

Interview With Actress: Kerry Washington

Written by Kam Williams

Tuesday, 20 September 2011 04:55



Winner of the 2005 NAACP Image Award as the “Outstanding Actress in a Motion Picture” for *Ray*

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[Kerry Washington](#)

is a versatile, talented and fearless actress who has built an impressive list of credits over the course of her relatively brief career. She has also garnered critical acclaim for recent roles in *Mother and Child*

,

The Last King of Scotland

,

The Dead Girl

and

Lakeview Terrace

.

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Kerry Washington

made her feature film debut in *Our Song* in 2000, and has since co-starred in *Fantastic Four* and its sequel

Rise of the Silver Surfer

,
I Think I Love My Wife

,
Little Man

,
Mr. and Mrs. Smith

,
She Hate Me

,
Against the Ropes

,
The Human Stain

, and
Save the Last Dance

for which she received a "Teen Choice Award" for Best Breakout Performance.

She will soon be seen opposite Eddie Murphy in

A Thousand Words

and then in

We the Peebles

, an ensemble comedy featuring Craig Robinson, David Alan Grier, Tyler James Williams and S. Epatha Merkerson. She currently has two films in theaters,

For Colored Girls

and

Night Catches Us

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Kerry is an active member on the Board of Directors for "The Creative Coalition", a group dedicated to raising awareness of First Amendment Rights and to the support of the arts in education. Plus, she's a member of the "V-Counsel", a group of advisors to "V-Day", the global movement to end violence against women and girls (

www.vday.org

). As for endorsement deals, Washington is a spokesperson for both "L'Oreal Paris" and "Movado". In addition, she co-directed and appeared in the music video for hip-hop artist Common's song, "I Want You", the fourth single off of his album *Finding Forever*. She also appears in Maxwell's "Bad Habits" video. In 2009, Washington performed in *The People Speak* a documentary feature film that uses dramatic and musical performances of the letters, diaries, and speeches of everyday Americans, based on historian Howard Zinn's "A People's History of the United States".

Washington went on to earn a

Presidential Arts Scholarship

to attend

The George Washington University

, graduating in 1998. She also studied at

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Michael Howard Studios

in New York City. Here, Washington talks about her involvement in the movie *For Colored Girls*. The following interview was conducted in Fall 2010.

Kam Williams: Hi, Kerry Washington, nice to speak with you again.

Kerry Washington: Hey, Kam Williams, how are you?

KW: Very well, thanks. My son said he came to see your lecture at Princeton University last semester. He's a junior there now.

Kerry W.: Cool! Congratulations! That's exciting.

KW: Thanks. I told my readers I'd be interviewing you, so I think we should get right to their many questions. Children's book author Irene Smalls asks: What attracted you to the role of Kelly in *For Colored Girls*?"

Kerry W.: I really just wanted to be a part of the production. I had heard a rumor that Tyler [Perry] was directing it, I so I approached him at one of these industry parties, and said, "If it's true, I want in, because it's such an important piece of literature."

KW: Irene says: This play was written some time ago. Do you think it is still relevant to today's black woman?

Kerry W.: I do. I do. I think the play is still relevant to all human beings, not just black women.

KW: FSU grad Laz Lyles asks: What is it about Tyler Perry that enabled him to assemble such an accomplished cast?

Kerry W.: He's a very inspiring person, when you look at the empire that he has created and built on his own. He wasn't born into it.

KW: FSU grad Laz Lyles asks: With a text this powerful, what was the self-discovery factor like? Were there any dormant traits that unexpectedly came to the surface?

Kerry W.: It was really fun for me to do this because I was coming off doing the David Mamet play "Race," on Broadway. And that character was so forceful and angry and smart and sharp and verbally articulate. Kelly is almost the opposite. She's very vulnerable and soft in a good way. Her role is to be a witness of these women and their journeys. It was a wonderful challenge for me as an actor to have to immediately exhibit the opposite qualities of those that I had been cultivating for almost a year.

KW: How was it having Hill Harper play your husband?

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Kerry W.: It was great to have the opportunity to work with Hill, since he's a friend, and we've traveled together along this political/artistic path. It was also nice to be able to tell this story of supportive, positive love between a black man and woman. I know that was important to Tyler and we felt very blessed to take on that responsibility.

KW: Reverend Florine Thompson asks: Even though the film is specifically about "Colored Girls," would you say it explores themes which resonate with all women?

Kerry W.: Absolutely! On the set, we even talked to each other about how universal the journeys of these characters are. So, the spectrum of colors that we're referencing really reflects a rainbow of human emotions. We're talking about being sad and blue, or red with rage, or green with envy. Those are the colors that we girls are embodying.

KW: Editor/legist Patricia Turnier [of www.megadiversities.com] is wondering: What African-American icon would you like to portray in a movie?

Kerry W.: Angela Davis is somebody I have my eye on. Also Diahann Carroll.

KW: Yale grad Tommy Russell asks: What do you struggle with as an actress: honesty in your roles, diving into the depth of your characters, or just navigating the crazy landscape of Hollywood and auditioning?

Kerry W.: D, all of the above! [Laughs]

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[illegible]

The DVD is available on www.amazon.com or www.amazon.ca and www.barnesandnoble.com

[illegible]

Awards and nominations:

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- [BET Awards](#)

- 2007- Best Actress [The Last King of Scotland](#) : *Nominated*

- [Black Reel Awards](#)

- 2011- Outstanding Supporting Actress [For Colored Girls](#) : *Nominated*

- 2011- Outstanding Actress [Night Catches Us](#) : *Won*

- 2011- Outstanding Ensemble [Night Catches Us](#) : *Nominated*

- 2011- Outstanding Ensemble [For Colored Girls](#) : *Won*

- 2009- Outstanding Ensemble [Miracle at St. Anna](#) : *Nominated*

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- 2007- Outstanding Supporting Actress [The Last King of Scotland](#) : *Nominated*

- 2005- Outstanding Actress, Drama [Ray](#) : *Nominated*

- 2003- Outstanding Actress, Network/Cable *Lift* : *Nominated*

- 2002- Outstanding Independent Actor *Lift*: *Nominated*

- 2002- Outstanding Supporting Actress Theatrical, [Save the Last Dance](#) : *Nominated*

- [Image Awards](#)

- 2011- Outstanding Actress in a Motion Picture [Night Catches Us](#) : *Nominated*

- 2007- Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Motion Picture [The Last King of Scotland](#) : *No minated*

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- 2006- Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Drama Series [Boston Legal](#) : *Nominated*
- 2005- Outstanding Actress in a Motion Picture [Ray](#) : *Won*
- [Independent Spirit Awards](#)
- 2002- Best Female Lead *Lift*: *Nominated*
- [Satellite Awards](#)
- 2005- Best Actress in a Comedy/Musical [Ray](#) : *Nominated*

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- [Screen Actors Guild Awards](#)
- 2005- Outstanding Cast in a Motion Picture [Ray](#) : *Nominated*

Source: www.wikipedia.org

An interesting link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G_g-Js-AI4g

----- **About the author of this article:** **Kam Williams**
is a syndicated film and book critic who writes for 100+ publications around the U.S., Europe, Asia, Africa, Canada, and the Caribbean. He is a member of the New York Film Critics Online, the NAACP Image Awards Nominating Committee, and Rotten Tomatoes. He is a contributor to TheLoop21.com. He is also a columnist for our webmag

www.megadiversities.com

. Williams is an erudite Attorney who holds a J.D. from Boston University and other degrees: an MA in English, a BA in Black Studies in Ivy Leagues (Brown University and Cornell University respectively) and an M.B.A. from Wharton School. Kam Williams can be reached at kwilliams@megadiversities.com

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