

WINTER 2017
ISSUE 2

CELEBRATING

5
YEARS

OF BREATHTAKING
FASHION &
BEAUTY

FEBRUARY
ANNIVERSARY
ISSUE!

ACTOR
**SHAUN
BROWN**

FEATURING

**PATRICE
ELESSIE**

the rise of
**BLACK
TALENTS**



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LATIFAH
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+more

**Black
History** *Issue*

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FEBRUARY 2017

THE NEW GENERATION OF FASHION & BEAUTY

SHAUN BROWN

“I was born on March Air Force Base in California near Riverside. I spent my whole childhood and adolescence moving around so I don't really claim any one location. They all have shaped who I am so I got to give them all credit.”

Éléments: How did you get into acting and what was your drive to do so? Shaun: I got into acting my sophomore year in high school. I heard there were auditions for the summer community theater production being held after school later that week so I decided to try it out. I knew nothing about preparing a legit audition so I sang “You Can’t Win” from The Wiz acapella. I landed a supporting role and fell in love with acting on stage and the rush of pretending to be a character. However, it wasn’t until my junior year in high school when I saw the musical “Hairspray” that I said to myself, “I want to do this forever.” My parents initially wanted me to be a heart surgeon but I saw an open heart surgery on TLC or Discovery Channel and was like “nah not for me”.

How has the journey been for you so far? And who are your inspirations? It’s been a great journey that I hope will continue to be fruitful. I started off in Los Angeles very poor. I almost lived in my car at one point and I was eating every other day. I had a mattress on the floor that I slept on (after I stopped crashing on my friend’s couch) and a suitcase full of clothes and that was enough to get things going for about a year until I booked my first commercial. That commercial led to more commercials and then I booked my first recurring role on The Newsroom and True Blood. Two of my favorite shows at the time. I think from there is when things changed. My inspirations are Chiwetel Ejiofor and Idris Elba. I think they are incredibly powerful actors that hold their space unapologetically.

What has been your most favorite project that you’ve worked on? The show I’m shooting now (The Great Indoors) has been a dream come true. I started this journey in theater so doing a sitcom in front of a live studio audience kind of feels like I’ve come back to that in a way. I mean, I go to work and laugh everyday so you can’t really have a bad day ever. I’m also surrounded by talents I’ve admired like Joel McHale, Stephen Fry, and Christopher Mintz-Plasse. Working with them has been a master class in fearlessness and trusting your instincts. These guys really know what they’re doing and yet are super collaborative.

Men style seems to be a dying art, how would you describe your fashion style? Is it really? Wow. I don’t know if I go for a style so much as I go for a look. So if I’m out with my friends I’ll go for a Urban look

with a long bomber, tight jeans, Jordan kicks and a t-shirt. Sometimes though I’ll go for a Sam Cooke or old Motown vibe. However, If I’m doing a red carpet event I go for a classic leading man look and finish it with a pocket square. I like to express myself through what I wear and I’m not feeling the same everyday so I think it’s always changing.

If you could compare yourself to another actor, who would it be and why? If I had to compare myself to another actor I would say Chiwetel Ejiofor. Besides that fact that people always tell me we look alike (or think we are related), he has deep roots in theater, can switch to comedy on a dime, but also is attracted to the very real, visceral stories that make you explore your craft and hone it even more so. Though I’m on a sitcom right now I would love to do those kinds of projects also during my hiatus to get my fulfillment as an artist.

Tell us about your show “The Great Indoors”. What does it mean to you and how has the experience been. “The Great Indoors” is a CBS sitcom about an outdoorsy journalist (Joel McHale) who returns to the magazine that produces his work to find that it has now become a digital magazine run by millennials who never go outside. Hilarity ensues big time. So basically there is this generational conflict in the work environment. However with their differences they come together every episode to achieve something as a unit. Also if you watching the show it becomes more about these ridiculous personalities working together and the friendships and romantic relationships that form along the way. The experience has been amazing working on this show. I really feel like I am apart of something rather than showing up to work, saying lines, and collecting a check. The creators are collaborative, the writers are hilarious, and the actors are at the top of their game. Nothing is ever dull. I’m always on my toes. I laugh hysterically every single day.

What current and future projects you have coming up that we should know about? I have a film coming up starring Woody Harrelson called, “Wilson”. It is a film based on the graphic novel with the same title and it is about a lonely, neurotic, hilariously honest who reunites with his estranged wife and teenage daughter for the first time. The film went to Sundance and will be released in March and it will be my first film that I’ve done that went to theaters. So that’s pretty dope. I have a cameo in the opening of the film that helps paint the picture that



Photographs by **JASON WILLHEIM**
STYLIST: ALVIN STILLWELL
GROOMER: SHIYENA



Woody's character is a very hard guy to deal with. I have another indie film coming out later this year or early next year called, "Heart Baby" which is my most dramatic role to date. It's a true story about a Tennessee state prison in 1984 and the events that transpired before the major riot in the prison.

Shooting for the cover of Elléments Magazine, how do you feel about this opportunity and how was the experience? It's my first cover of a magazine! I'm feeling pretty freaking great about it! I'm honored that someone deemed me worthy to be on the cover and it was a vain dream of mine to get that opportunity. The experience was very surreal. I don't think I've ever had an event/production where it was all about me and that it all was on my shoulders. Granted I had a phenomenal team assembled with my stylist Alvin Stillwell and photographer Jason Willheim but if I'm not on my game their hard work would have been in vain. So I'm glad at least one of the shots worked!

We are celebrating black history month, as a black actor how has your experience been in the industry? What words of encouragement can you give to other your black actors who has aspirations of entering this industry? I had a very hard road starting out in this industry being a black actor. I started five years ago and it has shifted drastically. When I started agencies didn't want multiple black men on their roster. We would be a "conflict". It was super annoying to hear that constantly when starting out because I would see two dozen blonde haired blue eyed guys that looked very similar but I couldn't be on a roster with a guy who was a light skinned black actor who looked NOTHING like me. It only fueled me. All roadblocks that I experienced fueled me to get to where I am now. The advice I would give to black actors today would be this: Be the absolute best you can be at your craft. It is extremely difficult to deny excellence. You may not fit the role but if you consistently wow them you will make a way and the right opportunity will present itself. On that note be the best person you can be also because no one wants to spend hours with a diva or jerk.

Just one political input. After this past election on a scale of 1 to 10, 10 progressing and 1 regressing, how do you think the country has been so far and where you think it will be in the next 4 years? Oh we are regressing big time as far as what our president wants to enact in to law. So I'd say a sobering 3. However, I'm hopeful. I see the protests, and people speaking out and that gives me hope that democracy will prevail. I guess we will see. It's very tense.

When you are not busy working, how do you spend your free time? If I'm not working I'm either at the gym or playing video games with my cast members. If I have a chunk of time I go on small vacations to Palm Springs or I'll drive up the coast to Cambria, California and unwind.

Valentine's day is just a few days away, how do you plan on spending it. Importantly, what advice can you give to the guys out there to make this day special and memorable for their valentine? I plan on keeping this Valentine's Day simple. I've been working a lot so I'm taking it back to basics and just spending some good quality time with a home cooked meal and gifts. My advice to guys would be to try a little bit harder than just a nice reservation at a fancy place. Remember the things she or he likes and show that you listen and that you care. I think that scores bigger points then just getting a reservation that will be over in a couple hours.

How can the beautiful Elléments Fans and the rest of the would follow and keep up with you and what you are doing? You can find me at twitter and instagram at @ShaunBrown or on Facebook @ShaunBrownOfficial.





