

The Best Chestnut!

Written by Kam Williams



Morris Chestnut was born on New Year's Day 1969 in Cerritos, California where he was a student-athlete in high school, en route to majoring in finance and drama at California State University. He made his big screen debut opposite Ice Cube in John Singleton's "Boyz n the Hood," and subsequently enjoyed his breakout role as the groom-to-be in Malcolm Lee's "The Best Man."

The handsome heartthrob has been a much-in-demand leading man ever since, starring in hits like "The Call," "Think Like a Man," "Identity Thief," "The Brothers," "Not Easily Broken," "Kick Ass 2," "Two Can Play That Game," "Breakin' All the Rules," "The Perfect Holiday," "Half Past Dead," "Like Mike," "Ladder 94" and "The Game Plan." A dedicated family man away from work, Morris and his wife, Pam, live in suburban L.A. with their son, Grant, and daughter, Paige.

Here, he talks about reprising the memorable role of Lance Sullivan in the eagerly-anticipated sequel, "The Best Man Holiday."

Kam Williams: Hey Morris, thanks for another interview.

Morris Chestnut: No problem, no problem, Kam. Thank YOU, again.

KW: I loved the film. It was like attending a reunion with a whole lot of folks I hadn't seen in a longtime.

MC: Oh, that's great!

KW: I'm going to mix my questions for you in with some sent in by fans.

MC: Perfect!

KW: Editor/Legist Patricia Turnier asks: What did it mean to you to reunite with the cast to shoot this sequel?

MC: It was just wonderful coming together again after all these years, especially since we'd had such a great experience before. It gave me a good feeling inside to reunite, almost like family. We'd accomplished so much the first time, and it was pretty much the same with the sequel.

KW: Chalyn Toon asks: Does Lance trust Harper around Mia knowing their past? Does Lance and Mia's relationship suffer from his being haunted by the images of what happened between his wife and best friend?

MC: That's interesting. Lance definitely trusts Mia. And I've always been that type of person. You really don't have to worry about your spouse, as long as you trust him or her. If you trust your spouse or whoever you're in a relationship with, everybody else

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doesn't matter.

KW: How did you feel about the arc of your character this go-round?

MC: I was really excited about how all the characters were layered and had depth to them. Malcolm [director Malcolm Lee] wrote a really great script. As for Lance's arc, I think this is one of the best roles I've ever had in a movie.

KW: What message do you think people will take away from the film?

MC: There are so many messages, because the film has a number of storylines. One thing I love about making an ensemble film like this is that you can have ten people come away from it with ten different messages.

KW: Director Rel Dowdell asks: Would you consider your role in "The Best Man" or in "Boyz n the Hood" to be your signature role, since both are iconic?

MC: [Chuckles] Wow! Thank you, Rel, I appreciate that. I'd like to think that they both are. "Boyz n the Hood" definitely put me on the map and really brought me into the game. Hopefully, this one does the same thing, twenty-something years later, because I feel very strongly about it. It's a great, emotional role in a great movie overall.

KW: Patricia says: You have been in the movie business for decades. What advice do you have for aspiring actors who want to achieve longevity?

MC: I would say focus on your craft. Nowadays, a lot of people come to quote-unquote Hollywood thinking that all they just have to be different or do something outlandish or have a huge personality to become a star. But I think that if you just focus on the craft, you'll have a better chance at longevity.

KW: The bookworm Troy Johnson question: What was the last book you read?

MC: Woo! That's a good question. I read so many scripts, that I don't do that much leisurely reading of books. But the last, good, feature film script I read was *The Best Man Holiday*

KW: What is your favorite dish to cook?

MC: I don't really cook, but I like to eat sweets. When I go to a restaurant, I'll read the dessert menu before I even look at the entrees. I love sweets, especially chocolate. Hot, hot, warm chocolate fudge... caramel... chocolate chip cookies... all those kinds of desserts. Now I'm getting hungry. [Chuckles]

KW: What is your guiltiest pleasure?

MC: It would definitely be the sweets. I try to keep in shape and I always have to check myself. Whenever I binge eat, sweets are the one temptation.

KW: The Sanaa Lathan question: What excites you?

MC: That's a great question. What was Sanaa's answer to that?

KW: It's been so long ago, I can't remember. Sorry.

MC: Well, I'm excited by my family, sports and desserts. [Chuckles]

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KW: When you look in the mirror, what do you see?

MC: **Nothing special... just me. [LOL]**

KW: The Uduak Oduok question: Who is your favorite clothes designer?

MC: **I love Hugo Boss, Calvin Klein, John Varvatos and others along that line.**

KW: The Mike Pittman question: What was your best career decision?

MC: **Signing on to do "The Best Man Holiday."**

KW: If you could have one wish instantly granted, what would that be for?

MC: **Instantly? For this movie to have instant box office success and make over \$100 million.**

KW: The Jamie Foxx question: If you only had 24 hours to live, how would you spend the time?

MC: **With my family. I like that question, too.**

KW: The Kerry Washington question: If you were an animal, what animal would you be?

MC: **I'd have to think about that one. There are so many to choose from.**

KW: The Ling-Ju Yen question: What is your earliest childhood memory?

MC: **One Christmas, my brother and I woke up at about 2 in the morning. These dirt bikes were there under the tree, so we went outside and started riding them around our tiny backyard in the middle of the night.**

KW: The Anthony Mackie question: Is there anything that you promised yourself you'd do if you became famous, that you still haven't done yet?

MC: **I never made any promises like that to myself, because I didn't pursue acting to become famous. I was actually just trying to make a living.**

KW: The Melissa Harris-Perry question: How did your first big heartbreak impact who you are as a person?

MC: **Wow, that's great! To be honest, it taught me that it's always about how you recover from that type of situation. It taught me that I could recover from anything and still be okay.**

KW: The Viola Davis question: What's the biggest difference between who you are at home as opposed to the person we see on the red carpet?

MC: **I'm probably just a little bit more animated, but other than that I'm pretty much the same person.**

KW: The Anthony Anderson question: If you could have a superpower, which one would you choose?

MC: **Hmmm... [Chuckles] that's a good one. I'd say the ability to fly.**

KW: The Judyth Piazza question: What key quality do you believe all successful people share?

MC: **Perseverance. They don't give up. They just continue to strive for what they want.**

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KW: The Gabby Douglas question: If you had to choose another profession, what would that be?

MC: Professional athlete. Basketball.

KW: The Michael Ealy question: If you could meet any historical figure, who'd it be?

MC: Dr. Martin Luther King.

KW: The Harriet Pakula-Teweles question: With so many classic films being redone, is there a remake you'd like to star in?

MC: Yes, Mahogany.

KW: Attorney Bernadette Beekman asks: What is your favorite charity?

MC: Children's Miracle Network.

KW: The Tavis Smiley question: How do you want to be remembered?

MC: Just as someone who has always done right by others.

KW: Morris, can you come up with a generic question I can ask other celebrities?

MC: [LOL] I can't think of one, but I wish I had a list of the ones you just asked me, because I need to think about all of them some more.

KW: I'll send you a copy of it. Thanks again for the time, Morris, and best of luck with the film. And if you think of a Morris Chestnut question, let me know.

MC: I will definitely do that. Thank you so much, Kam.

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To see a trailer for "The Best Man Holiday," visit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=va7uNZS3>