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ON LOCATION WITH ONE OF HOLLYWOOD'S MOST SOUGHT AFTER PHOTOGRAPHERS The Gospel According to Kevyn Major Howard; Getting Ready For Your Close-Up; Honoring Your Inner Movie Star! ...

by Nicholas Snow - May 23, 2004

Scene 1: The Gospel According to Kevyn Major Howard

What could be more adventurous in the world of entertainment than participating in your own photo shoot? I first came to know of Kevyn Major Howard—one of Hollywood’s leading headshot photographers—when I was referred to him to obtain a recent photo of Queer as Folk star Peter Paige for a story I was writing.



Star Photographer Kevyn Major Howard with Nicholas Snow on the day of their photo shoot.

At the time, I did not know that destiny would allow me to be the beneficiary of this Shaman and his lens in one of the most spiritual artistic encounters of my life. In fact, in my experience, Howard doesn’t photograph the actor—he photographs the soul, his garage is his chapel, his disciples those who converge seemingly randomly on a particular day. In fact, I was fortunate to share a photo shoot with another actor, a comedienne, a singer, and a screenwriter.

About this congregational approach, Howard explained, “What’s nice about it is when you’re shooting this many people together everybody gets a chemistry going with each other. We get our own rhythms going, and that interaction is what real life comes from—instead of being in a studio environment where it’s me and the client and becomes this plastic environment where people are trying to be interesting. What ends up

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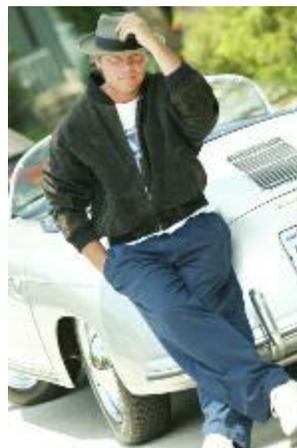
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happening—because real life and the interaction of real life is what's interesting—what you get is more of people's personality, their soul, their truth.”

“If you assume that God created each and every one of us, we already are walking miracles, and all I'm doing is reflecting that miracle within each person. I'm not doing anything special except I'm a mirror to what it is that they are. I'm not intervening on their values and their properties with my opinion. It's not my opinion. It really is what you are which to me is magical. Each and every person has their own blueprint. It's really that simple,” he added.



Kevyn Major Howard
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Howard's philosophy was shaped in part by his stepfather who impressed upon him that “If you're going to touch something, change it. Don't just do it because everybody else is doing it, do something different with it.' He taught me to reach for the stars rather than the golden apples on the apple tree. If you use your imagination enough to reach for the stars, make a jump for those stars, well the golden apples on the apple tree are much easier to pick.”

Howard knows the actor, having himself made six figures appearing in movies such as Stanley Kubrick's Full Metal Jacket and with Clint Eastwood in Sudden Impact. “I believe in actors. I want their careers to be all they want it to be,” explained Howard. “I will fight with them, fight for them, fight because of them. I want artists to listen to their own instincts. Stop believing just because an agent said. Stop believing just because a casting person said. You know, Harrison Ford will tell you that all day long. Agents and casting people and producers and directors said he'd never amount to anything but the carpenter he was. Well, Harrison Ford broke that mold. Many of us can. Stay true. Be your own Joan of Arc. Travel to the light and enjoy the journey.”

My Journey with Howard has just begun. For the boarding pass, just look at the photo below, and for more about this gifted artist, [click here](#). To the results of my entire photo shoot, [click here](#).

Scene 2: Getting Ready For Your Close-Up

So, you've scoped out the photographer, planned the big day, and you're now sitting in the makeup artist's chair getting ready for your close-up. How fabulous! In my own experience, I was sitting in the chair of makeup artist Nicole Bolin, who got bitten by the showbiz bug in her early 20's while living in North Carolina—she got her start working on commercials and independent film. With her Hollywood dream alive and well, Bolin traveled to Los Angeles to attend special effects make-up school, and well, the rest is history!

"A friend in my class knew somebody who knew somebody—one of those things," explained Bolin. "My first film was a weekend independent film at someone's house. One of those low, low, low, low, low budget to no budget. So that's where I got my first little break. And then one thing just kind of led to another. It started happening, you know, kind of like the domino effect. And then I got my really big break when I got to work on *Pirates of the Caribbean*. That was really cool."

How does Bolin prepare someone for their close-up? "Every time I look at someone, whether I'm doing their makeup or not, I totally look at their skin color and size up their face," explained Bolin. "And I come over to what I have, and with my products, mix a tone that I think best suits your coloring. All we're really trying to do, especially in headshots, is just get your skin tailored to make it one nice smooth color so you'll look flawless in your 8 x 10's."

What are the do's and don't of makeup for headshots? "If you're going to have your headshots done, don't do anything drastic to yourself," Bolin advises. "Don't get your hair cut a different way. Don't go get a facial. Don't get mystic tanned. Don't start going to the tanning bed the week before. Don't do your eyebrows crazy or get them waxed. Just try to maintain. A lot of times with headshots, some people actually do use them up to four years, so you want to make sure you're not going to have a trendy, crazy new look just for that day."

"The do's are—get a lot of sleep," she concluded. "Drink lots of water so you look refreshed. You don't want to have any bags or dark circles under your eyes. Make sure you keep your face clean and clear. It's Murphy's

Law. When you start to get your headshots done, you always end up with what we call a surface anomaly, a.k.a. a pimple...just make sure you get sleep and you're in a good spirited mood and you're ready to come."

What does Bolin like best about her job? "The best is that I'm doing something different every day," she explained. "It's never the same, and I get to meet a lot of great people. I get to use my creativeness. I look at someone's face as a palate, basically. It's so exciting to come in every day and have a fresh canvas."

Scene 3: Honor Your Inner Movie Star

It's official! The new Notes From Hollywood slogan is "Honor Your Inner Movie Star." Why? Well, we all have a star within us waiting to come out. You know it; I know it, so express it! In fact, you can get your own "Honor Your Inner Movie Star" T-Shirt now by clicking on the banner on any page of NFH! And this just in, the web site has climbed again and is ranked among the world's top 168,000 web sites by Alexa.com, so thank you!



[Nicholas Snow's Entire Photo Shoot Results.](#)

Cut: That's A Wrap!

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