

THE INTERVIEW

★
🗑️ THE ICON THAT DELETED
ACTOR'S NUMBERS FROM MY DEVICE

18 NUMBERS
DELETED



TABLE
12

BE SEEN. BE CHOSEN. BE THE ONE.



'I don't want to just create a star that is working here and there on projects. I want to create a global superstar with a name so powerful, it can promote iconic, industry and game changing moves in Hollywood'

During the events leading up to the Academy Awards, visionary Ross attended several pre award show functions. One in particular had him seated next to a blazing, modern day African American ICON. The two engaged in a conversation where the ICON deleted numbers in Ross's phone.

Below is a snippet from a translated film school alumni interview that gives insight on that life-changing placement next to an icon, how it changed his entire film direction going forward, the power of an actor director muse and the three muses he lost.

Alumni: You recently attended an Oscar related Awards season event. At this event one of the things they did was honor Michael B Jordan and Ryan Coogler. They sat you next to a global, film icon. Can you tell us about that evening?

Ross: It was surreal. I won't say his name because of some of the things he said..

Alumni: Some of the things he said?

Ross: He was straight to the point and candid. He spoke about the industry and people around it with a high level of uncensored truth. I just think he was talking directly to me and I feel it wouldn't be appropriate to say his name. But he is a superstar of the ages. One of the biggest stars in the industry. He could open a movie today and it would have the potential to go number one on his star power alone.

Alumni: How did you two start talking?

Ross: He was already sitting in his seat when I was placed next to him. He was talking to someone on his left and immediately stopped and stuck out his hand to me. He introduced himself and asked my name. He then said 'perfect' and joked saying 'We know why they put us together'. We laughed, then he turned back and finished his conversation. This was a taping so there was a lot of down time in between setups and it also had a huge break. During that break, he turned back to me and this is when we had a long and amazing conversation.

Alumni: What were some of the highlights of that conversation?

Ross: He asked my association with the event. I told him I was a man of film and was there to support Ryan and Michael. That led to me telling him how I had been looking for their kind of partnership for almost 20 years. I told him the stories of the only three actors that I made it official with and he shook his head.

Alumni: In a good or bad way?

Ross: He told me that I was too loyal. I wasted my time and the minute that I didn't feel the energy, I should have moved on. He went on to explain that we are in a generation where very few people are loyal. We are at a time where influencers are allowing people to believe success is simple. For every successful influencer, there are millions of actors who are not. He said my first mistake was giving any energy to someone who demonstrated that they are too busy for YOU to work on making them a star. His wording was key because nothing is promised, but if you have two people who connect, have all the tools available for success and have drive and focus...anything is a possibility. I definitely understood how he was choosing his words. That is one reason why he is the film icon that he is.

Alumni: After he said this, do you agree that you stayed too long with your three prospects?

Ross: The icon explained it in a way where I did understand that I wasted a lot of unnecessary time on people who didn't give a shit about me. Wait excuse me, everyone here in the class is over 18 right? (the room laughs)

Alumni: Did he give you advice on how to move forward in your search?

Ross (smiles): He did more than that. He told me to take out my phone and go to my contacts. He then said to show him the names of actor's that I met over the last year or so whom I thought were possibilities in my actor and director search. I showed him one name and he asked when was the last time they called or text me. I think for that particular person it had been almost two months. He said delete them from my phone. I thought he was joking. In that big movie star, iconic no nonsense face, he told me again...delete it. I held my hand over the delete button slowly waiting for him to release the joke and he never did. Just like that, the actor was deleted from my phone. He then said to me 'you're too slow' and grabbed my device. He said the break isn't that long and he went through my contacts with quickness, asking about several names. If each actor was over a month since we last spoke, he deleted.

Alumni: That is amazing, yet odd.

Ross: He explained to me that I was giving up too much time and energy to people who at the end of the day could care less about what it took for me to make things happen. Again his wording was purposeful. '..at the end of the day could care less about what it took for YOU to make things happen'. Because there is a process and most won't allow the process to happen. Most are too impatient for perfection. Too impatient to carve out something that could potentially be legendary. You have to build a friendship if you are planning on taking down Hollywood. It doesn't work any other way. There would be no Sinners, the most nominated film in the history of cinema, had there not been a solid friendship and trust between Ryan and Michael. That is why you only have one example of that type of success in this era and they are it. Yet there are thousands ascending to Hollywood weekly looking for that kind of success. What is missing from most Hollywood dreamers is foundation, focus and friendship. I mean here is the truth, as expensive as this world has become, why would a creator invest 100s of thousands into a talent who is not focused or they are not connected to? The superstar sitting next to me said he was doing what others obviously hadn't tried to do before I met him...and that as break my chain of one sided devotion. Thats why he was deleting. He said 'people didn't respect your time or effort so I am moving you on'.

The icon went on to explain that Ryan Coogler and Michael B Jordan generated 5 billions dollars with their connection. Then he asked me a question that really got under my skin: Do you think if the actors you were interested in pairing with believed that you could turn them into a multi billion dollar money making machine, they would be more focused? He also gave me an example. He has a son that works behind the scenes. He indicated that his kid was putting together an indie project and the actors that were cast gave a lackluster energy. Once they found out that he was the son of the icon I was sitting next to, their energy and commitment changed in a huge, positive way. I believe he gave me that example so I wouldn't take the lack of focus personal. It is just the rhythm of the entertainment business.

Alumni: I have to go back and ask, when he was deleting your texts, what was going through your mind?

Ross: I was sitting there in awe. It was a little emotional as well because he cared enough to do that. The moment was so powerful to me. I went on line and tried to find footage of him going through my phone. I saw people with their cameras out so I was sure someone filmed that moment.

Alumni: Did you find any footage?

Ross: I found a video on either Twitter or Instagram of me sitting and talking to him, but it did not capture the moment of him deleting the numbers. I have faith that it will turn up. One of the greatest moments of my entertainment journey and i'd like to save the imagery.

Alumni: Can you tell us about the three actor director potentials that you had on your radar?

Ross: All three were great. The first one was truly my bonafide friend. He was having financial difficulty and I couldn't really get a chunk of time with him because he was doing everything he could to land a national commercial. He felt that a national commercial would put him back on his feet. When he finally landed a national spot and was paid, our friendship ended. The second one took place seven years later. Muse #2, there was something about him..superstar potential but he truly needed someone who could bring out his true talent. The level of his career would truly benefit by way of a visionary because he had extraordinary, raw mechanics.

I could never get Muse #2's full focus or commitment so that ended around two or three years ago. I recently had to cancel a live stage performance due to the death of a family member. So I asked the theater if I could just film in the space so I would not lose money. I hit up that second muse and asked if he wanted to shoot a short teaser. He agreed and when I saw him acting out my words, he was even better than when I met him 5 years earlier. We kind of rekindled our friendship..Well at least I thought we did. We hung out. We ate. We went e-bike riding on the beach. I started to think maybe the fact that we were reuniting meant he was supposed be my muse after all. In the midst of this, I was talking to a CEO of a massive production company who said he was looking for UNIQUE material for a young actress that they were trying to break. He showed me some dailies of work they were doing together and I thought it was a perfect opportunity to pair her with Muse 2 in a project. I wrote a 30 page script and treatment and told Muse 2 to meet up, I had a screenplay for him. We were to watch one of the final big screen showings of Sinners, which if you know me I don't watch Sinners with anyone because of the significance and possibilities of what it represents. He agreed, got sick and canceled out. I haven't heard from him since. This was March. I told the icon that story and he said that was the earth intervening and he just wasn't right for me.

Alumni: What about the third prospect?

Ross: The third one I met in 2024, a year or two after the second muse and I stopped being a working pair. The first two Muses had the potential of being superstars if they kept their focus and trusted the process, but the third was *born* a megastar. He was global-ready meaning I could have wrapped him in a package of great material and introduced him to the studio immediately. His acting instincts were right on point in a natural way. I mean I have auditioned a ton of actors and I can tell when someone is just an organic, natural, advanced talent. I could give him an acting adjustment and he would surpass my expectations. He was an international icon in the making without a doubt. I remember one time I wrote a KEY line about a *Degas* painting. The line was very important and key to the character's shifting emotion. In the hands of a lesser talent, the line would have come across amateurish. Muse 3's release exhibited the subtle strength and complete illumination of the line. His delivery was exactly how I envisioned it and more. He nailed it and I was left breathless.

When he met me, I was the walking dead. I had spent the past 5 years in chaos. I had watched almost all of my mom's friends die....these are people who I grew up around. It takes a family to raise a village and in many ways, my mom's friends raised me so I was hurting. I started working when I was like 16..I had a lucky blessing. Quite a few people I worked with started to pass away. Life mentors. I lost my childhood best friend unexpectedly and she was only in her 30s. Death had become me. My aunt who was my second mom started showing signs of dementia. I was taking care of her all by myself before eventually moving her out of state to be with mom. Shortly after that my uncle had signs of dementia and I had to take care of him. I also had to bust his house and put all of his things in storage...just me and my girl. I am the kind of guy who doesn't ask for help. I have never borrowed a single penny from another human being. I have just always been self sufficient. I eventually moved my uncle to live with my mom as well. I have a ring camera in certain areas in and around mom's home and one day I learned she was unconscious on the floor. When I was leaving my house to get to her home in another state, I thought she was dead. I told my neighbors to watch my home because I would be gone for a while because my mom had just died. By the grace of GOD she hadn't died. She had passed out from all of the stress of dealing with my aunt and uncle. By the way mom is now doing terrific.

Alumni: That had to be a terrible time for you.

Ross: Stress started to affect me. I was becoming incredibly dizzy. I couldn't drive on the freeway. I would drive to San Luis Obispo California every few months to write. I learned of this place watching the limited series THE AFFAIR. One episode a guy went to visit the 'Rock in The Sea' and I knew instantly I needed to go there to write and meditate. One time I went and became so dizzy, a semi truck with trailers almost smashed into the back of me. I was almost dead on the highway, by myself, in the middle of no where due to my dizziness. Doctor's had to go inside my brain and see what was going on. When they were wheeling me into surgery, I literally grabbed my cell phone and called the theater that I had booked for 20 plus years. *I was trying to book a new date.* A nurses assistant took the phone from me.

Alumni: Booking a date while being rolled in to be prepped for a brain probe is crazy. Is that because entertainment was your safe place?

Ross: Yes. Whenever there was stress or difficulty in life, the one place that I loved to direct my energy was into my art. A funny story about that is that the lady who I booked THEATER with for over 20 years made that a part of her ongoing story. Whenever she introduced me to someone who is connected to the theater, she tells the story of me calling her at that crazy scary moment.

When Muse 3 and I went to lunch for the first time, I left our meal and headed to the graveyard to see the burial spot of another best friend. He was a police officer who had just died unexpectedly. I met him at film school and we became best friends. We talked every day before he went to fight crime. I was like his big brother giving him life advice on people, finances and women. Gone just like that. I'm telling if it had not been for me needing to be here to make sure my mom and aunt was ok, I saw no need to be here. Losing so many people close to me in such a short time. Trying to build this great platform for actors who weren't taking the process serious. *I was in a dark place.*

When Muse 3 met me, I was a walking dead man. His talent, star power and my instant recognition of his IT factor was resurrecting me. I finally had something that I could use to counterattack all the negativity and suffering I was experiencing. I didn't want or feel the need to wait. I wanted to start building my global superstar immediately. He was an entire entertainment arsenal: His talent was advanced. He had a great look that would allow him to hook every race, creed and age. He had the kind of charm & personality that you could put in a television promotional interview and capture a large audience. Most importantly he had the ability to make incredible, natural, spot on choices as an actor. For a filmmaker who writes what he directs, this is gold. My words and script ideas fit him like a hand in glove. He was perfect and I was over the moon. Sometimes it's the combination of the right visionary to the right actor that creates magic. Sometimes a talent could be right in front of your face but you don't see their connection with your vision. I've auditioned major superstars, two in particular I wish I had held on to and saw the spark. Regardless I definitely saw the spark with Muse 3.

Alumni: Sounds like you really believed in this actor.

Ross: Problem is, I had a big show coming up which wouldn't allow me to focus on my extraordinary new find. In the meantime I was building a financial wall for my new muse. Within a month I amassed over 100 thousand dollars just for my vision with him. I had learned financial paths at a Tom Cruise party believe it or not. A producer came over to me at the event. He had come to one of my previous shows and said something like 'Your show was great, you should be famous or front and center in Hollywood'. Something like that. It's a blur right now. We had a great conversation and he gave me incredible funding tips. I studied those tips very hard and in the first year I gained over a million dollars. With Muse 3, I quickly got him 100 thousand within a month.

I just think at the end of the day, Muse 3 didn't really believe in me. You have to understand that no one in this era is building stars. My Hero Spielberg announced that the era of the superstar was over a few years back. I get on my fellow filmmakers all the time telling them that we need to mentor the generation under us like those before who mentored us. It seems that everyone is out for themselves. Michael and Ryan are a rare moment in this era. I think Muse 3 saw all of this energy from me towards him and didn't understand it. Maybe he thought I was fake. At one point he did say 'I didn't believe you until we made it to the theater for the performance'. The ICON I sat next to at the OSCAR event said that when someone starts off in disbelief, they will question everything you do in their mind and ultimately it will destroy progress. That is powerful and I totally understand what he's saying.

Alumni: That is a good line because it sets path for everything. If you go in positive the results will more than likely.

Ross: Exactly. He didn't understand all of the knocks I had been through to get to him. He was unaware that he was truly the force behind my power. He didn't get that I had auditioned over three hundred thousand actors and I saw something *truly* special in only him and two others. There was also a lot of negative stuff in the news during this time. Moguls being brought down. Scams. Maybe that is where a lot of the weariness came from. For me, I wanted a quick bonding. I wanted to connect despite us being from two different generations. I am really a bond guy. Especially now. I been used by so many people...outside of my family and friends, I move by connection.

My friends called it right away after I told them a misunderstanding had destroyed my relationship with Muse 3. . My friends all said the same thing: He didn't understand my energy.

Even a fellow fan of my shows (who became my buddy) called it out indicating: You have wanted this for so long and when you found the right person, you probably showed too much eagerness and he did understand it or believe you. If only any of them understand my passion...

Lesson learned.

Alumni: Did the ICON give you any advice on moving forward?

Ross: I told him I was going to give up my search for a muse. He lifted his arms in the direction of Ryan and Michael, acted out a confused look and said 'why?'. He said look at what this team of two has done. Unprecedented. *He said do not let your negative experiences deter you. What you are doing is great. Look at what can come from it.* He was talking about the two of us sitting there while these two black icons were about to take center stage in one of greatest success in the history of Hollywood. He then made sure I had his number.

