

The Perfect Holiday: Terrence Howard Interview

Terrence Howard may be strictly the silent type side show to the main action in *The Perfect Holiday*, as mischievous mute meanie Mr. Bah Humbug, but during this interview he was by contrast a nonstop talkaholic, not to mention the instant main attraction and center of attention during these combo enlightening and entertaining sitdown proceedings. Here's Terrence, dressed to the nines in a designer suit, with some stylishly opinionated pronouncements on *The Perfect Holiday's* notion of gift giving in the best sense, the gift that never stops giving of positive adult male role models that is strenuously critiqued in the movie, the significance of *Hustle & Flow* in his stellar career, and how it's not all that hard out there for, well, a uniquely gifted dude like himself.

TERRENCE HOWARD: Okay, ask the questions. Let's get on with it!

Hey, that's quite a suit you've got on. Does dressing up turn you on?

I remember, I was in the 4th grade. And I went over to the Salvation Army to pick up some sneakers. And I got some Converse sneakers. I remember running around in them on the way to school in LA, I was so proud of them Converse. And they didn't stay clean for more than a day! But that was the happiest day for me.

And when you get older, and you finally get a chance to dress nice and have more than one pair of shoes, you take advantage of it. Because one day, I may not have these clothes anymore! You know how life takes its turns.

Like when you don't eat as a kid, you eat a whole lot as an adult. There was this kid I was just recording music with, and we all got our lunch. And literally, in an inhale and an exhale, his entire plate was clean. And I know he had had a rough childhood. You know, I got it. But that's my point in dressing. Yeah!

Terrence, by all accounts you're considered a hunk.

TH: Then they ain't seen me with my hat off!

Do you feel you ever had a bad performance in anything?

TH: The *Cosby Show*. I never sucked that bad in my life! But just don't talk about it. Let it go to sleep! Please!

Huh!

TH: Go look at it again. Go look at that thing again! I was loud. And I just didn't know anything about telling the truth. But now I know it's about being honest. And surrendering to your craft. It's not brain surgery. You got the lines. Understand them. You're just a paint brush. Understand where the director wants you to go.

Now, *The Perfect Holiday* is all about that 'better to give than receive' holiday spirit, and the movie is not just talking about gifts under the tree. What's the best gift you feel you ever gave to someone?

TH: When I was filming *The Hunting Party* in Bosnia. You've got people there that have been hurt. So they don't necessarily have a good opinion about foreigners. Like after foreigners came and did what they did, or failed to do. You know? And now people want to come in there and exploit their situation.

Half of the people who were extras on the set have lost family in the war there. And the other half of them had been raped during that war. There was a girl, she was an extra for about three days. She saw that I was a musician, and she loved listening to me play. She told me that she always wanted to play saxophone. And she said her father had always promised her that he was gonna buy her a saxophone.

So a few weeks later I asked, when is he buying you that saxophone. And she said, he can't, he's dead. I asked, when? And she was like, oh he was killed during those three days that they lined men up, and systematically killed eight thousand men and boys. So I took her over to a music store, and asked her to pick out a saxophone for me. And when she left to say goodbye, I told her to take it. And she said, I can't. You know, she was crying.

And I asked, why can't you take it. She told me, it's too expensive a gift. I'm like, you don't get it. Like if I was to die, and my daughter wanted a piano, I

would want somebody to buy that for her. So, just think of me as your father, giving this to you. I left a few days later, and we didn't keep in touch. But sometimes I can hear that saxophone in my heart, you know? I think this is what we're supposed to be doing. Now as actors, that's our responsibility, as human beings that's our responsibility.

Well, what do you think about people who say that actors should butt out of politics? Especially because you guys get to see chunks of the world that the rest of us could never imagine.

TH: I don't know. I know one thing. When I was preparing to play Thurgood Marshall, I got to spend time in Washington, behind closed doors. With the Chief Justice. You know? When I was playing a pimp, I got to spend time with a pimp. With many pimps. I talked to 123 different pimps, and 76 prostitutes. And in the movie, I was like the lead dog in this pack of huskies.

My perspective, and the places I've been allowed to see, if I was not to voice anything about what I've seen, how worthless I would be. If I've been given an opportunity to see the world, I will have my voice heard. And if I've seen anything bad, I'm gonna tell you that. Because I have a greater responsibility to the truth, than even a journalist. Because my artistic ability only stems from truth. And the moment you compromise that, you've lost that ability.

Speaking of your amazing performance as a pimp, when you were struggling so hard to make it as an actor, did you ever think of becoming a pimp?

Ha! Uh, no! I don't have the game, man. Look at me! I'm corny, and shy. And introverted. And uncomfortable mostly, with women. And everyone. No, I would never have that confidence. One of the pimps I was talking to, he was watching me talk to this girl on the street. He was coaching me and was like, go and talk to that girl. So I started walking with her, trying to sweet talk her.

Then he called me back over and he said, when you talk to a woman on the street, the first thing you do is stop her, turn her around, and get her to take a couple of steps in your direction. Then she gets used to following you. And then you send her away. Never have her dismiss you. And the second thing you did wrong, was when you said, hey why don't we get together. You never ask for a negative response.

No, you say, look. We're gonna get together later on! You never give them a choice. So I don't have that ability, no!

So how come you didn't try to take his advice?

TH: Because I like what my mama taught me, you know? Yeah, I like what she taught me better! I don't mind being somebody who is strong and insecure at the same time. And needs to be reassured. You know, the vulnerability that can stand up and be a lion when it has to be. I'm vulnerable, but I'm not afraid. I don't like allowing myself to feel scared. So that's the kind of man I like being.

You're in Philly now, which is a pretty violent area. Since *The Perfect Holiday* is also about what it takes to be a positive adult male role model to kids and you're a dad as well, do you have any personal advice to share?

TH: Yeah. It's the highest murder rate in the country right now. So what do you do about it. What I try to do on a daily basis - because I was one of those kids, I was walking around with a gun when I was fourteen years old. I was walking around like that on the streets of LA. And I was walking around with a gun, not because I wanted to shoot somebody, but because I needed to protect myself from somebody else. I didn't feel like I had protection otherwise.

So now when I see those kids like that, I sit down and I talk to them. You know, lead by example, one kid at a time. Speak to them honestly. That will make the difference. You're not gonna do it off of a stage or off of a platform, or out of a movie. You're gonna do it one person at a time.

And we need to change our music, It's some of that music that has given rise to that. We forget that our music is so powerful. And we have this war beating drum going constantly, leading everybody to rage and war. Where in the sixties, it was to peace and to love, you know? And the French Revolution, it started as a result of a great musical inspiration. So we need to change our music.

Are you talking about censorship?

TH: No, individuals need to censor what they are saying. You cannot abuse the First Amendment, and cause havoc throughout the world. Take responsibility for that.

Hey, but what about your pimp music in Hustle & Flow, it crossed the line.

TH: I did. I don't know, how do you answer that, without sounding like an ass.

If you listen to the first song that he came up with, it was Whoop That Trick. And it was very angry. And the second strong song was, it's Hard Out Here For A Pimp. And that was telling the badness of what I've gone through. Then the third song was, It Ain't Over For Me.

So tell the truth. But leave 'em on a positive note. The last song that he sang, It Ain't Over For Me. You know, I can be a better person. Because sometimes an actor dials into the truth, in an unadulterated manner. They accept it and they flow with it, and they don't stop it. They jump out of that airplane and they go whoooo, all the way down.

With all the violence in Philly and in wars, do we just like killing each other, or what?

TH: The older I get, the more frightened I become that we are in the last days. Yeah, and it's gonna get worse, I think. Because it doesn't seem to get better. And it's so strange, because the first thing we see in as newborn life, is not death. It's love. What makes us smile, is that this baby is so beautiful. We think of all the wonderful things that he can accomplish, and we never think of the atrocities that may come to be by his hands, or that he may suffer. So it's a horrible state to be in, to be capable of so much beauty, but to be limited by such evil.

Human beings, we've got the greatest gift of all. And that's creative communication. We can do anything. We can walk, we can talk, we can make love. We are the jewels of creation. And God forgive us, if we abuse that by not doing anything with it.

How do you feel about race, and your own racial identity?

TH: The last African person in my family may have been, I don't know, three or four hundred years ago. Since then, I've been made up of everything from French to German to Indian, Spanish and Chinese. All these exist in my family. So my family has become the world itself. And I want to help black people. But you cannot help black people, until you help the entire world.

I sit here as a collection of you and everybody around us right now. And we've all got to use our wisdom, and a little bit of our love. I'm gonna help the person right next to me. And hopefully you'll remind the next person. It all comes down to the same thing, where are we as a people. And who are we, and what are our responsibilities.

You're a family man with a bunch of kids now. So do you ever think about taking a break from movies for a time?

TH: I'll get a break when I turn back to dust! But right now, I'm gonna walk.

After hearing you sing in Hustle & Flow, I'm guessing your favorite music is hip hop.

TH: I'm a country buff by heart and by nature. That might sound surprising to you and a lot of other people.

What are your future plans for your music?

TH: Musically, it's just to write stuff for myself. And maybe get some songs together. But I'm getting a little old for a music career. I want to plant some petunias, that's what I'm thinking about now!

You're an amazing actor, but these indie movies don't pay too much. How do you feel about that?

TH: You got some money? Give me some money!

Terrence eyes a plate of donuts on the table, and grabs one

TH: Hey, I am a donut fan!

Okay, just don't mess up that fine suit with it!

TH: Thank y'all!

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Everybody needs to choosing careers, everyone has a desire to succeed, many people do not know what is best for his career and how to design it easily cause of success, success must be a way, intellectual Connaught letter vocational consultants believe: successful career development is the password and management within your career.

In recent years domestic experts have proposed the career and career, the concept, which is after the career development of the community an important theory.

1, within the career

Within career is a career in the required knowledge, concepts, psychological quality, experience, ability, physical health, feelings and the combination of factors such as changes in the process.

Within career made of the factors that can be achieved with the help of others, but the primary still rely on their own efforts to pursue and achieve. His career with the composition of different factors, a career within various components of the content once the acquisition, others will not be able to withdraw or deprivation. Within career is the real human capital lies within the career and improve the performance, will be translated into the career.n

In his career, career development is the prerequisite for the development of career development as a driving force of career development. Within career in the career success and success in life plays a key role. Thus in the various stages of his career, we should attach importance to the career development. Especially in the early and middle career early, especially for the college students have not yet graduated or just participate in the work of the new employees, we must put all internal factors career than our pursuit of a career is more important.

The lack of career factors always worried that their people can not find a good job, to find a job after worried that the list of laid-off will be their names, worried that their annexation of enterprises by others, worried that he could not promoted, there is no guarantee worried about the future, not worried about their own competence. In a career rich people will seize every development opportunities, even taking the initiative for themselves and for others to create development opportunities.

2, the career

In his career, is engaged in the work of professional units, place of work, work, work duties and job title, work environment and wages and a combination of factors such as changes in the process.

In a career of factors are usually recognized by others and given, it tends to be denied and others recover. Career outside factors may often inconsistent with their pay, particularly in the early career. Some people struggling lifetime pursuit of career success, but their hearts very painful, because they often do not understand, is the career development within the career development as preconditions.n

In his career, career and career is an inalienable two aspects, they were not incompatible, but a relationship of dialectical unity. A career like a tree trunk, crown, leaves, fruits, etc., as a career, it generally Clearly, everyone hoped that his career flourish tree upright, and promote further development, green and luxuriant, has made great achievements. , but this is not a towering trees grow into the vacuum, a large underground root system to its strong support, and transportation from the nutritional requirements of the tree. The nature of plant research found that the more adverse environment, the more barren soil, the more we need a more substantial root system.n

In fertile soil, roots and crown ratio of about 1: 1; in the barren environment, the ratio of roots and crown can be achieved 3: 1; in desert areas, the proportion of roots and crown will reach the 5: 1. This is the law of nature is nature s wisdom, it gives us the inspiration is the adequacy of our careful

consideration.n

This crown, the development of alternate roots, mutual sake. As the internal and external career relations, mutual promotion and mutual development, but also mutual refraction.

This root is to their subconscious a reminder - To promote further development of fruitful research results, on the deep-rooted. Many college students looking for work when the head of the recruitment unit said: Boyd said to me how many? When long wage ah? A bonus? Collective quarters? Quarters inside there are telephone lines? A color TV? have broadband? to the Internet? These issues are of concern to what? -- The contents of his career. If you ask the question: Have you been in need of that type of talent, the need for the concept and what kind of ability, I can win what kind of training opportunity, I can achieve with the company long on my request, the focus on the career within the roots, you let their roots deep gradually grown more and the longer, we can absorb more nutrients and moisture, your career What will happen to the tree? -- Sprouted many Shoots and Buds, many of the buds grow, it will result. If you every day in how not to stare flowering ah, ah how is not the result is not nurtured a roots , then you can only put up some artificial flowers, hang up some fruit, hanging less tree can the legislation, hanging on the tree more reversed. If you understand the career on the career and the right concept, you will suddenly want to understand that, you will never be without work.n

In the process of looking for work, he has experience, with experience, can improve mental quality can be gradually in the market to rectify its economic community concept, this is your income, this is your career within revenue.

Connaught letter unwise career consultants believe: the development of human potential is endless and, therefore, the development of the career is unlimited, and that the career development of a limited nature contrary.

About the Author

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