

MAGIC HAPPENS IN WONDER LAND

STORYTELLER RICH MANLEY (TV HOST & MAGICIAN)
PROJECT 'CULTURAL SHOCK'

RICH MANLEY IS A CREATIVE OF MANY TALENTS... FROM ACTOR AND FILM MAKER, TO WRITER, DRUMMER AND STUNTMAN WITH A BLACK BELT IN KUNG FU! HE HAS ALSO STUDIED ANTHROPOLOGY, ARCHAEOLOGY AND CULTURE EXTENSIVELY AND IS A PASSIONATE GLOBAL ADVENTURER TOO. BUT HIS GREATEST SUPER POWER IS... MAGIC!

RICH HAS FOUND AN ENCHANTING WAY TO BREAK DOWN CULTURAL DIFFERENCES WITH HIS MAGIC, AND HIS LATEST TV SERIES, 'CULTURE SHOCK' SHARES THESE MAGICAL MOMENTS WITH SOME OF THE MOST REMOTE PEOPLE ON EARTH.

TADAAAAA... MAGIC ONLY HAPPENS FOR THOSE WHO ARE BELIEVERS. YOUR MAGICAL POWERS AND IMPRESSIVE SCREEN STATUS NOW PLAY A VERY ENDEARING ROLE IN REMOTE CULTURAL COMMUNITIES AROUND THE WORLD. SO HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE ABLE TO BREAK DOWN LANGUAGE BARRIERS OR CULTURAL DIFFERENCE BY ENCHANTING INDIGENOUS LOCALS WITH YOUR MAGICAL CHARM? AN ENVIABLE TRAVEL SKILL TO BESTOW.

It is a very rewarding feeling. I have always believed that magic is less about the magician and more about the people it's intended to bring a sense of joy to. Most of the time, when I travel, I find magic to be somewhat of a social experiment. I have noticed many times that when I assume the role of a casual tourist >

Performing magic for the Hamar people in Ethiopia. It was heartwarming to see their smiles and the joy on their faces.

Photo Gökhan 'G' Telci

Rich uses magic to break cultural barriers... "What I do with my hands is a projection of myself. It's the creation of a feeling that anything is possible. That same motivation and mindset trickles into every adventure I embark on. The idea of wonderment and endless possibility is by whole everything we truly seek as humans."

within a particular community or cultural centre, I am treated as such. Many vendors and merchants will try to sell me their wares and souvenirs. However, when I begin to perform for them, they slowly integrate me into their community. Others gather around and soon enough I find myself a guest in the home of an elder, brother, sister... discussing culture, or being introduced to finer workings of their traditions.

In a way, my magic is like an ice breaker to let people know... 'This is me and what I have to offer you. I expect nothing in return but your smiles and joy.'

It opens up a world of happiness for these people and integrates them into a travellers life. It makes them feel special, like they have just witnessed something extraordinary. It's a great feeling to inspire that connection.

YOU ARE AN AMERICAN WITH MANY ADMIRABLE TALENTS IN STAR DEMAND. A MODEL, MAGICIAN, DRUMMER, WRITER, ACTOR AND GLOBAL ADVENTURER WHO SEEMS TO HAVE FOUND A WAY TO WRAP ALL OF YOUR SUPER POWERS INTO ONE MESMERISING LIFE JOURNEY. DRAWING FROM ALL OF YOUR ATTRIBUTES AND EXPERIENCES, WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNT TO CHERISH THE MOST? AND WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO SEE MORE OF IN THE WORLD?

I think my study of martial arts and training with the Shaolin monks instilled in me an immense amount of discipline and perseverance, but also compassion, which I believe to be the most important quality. Passion, dedication, determination, resilience and a thirst for ever-growing knowledge are keys to understanding oneself, the world and our place in it. The principles and foundations found in traditional styles of martial arts paved the way for a life dedicated to study, reading, researching, exploring and learning. I consider travelling and the experiences of meeting other cultures as an almost alchemic



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transformation. It is something that enriches not only the body and mind, but the soul. In that regard it is not really what I hope to see more of... rather... how many more people I can hope to inspire.

WHERE DID YOU GROW UP, WHERE ARE YOU BASED AT THE MOMENT AND WHERE NEXT?

I grew up in a small town called Stow in Massachusetts. I currently live in Los Angeles. I haven't thought that far ahead yet, however, I assume after I have accomplished much of what I need to here with my film production business, I will veer toward a more natural environment.

LURED TO THE DAZZLING LIGHTS OF LOS ANGELES, TO THE TWINKLING EYES OF ETHIOPIAN CHILDREN BEDAZZLED BY YOUR MAGIC, WHERE DID YOU ACQUIRE YOUR MAGICAL POWERS AND ADVENTUROUS SPIRIT? AND HOW DID YOUR TRANSITION FROM MAGICIAN, TO ACTOR, TO GLOBAL ADVENTURER?

I learned my first magic trick from my grandfather. He was a surgeon in Boston, but also a world traveller and fascinated by culture and travel. I think his spirit is what drove me toward the realms of magic and travel. As ➤

a kid, I would marvel at the things he had collected in his study. Relics and trinkets from around the world. He reminded me of Indiana Jones' father and I think deep down I always wanted to do what he did, travel the world, adventure and meet distant cultures. I performed magic on TV and all around Los Angeles but I had always felt something was missing. I wanted to share the magic with the world, with the people I thought truly needed magic in their lives. I travelled to Egypt for the first time with my adventure buddy James Houston. From there, I fell in love with meeting different communities and performing for them. This was the start of the transition for me.

WHERE DO YOU DRAW YOUR MAGICAL POWERS OR INSPIRATION FROM?

Books! I read a lot.

WHEN TRAVELLING TO CONNECT WITH TRADITIONAL COMMUNITIES AROUND THE WORLD, HOW DO YOU HOPE YOUR MAGIC TRANSLATES FOR THESE BEAUTIFUL SOULS TO UNDERSTAND?

I just hope that I can make an inspiring impression on the younger kids in the community. That anything is possible if you have the will. Not just the belief, but the will.

TRAVELLING TO FOREIGN PLACES CAN FEEL PRETTY MAGICAL TOO. IS THERE ONE TRAVEL EXPERIENCE THAT WAS SO PROFOUND IT CHANGED YOU AS A PERSON?

I would have to say my first travel experience... Egypt. As a kid I was fascinated by the ancient Egyptians. To finally be there was a childhood dream come true and fulfilled my need to experience a different viewpoint of the world. It's what started everything for me and what continues to fuel my fire as an adult.

AT THE MOMENT, EVERYTHING FEELS SURREAL ON MANY LEVELS. AS AN ACTOR OR MAGICIAN, DOES LIFE EVER FEEL SO SURREAL THAT YOU FIND IT TRICKY TO RECONNECT BACK TO REALITY? HOW TO YOU SEPARATE ILLUSION AND HOPE?

I separate myself from this and focus on the things I can control. Like, keeping healthy, training, reading, honing my skills, learning something



Adventuring in the mountains, pushing the body to its limits, enjoying the beautiful views, is all a form of spiritual cleansing and awakening. It's all magic.

Photo Dominic Gill

new and keeping my mind acute and active.

CASTING SPELLS, BEING CAST ON SCREEN, CASTING YOURSELF FAR FROM THE SPOTLIGHT TO REMOTE CULTURAL WORLDS, WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST REWARDING ROLE?

Each and every one of those experiences offers something different. It is hard to separate them as they have all made me who I am today.

'FALLEN CARDS' IS A FICTIONAL TV SERIES ABOUT A MAGICIAN WHO DISCOVERS A SECRET WITHIN HIMSELF THAT COULD CHANGE THE FATE OF HUMANITY. CULTURAL SHOCK! IS A

TRUE DOCUMENTARY ABOUT HOW YOU USE YOUR MAGIC TO BREAK DOWN CULTURAL BARRIERS WHILE EXPLORING INDIGENOUS CULTURES. IF YOU COULD WAVE YOUR MAGIC WAND TO HELP INFLUENCE A BETTER WORLD, WHAT WOULD YOU WISH TO COME TRUE?

That people would look outside themselves and their own needs and wants. To focus on the inner and the outward will come. And focus on compassion, for all things.

WHERE DO WE VIEW THE TV SERIES?

Well, Fallen Cards is a creation that started 8 years ago. It is something I

created and wrote and have filmed through my production company here in Los Angeles. It is finally coming to fruition as a TV series. I can't divulge too many details yet but stay tuned!

IT'S A BIT OF A CRAZY WORLD LATELY, BUT IF ONE COULD ADD A LITTLE MAGIC INTO DAILY LIFE WHAT WOULD YOU RECOMMEND?

Take time out to learn something new, and learn it to its completion. Stay focused. Stay vigilant. Find something that interests you and go for it. It will keep you centred.

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