Beat: Entertainment

Storyteller Shawn-Caulin Young

A Talent to Be Reckoned With

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USPA NEWS - Heart, Baby! The Movie, opens in New York at the Village East Cinema Nov 16 and in Los Angeles Nov 23 at the Ahrya Fine Arts Laemmle Theater with additional markets to follow. A must-see true story movie - if ever I´ve seen one.

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Becoming an unbeatable boxer after being sentenced for robbery to 40 years in the Central Tennessee State Penitentiary at age 18, George Lee Martin, authentically portrayed by Gbenga Akinnagbe, (The Wire, The Deuce), is offered Olympic Gold freedom.

Cast in Heart, Baby! as Martin´s transgender cellmate, Crystal, Shawn-Caulin Young instills your psyche with the heart of the matter. Meaning: If he hadn´t brought it appearing as Crystal, audiences may have had a tough time believing this story could possibly be true. Studying with the legendary Acting Coach, Larry Moss, to hone his storytelling craft was like a dream come true. But, learning how to walk, talk, think, and move like a woman had him, “riding on the edges of his sanity,“ he says.

Preparing for the role as Crystal sent Shawn-Caulin down a rabbit hole of discovery and transformation. “I related to her in many ways given my own experiences as a gay man growing up in a world filled with toxic masculinity,“ he says. Society revealed much of itself to Shawn-Caulin and culture´s need to grow beyond the confines of bigotry. “There is a dangerous epidemic in this country surrounding the treatment of women,“ he says.

After experiencing women´s role in society as “objectified, degraded, harassed and dismissed,“ he is outraged. “That is why it is now my mission to educate all men about what it is like for a woman, especially a trans woman, and teach them the limited belief systems about all women that were adopted by them are false and have to change now,“ he says.

His role as Crystal forced Shawn-Caulin to cross the boundaries of his sexual identity to spend near six months existing as a transgender in society. “I knew I had to understand and know in my bones what it felt like to be born in the wrong body,“ he says. Equally, he has now come into his own identity with greater clarity and a newfound sense of ease.

As reward for investing heavily into developing his craft, Shawn-Caulin has landed a few juicy roles during his chosen career as a Storyteller. There is his surreal experience of being directed by Kenneth Branagh on a pre-Disney Marvel production with, he says, “let me tell you, he is delicious,“ Chris Hemsworth, in “Thor“ while making use of Anthony Hopkins´ old dressing room. With his family hailing from Norway and Sweden, the young actor was able to live out his dreams being cast as a Viking.

Mr. Young also accepted a role opposite Drew Barrymore in “Santa Clarita Diet,“ so I pop the question. Recalling multiple hugs and the deep connection formed, Shawn-Caulin lets me have it. Confirmation is immediate, “Drew, in particular, is a real treat,“ he says. “She is as playful, funny, sweet, and as kind as you would imagine her to be.“ Currently, Shawn-Caulin is busy with the new season of HBO´s True Detective opposite Academy Award winning actor Mahershala Ali.

Shawn-Caulin Young identifies his persona in the realm of homosexual cisgender male. And while that may be confusing to some,

there is one thing for certain. He is truly a man among men adopting the lofty mission to expand the boundaries of human acceptance, “You have to get cool with what it means to be completely human,“ he says.

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