

LA LA LAND

La La Anthony gives us exclusive access to her personal and professional worlds

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La La Anthony and I are seated at her kitchen island in her Tribeca home in New York City. The actress-entrepreneur just finished up the photo shoot for this cover story, and is now comfortably dressed in a pink t-shirt tied at the side and gray sweatpants. She still looks very glamorous as her makeup is done and her newly-blonde tresses flow down her back in beautiful waves. "I apologize. This is the only time I've eaten today," La La tells me as she takes a bite from her bowl of takeout.

If you're an old school MTV fan, you may remember La La as a veejay/host on *Total Request Live*. If you're a movie buff, you may have watched her in Spike Lee's critically-acclaimed film, *Chi-Raq*, *Think Like A Man*, *Think Like A Man Too*, or *Baggage Claim*. And if you've been watching TV lately, you've likely caught her on at least one of these three TV shows, STARZ's *Power*, FOX's *BH, 90210* and ABC's *Reef Break*. La La is also a best-selling author, and a successful entrepreneur with her own production company and collaborative collections in fashion and beauty. There is no question about it —she has all her bases covered.

Since 2014, when *Power* first premiered, La La has been portraying Keisha, Tasha's friend and Tommy's love interest. STARZ's hit crime drama series —starring actors Omari Hardwick, Naturi Naughton, and 50 Cent— is currently in its sixth and final season, and it's the best season yet, La La tells me. "We just aired our second episode. Episode 3 is directed by 50 [who produces the show], so everyone is super excited about that. This is the final season, which is bittersweet when you've been on a show for 6 seasons and it's coming to an end, but it's going to go out with a bang."

Power hosted a sold-out premiere of the final season's first episode at Madison Square Garden. "50 performed. I don't think there's ever been a television premiere at Madison Square Garden," La La says proudly. "I'm sad, but you know, I formed bonds and relationships and friendships there that will carry on for life, they're not dictated by if we're on a show together or not. I'm just honored to be a part of something so amazing as *Power* and I think it's a show that people will look back on forever and talk about forever." This is not the very end, there will definitely be *Power* spin-offs, La La shares.

And it's certainly not the end of La La and 50 Cent working together. The power alums have another STARZ drama series in the pipeline titled, *Intercepted*. Based off Alexa Martin's "well-written" book by the same name, its premise sparked La La's interest because it pulls back the curtain and shows us what happens with these adored athletes and their families when the cameras are off. If anyone is familiar with this lifestyle, it's La La, who married NBA player Carmelo Anthony in 2010 (the two are currently separated and share 12-year-old son,

Kiyan). "50 and I both read this book; we fell in love with it, so we're producing a TV show around it. We're still in the beginning phases, but it's kinda the dark, behind-the-scenes of the sports world. It's like: What really happens when the careers [are] over? What happens to these guys' lives then, and their families, and wives? We just really want to explore that. And I thought it's something I hadn't seen on TV before."

La La and 50 Cent are currently working on getting the scripts written. *Intercepted* will feature an ensemble cast and as of now, they're still figuring out what role best suits La La. "I just want to make it work, it's not really about me being the lead. I want the show to work and I want all the characters to feel real and authentic, so wherever I land in that puzzle, I'm happy with. But right now, our focus is just creating a great story."

This summer, La La spent most of her time in Vancouver, Canada filming the *Beverly Hills, 90210* reboot, *BH, 90210*, which brought back the entire original cast (except for Luke Perry who unexpectedly passed away earlier this year) and a few newbies. On the show, La La plays Shay, the superstar hip-hop/pop artist wife of Brian Austin Green's character. "That was an amazing experience. Brian and I hit it off. He's a great guy, a great actor. I have so much love for him and Megan [Fox, his wife] and his family, so playing his wife was just so much fun and we really had a good time," says La La between bites. "It was nice to be a part of something that was so iconic, that was being brought back."

The warm, fuzzy nostalgia didn't stop there. La La had her own mini reunion on *BH, 90210* with Vanessa Lachey —both ladies were veejays on *Total Request Live* over fifteen years ago. "She [Vanessa] texted me like, 'Oh my God, are you doing this? I'm doing this too!' It's nice to see us from the MTV world step out into acting and really pursue it and book jobs and do well at it. I'm such a fan of hers and vice versa," she says with a smile.

Now that it's October, it's time for La La to begin preparing for Halloween. La La, her friends, and family take Halloween very seriously. "We really go all out for it. It's almost time to start thinking [about a costume] —it's crunch time." Every year,



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What would fans be surprised to find out about you?

“I’m super down-to-earth, humble, really a tomboy —I don’t know if people know that about me. Like, they see my Instagram, dressed up and makeup and hair, but if you know me, all my friends and family know I’m really a tomboy. I love sports. I play video games —I have a son, so I’m in that world. I love sweatpants. I love not combing my hair sometimes [smiles]. I’m really just super chill and just me.”

she throws a huge Halloween party in New York. “It’s gotten so big!” La La always dresses up. Her past Halloween costumes include, Silver Sable from Marvel Comics, a *Mortal Kombat* character, and a glow-in-the-dark skeleton.

This festive season usually brings family and friends together, which is something that La La looks forward to. “Thanksgiving is always with family. I have a really big family, so we all figure out where we’re going to be, whose house we’re going to be at, what state we’re going to be in, and everyone just congregates there and catches up and unplugs from the phone and Instagram and just really get a chance to enjoy ourselves and connect with family you might not get to see or talk to all the time.” Her Puerto Rican family whips up “the most amazing Spanish dishes you can ever imagine,” including her favorites: pasteles and Coquitos (a Spanish drink). “That’s a Spanish tradition for the holidays... they’re amazing.” Just don’t expect to find La La in the kitchen. “I absolutely do not know how to cook at all. I am the worst in the kitchen,” she says with a smile and gestures to her takeout food.

Watching holiday movies with her family is another beloved holiday tradition. “A sucker for holiday movies,” La La and her son, Kiyan, always watch *Home Alone* and *The Grinch*. “I love *This Christmas*, which was produced by Will Packer with Chris Brown, Lauren London. [*The Best Man Holiday* is another great one,” she muses. This winter, La La

stars in a holiday film of her own, Netflix’s *Holiday Rush*. “Romany Malco is in it, who is also in *Think Like A Man 1* and *2* with me, so it was nice to come back and do another film with him. It’s a great, feel-good holiday story for Netflix —I’m excited to be a part of it.”

The other role that La La takes very seriously is being a mother. Is there a motto or life philosophy that you hope to pass on to Kiyan? “My mom would keep it simple. She would always say, ‘Treat people how you want to be treated.’ I want my son to just be a good person, and treat people right and ultimately, treat people the way you would want to be treated. He’s going into 7th grade this year, so we talk about how you treat people, being compassionate, being kind. Not judging people on who they are or their choices in life, that’s definitely a lesson I talk to him about often. He’s a really good kid. Really, really good kid.” I hear that he’s a basketball phenom. “That’s where he is now, he’s at practice. He loves basketball. He’s an incredible athlete, incredible student, and super humble. Works really hard. He does travel all over the country with his basketball team, and he’s doing good,” she says fondly.

A strong work ethic runs in the family. In addition to being an actress, La La is an entrepreneur with a number of business ventures under her belt, including a clothing line, The La La Anthony Collection, available in Ashley Stewart, Macy’s,

LUCKY LADY

While in New Orleans for the Essence Festival, La La played a slot machine and hit the jackpot. “It was random. I put like a couple of dollars in the machine, and I pressed it and it went off and went crazy and I ended up winning like \$68,000 or something. Do you know how many of my friends called me in front of that same slot machine like, ‘Was this the one you played?’ And they literally were trying to play it. It’s luck. It’s random. It was after a party one night. It was super late. We were walking back to the hotel and I was like, *Let’s just try really quick, for fun.* And it went haywire! I screamed. I fell to the ground. My whole family was there. We lost it. You could look up the video. We were screaming at the top of our lungs. It was a crazy moment.”

Foot Locker, Saks, Lord & Taylor... “It’s a denim line, mostly athleisure line. I just wanted to create clothes that work for all women, all sizes, which was why I did my partnership with Ashley Stewart. I was really honored to be able to just create fashion for women of all shapes and sizes and allow women the opportunity to say that they feel confident in my clothes.” La La has the same philosophy with her capsule collection, Motives for La La, with makeup company, Motives. Again, she created an inclusive collection with shades for all women. “Everything I do is just about catering to *all* women, all shapes, all sizes, all skin tones, and just finding a way to make all women feel confident and beautiful about themselves.”

She’s also just about ready to begin writing her third book. Her first two books, *The Love Playbook* [“went #1 on *The New York Times* bestsellers list”] and *The Power Playbook* were both well-received. “I don’t know what it’s about yet, but I’m starting to

wrap my mind around what that is. It’s a series, *The Love Playbook*, *The Power Playbook*...”

You seem to have your hand in everything —TV/ film, fashion, beauty, publishing—, is there anything you haven’t done yet, that you would like to do? “No, I just want to continue to grow in the acting space and producing. I think it’s important to produce because you can control what content you put out there and really do things that feel good for you, and what you stand for. Producing gives you the control and you’re not just waiting for somebody to cast you in something, so I really just want to continue to develop my production company [La La Land] as well as my resume as an actor —that’s where I’m putting most of my energy right now.” **ML**

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Where do you like to go when you're in Miami?

I love Komodo —that's my friend Dave Grutman's restaurant. I love club LIV on Sunday, that's a go-to spot. I love the 1 Hotel. I love Zuma -that's a favorite spot, too.

What are you watching on TV?

The Handmaid's Tale is one of my favorite shows on television, besides *Power*. And now I've really become invested in *The Chi* on Showtime, Lena Waithe's show; I think it's an incredible show. [*The Chi* recently announced that La La will be joining the show.]

Who are you listening to?

Right now, I love Drake and Chris Brown's song "No Guidance." I love Drake. I love Meg Thee Stallion right now; I'm loving her music. I love Wale's new song with Jeremih. I listen to a little bit of everything. Those are my favorites.

You're into fashion and have your own line, what's your go-to outfit?

I love a sweatsuit, 'cause I'm on set so much. When you're going in and out of sets, it's good to just be comfortable. You also have to change so many times on set, so it's good to just have something you can take on and off really quickly. La La Anthony collection has some good sweatsuits. People send me sweatsuits all the time —that's my uniform for when I'm going to set for sure.

And your go-to outfit when you're going out?

I love a short dress and bodycon type of dress, I love that. I love jeans and a bodysuit and a leather jacket, that's always a go-to look of mine. I own a lot of shoes. Love boots, love. I just love fall and winter, I feel like that's when all my good clothes come out. I'm layering my leather jackets, my coats, that's when I feel like my fashion gets good.

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