

medal if that's all he's doing." He raced a car on Ocean Drive? I'm like, "If that's all he's doing, that kid is trying to be the best he can be a good human being." So anyway, it's been an interesting trip. And I was fortunate enough to be given the opportunity to reconnect with the simplicity that should never leave the core of what we do.

Adam, for so long you've been loved for your comedy work. But 20 years ago, when you starred in Paul Thomas Anderson's *Punch-Drunk Love*, it revealed this other side of you that we've since seen in 2004's *Spanglish*, 2007's *Reign Over Me*, 2019's *Uncut Gems* and now *Hustle*. Did you always aspire to show that you were more than a funny guy or did it take other people's belief for you to be able to believe it?
ADAM SANDLER It's funny, the other night, my daughter, who's 16, said, "When you first started, why did you do it?" I guess I just wanted people to like me. I started caring about opening up to other stuff the older I got. I started thinking about not just the opportunities, but making sure that every opportunity I got, I did the best work I could do — work that I could say, "Oh, I didn't know I could do that." It's exciting to do different types of things. And that stuff didn't open up in my brain until Paul Thomas Anderson wrote that movie for me. He saw it as just like "an Adam Sandler movie," but a dramatic version of it.

Jeremy, only six people have gotten two Tony nominations for acting in one year, the most recent being you in 2019. Then you played your first major TV role, in Ryan Murphy's *Hollywood*, and got an *Enemy* nomination for that. Now you're making a major impression with your first film. Did you always expect to move among media?

JEREMY POPE I didn't see a lot of representation of Black, openly gay, queer individuals in media, so I didn't know what my way in would be. When I graduated college, went to art school, and everyone was about to audition, it was like, "Don't let people know you're gay. You've got to be this version of a Black man to be successful as an actor." So I spent many years doing that and abandoning my truth and trying to be what they wanted me to be in the room. It was the moment when I started to love on myself, and love the evolved version of who I am, and be around collaborators and creators that are doing that, when all these things started to



KE HUYNH
QUAN



*Everything
Everywhere
All at Once*

happen. It began in 2019, when Tarell McCraney — whom I'd met years before and who won the Oscar for [writing 2016's *Moonlight* — brought his show [*Choir Boy*] to Broadway, which happened to be my Broadway debut. *The Inspection* is just an affirmation to myself of what's possible. I think about little Jeremy, just trying to find a way in, watching *George of the Jungle* [starring Fraser]. You just never know. But I'm grateful that I tried and kept trying and ultimately found self-love and self-worth.

Austin, you began as a kid on TV, and went to Broadway yourself, opposite Denzel Washington in a 2018 revival of *The Iceman Cometh*. Later, he advocated for you to play Elvis. But when

you began acting, was it with any specific goal in mind?
AUSTIN BUTLER I started at about 12. I just stumbled into extra work. I was an incredibly shy kid. If that kid knew that I was sitting around all my heroes right now, talking like this in public, he wouldn't believe it. But being around other actors, suddenly I felt like I'd found my tribe. I started wanting to be around other people. My mom saw that in me, and I owe her for everything because she quit her job and drove me to auditions and took me to acting classes. Then I started working. This was in the heyday of Nickelodeon, and you'd make 100 bucks a day or something, and, as a kid, that was huge! Then, as I started to get certain mentors who'd say, "You've got to watch

Raging Bull and *East of Eden*," I started falling in love with the craft. But I was stuck in a lane of doing Nickelodeon and Disney. Then I moved on to young adult TV shows. After my mom passed away, I'd never experienced pain like that before, and I started to question. Suddenly I was around doctors and people that were hurting a lot in hospitals, and I thought, "Is acting a noble profession? Should I be doing this or should I give myself in some way that can help people who are dealing with cancer or something like that?" After my mom passed away, I went straight to New Zealand to start shooting a young adult TV show. A lot of people enjoyed the show, and I had fun doing horseback riding and that sort of thing, but I'd go home and cry every night. I was dealing with grief, but it was also this feeling that I wasn't aligned with something that felt truly fulfilling. I got done with that show, once they canceled it after two seasons, and I said, "I would rather not work as an actor than ever do something like that again."

SANDLER How old were you?
BUTLER I was 24, 25 at that time. I thought, "I've got a little bit of money in the bank. I'll just take time off." Then I started sinking into a deeper and deeper depression. It was about six or eight months of that. Then my agent called and said, "You've got to put yourself on tape for *The Iceman Cometh*. Denzel's doing it on Broadway." I had just bought a camera, so I thought, "I'm going to film this like a movie and give it everything I got." That day I had an actor friend come over, and we started running it and filmed it like a film. I sent that in on a Friday, and they said on Sunday, "We want you to fly out on Monday to meet with Scott Rudin and George Wolfe." I had these perceptions about an L.A. actor going to New York — "There's no way that they'll cast me, they'll rip me to shreds, I don't deserve to be here, it was a good tape but I'm not going to be good in the room" — but I flew out early and worked with one of my acting coaches who's been a mentor for a long time, Larry Moss, for three days in a row, and then I went in the room, and they gave me the job in the room. And that's the moment that changed my career.

That brings us to your 2022 films that have gone over so transcendently. Austin, it's eerie: Elvis was on your mind shortly before you learned there was going to be a film, right?

BUTLER Yeah, in the month before. People

always ask me, "Had you for years thought you looked like Elvis?" And I'd say, "I don't really think I look that much like Elvis." That never crossed my mind. But the month before I heard that Baz [Luhmann] was making the movie, I was going to look at Christmas lights with a friend, and there was an Elvis Christmas song on the radio, and I was singing along, and my friend looked over at me and goes, "You've got to play Elvis." I said, "Oh, that's such a long shot." Then my agent called and said, "So Baz [Luhmann] is making an Elvis film..." The hairs just stood up on my arms. It made me go, "All right. It's Everest. I don't know if I'm good enough. But I've got to give it everything." I hired a movement coach, a singing coach and a dialect coach, and I just started working like I had the job. I met with Baz after about a month. And

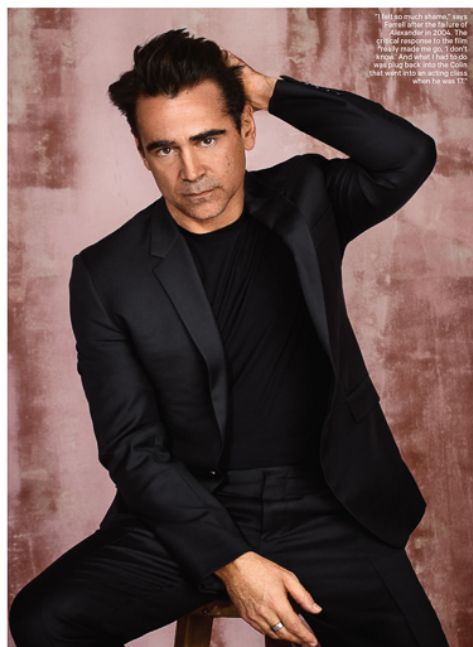
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*The Banshees
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we spent five months trying things. And then eventually I had to do a screen test. I was like, "Oh, I don't have the job!"

Ke, what led Daniels to you?
QUAN Hearing Austin's story gives me goose bumps because it's very similar to mine. Everything came around the same time. I decided to get back to acting. Then Daniels saw somebody do a joke on Facebook — a picture of Andrew Yang with the caption, "Short Round [Quan's character in *Indiana Jones*] is all grown up and he's running for president." Which triggered them to go, "Oh, I wonder what Ke is doing." They started doing the calculation, "Oh, he's about the same age as this character." It was at the same time that I called up an agent friend of mine. I didn't have an agent for decades, so I was practically begging him to represent me, and



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