

MOOD



JAVON

WALTON

WEARS BOTTEGA VENETA

JAVON

WALTON

WALTON





Five years ago, an amateur boxing sensation and gymnast in his pre-teens named Javon “Wanna” Walton appeared as a guest on Steve Harvey’s daytime talk show. Within seconds of making his debut on syndicated television, the charismatic 11-year-old performed a spirited boxing presentation with his father, before he boldly propped himself on top of Steve Harvey’s desk and back-flipped through the air, landing squarely on his feet. Little did he know that his perfect dismount in front of a live studio audience would also land him the role of a lifetime in HBO’s hit series, “Euphoria.” And the rest, as they say, is history.

“A casting director from ‘Euphoria’ saw me on Steve Harvey’s show and asked if I was interested in acting,” Javon said, as he recounted the life-changing phone call that he received shortly after being interviewed by Steve Harvey. “It’s not something that I ever did before, so it was a confusing space [at first.] But I ended up trying out and I got [the role of Ashtray] immediately.”

Up until that point, Javon had spent the majority of his life being trained by his father, DJ Walton, to become a boxer. But once he flashed his pizzazz on syndicated television, the producers at HBO were hell-bent on converting the young dual-sport athlete into a triple threat. In wake of Javon’s interview with Steve Harvey, the visionaries behind “Euphoria” believed that they had just discovered a hidden gem with the potential to add personality and glaring characteristics to the role of a gun-wielding drug dealer with face tattoos. Initially, the show’s creators wanted someone much older to play the role of Ashtray, but once Javon performed a cold read, at the tender age of twelve, they flipped the script and penciled him in as a member of the main cast. “At first, I had problems pronouncing

“It’s really good for them, in a certain kind of way. Because a lot of kids come from a tough background and when they watch ‘Euphoria,’ they can relate to whoever they’re trying to relate to and it gives them a little break.”



the drug names right,” said Javon with a slight chuckle. “[The casting directors] were going for an older kid and a bigger kid but they ended up liking my look for it, so I got chosen for Euphoria.”

In the years that followed, the adolescent actor would go on to become America’s most beloved on-screen drug dealer. Or better yet, the baby-faced muscle in a trap house orchestrated by his on-screen older brother, Fezco (a character played by Angus Cloud). Javon’s cold-blooded “death stare” in season one of ‘Euphoria’ helped pierce a hole through the show’s metaphysical third wall and gave its viewers an emotional glimpse into the life of two latchkey kids trying to make their way in a town full of vivacious teenagers who all have their own hazardous subplots to deal with. It’s an impression that made Javon a star, immediately following the conclusion of the inaugural season. And it’s an emotional roller coaster ride that he’ll always cherish, because he has had the pleasure of sharing the experience with a leading woman like Zendaya, along with a slew of fresh Hollywood faces such as Hunter Schafer, Sydney Sweeney, and Jacob Elordi. Indeed, the talented young cast has been given their flowers, in the form of awards, critical acclaim, and the distinction of boasting the second most-watched show in the history of HBO. Nevertheless, the roses have also come with a fair share of thorns because organizations like D.A.R.E

JAVON WALTON

have condemned the hit series for placing too much emphasis on drug abuse and violence amongst teenagers. To that, Javon shared an insightful viewpoint, indicating that while there may be some adults who do not fully appreciate the positive impact that the show is having on society, it is certainly resonating with people from within his age demographic. “I think kids are finding a way to relate to the characters in a way that their parents can’t really understand,” Javon said. “It’s really good for them, in a certain kind of way. Because a lot of kids come from a tough background and when they watch ‘Euphoria,’ they can relate to whoever they’re trying to relate to and it gives them a little break.” Collectively, the cast of ‘Euphoria’ has already left a lasting impression on the societal landscape of pop culture by pushing the boundaries of the nuclear family structure in suburbia with a brand-new take on love, art, gender identity, school days, and the drug game. A notion that is very real and relatable for people of all walks of life. For now, Javon’s character is neck-deep in a suspenseful narrative that is unlikely to resume until season three, which has been tentatively scheduled for release sometime during the year 2024. So, now that the writers from ‘Euphoria’ have etched an insurmountable level of anticipation for the fate of Javon’s character inside the minds of their fans, this seems like just as good of a time as any for the young actor to take a temporary detour from the speculation surrounding the hit show. Why? So that he can gather his thoughts, before taking a metaphorical backflip into the world of fictional television and films.

fighters. “We talked about boxing pretty much every single day we were on set,” recalled Javon. “We would always argue about who’s going to win this fight and who’s going to win that fight. The fight that we debated on that I ended up winning was Teófimo vs Lomachenko.” According to Javon, the two actors formed such a genuine bond over boxing that Stallone practically gave him full access to his mental Rolodex, regarding the combat sport. “[Stallone] would always tell me these crazy boxing stories about fighters from so long ago. He’s definitely a boxing historian, so it was cool to be able to hear all of the old boxing names that he was talking about.”

Javon’s co-star, Sylvester Stallone, has written and/or produced over 10 boxing-based television shows/films, which include “Rocky,” “Creed,” and “The Contender.” So, considering the fact that Stallone and Javon both share an affinity for the sport of boxing, this could be a pairing to look out for in the future. As Javon’s interview with MOOD magazine continued, he indicated that he would like to portray the late Rocky Marciano (a legendary boxer who finished with a record of 49-0 during the mid-1950s) in a biopic someday. Stallone’s penchant for directing critically acclaimed boxing-based productions would actually make him an ideal fit to facilitate such a project, in which Javon could be cast in his dream role as the only heavyweight boxer to have ever finished with an undefeated record. Logistically, it’s unlikely that Javon could portray a heavyweight fighter like Marciano until he ages into adulthood in about five years or so, but if his current trajectory as an actor serves as an indication of what he will accomplish in the future, it may not be long before a casting director reaches out to him about making his dream role to play the man nicknamed ‘The Italian Stallion’ a reality.

While Javon’s journey towards the pinnacle of boxing and acting is off to an admirable start, it is important to note that since the Academy Awards began, nearly 92 years ago, the only champion from professional sports to have ever won an Oscar is the late Kobe Bryant. This is an achievement that Javon would like to duplicate in the future. However, if

As part of a cover story interview with MOOD magazine, Javon revealed that he will be appearing in the widely popular superhero television series, ‘The Umbrella Academy.’ While the 16-year-old actor stated that he couldn’t share too much about his involvement in the project just yet, he did share a few tidbits about what his fans should be on the lookout for, in terms of the role that he’ll be playing this Summer. “It’s a character that [my supporters] aren’t going to be expecting at all,” Javon explained. “It’s pretty crazy! The writers and the directors did a great job with the entire season, it’s going to be really cool. My character is a bit of a prankster, I’ll say that.” Two months after Javon is introduced to The Umbrella Academy’s viewers on Netflix, he will make his debut on the silver screen in a superhero movie called “Samaritan.” A blockbuster film loosely based on a series of graphic novels by Mythos Comics. The storyline depicts the shocking discovery made by a young boy named Sam Cleary (played by Javon) that a renowned superhero named Samaritan (played by the legendary leading man, Sylvester Stallone) is still alive, after he disappeared, in wake of an epic battle, 20 years before their first encounter with one another. Javon’s depiction of the Sam Cleary character is quite a departure from his famous role on Euphoria, as the script presented challenges that the young actor had never faced before.

“My role as Sam in Samaritan has been my toughest role so far,” Javon declared. “Sam is a very dynamic character. He’s smart, funny, tough, and sensitive at the same time. He’s got a lot on him and finding the balance of that while still being a kid was important to the role. I’m really happy with my performance though, of course, I’ve grown a lot since we filmed this but to date, I think Sam was tough from an emotional standpoint.

About 45 years ago, Javon’s co-star in “Samaritan,” Sylvester Stallone, introduced the world to the very first installment of the iconic “Rocky” series. Since then, those sports films have made him a fixture in the world of boxing. So, naturally, on the days when the teenage actor/boxer and Stallone shared scenes together, during the filming of ‘Samaritan,’ they would often engage in friendly debates about their favorite professional

given the choice between taking home an Academy Award or an undisputed featherweight belt someday as a professional boxer, he’s far more likely to choose his boyhood dream. “I’d rather be a world champion,” stated Javon. “It’s been my path since I was four years old, to be world champion and I’m going to continue that path and that’s what I would rather [accomplish]. As much as I would like an award for acting, being a world champ would mean the world to me...But I’m trying to both.”

Thus far, in his short but illustrious career as an actor, Javon has deemed his role as Sam in “Samaritan” as the most emotionally challenging one to date, because of the wide range of emotions that he had to muster up in order to exemplify the essence of the character in a high-pressure setting. But the notion of preparing for thought-provoking roles such as this, while also gearing up for a slew of amateur boxing opponents on a continual basis is nothing new to the young entertainer. That’s because his father/boxing trainer, DJ Walton, has guided him with a custom-made workout regimen that embodies perseverance, intellectuality, mental toughness, preparation, technique, and family honor. All of which can be defined by a special word that the Walton family has adopted, “Onward.” It’s not just a name of DJ Walton’s athletic apparel company nor is it simply a verb featured in almost every Instagram tag that is owned by various members of his intermediate family—it’s a way of life that they all adhere to, especially when it comes to physical fitness and training. “Onward is a way of life for us,” said Javon. “You are always going to have obstacles and

things that try and hold you back but my tribe has also focused on pushing through. Pops started using ‘Onward’ as a theme for all of us to always push forward,” said Javon. “Having my dad train me is perfect for me. His boxing knowledge and understanding of the game are crazy. He knows how to motivate people and there’s is no one that knows me better than my dad and because of that I know he’s always got me in and out of the ring.” DJ Walton will surely be a significant presence in his son’s passage up the boxing ranks, which he hopes will include a trip to this year’s National Junior Olympics and Summer Festival followed by his professional boxing debut and an entry into the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles.

DJ Walton has been in his son’s corner for approximately all 80 of his amateur boxing matches so far. He may not be Javon’s acting coach, but when we asked the teen sensation to share his thoughts on an occurrence, two years ago, when news broke that he and his fellow cast members from “Utopia” would not be allowed to reprise their roles in the Amazon Prime series because it had been canceled, Javon delivered an optimistic answer as if he were quoting his dad’s playbook, directly. “Honestly, I wasn’t too disappointed because everything happens for a reason,” said the former Georgia State Gymnastics champion. “So, if [a television series] doesn’t get picked up, I know there’s something better out there for me and, I always know that. Even if I don’t come back for season three of Euphoria, I know that there’s something out there for me and I’m totally okay with that.” Released back in September of 2020, “Utopia” was a sci-fi drama in which Javon played a protagonist named Grant Bishop. In the eight-episode drama, his character becomes the main subject of a manhunt after he steals a coveted comic book that seemingly predicts the way in which the world is going to end and the powerful people involved in making it so. The project was primarily filmed in Chicago, Illinois over the course of six months and it marked Javon’s first ever leading role. Although “Utopia” was short-lived, it garnered a cult following

which has resulted in a plethora of fan pages and a bevy of petitions to bring the show back for a second season; all of which are still going strong.

On the surface, he’s a swaggy teenager with a low fade haircut and design lines neatly trimmed on the side of his head and left eyebrow. But, as the boxing matches and acting credits continue to pile up for Javon “Wanna” Walton, he remains a “normal” teen at heart. One who enjoys the simple pleasures in life, like relaxing and bobbing his head to songs like “Passion Fruit” by Drake. The iconic Toronto-based musician who once famously rapped “My reality is brighter than your dreams are...” In the case of Javon, those rap lyrics just might be true. His reality is slowly encroaching upon his wildest dreams, as he continues to put an “X” next to one lofty goal after another on his checklist of aspirations. But from the looks of things, he’s just getting started. During our Q&A session, Javon revealed that he’s a sneakerhead and he’d like to try his hand in the shoe game by teaming up with one of his favorite rappers to design a special collection that emphasized comfort for athletes like himself. “I would love to collaborate with Travis Scott because he’s made a huge impact in the sneaker community and I think we could do something really cool in the fitness space. I’d want to create my own mold and not just go with something that has already been done.

A feature I would add would be an orthopedic type of sole for extra comfort and support.” The rising star’s hard work and ambition paid off this past July and he became the new face of the Travis Scott x Jordan campaign - further solidifying his monumental growth.

As much as Javon takes delight in the normalcy of being

around his family and “day one” friends, one would think that his rising celebrity status would prompt someone from his social circle to ask for a selfie, every now and then or perhaps a shoutout on Instagram stories or something of that nature... Right, Javon? “Nah, my friends don’t ask for things like that,” replied the actor, as he chuckled. “Honestly, nothing has changed between my tribe and my friends. I get treated the exact same way that I did when I didn’t have any popularity. We’re a tribe, so they don’t care about any of that. I only surround myself with people that I trust and people that I mess with. And those people aren’t going to want to ask for stuff like that.” The close-knit support system amongst Javon’s family and friends has proven to be quite influential in the way in which the actor has remained grounded during his ascension in young Hollywood.

When it comes to being a triple threat as a teenage boxer and actor, with a strong background in gymnastics, Javon just might be

Universe. But, who would he play? “I would love to play the next Robin [in an upcoming Batman film],” exclaimed Javon. “That would be a lot of fun because there’s fighting in it and some gymnastics in it, so it could be really fun!” The thought of Javon soaring through the air as a caped crusader in the sequel to ‘The Batman’ is very compelling. But for now, Javon’s fans seem to be more focused on the elephant in the room. Which is what in the world is going on with his character in ‘Euphoria?’ Because the series left its viewers dangling off of a tear-jerking cliff-hanger where no one knows for sure if Javon’s character, Ash, lived or died in the very last scene of the season finale. Apparently, the producers did such a good job of devising the open-ended final shot, that even Javon is uncertain about what happens next. “I got no clue,” he said. “I have no clue, to be honest, and I’m just going to leave it at that because whatever happens—happens and it happens for a reason.” ‘Euphoria’ has legions of die-hard fans, so the lasting image of

“I would love to collaborate with Travis Scott because he’s made a huge impact in the sneaker community and I think we could do something really cool in the fitness space”

the very first entertainer of this variety. Therefore, as the old adage from ‘Spiderman’ goes: “With great power comes great responsibility.” Javon can fight, he can perform backflips with ease and he can act. So, it would be quite fitting if he were to portray a character in the Marvel-Verse someday or perhaps in the DC

gunshots being hurled in the direction of Javon’s character probably won’t fade away anytime soon. But, in the meantime, his supporters can expect him to re-emerge in the ring this summer, for a series of boxing matches before he unveils his upcoming work in television and film for the remainder of 2022 and beyond. **M**