

A Conversation with *Carl Anthony Payne*

By Alexandria Bland

Carl Anthony Payne is a very talented actor that is best known for his role as Cole on the 1990's sitcom, *Martin*. However there's so much more to him so we caught up with him in an effort to get to know him a little better. Here's what he had to say:

It's been 15 years since the last season of Martin yet it's still a show that many people watch. How does it feel to have played a role in such a historic sitcom?

It feels wonderful, it feels amazing. When you love what you do and you're just doing what you do, you don't realize the kind of magic that you're creating. Did I think about it at the time? Absolutely not. To know, though, that you're a part of history, you'll be a part of culture and things like that is kind of surreal sometimes. You sit back and realize that we started that thing... Do you know where "You go boy, you go girl" comes from? When you have millions of people across the country doing these things and it's amazing. And for me to be a part of it twice, because before that it was *The Cosby Show*, to be a part of two game-changing events... That's big!

How did you end up getting the role as Cole on Martin?

I just auditioned for it like everybody else. I had actually met *Martin* prior to that at a one-man show that he did for HBO and I went to the screening. My agent just called me in on the job and was like "We have an audition for *Martin*," and I was like "What's *Martin*?" He said it was a new show and I was like "Called *Martin*?" He said "You remember this guy," and I was like "Dragon breath from *House Party*?" So we asked [*Martin*] later what made him choose me and why and he was like "you made me laugh, you had me dying." I've always approached every role and everything I do with a sense of realness and just committed to it and it worked out.

We're sure that people still call you Cole when



they see you on the street. Does that annoy you?

No, no it's all good. Like I said, I feel blessed and I'm happy to have been a part of something that's memorable, you know what I mean? So it doesn't annoy because for one it differentiates who knows me and who doesn't, but it's a blessing to have been able to touch that many people in a way. What will bother me though is when you think that I'm just gonna tap dance on command. Don't just be like "Hey! Do the bird call, give it to me!" or "Where's Big Shirley at?" If I had a dime for every time somebody asked me where's Big Shirley or is Pam's booty really that big or is Gina's head really that big, I'd be a lot richer.

Did you always want to be an actor?

It's something I fell into. I started off taking dance actually when I was a kid, but I think I just did stuff that was creative and involved with the arts. That kind of kept me busy and out of the neighborhood. Because I grew up in Harlem, New York., my mother just always tried to get me involved in stuff that would keep me busy as opposed to hanging out in the neighborhood. And I had a friend who was in the industry at the time and I would go hang out with her all the time

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and she would take me to auditions and be like "You should try out," and I was like "Alright, what I gotta do?"

So many people would be envious of that story...

But it's the truth. I'm a firm believer in the fact that you are where you're supposed to be at all times. Sometimes people just don't recognize the signs. We all have a gift, we all have a talent we all have a purpose. Once you realize that and if you realize it early on, that's a beautiful thing. If you realize it period, that's a beautiful thing. But once you do then that's what you gotta do! You gotta walk and live that.

Most recently people saw you playing Reynaldo on BET's The Game. That was such an adjustment from what we're used to seeing from you. How was it making that transition?

You haven't seen me lately. After I saw myself on the show I was like "I gotta lose some weight and I gotta get back in shape," so, you know, a brother's been in the gym getting it together. I'm doing my LL right now, licking my lips. Doing that show was crazy, it was fun. Wendy Raquel, we went to Howard University together. Shout out HU! Yeah, it was different from what most people are used to seeing me play and that's what they need to see. They need to know that we are chameleons, we are actors, and we're multifaceted. There are many sides to us and a lot of people who know me personally know that Reynaldo side of me. [Fans] just fell in love with Cole, but other people know Reynaldo.

So can you, as Carl, describe your perfect date?

In general I think you want to do something that's out of the ordinary and outside the box. Doing something when you can actually connect with somebody and get to know who that person is rather quickly. You could do something really fun and interactive, I mean you could go bowling. You can't really get to know somebody at the movies, you're not gonna do that. I think it's just gotta be some sort of situation where you can actually get to know the other person. Make it fun, do something outside the box. Go horseback riding, get in a helicopter, do something different. I'm a simple person so on my date night, I'm simple. I'd rather lay up on the couch, get some Netflix, get some popcorn, get some red wine. You know? I'm simple.

So what's going on with you now? Is there anything that we should look forward to from you?

Yeah.,I'm in a movement right now. I'm on a mission. A lot of stuff is being done down in Atlanta so I have a lot of projects that I'm working on. One of them is called The 11ELEVEN11 Project™ from Studio 11 [Films]. We basically took 11 up-and-coming filmmakers, directors, producers, you know the new generation, and we are giving them a chance to shine. We have produced 11 of their short films which we are going to be sending into the film festival. We are also going to string together each one of those films to make one feature length film. Basically my mission and my movement right now is to redefine the game. Redefine definitions is like redefining reality and redefining what's relevant, you know? When we first started talking you said it's been 15 years since the show ended, it's been 20 years since the show began. The fact that I'm actually on five different networks every single day that, to me, is relevant. When a 10-year-old comes up to me in Maggiano's and says "Man, I love you. You are my favorite character," for two generations back to still know because that's what they're watching today, that's relevant. Maybe not The Housewives of New Jersey, I'm just saying.

We've got to redefine what reality is, we've got to redefine the term reality and redefine the term relevant. It's time to bring some good TV back, it's time to bring some quality TV back and some quality films back. There's a movement that's happening and I'm gonna be the General, dammit. We're getting ready to give you what you want.

Finally, is there anything about you that people may not know that you want them to know.

There's a lot of things that people don't know about me because I haven't really let people in, but now they'll start seeing a lot of stuff. What do people need to know about me? They need to know that I'm dedicated, I'm tenacious, and I will not stop until I achieve what I want to achieve. Ultimately, I'm going to leave a worthwhile legacy for my kids. That is what people should know about me.

You can follow Carl Anthony Payne on twitter, @TheCarlPayne , and be sure to tell him that Kontrol Magazine sent you!