

# STAR CENTRAL

FEBRUARY 2022

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT

**MINDIE  
BARNETT**

AN ENTREPRENEUR TO DEFINITELY  
WATCH OUT FOR THIS YEAR

INTRODUCING  
ZULEYHA OZGEN

+

**GEENA DAVIS**  
one on one interview with  
an Oscar-winning actress

GET TO KNOW

*Charlie*

MCCOY OYEKWE



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Find out more about one of the entrepreneurs to watch out for in 2022



# AMBN

AUSTRALIAN MILLIONAIRES BUSINESS NETWORK



OPENING REMARKS



Happy new year everyone! 2022 has definitely been an extremely challenging year so far full of change and uncertainty. As we are all aware, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to escalate globally impacting how we all operate and manage our businesses and lives day to day.

In addition to the immediate and serious health concerns, we are also seeing a much wider impact on all of our lives as well as the global economy as a whole. It is in this context that I would like to express how thankful I am that our business is still alive and kicking. Even though the Coronavirus pandemic crippled the economy and sparked a recession, our brand managed to survive and do well despite these testing times through God's grace. Let me take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very prosperous 2022! God Bless.

Mike Ilagan  
Managing Director



6 **Celebrity Interviews**  
One on one interview with the beautiful Geena Davis



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Mindie Barnett Pg. 16

EDITOR'S NOTES

Welcome to Summer 2022.

As headlines about Coronavirus started getting more terrifying, the infomaniac in me also became more and more paranoid. I do not need another reminder to wash my hands for 30 seconds or wear a mask everywhere I go. I also don't need a reminder never to share drinks or get too close with anyone because I can potentially get the Coronavirus that way.

Still, I couldn't stop reading about Coronavirus and the vaccine rollouts daily, asking advice from friends in the medical field, and perfecting how to sanitise my phone while scrolling for live updates. After stocking up on various supplies and preparing as best as we could, I had to take a break. This issue of StarCentral was my perfect antidote because it was a welcomed distraction for me. I hope it is for you too. Wishing you all a happy, healthy 2022. God bless.

Vicky I  
**Editor-in-chief**

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Angelo Montano Pg. 26



INTERNATIONAL GOLDEN  
SASH ACADEMY



INTERNATIONAL  
**GOLDEN**  
SASH ACADEMY

The International Golden Sash Academy is an academy designed for women of all ages competing in pageants. Whether you're a beginner or an experienced beauty queen, The International Golden Sash Academy will give you the tools you need to reach your next level of success! It will give a comprehensive overview of what it takes to succeed at your next competition starting from the inside out. This is a ten week course that will focus on a different topics each week.



ONE ON ONE WITH GEENA

# Davis

By Allison Kugel

Academy Award-winning actress Geena Davis has spent decades breaking down barriers for women with powerfully resonating on-screen portrayals that have transcended entertainment and inspired seismic cultural shifts in how women are viewed in art and real life.

Davis made her feature film debut starring opposite Dustin Hoffman in the classic 1982 classic comedy, *Tootsie*, and she went on to star in such films including *The Fly*, *Beetlejuice*, *The Accidental Tourist*, *Thelma & Louise*, *Hero*, *The Long Kiss Goodnight*, *Stuart Little*, and *A League of Their Own*.

From the quirky and offbeat dog trainer, Muriel Pritchett in Lawrence Kasdan's *The Accidental Tourist*, for which she won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress, to her Academy Award-nominated and Golden Globe-nominated performance as Thelma in Ridley Scott's *Thelma & Louise* alongside Susan Sarandon, to leading the cast of Penny Marshall's *A League of Their Own* opposite Tom Hanks: Geena Davis has portrayed characters who claim their own narrative and make us reimagine womanhood. Geena Davis's roles have remained evergreen in their ability to reflect the human condition, brilliantly, long after their release.

In 2019 Davis was honored with a second Oscar trophy, this time the Academy's Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award, in recognition of her work over the decades to achieve gender parity onscreen in film and television.

Ahead of her time, Davis also earned the 2006 Golden Globe Award for Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Dramatic Series for her portrayal of the first female President of the United States in the ABC television series *Commander in Chief*.

Geena Davis is the archetype fearless female who gets it done. Yet, to speak with her is to witness a soft-spoken and centered human being who draws you into her space with carefully cultivated wisdom that doesn't need to shout to be heard. A world-class athlete (at one time the nation's 13th-ranked archer) and a member of Mensa, most recently, she is recognized for her tireless advocacy of women and girls nearly as much as for her acting accomplishments. Davis is the Founder and Chair of the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, which engages film and television creators to dramatically increase the percentage of female characters — and reduce gender stereotyping — in media made for children 11 and under.

**Allison Kugel: What are the three major life events that shaped the human being you are today?**

Geena Davis: The first one would be having the parents that I did. Both of them were great, but particularly, my dad was very encouraging in a subtle way. Whenever he was doing something, like working on the car, shingling the roof, or whatever, it was he who would have me come along with him just as a matter of course. I grew up feeling like there wasn't anything I wasn't supposed to do, and also feeling very capable, which I've taken into my life. Another one would be getting to work with Susan Sarandon. She had the most impact on any person in my life, because I'd never really spent time with a woman who moves through the world the way she does. It sounds crazy to be 33 years old at the time and first experiencing a woman like that, but I really had previously never met a woman who didn't preface everything with, "Well, I don't know what you will think, and this is probably a stupid idea, but..."





**Allison Kugel:** I love it, and I love the fact that you said your dad didn't place any limitations on you. Do you have brothers?

Geena Davis: I do. I have an older brother and he, of course, did all of that stuff as well with my dad, but I did it too! My dad didn't seem to have the impression that I should just be learning stuff that my mom would teach me. It was very natural for him to include me in everything.

**Allison Kugel:** That is pretty awesome. To unpack your third major life event, motherhood, did you feel instantly reborn when you had your first child, or was it more of a subtle shift for you?

Geena Davis: I don't know that I would say I felt reborn, but it certainly changes your life dramatically. I had my daughter first and very clearly started seeing the world through her eyes, and it has just been magical.

**Allison Kugel:** I want to talk about the Oscars and your Best Supporting Actress Oscar win for *The Accidental Tourist*. I think so many actors, and especially actresses, see an Oscar win as their ticket to being treated as an equal in the film industry. Like, if you get that gold statue, you are now an equal and you are going to be treated with a certain level of reverence and respect, and you are going to get substantial roles and you can exhale and just relax. Was that your experience, where you felt like, "Okay, I've arrived."? Or did you still feel like you had more to prove?

Geena Davis: Well, I didn't ever think, "This is my magic ticket to..."

**Allison Kugel:** Equality (laugh)?

Geena Davis: Doing everything I want to do, or like now I was at the top of the A-list, or anything like that. I didn't think of it that way, but I did unexpectedly feel a tremendous feeling of having accomplished something. I thought, "Well, I got that out of the way. I never have to wonder if I'm going to get one of these things."

**Allison Kugel:** They didn't have the term "bucket list" at the time, but I hear you.

Geena Davis: Absolutely. I thought, "Well, I got this out of the way early. That's cool."

**Allison Kugel:** Very cool! I know, philosophically and humanly speaking, we can all fall into this mindset of, "When I get this, I'll be happy." Whether it's getting married, winning an award, making a certain amount of money, becoming a parent; whatever it is for people. Are you one of those people that sees life that way, or do you believe in the journey as opposed to the destination?

Geena Davis: I'm more of a journey person. I haven't, in my life, been clamoring for the next thing that will make me fulfilled. I get a lot of fulfillment from what I do and just living my life. Speaking of winning the Oscar, does it change how people see you and everything? I had two directors, after I won the Oscar, who I had a rocky start with, because they assumed that I was going to think I was all that, and they wanted to make sure that I didn't feel like I was all that. Without having met me or having spent any time with me or anything, they just assumed I was going to be like, "Well, now no one is going to tell me what to do."

**Allison Kugel:** You kind of had to go out of your way to let people know you were down to earth.

Geena Davis: I just am.

**Allison Kugel:** I don't think a male actor would have had to prove he is still nice and cooperative, and down to earth.

Geena Davis: Yes, and I think maybe because I was a woman, that the directors felt that way. And maybe it was even unconscious bias that they would maybe do it to a woman and not a man. But they didn't want a woman to potentially cause them any problems. They wanted to make sure I knew my place, and maybe you're right, it probably wouldn't happen to a man.

**Allison Kugel:** We already talked about working with Susan Sarandon, but generally speaking, what did doing the film *Thelma & Louise*, and its subsequent success, do for you, both as an actor and as a woman?

Geena Davis: I had read the script for *Thelma & Louise* after it had already been cast. I thought, "Oh my God! This is the best script I've ever read. I wish I could be in it." I ended up having a year-long pursuit for the role, because Ridley Scott was only the producer at that time, and different directors and different pairings of 'Thelmas' and 'Louises' were coming together and falling apart, and so for a year my agent called at least once a week to say, "Just so you know, Geena is still available. She's still interested." Then when [Ridley Scott] decided he was going to direct it, he immediately said, "Yes. Okay sure, I'll meet with her," and I convinced him somehow or another (laugh).

**Allison Kugel:** Way to play hard to get Geena (laugh).

Geena Davis: (Laughs)

**Allison Kugel:** Let's talk about male and female pairings in film. Normally, it's very common to have a 50-year-old or even a 60-year-old leading man opposite a 30-year-old leading lady. That's just kind of been the norm, although there are a few exceptions, and that is what our eyes are used to seeing. I know that kind of sucks, but how do you feel when an older woman is cast opposite a younger man? Do you see that as a win for more mature actresses?

Geena Davis: Let's see... in *Thelma & Louise* they cast Brad Pitt to be my sort of... love interest, and it wasn't actually because he was younger. They didn't purposely try to cast someone younger than me. He just gave the best audition and he was the best choice. But I thought that was pretty cool. He's only, like, seven years younger than me, but I thought that was quite cool that they did that.

**Allison Kugel:** We are all a bit societally conditioned to look at it sideways if the man and woman on screen are exactly the same age. If you put a leading man who is 50 with a leading woman who is 50 or even 45, I feel like that would almost look odd to us, the audience, because we are so brainwashed.

Geena Davis: It's very strange and so prevalent. A certain male actor that was making a movie said that I was too old to be his romantic interest, and I was 20 years younger than him. You know what it is? Women peak in their 20s and 30s, and men peak in their 40s and 50s as far as actors go. So the male stars of the movies want to appear to be younger than they are, or they want to appeal to younger people, so they always want a co-star who is really young. I guess it's to make them seem whatever, but that is why that happens and that is why women don't get cast very much after 40 and 50. It is because they are felt to be too old to be a romantic interest.



**Allison Kugel: Tell me what inspired you to create the Geena Davis Institute on Gender and Media. Was it one thing or many things?**

Geena Davis: It was one very specific thing. I had my awareness raised about how women are represented in Hollywood in *Thelma & Louise*, and seeing the reaction. It was so extreme if people recognized us on the street, or wherever, and it made me realize that we really give woman so few opportunities to feel like this after watching a movie, to identify with the female character or characters and live vicariously through them. I decided I was going to pay attention to this and try to choose roles that make women feel good. So I had a very heightened awareness of all of this, and then when my daughter was two, I sat down and watched pre-school shows and G-rated videos with her, and from the first thing I watched I immediately noticed there were far more male characters than female characters in a pre-school show. I thought, "Wait a minute, this is the 21st Century. How could we be showing kids an imbalanced world?" I saw it everywhere, in movies, on TV. I didn't intend at that moment to launch an institute about it, but I found that no one else in Hollywood seemed to recognize what I saw. I talked to lots and lots of creators who said, "No, no, no. That's not a problem anymore. It's been fixed." That's when I decided I'm going to gather the data because I think I'm really right here. I'm going to get the data and I'm going to go directly to the creators of children's content and share it with them privately because I know this is unconscious bias at this point. So that is what we did, and that is what we have continued to do.

**Allison Kugel: Tell me how you are getting your organization's data into the right hands? You're gathering what I would call evidence-based information, so it's not just anecdotal evidence. You're getting science backed, evidence-based information and data. How are you going about getting that into the right hands?**

Geena Davis: My thoughts from the beginning was since I'm in the industry I can get meetings with all the people I want to share this with so that I didn't have to try to influence the public to rise up and demand this. I could go in a very friendly way privately with my colleagues and share information with them. The universal reaction when people first hear it is, they are stunned. Their jaws are on the ground, and they cannot believe it, especially the people that make kids' entertainment. They can't believe they weren't doing right by girls. The combination of seeing the data proved that there is a big problem, and then realizing they want to do right by kids has been the magic formula in creating change, which is very exciting.

**Allison Kugel: You told me you were raised to be extremely polite, but yet there is an interesting dichotomy there. You were raised with what I call "the disease of politeness" that girls in my generation and your generation, we were kind of infused with it. But at the same time you were also raised by your father who was quite inclusive with a lot of things that were traditionally male. In what ways are you raising your daughter similarly to how you were raised, and in what ways you are raising her differently from how you were raised?**

Geena Davis: Well, it's all been quite different. She was just born the way she is, which is very self-confident and poised. I tell her, "I will never be as poised as you are." I wanted to be her popular culture literacy educator. That is why I started the whole institute, was because I realized when I first saw that first television program I thought, "Oh no. Kids are being raised from minute one to accept that men and boys are more important than woman and girls. I can't prevent her from growing up knowing that woman are thought of as second class citizens, but I'll do everything I can to change that for her." With her and with my boys, I did the same thing. I always watched with them, whatever my boys were watching, like you did with your son, I could say, "Did you know that there is only one girl in that whole

movie? Did you notice that?" Or, "Do you think girls can do what those boys are doing?" Or, "Why do you think she is wearing that if she is going to go rescue somebody? Don't you think that's strange?" They became very savvy. Then they started noticing things before I did. So that was great.

**Allison Kugel: What is really cool is that they were actually interested in the questions you were asking and receptive to it. I would imagine that you raised your boys to be very conscious young men in terms of how to treat a woman and how to view women. Can you tell me a little about that?**

Geena Davis: It's not just for women that we need to show more women on screen. My goal is to have fictitious worlds reflect reality, which is 1/2 female and incredibly diverse; which is 40 percent people of color, 20 percent with different abilities. Forty percent are heavy body types, and the representation of people with different gender identities and all of that, it barely registers.

**Allison Kugel: What is so interesting is that society kind of goes in a loop, right? You've got reality, then you have art, then you have people looking at art and then incorporating that into their reality. It's like a circle. Think about how many people are influenced by television, film, music, and then that influences how they show up in our culture, which then shapes our "reality."**

Geena Davis: Oh, absolutely. You think these are just harmless pieces of entertainment, but they cause tremendous change that we have measured. FOX asked us to do a study on the Dana Scully character from *X-Files* to find out what impact she had on women going into STEM careers. We found that 58 percent of woman who are currently in STEM jobs named that character, specifically, as their inspiration to go into a STEM career. That's just one character on one TV show. It's really incredible.

**Allison Kugel: Mind blowing.**

Geena Davis: In 2012, girls' participation in archery shot up 100 percent and it was because *Brave* and *The Hunger Games* both came out in the summer of 2012, and girls left the theater and bought a bow.

**Allison Kugel: Let's talk about the recent study, *Women Over 50, The Right to Be Seen on Screen*. Can you tell me a little bit about that study and how that is being presented to the entertainment industry, and what you hope to accomplish with it?**

Geena Davis: I hope to accomplish getting more jobs (laugh). You can tell that there are very few parts for women over 50, but we found that characters over 50 are 20 percent of characters on screen, so that is pretty low. How many people are over 50? But women are only a quarter of those characters. Woman over 50 are five percent of characters on screen in film and television. And those commonly cast as supporting characters and minor roles are less likely to be developed with an interest in characteristics or certainly to be romantic interests. We are using our same philosophy of working directly with the film studios and television networks to get them this information share it with them, and encourage them to make some changes. So I think this will be very impactful.

**Allison Kugel: What has been the feedback?**

Geena Davis: Great feedback, and again, people were surprised. They did not know it was unconscious bias, so we are looking to see some important change happen.

Learn more about the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media and get involved at [www.seejane.org](http://www.seejane.org). Follow on Instagram @geenadavisorg.

## ender in Media







## EMERGING DESIGNER SPOTLIGHT

# Zuleyha Özgen

Züleyha Özgen is a 28-year-old Fashion Designer based in Berlin – she founded the brand Zsolea back in 2019. She started dreaming about becoming a fashion designer at a very young age but it took her a long time to make the first step towards achieving that dream. She worked for about 5 years in fashion retail where she gained a lot of experiences related to the industry before she finally decided to study fashion design at the age of 25. She eventually quit her job to become an intern for a fashion designer in Berlin and up to now, she feels that the move she made was the best decision she's ever made.

StarCentral magazine recently caught up with Züleyha to discuss her journey in the fashion industry and here's what went down:

### What do you like most about being a designer?

What I adore about being a fashion designer is that you don't have to stick to any rules. I can put my creativity, feelings, and personality in one design to express my understanding of fashion.

### The downside to being a fashion designer?

When you are working all by yourself, like in my case it's not that easy to be constantly creative and productive. You need breaks, especially creative breaks so that new ideas new inspiration can arise. These times are always the hardest, you are trying but you have the feeling that nothing is working out as you imagine. It took me a long time to find the right handling for that.

### What has been the most memorable experience of being in the fashion industry so far?

The most memorable experience in the fashion industry so far was the time I had as an intern abroad in Barcelona. I had the chance to participate in fashion week Barcelona. It was my first time behind the scenes of a fashion week. Everything was new and so exciting. Professional models, successful brands, the location, and organisation. A lot of new impressions and a great experience.

### Who have been the most interesting people you've met so far?

The most interesting person I have met so far related to fashion

is Olga. She is a fashion designer of the brand Menchen Thomas. She was like a role model for me. Although things were not working out she was calm and still spread positivity. I remember that I was asking her how she can be that calm in difficult situations and still make jokes and things like that. She told me that we always have the decision of how we react to this kind of situation. When everything goes wrong why adding more negativity with being angry or making more pressure. When the team is fine and in a good mood you can conquer every fence together.

### What has been the most valuable lesson you've learned while in the fashion industry. This can be about the industry or about yourself.

The most valuable lesson I've learned is from nothing comes nothing. Even if it's 10 minutes you are putting into your business or your self you should take that time. Every day doing at least one thing will open new doors. That's what I've experienced.

### Is your family supportive of you being a fashion designer?

My family is my biggest supporter. I'm so thankful for that. They believe in me sometimes more than I'm doing, to be honest. To know that I have such a supportive family gives me strength and motivates me.

### If you could go back in a time machine to the time when you were just getting started, what would you do differently?

I think there is nothing I would do differently because every experience and lesson lead me to this day. I'm still learning and I'm still making mistakes and I'm fine with that, this makes my work more personal and authentic I guess.

### What is the best advice you have ever been given?

That small steps are important and okay. It takes time to get where you want to be. How you get there is more important than when you get there.

### What are your future plans? Inside your career or out of it.

My future plans are growing in the fashion industry as an upcoming fashion designer from Berlin. I would love to show my work all over the world and see people wearing my visions.









## ENTREPRENEUR SPOTLIGHT

# MINDIE Barnett

After ten years working as a television news reporter and anchor within the Philadelphia, and New York regions – among other cities – Mindie Barnett decided to use her knowledge and experience in the media to help propel businesses and position companies as thought-leaders. Barnett founded MB and Associates in 2003 and swiftly garnered a great deal of clients in a short amount of time. Because of her vast knowledge of the news business and strong ties with key members of the media – both on the local and national levels – MB and Associates was able to achieve rapid results and obtain countless press opportunities for clients. Due to these attributes, Mindie Barnett is now one of the nation's most sought-after and respected publicists.

Mindie was raised in South Jersey and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Broadcast Journalism from Hofstra University in Hempstead, New York, as well as graduate credits in the field of public relations from Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey. She's worked as an anchor/reporter at various television outlets, including NBC 10, Cablevision's News 12 New Jersey, TSM 24-Hour News, NBC in Louisiana, and NBC in Illinois. She is a devout volunteer with the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Philadelphia Affiliate, Philadelphia's Maternity Care Coalition. She serves as a board member of the American Heart Association in Philadelphia and an active volunteer for the global Wigs & Wishes foundation.

Mindie Barnett's public relations credits include landing clients' opportunities on Oprah, The Today Show, Good Morning America, Inside Edition, Live with Kelly, Dr. Oz, The Doctors, Anderson Cooper, In Touch Magazine, US Weekly, InStyle Magazine, USA Today and MSNBC, among numerous regional inclusions. Barnett was named "Business Owner of the Year," by the South Jersey chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners. Her firm has won "Best PR Firm" by South Jersey Biz Magazine, two years in a row.

Mindie spearheads her public relations and social media firm and is also the author of the self-help memoir "Intermission," "You Don't Need to Be a Bitch to Be a Boss," a keynote speaker,

host of "The Race for the Ring" podcast and on-air contributor. She lives in the Upper East side, New York City, with her two children and lovable pups, Max and Parker.

StarCentral Magazine recently caught up with Mindie to discuss her journey as an entrepreneur and here's what went down:

**When did your entrepreneurial flair first reveal itself?**

In 2003, I launched my PR firm and became obsessed with pleasing clients and closing deals.

**How did your life look like before being an entrepreneur?**

As a news anchor/reporter working for tv outlets in various media markets. I loved my career but very much was "owned" by the stations I worked for. My name, my brand, my choices, everything was under the station's ownership.

**As a seasoned entrepreneur, what is it that motivates and drives you?**

I am driven by pleasing people and serving clients. I am also driven by doing my best to mentor my younger team and watch them grow and evolve.

**In one word, describe your life as an entrepreneur and explain why.**

Relentless. I am hardworking, never take no for an answer, and always find a way to make something happen.

**What were your top three motivations for starting your business?**

Money  
Life control  
Staying connected to the news industry





**What would you say are the key elements for starting and running a successful business?**

Investing in your employees. Not only financially – but with your time, your skill, and getting to know them personally. Once you've cultivated a healthful work environment, a team that respects you and likes you – the sky's the limit.

**What are the three biggest challenges you have faced growing the business and how did you overcome them?**

Not having a partner – someone who cared as much as me as was as invested into the company as I was. I seek support from colleagues in the field.

Not having capital when things were slower – I took out an SBA loan.

Not having a business degree or experience in running a business. I have been lucky to trust my gut and make solid decisions.

**What form of marketing has worked well for your business throughout the years?**

Public Relations

**As you grew the business, what have been some of the most important leadership lessons you have learned?**

To allow your team to make mistakes – not to do the work for them. While it's sometimes painful not to take over, you must let them try and if they really mess up – teach them how not to make the error next time. Also: owning my mistakes – not only for the sake of my team, so they see I'm not perfect, but so that I'm seen authentically to my clients, who trust me.

**What is the best advice you have ever been given?**

Make the time for self-care and take a break because I tend to keep going.

**What advice would you give to a newbie Entrepreneur setting up their first business?**

To stay the course. The terrain is rough, especially initially, but all good things are worth fighting for. Not to give up and if need be, make your company a side-hustle until you can do it full-time.





# INTRODUCING Charlie

## MCCOY OYEKWE



One of the most powerful rags-to-riches stories is that of Charlie McCoy. He's a master barber, a serial entrepreneur, a successful New York-based investor, a dedicated father, and an author, as well as a men's grooming expert with over 20 years of barber and beauty industry experience.

Charlie spent ten years with the global non-profit JW.org Watchtower, Bethel, and five years working at the L'Oréal USA parent company's

global brand, Kiehl's. He has a Babson education and is the founder and CEO of Artisan Luxury Brands, a CPG parent company and creative agency based in New York City. He's also the founder of The Grooming Alchemist, a non-profit on a mission to improve the mental health, wellness, and grooming of At-Risk Youth and Former High-Control group members, aka cult survivors.

Charlie's journey of personal struggle, PTSD, and leaving the Jehovah's Witnesses is central to his passion for mental health advocacy. Through TGA, he works to support cult survivors, underrepresented youth, and men's mental wellness by offering programming and mentorship to these overlooked communities.

Charlie works as an industry leader to build brick-and-mortar and e-commerce businesses. He has founded six successful companies in the past five years and leads a diverse team of creatives. He owns and operates a global portfolio of growth brands. Charlie is a member of the Black Economic Alliance and the Black Government contracting club, both organizations supporting the economic empowerment of the African American Community.

Because of his credentials, Charlie has been featured in several high profile publications such as Forbes, Business Insider, CBS, Fox, NBC, Medium, NY Times, Miami Wire, LA Wire, CEO Weekly, Thrive Global, Future Sharks, Disrupt Magazine, The Knockturnal, Yahoo Finance and even Us Insider List of Top 10 Entrepreneurs to Watch in 2021.

StarCentral Magazine recently sat down with Charlie to find out more about his journey to entrepreneurship, and here's what went down.

#### What are you currently doing to maintain/grow your business?

I've had my business since May of 2017. I've grown the brand's revenue 35%-65% year over year over the last five years. One of the tools I've used is YouTube videos with clients praising our business. The other tool that has helped boost our traffic is our secret recipe of Search Engine Optimization for keeping us at the top of the google search for my category of businesses in New York City.

#### What social media platforms do you usually use to increase your brand's awareness?

We leverage Instagram and YouTube to increase our brand's awareness. We have organically grown our email list to over 12,000 and our total Social Following to over 11,000.

#### What is your experience with paid advertising, like PPC or sponsored content campaigns? Does it work?

We have had a collaborative journey the last few years, working with various brand deals and sponsored content. We recently worked with Harry's global shaving brand to produce a video campaign focused on Men's Health and Grooming. These campaigns are always productive in various ways that might not be noticeable immediately in terms of revenue. The goodwill and brand awareness that these partnerships create goes a long way when it comes to building a brand.

#### What is your main tactic when it comes to making more people aware of your brand and engaging your customers? How did your business stand out?

Our main tactic for engaging new customers is word of mouth and our second tactic is ad funnels. We found that taking really good care of clients goes a long way in making them your best promoters. We also found that our ads across the various social media funnels help keep us top of mind for new prospects online.



**What form of marketing has worked well for your business throughout the years?**

We found digital marketing to be one of the most effective ways to build traffic for a brick and mortar. This method has helped us connect with thousands of new customers each year for the past few years.

**What is the toughest decision you had to make in the last few months?**

In 2021 I had to decide on the future of two of my store locations in Manhattan. The pandemic had depressed overall commerce in the city, and the growth we had experienced leveled out at our most recent location downtown. The uptown location was doing four times the sales of the downtown location. I had to decide what location to focus all our attention on making a success. I chose to open a new location, consolidating both stores into one new flagship space in the area where our biggest concentration of customers drove the most sales.

**What mistakes have you made along the way that others can learn from (or something you'd do differently)?**

I had made mistakes in hiring over the years since I began the business. I have had over two dozen employees in the last few years. Many of them were solid, but several of them were not a good fit for the business and made things worse before they were unhired. Now I do things differently by having my management team interview candidates for a few rounds before I vet them at the last interview round.

**What new business would you love to start?**

I'm working on starting a new SAAS business that helps entrepreneurs build the world's best barber-shops. It's a technology-driven subscription business education, and digital marketing agency focused on the 5 Billion Dollar Global Barbershop Owners Market.

**If you could go back in a time machine to the time when you were just getting started, what would you do differently?**

I would do more customer research on where I plan to open a location and establish a shorter-term lease option because market conditions and business cycles often change. You need to keep lease terms flexible.

**What is the best advice you have ever been given?**

Some of the best advice I have ever been given was to keep growing as a person and travel as often as possible. To the extent that I grow, my business grows and gets better, more efficient, and organized; it all starts with me. Then the second-best advice is to find people you trust who have been through challenges with you, keep them close, and position them well in the business.

**What advice would you give to a newbie Entrepreneur setting up their first business?**

I would tell a newbie entrepreneur to invest in coaching and business advisory at the start-up phase so that you can shorten the learning curve to success and maybe avoid some of the pitfalls that early founders get dinged on.



*"I'm working on starting a new SAAS business that helps entrepreneurs build the world's best barbershops."*





A woman with long brown hair, wearing a white wide-brimmed hat, a white short-sleeved dress with ruffles, and brown leather boots, is sitting on a sand dune. She is holding a brown leather crossbody bag and sunglasses. The background shows a beach with wooden posts, waves, and a blue sky with light clouds.

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## ACTOR SPOTLIGHT: MEET ANGELO

# MONTANO

Acting came early for Angelo Montano, appearing at the age of four in the fondly acclaimed Australian series *A Country Practice* in 1981. For the next 40 years, he has built on his career as an actor, taking on roles in award-winning Aussie dramas like *Underbelly*, *Packed to the Rafters*, *Bikie Wars*, and *Neighbours*.

Angelo has not been limited to playing characters on television, having also tackled big-budget international tent pole movies with Disney's Jack Sparrow in *Pirates of the Caribbean* and fighting alongside Asia's No. 1 Mega Star Jackie Chan in *First Strike*.

With a long list of productions, movies, and streaming series, currently underway locally, Angelo's has recently scored a major movie role set to start filming on the Gold Coast this summer. His long list of credits has placed him in the envious position of being asked to audition for three other roles before the end of 2021, which includes a new children's streaming series.

His olive complexion and good looks, born from Italian heritage, have benefited casting agents when looking for cultural diversity. Angelo slips into the part with ease, whether taking on drama or comedy. From performing on stage in theatre productions to television commercials, he learns and hones his craft and love for acting.

For Angelo, his acting can benefit from his personal growth, using his life lessons and bringing that to the characters and roles he plays. He also knows that you have to keep working at it with anything you love and put the time in to broaden your education. So, he enjoys nothing more than attending a peer workshop, hoping to improve on his passion so he can put everything into each performance and gig.

After recently taking a forced break for two years to look after his seriously ill young Daughter, who needed full-time care, Angelo has returned to acting. *CStarCentral Magazine* recently caught up with Angelo to discuss his journey in the industry, and here's what went down:

### Can you tell us more about yourself?

Well, what can I say? I enjoy making people laugh and putting a smile on people's faces; everyone has an amazing story to tell; I enjoy acting, or as I call it, my role play. I love impersonating characters and being funny, nothing better than seeing people happy. I also do many charity works for sick children and help those less fortunate. As I always say, there's always someone worse off out there. So things are never as bad as it seems.

### How did you get started in the entertainment industry?

I was four years old, living in Sydney in 1981 when a friend from school's father worked on *A Country Practice* – he needed a boy to play a hospital patient, so me being an out-there child, jumped at the chance. I was always the entertainer in my family and, as you could say centre of attention (laughs). I then went on a year later and played an autistic child on the show. My love of television was known as a child, sitting like a metre away from the television, learning, and copying every show I watched, even romper room. I always wanted to be famous. Because to me, it was something inside that said if people around you are smiling and laughing, you keep doing what you are doing. I had a loving family around me that always laughed and smiled even if times were tough. From then on, I did everything in the entertainment industry, from school lead roles in musicals and cameo television appearances to even being on young talent time as a junior performer. My mum and grandad were my rocks; they took me and sacrificed a lot for me at a young age to follow my dreams.







#### What do you like most about acting?

I've probably answered that already – getting to play various roles and challenging myself, and being in the moment. As I got older, I learned to act differently; being younger, I was more worried about being seen on a film or television or showing off (laughs). But after years of experience, my goal was to really take on the person I'm playing and be him – focused on playing the best part I can with what I have at hand. You might have an idea of what the role is but so do others. I used to focus on getting the script right and making sure directors were happy. But I took a different approach and thought to myself, hey, be the guy, show them who you are, and always stay in character. As I call it – be the person I'm playing to be. The best thing I love about acting is seeing people say, wow, you were great; it gives me self-satisfaction and determination to do more because I've done right by the character and right by the public. Meeting so many wonderful people who share your enthusiasm and passion for the industry is satisfying. But mainly, it's to tell stories through different people I have played and hope that I do the character justice and deliver an amazing performance.

#### How different is it to act in a movie and to act in a TV series? And which one do you prefer?

Good question. They are totally different in a lot of ways. I've worked on many American and Australian productions, and it's such a massive difference. I enjoy working on large films; sometimes, you feel like just a number or not famous as the main cast. Because of its large scale, it's a lot more rushed and more pressure, a lot more crew watching your work which is a good thing though you feel like a celebrity at times (laughs). TV series is great because you get to meet many local talented people, make good friends, and network in the industry, I have done lots of various roles in short films as well. In my spare time, I helped many film students and did many projects to challenge myself for future productions. TV series is also good because you can be known for that character and remembered if you execute an outstanding or memorable performance.

#### What are your weak points when it comes to acting? How do you try to improve them?

Well, I guess my weak points were focusing too much on the script in my earlier years, worrying about stuffing up the lines, and not focusing on the character I would play. As I grew older, I learned not to worry so much and take on that character and be that person without being in their shoes for real. I always try to use my life experiences and what I've learned to better or improve my skills to adapt to the character.

#### What are your strong points as an actor?

Being believable and having people say, wow! I guess I naturally have that ability now without sounding egotistical. But it's taken a lot of hard work and experience to get to where I am. Some are luckier in a sense, while others take time. But if you believe in yourself, you never give up, and I have done this my whole life. My strong points would be my dedication and training to be better to move with the times, the diversity of characters I can play from gangster to policeman to father to villain, and even drama. I love new challenges so I can break away from my stereotypical look.

#### What have you learned from the directors that you have worked with throughout your career?

Wow, tough question! Directors love filming and have chosen that path, and I love acting to make it come alive for them. Many directors are set in their ways, and they have an idea of what they want to achieve on set. Others have asked me for input to make

scenes jump out, so I guess you could say I learned creativity from them, and in the end, we are the same. We all have a story to tell; they do it from behind the camera, we have to make their story and their dream come to fruition through our performance. In the end, it's a mutual effort for all.

#### What are some of the difficulties of the acting business?

It's definitely a lot easier in a sense now with technology. We used to have composite cards and written resumes back in my day. Our agents did the best they could, having so many on the books, so you had to stand out. I remember getting in trouble for watching too much television (laughs). I had to explain to my parents that I was sitting there with a notebook taking down casting directors and directors' names so I could write them a letter and send my composite cards to them and hopefully have a meeting or a chance to audition for upcoming films or shows. There's also competing with so many talented people when the roles you thought were perfect for, cast someone totally different from what they wanted. I was lucky in so many ways as I always connected well with panel auditions and directors and casting directors. Nowadays, it's pretty much a screen test, and I believe it's like a lottery because nothing beats an actual performance on the spot like an improv or an audition face to face. I think we worry too much now; there are so many difficulties around us in this world with acting and film that we just have to do the best with what we have and do an amazing job to the best of our ability.

#### What's challenging about bringing a script to life?

Doing the same character as the scriptwriter envisaged to create and make that person appear in real life. Also, making sure you do the character justice and be creative with it from many angles. I always like to give a different vision as well but mainly stick to the task at hand. It's also the actors around you that make this magical if you have a talented bunch that gel together; this is where movie magic happens. I love to work with actors who have that natural ability to flow with each other, and this is where it comes to life.

#### What do you do when you're not filming?

Usually, apply for more roles and try to keep myself busy and keep training or networking with others. I love spending time with my beautiful wife Elsa, my little princess Valentina, and my immediate family and friends, who are all so supportive. Nothing is better than being at home after being on set for so long – it's the precious times we spend with our family and friends that mean the most; after all, they have all supported my journey, and I can't thank them enough.

#### If someone is going to make your life into a movie, who would play you?

Hopefully, me, of course (laughs). Probably John Travolta or Christopher Walken; I get compared a lot to these two actors in my work, so that can be interesting. Otherwise, Al Pacino or anyone from the Sopranos.

#### What are your future plans? Inside your career or out of it.

It's a busy time ahead for me. I've been cast in some major productions coming up so far. So I have some major lead roles in some big upcoming productions – look out for me on the big screen next year. I'm spending as much time as I can with my family, enjoying my time, and seeing my gorgeous little girl Valentina grow day by day. Other than that, it's reading scripts and working on my projects on hand and, of course, talking to you beautiful people at FilmCentral magazine.





SNEAK PEEK: CELEBRITY HOMES UNLOCKED  
**John Legend & Chrissy Teigen**

As busy as they are with television, music, cooking, a new skincare line, and raising two children, John Legend and Chrissy Teigen hardly have time to oversee the restoration and combination of two contiguous New York penthouses. So, they are selling the two penthouse units they recently bought in Manhattan's Nolita neighborhood with plans to combine them into one huge residence on two floors, plus over 3,300 square feet of rooftop terraces. Spending almost all their time in California, John and Chrissy have decided to discontinue the combo project and have put the two apartments on the market at \$18 million. As Mr. Legend told *'The Wall Street Journal,'* "We've realized that because of work and everything, we're really mostly going to be in Los Angeles, so we're going to focus our home-building energy and renovation energy on what we're doing in L.A." Still keeping their four feet in the Big Apple part time, the glamor couple plan to look for another New York home that will be less work.

Nolita, in Lower Manhattan, is on the edge of all the sights and sounds that make the city such a fascinating place to live with ethnic dining, shopping, and weekend explorations. Built in 1900, the Brewster Carriage House is directly across the street from Little Italy and three city blocks from Chinatown. As the *New York Daily News* put it, "There is a reason Nolita stays a cut of cool above the rest. It's sophisticated, fashionable, and a bastion of serenity at the crossroads of urban chaos." It's a fascinating place to people watch and it's rumored that on any day one might see one of the Olsen twins or other celebrities perusing the shops.

It was a good idea and one that some celebrities and people with deep pockets often do: Buy two apartments in a trendy neighborhood, join them and end up with a mega residence that they feel matches their status in life. Joined together the finished penthouse would include a total of 6,164 square feet with six bedrooms and seven baths. The hardwood floors appear to be original, the windows are large and offer lots of daylight streaming through the rooms with neighborhood views. A particularly interesting item is the bar with lighted translucency in front of the bar stools. A touch of urban-style rusticity is seen in boards on some walls and a large three-sided fireplace. A unique touch is the glass-front wine cellar located under the stairwell. Skylights abound throughout and the landscaped roof terrace, with its own irrigation system and grill, is an ideal place to just hang out in the sunshine or entertain with a cookout.

Listing agents are Noble Black, Jennifer Stillman, David Son and Corinne Cahlon, all of Douglas Elliman, New York City.

For more celebrity home news and celebrity home video tours, visit [TopTenRealEstateDeals.com](http://TopTenRealEstateDeals.com).

Photo Credit: Tina Gallo for Douglas Elliman | Source: [TopTenRealEstateDeals.com](http://TopTenRealEstateDeals.com)











On December 11, 2021, Alberto "Albie" Prias and Floraine Lombardo introduced the Bachelor Collection of the brand featuring designs of 4 Couturiers from different cities in the Philippines in a Fashion Show held in Sydney, Australia. They released the Avante Garde, Traditional and the Wearable collection following the theme of the Wonders of the Ocean as a statement for the preservation of the Coral Reefs around the world.

With the release of this collection, the Classic Barong Tagalog Men's Attire was made to look more exciting and trendier. They have created Mr. Gino-o House of Filipino Designers to promote Filipino designed men's garments using Philippine sourced materials, designed and crafted by Filipino Designers and tailors.

Philippines is rich in natural apparel materials including Abaca, Jusi – Philippine silk, Pinya or Pineapple cloth, Jute, Banana Fiber, Cotton, Handwoven and Hand Printed textiles from different provinces including Inaul, Inabel, and Tinalak. There is also an abundant source of beads, shells, seeds, dried flowers, and fruits that can be transformed into clothing accents.

Their purpose is to discover uses of these materials in clothing, explore Filipinos' artistic abilities, and in turn, provide jobs and sources of income for the unemployed and unprivileged families.

Watch out for the release of the next collection on May 3, 2022.

For orders, please check out their official website: [www.mrgino-o.com](http://www.mrgino-o.com)



*With the release of this collection, the Classic Barong Tagalog Men's Attire was made to look more exciting and trendier.*







**MG**  
Mr.Gino-o  
*made for men*

*Mr Gino-o released the Avante Garde, Traditional and the Wearable collection following the theme of the Wonders of the Ocean as a statement for the preservation of the Coral Reefs around the world.*



Photographed by: Bob Reyes  
Designers: Kimi Romero,  
Manny Deiparine and Ruel Rivera





Editorial credit: Sarunyu L / Shutterstock.com



## MOVIE REVIEW: SPIDER-MAN NO WAY HOME

By: Rob Jefak

With the Avengers disassembled after the events of "Endgame" and a crop of new stars on the rise still too early to take center stage, few crossover events have matched the grandiosity and attention beyond "Infinity War" and "Endgame." After successfully rebooting Spider-Man with Tom Holland into the MCU, we finally complete his "home trilogy" with a third installment to ambitious enough to prove not all trilogies collapse once we reach Roman numeral number 3. "Spider-Man: No Way home" is in many ways a culmination of all Spider-man films that came before it, while also providing a cinematic cap off to all 3 Spider-man franchises simultaneously in one wondrous, crossover package. Let's dive into the Multiverse and see if it all pays off.

Picking up directly after the events of "Spider-man: Far from home," the world now knows that Peter Parker (Tom Holland) is the man behind the Spider-man mask. His life, his friends, his aunt (Marisa Tomei), and even his girlfriend (Zendaya) have their worlds turned upside down as the world refuses to give Parker one moment of peace. Desperate to undo this damage, Peter contacts Dr. Strange (Benedict Cumberbatch) to cast a spell to make everyone forget Spider-man is Peter Parker. Unfortunately, Peter disrupts the spell and causes pleather of villains from other Spider-man universes to invade; including Green Goblin (Willem Dafoe), Dr. Octopus (Alfred Molina), Electro (Jamie Foxx), and more. Now Spider-man must send the villains back before his life and his reality are torn apart in the wake of his greatest mistake.

Many franchises juggle their characters defining actors around with a roll of the dice. With Batman having 6 different actors to portray him on film, 3 for Hulk and now 3 for Spider-man, it can be hard to keep track of which version of a character people are most familiar with. "No way home" solves this problem by combining them into one, cross-dimensional collision that brings heroes and villains from 3 separate franchises and not only finds a logical way for them to fit together but also to improve and expand upon their own mythologies and stories left unexplained from previous installments. Spider-man learns his hardest lessons thanks to the stars of the past films and figures that came before him and does so in an exceptionally beautiful way.

No words can properly describe the chills that went down my spine when I saw Holland duking it out with Doc Ock from "Spider-man 2" and Electro from "Amazing Spider-man 2," it was a fan spasm moment I never thought I would be able to witness. The story perfectly brings the iconic suffering in Parker's life to the forefront; having his consequences affect his friends, his family, and even his school life is a painfully realistic and natural causality due to his actions. It's a darker side we never got to see this Spider-man go through and Holland's incredible performance captured the emotional impact and significance of this dramatic turn perfectly. By far though, the most incredible aspect of this film to behold is the use and interaction of the villains.

We see the likes of Sandman, Doc Ock, Green Goblin, and Lizard interacting with each other, learning of their individual fates and how their lives have been changed by Spider-man. It collects so many talented names and faces under one roof and develops them beyond being big bads; learning what makes them tick and how they feel learning about their lives and possible future when dealing with Spider-man. This is far more than a fan service film or even a flashy comic book action movie, this is the ultimate form of appreciation and collaboration of everything Spider-man is and ever was throughout all previous 7 films; even more so than "Into the Spider-verse." This is a jam-packed, stellar sendoff that wows your eyes, attacks your heart, and mixes all those feelings together in one unforgettable trilogy topper that does everyone justice.

Overall, "Spider-man: No way home" is a dream-come-true-film that felt far more impossible and unlikely to happen than even the first "Avengers" film. Every hero, villain, minor, major and side character delivers their best work throughout all 3 co-existing franchises. This is not only the ultimate Spider-man movie of all time but also the film of the year and one of Marvel's best of the best. If things ended here for Holland's Spider-man then he'd be going out on the highest of high notes, but even though I doubt this entry can be topped, I cannot wait to see what the future holds in store for Spider-man. Don't wait, don't hesitate, buy/watch this movie ASAP and be amazed.

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