

Remember Rochelle

Written by Kam Williams



Rochelle Aytes is quickly establishing herself as one of Hollywood's brightest, young starlets on the rise. In 2004, she made her big screen debut playing Shawn Wayans' love interest in the genderbending comedy *White Chicks*, directed by Keenan Ivory Wayans. She can currently be seen in the ABC drama series "The Forgotten."

Aytes has also shot guest leads on ABC's *My Wife & Kids*, and on FOX's *Johnny Zero*. Furthermore, she's starred in the Fox series "Drive" and enjoyed a guest-starring role on the HBO series "Sex & The City," although she is perhaps best known for her breakout lead role in the Tyler Perry hit movie *Madea's Family Reunion*.

Rochelle was born on May 17, 1976 in NYC, where she developed a love for ballet at an early age. As a classically-trained ballerina, she appeared with Ballet Hispanico as well as the national tour and Broadway cast of *Aida*. Fueled by her growing passion for acting, she quickly built up an impressive modeling resume' by appearing in the commercials for Coca-Cola, McDonald's, L'Oreal and Mercedes Benz, to name a few. And she was subsequently featured in ad campaigns for Dasani, Tylenol, Gillette, Johnson & Johnson, Heineken and Burger King.

Kam Williams: Hi Rochelle, thanks for the time. What interested you in *The Forgotten*?

Rochelle Aytes: I loved the concept and the strength of the character.

KW: How would you describe the show?

RA: *The Forgotten* is about a volunteer group that assists the police in identifying the unknown and capturing the guilty. It's filled with passion, darkness and humor.

KW: Tell me a little about your character.

RA: Detective Russell is a tough, smart, passionate detective from Chicago. She works very closely with the network to solve these cases and bring closure to the victim's family. She also has a soft spot for the character, Alex [played by Christian Slater], her former partner, and tries her best to keep him and the rest of the group out of danger.

KW: How is it working with Christian Slater and the rest of the cast?

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RA: It has been such a joy working with him. He has been kind and generous in his work and inspirational. His work ethic is amazing. The same goes for the rest of the cast. We work hard, but laugh a lot!

KW: Where in New York City did you grow up?

RA: I grew up in Harlem.

KW: What high school did you attend?

RA: LaGuardia High School for the Performing Arts.

KW: When did you develop your interest in acting?

RA: After working in a Broadway show, called Aida.

KW: What's the difference between working with the Wayans' Brothers in *White Chicks* versus Tyler Perry in

Madea's Family Reunion

?

RA: Working with the Wayans Brothers was my first film and just a lot of fun to do. It was much less demanding of my time and emotions than working with Tyler. Though they were both comedies, Tyler's movie required more depth and focus, therefore, creating a more serious working environment. I learned a great deal from them both.

KW: What do you prefer TV or film?

RA: Film.

KW: Who would you like to be paired opposite in a romance drama?

RA: Matt Damon.

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

RA: No.

KW: The Teri Emerson question: When was the last time you had a good laugh?

RA: Last night, watching my girlfriend try to learn this new dance.

KW: The music maven Heather Covington question: What music are you listening to nowadays?

RA: The Beatles. I just watched *Across The Universe* on cable.

KW: What is your favorite dish to cook?

RA: Spaghetti with turkey meatballs.

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

RA: *The Alchemist*. <http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0061122416?ie=UTF8&tag=thslf-ofire-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=0061122416>

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KW: The "Realtor to the Stars" Jimmy Bayan question. Where in L.A. do you live?

RA: Miracle Mile

KW: The Boris Kodjoe question: What do you consider your biggest accomplishment?

RA: Every new project I'm involved in is my biggest accomplishment.

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

RA: Bebe.

KW: The Mike Pittman question: What is your best childhood memory?

RA: Dancing at Lincoln Center every year with Ruth Williams' dance recital.

KW: The Rudy Lewis question: Who's at the top of your hero list?

RA: My mother.

KW: The Columbus Short question: Are you happy?

RA: Most of the time.

KW: The Tasha Smith question: Are you ever afraid?

RA: Yes.

KW: What has been the biggest obstacle you have had to overcome?

RA: Not caring about what other people think.

KW: The Flex Alexander question: How do you get through the tough times?

RA: I pray and I use those challenges and disappointments as a learning experience. Criticism or rejection drives me to be better.

KW: The Laz Alonso question: How can your fans help you?

RA: By going on influential websites and saying, " We want to see Rochelle Aytes in more movies!" [Laughs]

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

RA: Someone striving to do better.

KW: What advice do you have for anyone who wants to follow in your footsteps?

RA: Believe in yourself and speak success into your life. Hard work and determination equals success.

KW: How do you want to be remembered?

RA: As someone who made a difference in the lives of others.

KW: Thanks again, and best of luck with everything.

To see a trailer for *The Forgotten*, visit:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nYUJvJmXrik>