

Interview: Kevin Hart Wants You to ‘Think Like a Man’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on April 19, 2012 - 2:14pm

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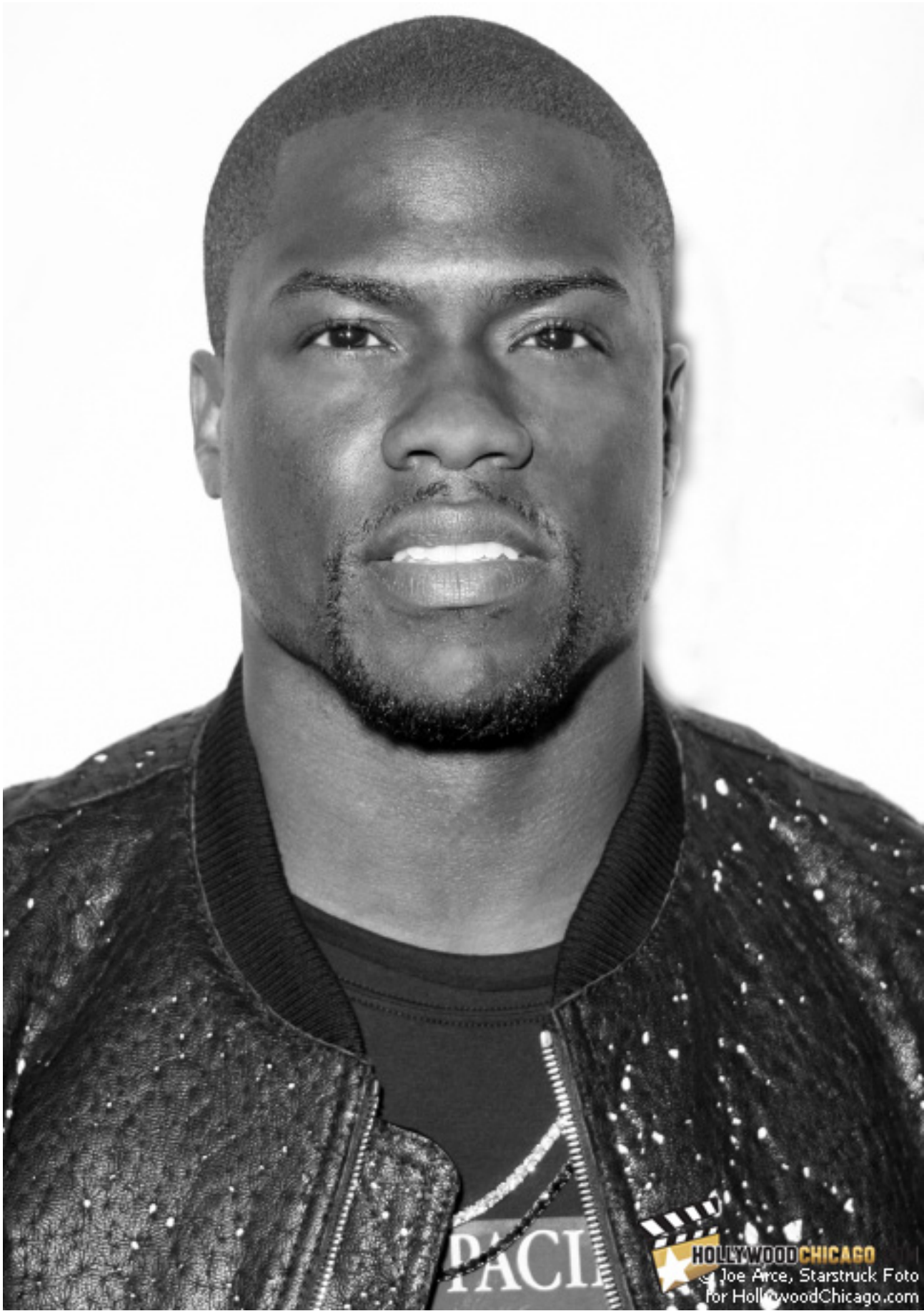
CHICAGO – Kevin Hart is easily one of the most popular stand-up comedians on the planet and he’s had a consistent film career for years now. But it feels like he’s right on the verge of a breakthrough as his career-best work premieres this weekend in “Think Like a Man” and he co-stars in next week’s “The Five-Year Engagement.” Hart sat down with us last week to talk about his journey, his movie, and, what is clearly most important to him, his fans.

HOLLYWOODCHICAGO.COM: There aren’t a lot of good relationship comedies out there. Why do you think that is? Why do you think it’s hard to get relationships right in movies?

KEVIN HART: For one, they’ve all been done. When you look at the approach to “romantic comedies,” every angle that you can do has been taken to where it’s repeating. What makes this movie unique is that you’re dealing with a comedy that’s being told from a male’s point of view. That’s never been done. It’s a male-driven movie that deals with relationships. On top of that, it’s unique because we allow women to jump inside the head of a man and see why we lie, why we manipulate, and why we do the things we do. At the same time, we allow women to see a group of women figure out a solution. They tell the men that they play too many games and they’re not about games. You then get to see men deal with the consequences of their action. It’s never really done from a male’s perspective.

HOLLYWOODCHICAGO.COM: And when it is it typically demonizes women, which you don’t do here. These are strong women. You can do a movie from a male’s perspective that doesn’t turn women into stereotypes. These are strong characters.

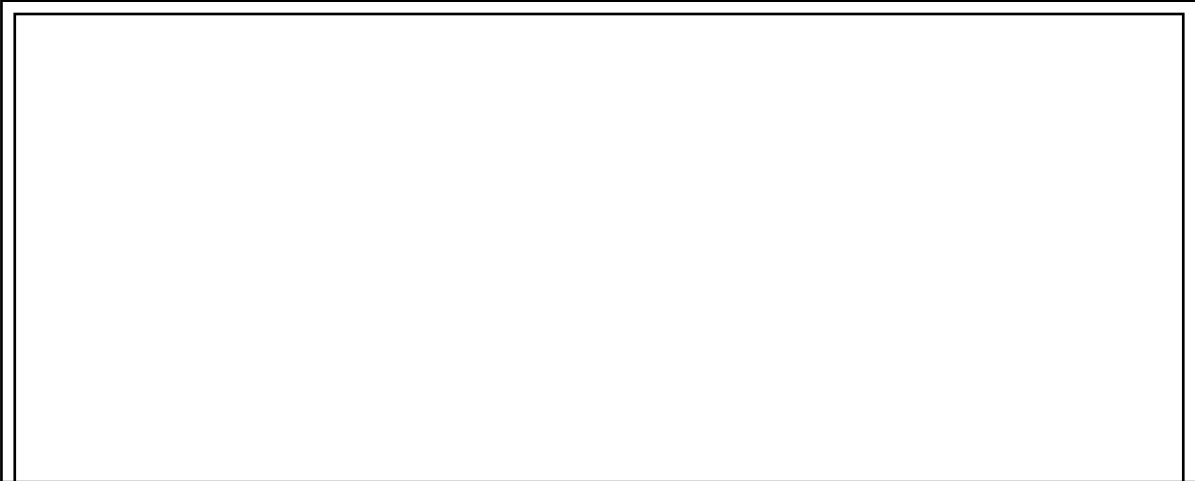
HART: Definitely. Very. Very strong.



Kevin Hart of Think Like a Man
Photo credit: Joe Arce/Starstruck Foto

HOLLYWOODCHICAGO.COM: The ensemble is strong. When you get in a thing like this with all of these talented people does it make you any more nervous than it otherwise would if it was a bunch of newcomers? Does it make you up your game?

HART: Dealing with the cast that we got — once we figured out that we were cast, we all came into it with the same goal. Our goal was to make a SMART movie. We didn’t want to make a “black movie.” You get a stereotype when you put a black cast together. We said, “How do we make this a smart movie? How do we make a universal movie that appeals to everybody?” With us coming in, we said we’re all credible actors. We can pull this off and make a smart film. Tim Story is a great director. We trusted in him. We took his advice. And, at the same time, he allowed us ot put our input in the film to where we felt like, “Hey, in the development of my character and what he’s going through it would be better if I did this or what do you think about this?” We went back and forth. That’s how great things are done — through communication. Tim took our advice and the things that he thought were great, he said, “Let’s do it.” And some things he would put it back to where we could find something similar but not a stretch. We got a lot of great material.





Think Like a Man
Photo credit: Screen Gems

HOLLYWOODCHICAGO.COM: I also found that the relationships, especially the friendships, felt very natural. How do you work on that? Or do you? Does it just come naturally?

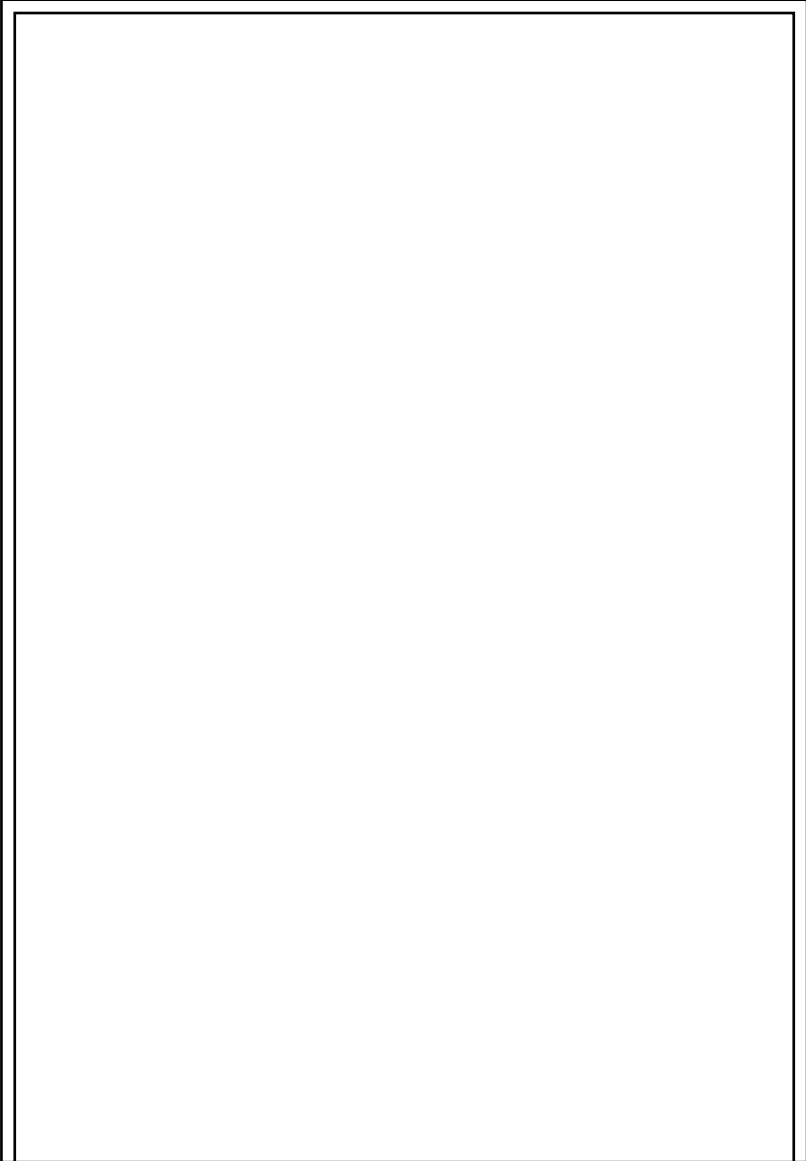
HART: Actually, I’m friends with everybody. I knew ‘em all. The only person I didn’t know was Jerry [Ferrara]. We went out to dinner. Had some drinks. We hit it off. If you want that chemistry, you got to spend some time together. It shouldn’t just be about work. Let’s get something to eat. Let’s get some drinks. When you’re going to work and you’re playing friends, you want to come off as friends on film. In this particular movie, because of the chemistry we had off-set, our chemistry on-set was all the more amazing.

HOLLYWOODCHICAGO.COM: You’ve had ridiculous success as a stand-up. How does that make you a better actor on film?

HART: You know, coming from a stand-up comedy background helps with comedic acting, in general. On stage, you’re in and out of characters. You’re constantly acting. You’re doing things you wouldn’t normally do.

HOLLYWOODCHICAGO.COM: But we’ve seen stand-ups who can’t make that transition.

HART: Very true. Very, very true. Knock on wood that I maintain my success. For me, it hasn’t been a hard transition because of the type of comedian I am on stage. I know what you’re saying about some actors or comedians that can’t make that transition. For me, I’ve had success because of the type of jokes that I’m telling. I can’t just tell a joke about a person without becoming that person. I can’t do it. Within that was my personal training before a possible acting career. Once I got involved with acting, it wasn’t hard for me to keep up and do what I was required to do. I think that’s what made me a better actor as it went on. I tell stories.





Think Like a Man
Photo credit: Screen Gems

HOLLYWOODCHICAGO.COM: Let’s say this makes \$200 million and the film offers roll in, do you leave stand-up behind?

HART: Stand-up is always involved. Without it, I don’t get here.

HOLLYWOODCHICAGO.COM: But now you are here and we’ve seen people not go back.

HART: Here’s the thing — with stand-up, there’s an immediate reaction from your fan base. They come out to see you. They pay a good ticket price to come see you perform. It’s your show. With a movie, you film it, there’s editing, and then it comes out. That whole process is something you’re not really a part of. With stand-up, it’s your creation from start to finish. You own and control. I don’t ever see myself going away from stand-up.

HOLLYWOODCHICAGO.COM: You get that immediate adoration from your fans. Does it ever get overwhelming?

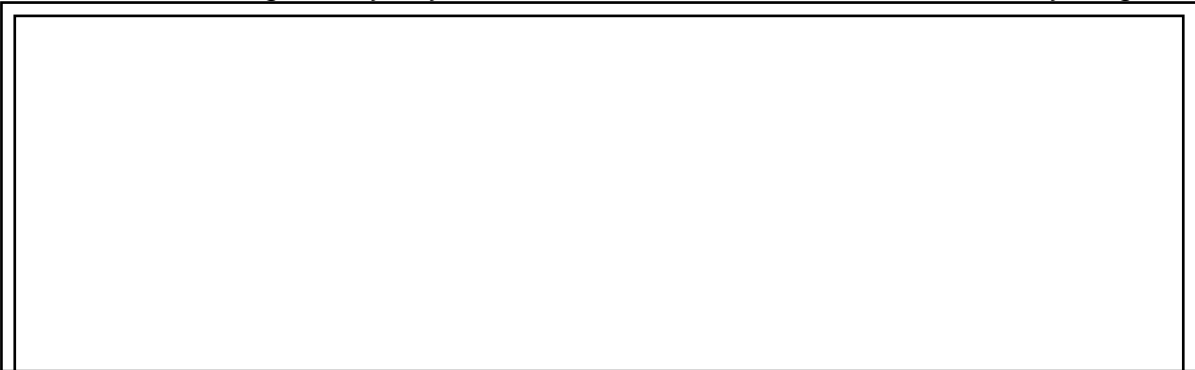
HART: I don’t think about it. I don’t want the attention or success to get to my head. I think in order to maintain a level of success you have to stay humble and realize that it can be taken away from you. That’s something that I’m conscious of. The way you treat people is important. When fans are screaming and yelling for you to sign something, it takes a second. It can be draining, but you doing that for 30 seconds has made this person’s day and will have such a big impact on them and they’ll talk about what you did to other people who will then become fans because of what you did for this one person. It’s a trickle effect. I don’t allow it to get to my head. It’s part of the business that I chose. I don’t look down on it at all.

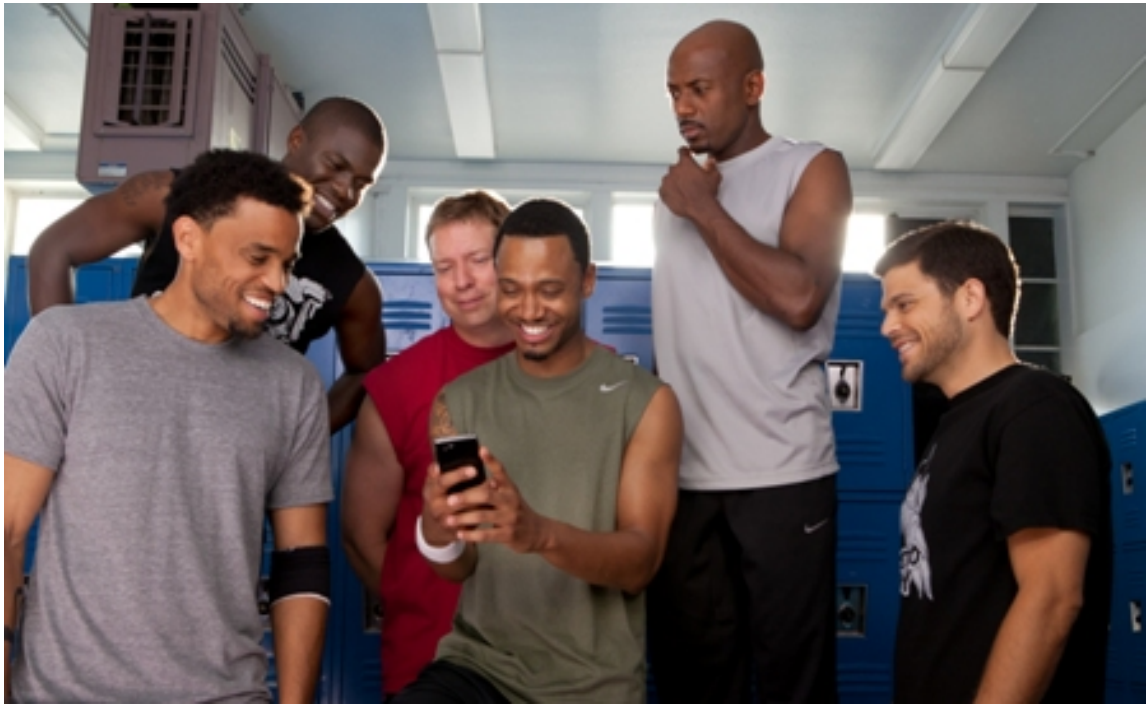
HOLLYWOODCHICAGO.COM: You clearly love your fans. Do you put any value in what critics think? Do you read reviews?

HART: No. That’s their job. This is my job. A critic’s job is to be a critic. The day that you care what critics say is when you don’t understand the business you’re in. In the entertainment business, you got good guys and you got bad guys and sometimes the bad guys are gonna be critics. That’s their job. They don’t hate you personally. Their job is to critique your performance or what it is you’re doing. If they feel it wasn’t up to par, they can voice that opinion. It’s not going to change what you’re doing or what your job is supposed to be. If you read too many of those things, you take the chance of going crazy. I don’t even read ‘em.

HOLLYWOODCHICAGO.COM: But if critics get behind a movie like this and really push it..

HART: It’s amazing. If they say, “It’s the best movie! We’ve never seen anything like this!” It’s amazing.





Think Like a Man
Photo credit: Screen Gems

HOLLYWOODCHICAGO.COM: Are you gonna be back on “Modern Family”?

HART: Yes. My next episode airs May 2nd.

HOLLYWOODCHICAGO.COM: Is there anyone you look at in the industry and go, “That’s the path. That guy has the career path I want to take. That guy did it right.”?

HART: Chris Rock has a very smart career. Chris Rock works consistently. He’s done so many different things — writing, hosting, directing, acting, stand-up. He’s a threat. He’s a made man. Regardless of your personal opinion, his road to get to where he’s gotten was so smart and so well-executed. If I was to follow anyone’s path it would be his path. His decisions were great decisions. He’s a great friend, a great mentor, and a great comedian.

HOLLYWOODCHICAGO.COM: Do you have that moment in your memory banks when you knew this was what you wanted to do?

HART: I did an amateur night in Philadelphia, PA with around 25 people. I was doing what I thought was stand-up at the time and I got a great reception. People were clapping and laughing. They were shaking my hand and saying, “Good job, man.” I had never gotten that. “This is cool. This is where I want to be.”

HOLLYWOODCHICAGO.COM: So it was always about the fans.

HART: Pretty much. Pretty much.

HOLLYWOODCHICAGO.COM: What would you be doing if that hadn’t happened?

HART: I’d probably be knocking old ladies in the head somewhere. I don’t know. I didn’t have another plan. I wish I could say, “I would have been in school, studying.” I have no damn idea, man. Thank GOD this worked out. Knock on some wood.

See how well Kevin Hart’s plan worked out when “Think Like a Man” opens nationwide tomorrow, April 20, 2012.



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Source URL (retrieved on Apr 18 2024 - 10:42pm):
<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/18215/interview-kevin-hart-wants-you-to-think-like-a-man>

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