’t prepare you for acting as a career. I had to learn on the job and do my research. Every day I learn something new and plan to continue trying to improve on a constant basis.

Since 2017 when your path detoured into acting, you have worked with a lot of Directors and actors, how do you reconcile your views and ideas with theirs without conflict?
I think it just boils down to being respectful and knowing that nobody knows everything. Like I said, I’m willing to learn on the job, and thankfully most Directors and my colleagues are constantly being impactful in my career.

Which is your most challenging role till date and



with your work?
God. Passion and very importantly, rest. Make person no kill himself o.

As an actor and producer, what is the most challenging thing about bringing a script to life?
The truth is that I believe that there are no bad stories. A story may be too slow for you, too cheesy for another and too action-packed for the third person. So I don’t bother with having a particular way of bringidon’tstory to life. Instead, I focus on putting the right team together. Very soon I’ll have good news for you guys. I’ve something col’llg.

If you weren’t famous l’veown actor), what would you be uweren’tght now?

why?
This is a tough one, because different roles come with different challenges. From being in a wheelchair for Unbroken, to learning about drifting for Seven. But I think Ajoche, my latest role, will have to take the crown. Having to shave my facial hair completely and lose weight for months and then put on weight and grow a full beard over a period of about eight months can be a lot. Not to talk about walking for a limp for that period of time and the character evolution from a timid prince to a tyrant king. Let’s not talk about the environmental conditions. Maybe James Omokwe (the Executive Producer) is out for my life! (Laughter)

You are always busy; moving from one set to another. When you are most free, how and where do you relax?
This is a very common assumption. But, I do have my moments when I’m home and lazying about. I’m a gamer and an avid FIFA player. I like to have friends over and catch up. If that’s not possible, I do that online. But one thing is for sure, in my spare time I am definitely thinking about my next project with things that im try-

Businessman which I am right now and God has added politician to the list. Yet I have never paid any graphic designer to design any poster that I want to run for Councilor of wards or House or Rep.

What do you want to be remembered for in the industry and generally?
Eze Ndi Ala...(Laughter).

Tell us about your early days as an actor and the journey thus far?
It wasn’t easy but I don’t like to dwell on things of wasn’tst. But everdon’tcess story has an ugly story behind it. If tomorrow my son has everything he needs and has no struggle story then my story will be his struggle story. Whatever blessing you see; a prize was paid.

You stated some months back that a large part of your revenue is donated as charity, what motivates you to do that?
Charity is the work of the Lord. It’s one sure way to bless the heart of a man and it’sst bless yours back. Giving is a passion, my people say “Onye enyelu; ya nye”! He who has received, should give as well.

You have been acting for a while now, which movie has been most challenging for you to act on and why?
Omo Ghetto and Eze Ndi Ala. First one is because I’m not used to playing under somebody because my ol’mdey my body. Also having to do numerous takes and seeing as it’s such a big film, with scheduling and waiting oit’s. While my movie Eze Ndi Ala was or is probably the most star-studded movie ever in Nigeria, I was also acting and producing which was so tasking.

What is your advice to upcoming actors and actresses who look up to you?
Brother, sister, daddy and mummy, never say never and never listen to what anybody thinks of you. Listen but do away with the negatives. Keep pushing.

Which actor in the world are you starstruck by and would love to act in a movie with?
The person is yet to be born...just kidding! Maybe Arnold Schwarzenegger or Rambo

ing to achieve in life.

You come from a very educated background; your father is a Professor of Linguistics and your mother is a Librarian. Did they support your decision to go into the entertainment industry?
Like many fathers, mine was very skeptical about the field I chose. But, if I was in his shoes, I’ll probably feel the same way. But, I’ve realised over time that what’s important to him is me succeeding in life and excelling in any field I choose. My mother on the other hand, will support me 100% even if I say I want to count water droplets for a living as long as it makes me happy. They are both supportive, but in different ways.

During your time as a rapper, you worked with the then Plantashun Boiz, Yemi Alade, MI Abaga to mention a few, and now you’re into acting and doing well too. What advise do you have for young creatives trying to carve a niche for themselves?
A: Be ready to sacrifice everything for what you believe in. You need to have a coconut head but also know when to listen. If I tell you how many people sneered

and didn't believe in me, it'll shock you, but pay the nay sayers no mind. Tunnel vision and focus on your dreams.

On several occasions, you have mentioned that you originally started out with music and acting was a thing of chance. Any regrets?

I'm a creative, whether it's music or film. I'm happiest when I'm creating magic. I will always make music, but will I ever "release" music? Maybe I might surprise everyone soon. I have no regrets, I still do both of them and I'm grateful to be able to.

Q. What is that unique thing about you that people don't know about?

A. There are so many things! But I'll drop two things people don't know. I learnt how to farm from my dad. We used to work on his farms every weekend. Learnt a lot from him, but missed out on a lot of cartoons growing up! I also played competitive cricket for my University and won medals. I'm still a part of a professional club called Ibadan Metropolitan Cricket Club (IMCC)

When you realized that you had been nominated for Actor of the Year at the AMVCA 2020, how did you feel?

I think I was numb for a little bit. I was heading to set to shoot, so I was a bit distracted. When I was done with shoot. I called loved ones and we celebrated over the phone. But, I had told someone to check the list of nominees once it came out and tell me if I got nominated. She slept off! When she reads this, I want her to know I still haven't forgiven her. (Laughter)

Who is your kind of woman?

My kind of woman is kind, strong, independent, prayerful and patient because, dating an actor is

LATEEF ADEDIMEJI

What is the process of bringing your character to life in movies?

Basically it's me understanding the whole story, understanding the character and every other character in the story. This helps me as an actor to see what mannerism I want to give or add to what the character bible already puts up.

As one of the reputable actors who has featured in many Yoruba movies, how would you describe the contribution of Yoruba movies to the growth of Nigeria's entertainment?

Yoruba movies have contributed In a lot of ways as the industry is basically an agent of change by putting out stories to correct the wrongs in the society. So we are trying but I know also that we can do better.

What do you want to be remembered for in the industry generally?

Just remember me for my good work and quality movies. I also want to be remembered for contributing positively to the industry and humanity.

You are often said to look like Odunlade Adekola, and on several occasions, both of you have been seen together, what is your relationship with him?

Odun Adekola is a one the most successful actors I know. It's good to have a resemblance with



definitely a handful. It takes a special type of woman to cope with our unique lifestyles. It can be very unpredictable as opposed to dating someone with a 9-5.

When is the wedding bell ringing for you?

My mother will like this question a lot! (Laughter) In due time to be honest. I'll rather marry late and make it last forever than marry now and have it end next week. Marriage is a huge step, not one to be rushed into. But,



if you see me wearing a wedding band in the nearest future, don't be too shocked.

You have been part of some award-winning movie projects such as King of Boys; The Return of the King of Boys, Rattlesnake, Men's Club to mention a few. How have you been able to get those roles in just four years in Nollywood?

God has been faithful. Hard work. And just grace. And, people have just found me worthy of being on their projects and for that, I'm eternally grateful. Everyone who has given me a small role to everyone who has given me a big role, I want to thank and appreciate you.

Which actor in the world are you starstruck by and would love to act in a movie with?

When it comes to foreign actors, it will have to be Daniel Day-Lewis. I've always been blown away by how he selects roles and just kills it every single time! In Nigeria, it will have to be the legendary Chief Pete Edochie. Maybe, one day we will trade parables. Who knows?

What impact are you aiming to make to help place Nollywood in a position for global relevance?

To excel and be able to take our movies to the point where we can stand shoulder to shoulder with the rest of the world. I'd like to not just star, but also direct movies. We are doing a good job and we are moving forward. Slowly and surely we will get there. Hollywood and Bollywood should be looking over their shoulders.

Judging from your growth and pace thus far in the industry, where do you see yourself in the next decade?

In the next decade, I see myself playing in both local and international markets. I see myself being an inspiration to many. I want to be remembered as the guy who never took no for an answer in the industry. The underdog who made it. Not many people come from Ugep, Cross River state and make it in this Industry. If I can do it, then so can you...twice over!

such. He is a boss and one of the few I look up to. No bad vibe. I have learnt so much from him and still more to learn.

You are always beaming with smiles; always happy. What is the source of the joy and happiness you exude?

It's just so good to love oneself. The love you show yourself is what people see and choose to also love you. Smiling is a good thing. No matter how tough the situation is, there is always something to be grateful for each time. Remember that and just smile.

Q: You are nicknamed 'Crying Machine' by your fans, how are you able to cry effortlessly in movies?

A: It's basically me forgetting the Lateef in me and giving every other thing to the character that help me a lot. And for me everything around me is a motivation.

You produced your first film in 2004, tell us about it and what do you think has changed in the industry from then till now?

The first movie I produced was in 2007. Oseregi. A lot has changed since then. My understanding of the Industry, filmmaking and relating with people. A lot has improved when it come to story telling and shooting quality movies, but a lot can still be done.

Which actor in the world are you starstruck by and would love to act in a movie with?

I love Denzel a lot. I watch a lot of his movies and will

love to act with him someday.

Your fans are curious to know when you would make the big announcement; the choice of a life partner. Tell us about the qualities your life partner must have to possess?

The big announcement about my partner is coming soon. What I look for...just be you, God fearing, real and the rest is history.

In movies, you cry effortlessly, are you an emotional person in real life?

Yes I am a very emotional person in real life.

BUCCI FRANKLIN

Which actor inspired you into acting?

A: Growing up I'd say Rowan Atkinson, Robin Williams and Jim Carey who are all comedic actors by the way.

Q: You are also a Creative Director at RedPoleMedia, what inspires you?

A: As a conscious "creative disruptor", the burning desire to create magic is constant. I'd say our ideation sessions at the office inspires me. Those sessions give me a positive mental high that translates to premium content.

You have been active in the industry since 2013; what would you say has been your greatest achievement thus far? And what advice do you have for aspiring actors who look up to you?

I love acting, it's my first love. I'd say my greatest achievement as an Actor would be consciously creating a relationship between character and audience like I've done with characters like Nze in Rattlesnake, for example. That spark never gets old. My advice to aspiring Actors would be - First, this isn't easy; if you are reading this now and you haven't been a part of any drama club- in school, church or even a mosque, quit now. But if you desire it so much that you visualize yourself as a working actor, almost every time...I'll see you on set. God willing.

Before you ventured into acting, you worked as an O.A.P what do you miss about those times and any regret choosing acting over being a broadcaster?

Yes I miss radio a lot especially hosting and creating shows for FM but I am in a serious relationship with my first love Acting and I have no regrets to be very honest.

Your fans are curious to know when you will make the big announcement; when the wedding bell is ringing for you. Will that be happening anytime soon?

(Smile) God willing.

Which has been your most challenging role thus far and why?

None for now, I am still searching and I hope someday, my insatiable appetite to create will be satisfied. Until then, we keep creating.

Who is your kind of woman, what do you look out for in a woman?

Intelligent, enterprising, articulate and attractive. Not perfect but a Queen in the making, someone who inspires me to be the best version of myself. I hope she reads this!

Which actor are you starstruck by and would love to act in a movie with?

Starstruck? I don't know but I'd love to work with Lupita Nyong'o, Jim Carey, John Boyega and Constance Wu.

You have been acting actively for more than a decade now, as a result, you have worked with so many actors and producers, how do you handle your differences in ideas and views without conflict?

In life, one will meet people with different acts and ideas. What is important is to accept people and how they are and relate with them on their beliefs.

You had been acting on the Yoruba front for years before now that you have started featuring in Nollywood English movies, tell us about the transition and how you have been able to adapt?It's basically

doing a lot of rehearsal and I have never stopped trying to get better at my craft. You should know when to build yourself and never stop working hard at it. You will go places that way.

By virtue of your career, you are always busy, from set to set. When you are free for all work-related issues, where and how do you relax?

I just go on vacation, away from work stress, but always somewhere I can always see what will inspire me, I love nature. Then I try to sleep and spend time with few people that mean a lot to me.



In 2020 you were reported as the highest-grossing artiste, does that have to do with the value you place on yourself or just your talent?

Honestly it's the whole package. You have to put in the work, talent isn't enough. You need to consciously align yourself with record-breaking productions so as to be asked the question "Do you place value on yourself?"

You won the Best Lead Actor and Best Upcoming Actor at the annual Africa Film/Music Awards and Festival (AAFMF). How have you been able to maintain and grow on that achievement?

I was ecstatic then, but I am not one to hold unto accolades as such, even though I appreciate the recognition. Also to maintain and grow successfully as an actor; consistency, conscious networking and compulsive learning as an actor in the industry are essential.

Tell us how you were able to interpret your role in movies like "Knockout Blessing""Razz Guy" and "RattleSnake The Ahanna Story"

You need to apply for my master acting class by the way! (Laughter). A "relationship" must be created between you and the character. You are a vessel and the

process of learning, unlearning, and relearning must be achieved. The rest is cosmic. Just Listen, we don't listen enough.

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. Where is your favourite holiday spot and why?

Thank you very much for this question. Nature is my best friend, I am good with a bottle of wine, a basket of fruits and food my music. No phones just the sound of Cape Town's seaside, Bonny islands rivers bank or an old cabin in the southern part of France.

If you were not acting what career would you be practising?

If I wasn't an Actor or rocking the role of Creative Director at RedPoleMedia; Altruism is mighty fine with me. There isn't enough love to go around these days, I don't mind a 9-5 of caregiving to anything that breathes.

You have been acting for a while, do you have any plans of trying to direct or produce?

Definitely directing. Also, I am producing an original, A psychological crime thriller directed by Sammi Edehi. You are not ready for what's coming. Trust me.

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