



WORDS BY: L. Mz. Limitless

BENJAMIN JIMERSON: The Politician of Entertainment



IMAGES BY: Mark Sacro
MAKEUP: Damarius. G & Artemis
HAIR: Jamie Gatlin
STYLING: Betrice Benbow

TO PERSEVERE THROUGH ADVERSITY AND SUCCEED IS ALWAYS A HIGHLY REGARDED ACCOMPLISHMENT. THIS IS PARTICULARLY TRUE FOR BENJAMIN JIMERSON, WHO CAME FROM A HUMBLING "RAGS TO RICHES" STORY TO BECOMING A SPECIAL SENATE REPRESENTATIVE. NOW THAT ISN'T A TYPICAL FIND ON THE RESUME OF A FILM PRODUCER OR CASTING AGENCY. THEN AGAIN, BENJAMIN JIMERSON IS ANYTHING BUT TYPICAL.

GROWING UP WITH HIS MOTHER WHO WAS A GOSPEL SINGER IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY, YOU COULD EASILY SAY THAT IT WAS MEANT TO BE FOR JIMERSON TO ALIGN HIMSELF IN THE SAME BUSINESS. WHAT BEGAN WITH ENOUGH ADVERSITY EARLY IN HIS LIFE TO CREATE A BOX OFFICE DRAMA AND TURNED OUT TO BE A LIFE FILLED WITH SUCCESS AND CONTINUED ACHIEVEMENTS OF GREATNESS IN THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY, INCLUDING MAKING FILMS, PRODUCING PLATINUM ALBUMS WITH STAR PERFORMERS. BETWEEN DOING THE FINAL EDITS OF HIS NEXT MOVIE, PLAYERS SCHOOL, JIMERSON HAD A CHANCE TO DO AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH J'ADORE.

WHAT STARTED YOU ON YOUR JOURNEY IN THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY?

Guess you can say I really grew up in the industry. My Mom was a Gospel recording artist, so I grew up watching her tape TV shows, etc.

YOU WERE APPOINTED WITH THE HONOR OF BECOMING THE UNITED STATES GOODWILL AMBASSADOR IN A SPECIAL SENATE RESOLUTION #728. HOW DID THIS COME ABOUT?

It's an honorary position. Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie have the same type of commission. You don't have duties, you are just viewed as a representative of the Government and in some cases may have Diplomatic Immunity.

YOU RECEIVED GOLD AND PLATINUM AWARDS FOR ARTISTS SUCH AS BRANDY, R. KELLY AND A HOST OF OTHERS. WHAT ROLES DID YOU PLAY IN THEIR CAREERS AND HOW DID THAT COME ABOUT?

Well, like I said, I grew up with a recording artist, my mother. Some of the gold and platinum records I received were on artists I wrote, produced, managed or handled publicity for. My company, www.jimersonandassoc.com, was one of the top suppliers of women for music videos for a lot of artists, so I have even received 'thank you' awards for that.

BETWEEN YOUR ROLES IN MUSIC PRODUCTION, CASTING AND FILM PRODUCTION, WHICH DO YOU FIND IS THE MOST REWARDING TO YOU AND WHY?

I really love producing movies and now my two new upcoming reality TV shows, including The House of Diva's. I see how television and movies have such a strong influence on the culture and, in particular, how it influences young people. I just want to do films and TV shows that can help make a positive difference in people's lives where it is not just entertainment, but what I call 'constructive entertainment.' All I can say is don't be fooled by the names alone.

HAVING YOUR HAND IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY, WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF THE MUSIC INDUSTRY TODAY AND DO YOU FEEL IT HAS GONE AWAY FROM BEING ABOUT THE TALENT AND BECOME TOO COMMERCIALIZED?

I don't have a problem with the commercial aspects of the industry, because for too long, black artists were taken advantage of—getting paid a used Cadillac and a few dollars in exchange for their publishing rights (which is where the money is for artists), I remember back when I was about 10, my mother was on welfare by then and we were really low on food and walked a long way to get to the publishing company for her royalties, only to find they had a check for \$16.00 off a hit song. I remember my mother cried about that. Now guys like Prince, Jay Z, Puffy, and 50 have become multi-millionaires and changed the status of the game by keeping their publishing.

What I would say is that in a time when we have a black President, we need to start looking at stepping up our game. Stop using our women as ho's in song lyrics and videos, and start motivating our people to achieve greatness.

IF YOU COULD CHANGE SOMETHING ABOUT THE MUSIC INDUSTRY, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

I'd like to see artists stop glorifying materialism and the pimp lifestyle. That's really what my new movie, Player's School, is all about. It's going to be a very funny movie with some great

talent. The movie has some really strong messages to deliver. It's a great project that I've been fortunate to find some wonderful investors for. They see the vision for this film and have invested in the future of this film. Special thanks to the Government of Gabon, Africa, which is quickly becoming the Hollywood of Africa.

I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU WILL BE BEGINNING PRE-PRODUCTION ON YOUR SIXTH FILM, PLAYER'S SCHOOL. HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH THE CONCEPT FOR THIS FILM?

Life experiences. Plus, I wanted to have a great film that would bring people into the theaters and allow them to see a really funny film. The movie has a real message in it—something the youth really need to hear in this new, 'Yes We Can,' Obama, 'anything is possible' era.

I READ ABOUT A POSSIBLE DISPUTE BETWEEN YOURSELF AND 51 MINDS REGARDING THE USE OF SOME OF THE TALENT FROM FLAVA OF LOVE SEASONS 1 AND 2. WHAT HAS COME OF THAT?

51 Minds had their lawyer send me a cease and desist letter, which meant nothing to me! Having been a manager with a family of lawyers and politicians, I was not going to be bluffed into not working with the girls from Flavor of Love who had already signed contracts with me, because 51 Minds wanted a monopoly on them. Some of those girls only got \$100 a week for a show that had reportedly generated over \$100 million dollars. I was paying the girls major dollars for a small independent film. I personally felt that the girls and Flav were exploited and underpaid when you consider they were the reason for the show's success.

WILL YOU STILL BE USING THE SAME TALENT, OR HAVE YOU CAST NEW TALENT IN THEIR ROLES?

No, the girls are in. We did lose a couple of them because of what I looked at as intimidation from that company. The others stood strong, which is a big thing, because it has been a long, hard road to go from just having a good idea to securing funding, contracts, talent, etc. I owe Buckeey, Serious, Smiley, Rain, Q-Tee, Pumpkin, Crazy and Beautiful a world of thanks for believing in the project. I also have to thank Michael Colyar and old school rap artist Kurtis Blow. When choosing the talent, at first, it was popularity, but I have come to learn it's more about talent, along with the belief in what your project and vision are about.

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT TO SEE IN TERMS OF CONTENT IN THIS MOVIE THAT WILL SET IT APART FROM OTHER MOVIES IN THE SIMILAR GENRE?

It's seriously funny! People will go to the theaters expecting a laugh or two, and they will get that. But at the end of the movie, they will walk out saying, 'Wow, that was really deep!'

Benjamin Jimerson also has a number of websites that represent his ventures including:

- www.playerschoolmovie.com
- www.jimersonandassoc.com
- www.myspace.com/arealprize
- www.thedivahouse.com
- www.catchaproducer.com

