

Oscar-Winner Kevin Costner Reflects on Life, Career and His Latest Film

Written by Kam Williams

Saturday, 21 February 2015 23:30



[Kevin Michael Costner](#) was born in Lynwood, California on January 18, 1955. He began his career in independent films, gradually earning small parts in more established movies. His first major motion picture role was in the coming of age comedy, *Fandango*.

Throughout his career, Costner has varied his choices with comedy, action and drama role. He has appeared in such popular box-office hits as *No Way Out*, *Bull Durham*, *Field of Dreams*, *The Bodyguard* and *Wyatt Earp*. And his exceptional filmmaking abilities were showcased in *Dances with Wolves*, which he produced, directed and starred in, and which won seven Academy Awards including Best Picture and Best Director.

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In addition to appearing in memorable roles in *JFK*, *The Untouchables* and *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*, Kevin

Costner re-teamed with his

Bull Durham

director Ron Shelton for the hit feature

Tin Cup

. He also starred in

Thirteen Days

, successfully collaborating again with his

No Way Out

director Roger Donaldson. His other film credits include

For Love of the Game

,
The War

,
3,000 Miles to Graceland

,
Dragonfly

and

The Postman

, his second directing effort.

Costner last directed the box office hit and critically acclaimed film *Open Range*, where he co-starred alongside Robert Duvall and Annette Bening. More recently, he was seen in

Superman: Man of Steel

; the spy thriller

Three Days to Kill

; and the football inspired

Draft Day

.

When not working on films, Costner sings lead vocals and plays lead guitar in his band, Modern West, and can be seen playing venues across the country. The band's song "The Angels Came Down" from their album *Turn It On*, was recently adopted by the Gold Star Moms and Gold Star Wives organizations, which support the mothers, wives and families of fallen soldiers.

Here, Kevin Costner discusses his latest film, *Black or White*, a courtroom drama where he plays a grandfather caught up in a legal fight for custody of his biracial granddaughter with the

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Black side of her family.

Our webmag is the first Canadian media to post this interview.



Kam Williams: Hi Mr. Costner, thanks for the interview. I'm honored to have this opportunity.

Kevin Costner: You can call me Kevin, Kam.

KW: Thanks! I told my readers I'd be interviewing you, so I have a lot of questions for you from fans. Children's book author Irene Smalls asks: What attracted you to this project, and do you think the plot is relevant, given the evolution of race relations in America?

KC: That's what attracted me to the project. It reminded me of one of the things I like about movies. I remember how, after I read the script for *Dances with Wolves*, I just knew that I had to make it, when not everybody else wanted to. But I did end up making it. Similarly, *Bull Durham* and *Fields of Dreams*, didn't strike people as giant movies, but I think the hallmark of all three of those pictures is that they have traveled through time and become classics. And when I read *Black or White*, I had the exact same feeling. I said, "Oh my God! This is about the moment that we're living in right now. And this was before Ferguson, and all this stuff. You know, our problems didn't just start in August. I've been living with this my entire life. But I thought there was a level of genius in the writing that I thought would make everybody rush to make this movie also. Unfortunately, that didn't happen, and so the journey of this project has been very much like the journey of others that I've had to push uphill. But I didn't think *Black or White* had any less value, so I decided I would pay for it, and make this movie because I just thought it had a chance to be a classic, and because it said some things I think a lot of people need to hear and would even perhaps say themselves, if they could string the words together.

KW: Sangeetha Subramanian says: *Black or White* looks like a great movie, Kevin. Did you give your on-screen granddaughter, Jillian Estell, any acting advice on the set?

KC: No I didn't. I just tried to lead by example by the way I behaved on the set, and she understood. She's a little girl, and I always had to keep that in mind. But she gave us the performance that we really needed. This movie depended on her being really good, which she was!

KW: Harriet Pakula-Teweles says: *Field of Dreams*' message was, "If you build it, he will come." What's the takeaway built into *Black or White*

?

KC: I guess the message of *Field of Dreams*, ultimately, was about things that go unsaid between people who really love each other, and about how it's important that you try to say those things while you're still alive, so that they have that level of meaning, that level of value, that you can carry with you for the rest of your life.

Field of Dreams, to me, was always about things that go unsaid that need to be talked about. I don't know what the takeaway for *Black or White* is, but I do know that if you're going to make a movie, and it's going to deal with race, you have to make it authentic, and not pull any punches. You have to use the language that's appropriate. And I thought this movie was a miracle because writer/director Mike Binder was able to just be authentic in dealing with race. These were things that wanted to be said, so I knew that I would have a kind of a role of a lifetime in Elliot Anderson.

KW: Director Larry Greenberg says: *Black or White* touches on how alcoholism and addiction impact parenting. Is this an issue that you feel needs more attention?

KC: Well, obviously, you were able to see the movie, Larry, and for that I'm grateful. The hope is that, if the movie did touch you, you'll continue to tell other people about it. But alcohol, used in any excess, is always going to put a veil over how we behave... clouding our judgment... and affecting our ability to love and to be responsible. And certainly, in this instance, it's pretty clear that what was driving the drinking was the loss of the love of his life, his wife, and the loss of his child seven years earlier. The discussion of alcohol, and where he is in terms of it, is pretty unique in this film, because at one point he suggests that maybe he isn't an alcoholic, but just an angry person. And that clouds his judgment when he's backed into a corner. Also, the movie deals with addictions on both sides, which makes it very balanced and enjoyable to watch.

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