

Ice Cube: The cube root of 22

Written by Kam Williams



The "22 Jump Street" Interview

As much as technology, business and society have changed since the Eighties, one thing has remained constant: Ice Cube has been a premier cultural watchdog, astutely commenting on, examining and detailing the breadth of the American experience in uncompromising terms with an unflinching honesty and a sobering perspective, as well as a deft comedic touch that has endeared him to several generations of fans.

Indeed, growing up in crime and gang-infested South Central Los Angeles, he learned how to navigate a world where the lines between right and wrong shifted constantly. Of equal import, the L.A. based entertainment mogul also found a lasting way to present the comedy that exists in the midst of difficult situations.

After penning the most memorable lyrics on N.W.A's groundbreaking songs "Straight Outta Compton" and "F— Tha Police," Ice Cube left the group at the peak of its popularity because he was not being paid correctly. That move led to one of the most successful careers in music history. As a solo recording artist, Ice Cube has sold more than 10 million albums while remaining one of rap's most respected and influential artists.

Beyond music, Ice Cube has established himself as one of entertainment's most reliable, successful and prolific figures. In the film arena, he's an accomplished producer (*Friday*, *Barbershop 2: Back In Business*, *Are We There Yet?*

), writer (*Friday*, *The Players Club*, *The Janky Promoters*) and director (*The Players Club*) who is best known for his acting.

One of the most bankable actors in cinematic history, his films include the acclaimed *Friday*, *Barbershop* and *Are We There Yet?* franchises, as well as star turns as a conflicted teen in *Boyz N The Hood*, as a greedy soldier in *Three Kings*

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and as an elite government agent in

xXx: State Of The Union

. Ice Cube's ability to bring a natural, everyman aesthetic to any film genre makes his characters compelling and memorable, whether he's playing a confrontational career college student (

Higher Learning

) or a skeptical football coach (

The Longshots

).

As a television producer, he took the "Barbershop" and "Are We There Yet?" series to successful network runs as well as the controversial "Black - White" reality series. He's also a pitchman for Coors Light and has been featured in various commercials for the brand.

In 2012, he appeared in the blockbuster film *21 Jump Street* and the independent thriller *Ramp art*

More recently, he enjoyed major success with the #1 box office hit

Ride Along

, which his company Cube Vision produced. The picture has already been greenlit for a sequel, proving once again that Cube is the king of the franchise film category.

While Cube loves making movies, his first passion will always be music. His forthcoming album, *"Everything's Corrupt,"*

slated for a release later this year, will be his 18th as either a solo artist or member of a group (N.W.A, Da Lench Mob, Westside Connection). Here, he talks about reprising the role of Captain Dickson in

22 Jump Street

Kam Williams: Hi Cube, thanks for the interview.

Ice Cube: Oh, no problem, Kam.

KW: I loved the film. Did you enjoy rejoining Channing [Tatum], Jonah [Hill] and the rest of cast to shoot the sequel?

IC: Yeah, we had a lotta fun. We shot it in Puerto Rico and New Orleans. You can't beat that, especially since we went in knowing that we'd been successful the first time, and that we were going to make something just as cool.

KW: You guys managed to measure up to the high bar you set with *21 Jump Street*.

IC: It's always great when you're able to give fans what they expect and even a little more. I think some people were a little nervous about the sequel because you never think you can get close to the original. But I think the audience is going to love this one just much, if not more than the first one.

KW: Attorney Bernadette Beekman asks: What was the funniest thing that happened during the shooting?

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IC: [Chuckles] Everybody asks that, but nothing unusual happened on the set. Like I said, we had a lotta fun, but nothing out of the ordinary happened. We just went to work, and everything that was funny was caught on camera, so you should be able to see all the fun that was had in the movie.

KW: Harriet Pakula-Teweles was wondering whether it's hard to play a supporting role after getting used to being the star, producer, scriptwriter and director?

IC: No, I just want to be a part of good projects. I enjoyed playing my role. It actually felt like a vacation to only have to act and not have to worry about all the business stuff. I was happy for all that to be somebody else's headache.

KW: Erik Daniels would like to know what advice the Ice Cube of today would give to the Ice Cube of N.W.A.?

IC: Keep doin' what you're doin', fall in love with what you're creating, and everything else will fall into place.

KW: Realtor to the Stars Jimmy Bayan would like to know what you think of the deal Dr. Dre just cut to sell Beats Electronics to Apple?

IC: I'm extremely excited for Dr. Dre, personally. He totally deserves it. He's a genius. He put me in the game. I wouldn't be here without Dr. Dre, so I was as happy for him as I was when Obama won to see somebody finally take it all the way to the top.

KW: Children's book author Irene Smalls asks: How were you able to parlay your music career success into a film career?

IC: To be honest, I got discovered. I don't really have a story to share. [Director] John Singleton saw something in me and put me in *Boyz 'N the Hood*. I recognized how much of an opportunity it was and, from there, I just worked hard, paid attention, and tried to figure out what it would take to get to this spot right here. Things have worked out, not perfectly, but things have pretty much worked out.

KW: Editor/Legist Patricia Turnier says: I loved your performance in *Boyz 'N the Hood*. How often do you go back and watch that and your other movies again?

IC: Not a lot. I'm always kind of off to the next movie, and focused on making sure that the one I'm currently working on is as good as the one that's already on TV. If I'm passing one of the movies, I usually catch 5 or 10 minutes here or there, and keep going.

KW: Is it still a surprise when you're channel surfing and you suddenly see yourself on television?

IC: I always have a "That's cool!" moment. You never get tired of seeing yourself on TV. It's always extra cool... always a treat.

KW: At those moments, do you just think about making the movie, or do you think about being on the set, too?

IC: I usually think about making the movie more than that actual cut, because there's so much that you don't see that went into that shot. And I always see the crew, and remember everybody off-camera. [Chuckles]

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KW: Documentary filmmaker Kevin Williams asks: Was it a hard decision to leave N.W.A. and go solo, artistically?

IC: It was hard because I was really connected to Dre and everybody in the group, and it was so much fun. But I had to go once I saw what was going on financially.

KW: What is your favorite dish to cook?

IC: I don't do much cooking, but one of my favorite dishes to eat is my wife's macaroni and cheese.

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

IC: The ability to read minds.

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

IC: Getting an airplane I could ride around in when I was about 2½. I still have a picture of me in it.

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

IC: A tiger.

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

IC: An eagle.

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?

IC: At home, I totally kick back. On the red carpet, I'm working.

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

IC: I wish the world would become what God wanted it to be in the first place, before we tampered with it.

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

IC: Telling everybody I love that I love them.

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

IC: "Q," Quincy Jones' autobiography. <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0385488963/ref=nosim/thslfofire-20>

KW: The music maven Heather Covington question: What was the last song you listened to?

IC: Flashlight by Parliament. <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/B000W0125A/ref=nosim/thslfofire-20>

KW: Let's say you're throwing your dream dinner party—who's invited... and what would you serve?

IC: God, and I'd serve whatever he wants.

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

IC: I don't know if it's considered a classic, but Scarface.

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

IC: Besides my family and relatives? [LOL] The Minority AIDS project, especially after Eazy [N.W.A. member Eazy-E] died.

KW: Is there any question no one ever asks you, that you wish someone would?

IC: Nope, I've been asked just about everything.

KW: Thanks again for the time, Cube, and best of luck with the film.

IC: Thanks, Kam.

To see a trailer for 22 Jump Street, visit: <http://www.22jumpstreetmovie.com/site/videos>

Or: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H75QBalBhB0>