

Feature: Top 20 Celebrity Photos of 2018, by Joe Arce of HollywoodChicago.com

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on January 10, 2019 - 4:39pm

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CHICAGO – 2018 was a killer year. I lost both my father and my childhood guitar idol/mentor Ed King (of Lynyrd Skynyrd) within four days of each other. Both men played instrumental roles in starting and supporting my chosen photographic journey.

My dad bought me my first studio lighting equipment then fashioned and welded my fifteen foot solid steel background stands by hand in the garage. Ed King took me under his wing and on the road as a personal band photographer for Lynyrd Skynyrd, and then made sure some of my live shots ended up on their 1993 album.

There were a dozen former celebrity subjects/clients also passed this year. Some of them blissful joys to work with – like Burt Reynolds – while a couple others some of my worst nightmares. One Diva in particular ironically couldn't muster up even the smallest sliver of "Respect." Ninety celebrities posed for my lens last year, which was literally half the number of five years ago. It was the first year in memory that I didn't crack over 100. But times are tough and celebrities just aren't taking as much time to plug their wares lately. Who knows, maybe like so many others they are more concerned with fighting for clean air and water, or busy protesting an administration that is literally locking toddlers in cages.

Anyway, as we bid 2018 good riddance hopefully I can distract you with some of my more joyous moments as I present my TOP 20 LIST of Celebrity Portraits of 2018. As per every year, the ranking of these portraits are based on a combination of the star power wattage of the subjects, the artistic results and the difficulty of landing the quarry for those budding smart phone celebrity stalkers who may wish to play along at home. Let's begin!



20. Jerry Mathers and Tony Dow of LEAVE IT TO BEAVER



Tony Dow and Jerry Mathers of 'Leave it to Beaver'

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

In the call to “Make America Great Again,” the illusionary image that so often comes to mind in the President’s base is the utopian landscape straight out of “Leave it to Beaver.” Last year that series childhood star, Jerry Mathers (as the Beaver), turned 70. And Tony Dow, who portrayed his “aw shucks” older teen brother Wally, is now 73 years old... one year older than the current occupant of the White House. Unlike our Commander in Chief, both Mathers and Dow served their country in the military – the former in the Air Force Reserve and the latter in the National Guard. The popular urban legend that Jerry Mathers was killed in Vietnam, while obviously false, served to illustrate how for so many “Leave it to Beaver” represented the idolized safe space of 1950’s suburban middle class values.

From 1957 until June of 1963 – when Wally prepared to go to college – the show was both critically and commercially a cultural juggernaut. It launched a wave of books, lunch boxes, board games and other merchandise. The series has been in syndication from my earliest memories of television. As I photographed them, Mathers seemed very much in character... proudly displaying his characters fictional Mayfield High letterman sweater, complete with Beaver monogram. Fifty-five years after the series finale the now septuagenarian actors smile for the viewer, but there is something slightly disturbing about the portrait. I think it speaks about the role of nostalgia in general, harkening back to the glory days of youth that may have never truly existed, as we would like to remember.

LOCATION/DATE: The Hollywood Show (Rosemont, Illinois), March of 2018.



19. Bob Mackie, Legendary Fashion Designer



Fashion Design Icon Bob Mackie

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

It's been often said that one of the keys to success is dressing the part, and never has that been truer than in the case of Bob Mackie. His nicknames include the "Sultan of Sequins" and the "Rajah of Rhinestones"... Mackie has won nine Emmys and been nominated for three Oscars for his costume designs. And notable, as the show designer for The Carol Burnett show for 11 years, he designed the famous "Went With the Wind" curtain rod dress that now hangs in the Smithsonian Institute.

His second most legendary work was Cher's 1986 Academy Award dress with the towering showgirl style headdress... that had audience member's jaws dropping. As the dresser of Divas like Cher, Diana Ross, Whitney Houston, RuPaul and others – when a concert tour or Vegas show needs sparkle – Bob Mackie is the guy they call. He once said that a woman who wears his clothes is not afraid to be noticed, and it wasn't long until Mackie himself was getting almost equal billing. In 1981, he appeared on two separate episodes of The Love Boat, and in 2002 was inducted into the Television Hall of Fame. Naturally, Mackie designed all the costumes for the Broadway bound "The Cher Show" when it premiered here in Chicago. Not only was he willing to pose for me, but that shoot would help me land the biggest "get" of the year for me the following week. Once again, Bob Mackie was doing what he does best... helping another artist sparkle.

LOCATION/DATE: The Oriental Theatre, Chicago, June of 2018.

★ 18. ABC-TV Chief Meteorologist Ginger Zee

Meteorologist Ginger Zee

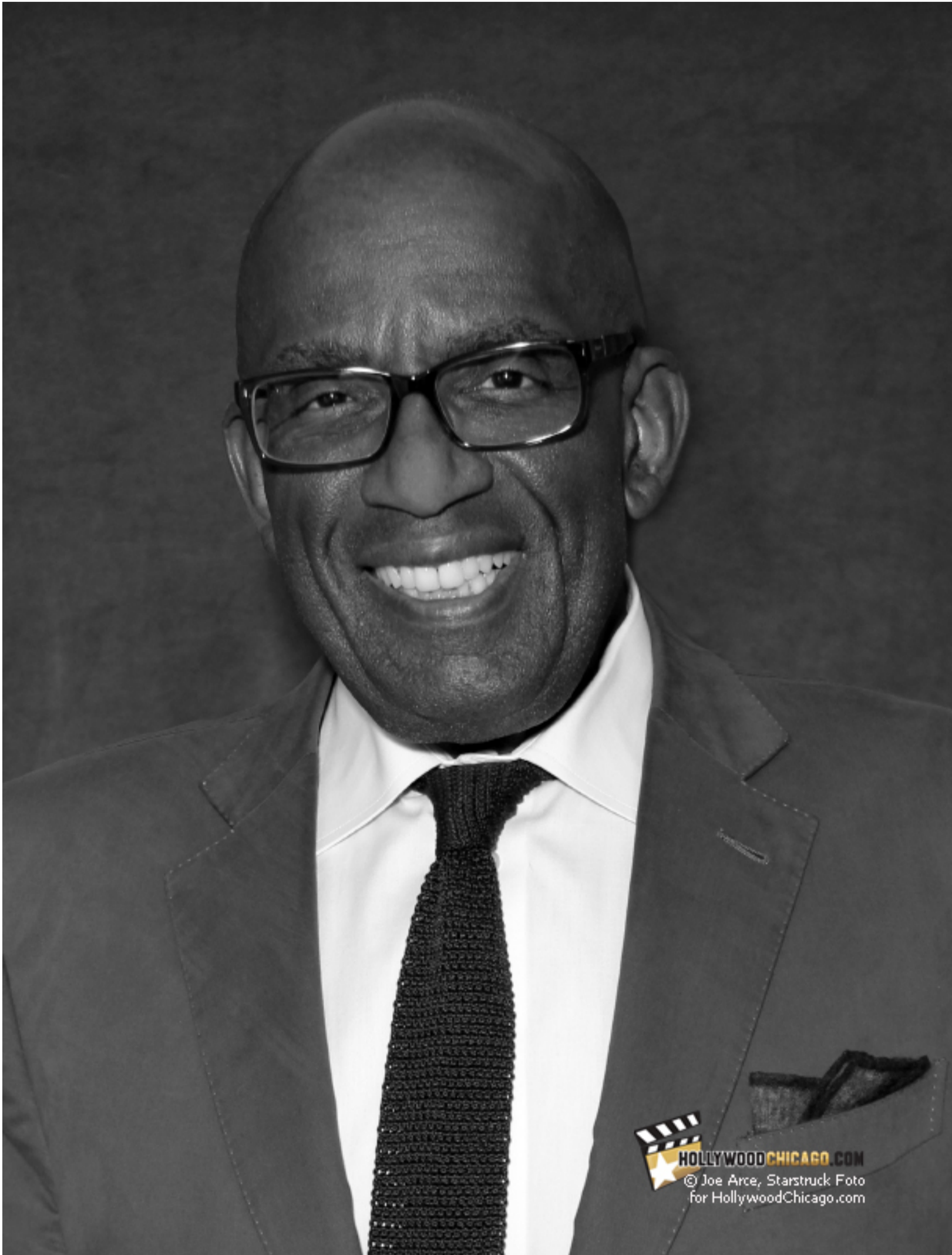
Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

Ginger Zee is no stranger to “dark clouds,” and who would have ever guessed? She first appeared on my radar, bright and warm, as the local NBC5 weather forecaster.... even then I contemplated reaching out and offering to do her head shots, as I had done for a couple other local news anchors. Before that even happened she was off to the big leagues as the meteorologist for Good Morning America, and in 2013 she then landed the coveted spot as Chief Meteorologist for ABC News. But what viewers didn’t see in the glare of the spotlight was her long battle with clinical depression, which included a youthful bout with anorexia. According to her 2017 memoir “Natural Disaster: I Cover Them, I Am One,” before she left for New York her condition got so bad that she voluntarily checked herself into an inpatient mental health treatment facility, to finally get the help she needed.

Like her weather coverage Ginger Zee chased the storm and learned how to ride it out both on screen, and more importantly in her personal life. “The clouds don’t last forever,” she related to [HollywoodChicago.com in an interview](#). [34] “That’s not how the atmosphere or life works.” Not only did those clouds lift but also she learned how to dance in that new light, placing third as a celebrity contestant on “Dancing With the Stars.” Now married with two children, she harnessed her creative whirlwind last year to write a semi-autobiographical tale about a young girl who has an affinity for extreme weather events. The middle school novel “Chasing Helicity” encourages young girls to embrace their love of science, and fearlessly ride out the inevitable storms that life may bring. And just as predicted, Ginger Zee bestowed a portrait as scorching as an August day.

LOCATION/DATE: Anderson’s Bookshop Event at North Central College (Naperville, Illinois), August of 2018.

★ 17. Al Roker of NBC-TV's TODAY



Al Roker of 'Today'

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

This year marked Al Roker's 40th year working for NBC-TV. The seemingly always sunny meteorologist – originally from Queens in New York City – got his TV start at the NBC Cleveland affiliate WKYC in 1978. Joining The "Today" show in 1996, Roker's infectious humor, humanity and charm easily won over viewers, even as his duties expanded far beyond prognosticating the weather. As the jovial "Today" co-host he would rack up 13 Emmy awards and in 2014 set a Guinness World Record for longest uninterrupted live weather reporting (34 hours). In addition, he was soon appearing as himself in numerous acting jobs, cooking shows and as the annual host of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

As an author, Al Roker has penned both fiction and non-fiction. His "Morning Show Murders" was made into a Hallmark movie. In "Never Going Back: Winning the Weight Loss Battle for Good," he documented his own personal struggles with weight loss and the complications of his 2002 gastric bypass surgery. I photographed Al to help promote his latest book "Ruthless Tide: The Heroes and Villains of the Johnstown Flood," but what flooded my lens was that familiar radiant smile that had brought a warm front into the lives of so many. "Happy Al-iversary"

trended on Twitter for December 14th, 2018, his 40th year on NBC, and among a torrent of well wishers were celebrities like Oprah, and everyday loyal viewers alike.

LOCATION/DATE: Anderson's Bookshop (Downers Grove, Illinois), May of 2018.



16. Nichelle Nichols



Live Long and Prosper: Nichelle Nichols

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

Nichelle Nichols has always been a pioneer. As Lieutenant Uhura on the original 1960s "Star Trek," she was the first African American on television that had an equal role in an ensemble crew... she was viewed and treated as an equal aboard that fictional starship, during the height of the Civil Rights movement. When she contemplated leaving the show to pursue other roles, no less than Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. convinced her otherwise. He reminded her of the historical significance of being viewed by millions as an officer, and fourth in command, in that vision of the future. Besides that, he confessed it was his and his family's favorite show and they all watched it together. "Star Trek" creator Gene Roddenberry was making a bold new statement, not only about race relations, but a woman's rightful place in the job industry as well.

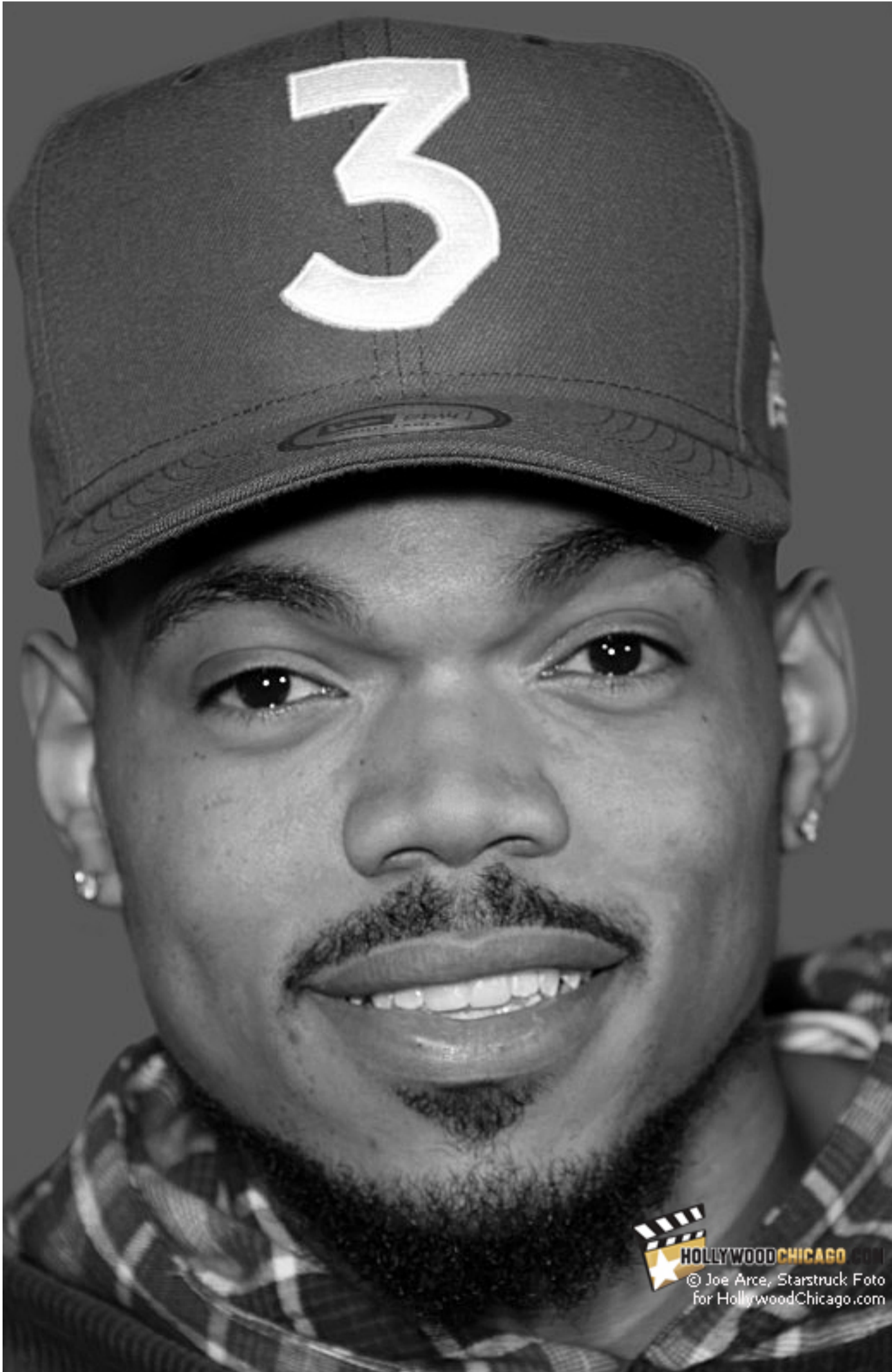
Last year also marked the 50th anniversary of U.S. TV's first interracial kiss, which Nichols participated in. In the 1968 Star Trek episode "Plato's Stepchildren," William Shatner's Captain Kirk and Nichol's Uhura lock lips in an onscreen kiss. This was only one year after the Supreme Court overturned the ban on interracial marriage in the case of Loving vs. Virginia. That episode generated the largest amount of mail the show ever received, both positive and negative.

Nichols would reprise the Uhura character in six Star Trek films and the animated series. Her appeal on the show also resulted in her being offered a job as the recruitment face of NASA... focusing on women and minorities. One of those recruits, Astronaut Mae Jemison, became the first African American woman in space, and she credited Uhura as her childhood hero. At age 86, Nichelle Nichols is still fighting for her rights and those of others. Recently, she was even battling in court against her son for the right to continue working despite a medical diagnosis of dementia. She claims that independence to earn her own way is essential to her pursuit of happiness to live long and prosper. Indeed!

LOCATION/DATE: Wizard World Comic Con, Rosemont (Illinois), August of 2018.



15. Chance the Rapper



Chance the Rapper

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

Since he was promoting a film called “Slice,” all we are saying is give Chance a piece.

Chancellor Jonathan Bennett – AKA Chance the Rapper – was once suspended from Chicago’s Jones College Prep in 2011, and used the length of that suspension as the title for his first mixtape, “10 Days.” It was the first step of a journey that would eventually propel him to fame. “Acid Rap” followed in 2013, which would get him booked into Lollapalooza. By 2016, he had appeared on “Saturday Night Live,” and was collaborating with Kanye West. The following year, he was performing on the Grammys and winning three for himself. His appearance at 2017 Lollapalooza broke the festival’s attendance record for any act.

His father, Ken Williams Bennett (who worked as an aid to former Chicago Mayor Harold Washington and then Senator Barack Obama), had installed in Chance a strong sense of community responsibility as he was growing up. He proved to be the real deal, and a political force to be reckoned with, when he famously cut a check for a million dollars to support the Chicago Public School system, and his endorsement of Chicago mayoral candidate Amara Enyia made headline news.

While many rappers have become famous for paying lip service to fighting the power, Chance has put his money where his mouth is. His progressive activism and charity work, both in combating gun violence and supporting “My Brothers Keeper” (an urban mentoring program), is almost tireless. I photographed him at the September premiere of “Slice,” his first feature film debut. His role was that of a werewolf pizza deliveryman, and he gave me one howling good portrait the night of the premiere.

LOCATION/DATE: Arclight Cinemas Red Carpet, Chicago, September of 2018.



14. Lecy Goranson, ‘Becky’ on THE CONNORS



Alicia 'Lecy' Goranson of 'The Connors'

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

Roseanne Connor may be dead and gone, but her onscreen daughter Becky – portrayed by Alicia “Lecy” Goranson of Evanston, Illinois – is carrying on with the rosy glow of a new life. After five seasons in the original run of “Roseanne” ... she famously rotated in and out of the Becky role (with actress Sarah Chalke) to attend college at Vassar... her mother (an Evanston teacher) had instilled in her daughter the importance of higher education. When I photographed the sitcom star the night before the rebooted “Roseanne” premiere, she was basking in the light of new possibilities. She was at home being honored by the Chicago International Television Festival along with Roseanne writer and executive producer Bruce Helford, who is also a native Chicagoan.

In the updated series, Roseanne Conner was a fervent Trump supporter, which was exactly like the real Roseanne off camera. This became a plot line as Roseanne’s character clashed with other family members, most notably her sister Jackie (Laurie Metcalf), who is a liberal democrat. On May 29th, Roseanne mirrored the man she so admired, and tweeted out a horribly racist attack against Valerie Jarrett (President Obama’s former African American senior advisor). It was the tweet heard around the world. As soon as Goranson saw it, she immediately texted her series co-star Sara Gilbert, “We’re Screwed.” The response was almost immediate... ABC-TV pulled the plug on the show. Roseanne had single handedly flat lined her hit show, got dropped by her management representation and most likely permanently damaged her future ability to work in the industry.

A rebooted series concept, "The Connors." returned five months later with Roseanne's character killed off with an opioid overdose, and Lecy Goranson has once again returned to the role she originated. Her character Becky is now pregnant on "The Connors," and next season it will be determined if she decides to keep the new potential family member. It's been a helluva roller coaster ride lately for Lecy Goranson, but out with the old and in with the new. Like everything else families evolve, even on sitcoms.

LOCATION/DATE: Chicago International Television Festival Red Carpet, March of 2018.



13. Tiffani Thiessen of DINNER AT TIFFANI'S



Tiffani Thiessen, Still Cooking

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

She put the "Pow" in Kelly Kapowski, and while Zack Morris may have – in retrospect – may indeed had been trash, Tiffani Thiessen still continues serving up something scrumptious for the camera. From Miss Junior America to then the Covergirl Magazine's Model of the Year, in the same year (1989) that "Saved by the Bell" premiered, Thiessen became the all-American fantasy girl for a whole generation of Saturday morning viewers. The show ran four years, plus an additional season of the college years, and produced two prime time movies... one film set in Hawaii during summer break and the infamous Vegas Wedding film where she was placed in permanent detention, shackled in unholy

matrimony as Mrs. Zack Morris.

When that class was finally dismissed, Thiessen would graduate to racier fare as a vixen on “Beverly Hills 90210.” From there she would continue working steadily in the series “Fastlane” and “White Collar” between the occasional big screen roles. In 2015 she would move to The Cooking Channel, preparing meals for her celebrity friends in “Dinner at Tiffani’s.” Naturally a companion cookbook, “Pull Up a Chair,” was released. I would have happily pulled up a bed of nails to finally photograph her, and in October I finally got the chance. From Bayside High to Netflix’s “Alexa and Kate” (as a hot mom), Tiffani Thiessen’s career continues to cook quite deliciously.

LOCATION/DATE: Anderson’s Bookshop (Naperville, Illinois), October of 2018.



12. Terrence Howard



Terrence Howard of ‘Empire’

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

Terrence Howard just may be a genius, and he’d no doubt be the first to say it to your face. Like many brilliant artists, he has been described as temperamental, eccentric and often times volatile... both onscreen and off. From his first role portraying Jackie Jackson in the ABC

mini-series "The Jacksons," to his current blockbuster starring role on "Empire," Howard has always been an actor whose every performance instantly commands your attention. Whether he is rapping on an Oscar winning theme song, remarrying two of his three ex-wives or single handedly rewriting the laws of mathematics, Howard is like a pit bull that just doesn't let go. Maybe it's that very commitment to hammering home his personal truth that makes him so exceptional at his craft.

The actor is often no picnic to work with or photograph. He almost always insists on the inclusion of his significant other at red carpet photo ops or during public appearances. Getting a good solo shot is now no easy task and has become something of a bragging right for a photographer. With a little strategic positioning and just the right lens, I managed to beat the odds and capture the shot... Pit Bull meets Bloodhound.

LOCATION/DATE: Chicago International Film Festival Event Red Carpet, July of 2018.



11. Sean Hayes of WILL & GRACE



Sean Hayes of 'Will & Grace'

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

Sean Hayes (A Poem) Jack is back through 20-19
'Will & Grace' is the place
Where McFarland is Queen
Of comedy ratings at NBC
Still perfect casting chemistry.

Yup, Sean Hayes wrote a fairy tale
Just in time for Christmas
So it couldn't fail
A Plum little project with his husband Scott
So he posed for my lens... This is what I got.

LOCATION/DATE: Anderson's Bookshop, November of 2018.



10. Megan Mullally (WILL & GRACE) and Nick Offerman (PARKS AND RECREATION)



Nick Offerman and Megan Mullally

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

It's been said every pot has a lid – and there is somebody for everyone – but to learn that “Karen Walker” and “Ron Swanson” just may have written “The Greatest Love Story Ever Told” only proves that fact may indeed be stranger than fiction. Love is a many splendored thing and this portrait of the coo-some twosome, just before their sold out Chicago Theater show, had many of their fans agreeing.

LOCATION/DATE: MICHIGAN AVE Magazine Event, Chicago, October of 2018.



9. Busy Philipps of BUSY TONIGHT



Busy Philipps of 'Busy Tonight'

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

Busy Philipps has been one of my favorite actresses... since her first role as Kim Kelly on my favorite comedic series, “Freaks and Geeks.” As a member of that fictional graduating class of 1981, I found her portrayal both brilliant and dead-on accurate. I knew, because hell, I dated almost exclusively slight variations of that character all through high school. So naturally I've been dying to photograph the actress who portrayed so many of those bittersweet familiar memories on television.

Busy certainly lived up to her name in 2018. Famous for roles just as memorable in hit shows (“Dawson’s Creek,” “ER” and “Cougar Town”), she recently became the breakout media star and social influencer on Instagram Stories media platform. It was on that platform – following Dr. Christine Blasey Ford’s Supreme Court confirmation testimony in the Senate against Brett Kavanaugh – that Phillips publicly revealed her own rape at age 14 for the first time. In her best selling 2018 memoir “This Will Only Hurt a Little,” she further revealed how she has been physically assaulted on set by fellow “Freaks and Geeks’ cast member James Franco (her love interest on the show). That began yet another online media firestorm ensued.

I finally got Busy in a Green Room shoot... to celebrate both her book and the soon-to-be-launched talk show “Busy Tonight” (produced by Tina Fey), which premiered on October 28th. The golden-haired actress showed up early, warm and definitely camera ready. Within two minutes she had performed her superpower, and I was mesmerized under her spell. Like so many others I was completely convinced that yes, “Kim Kelly was indeed my friend.”

LOCATION/DATE: Anderson’s Bookshop North Central College (Naperville, Illinois) Event, October of 2018.

 **8. Amandla Stenberg of THE HATE U GIVE**



Amandla Stenberg of ‘The Hate U Give’

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

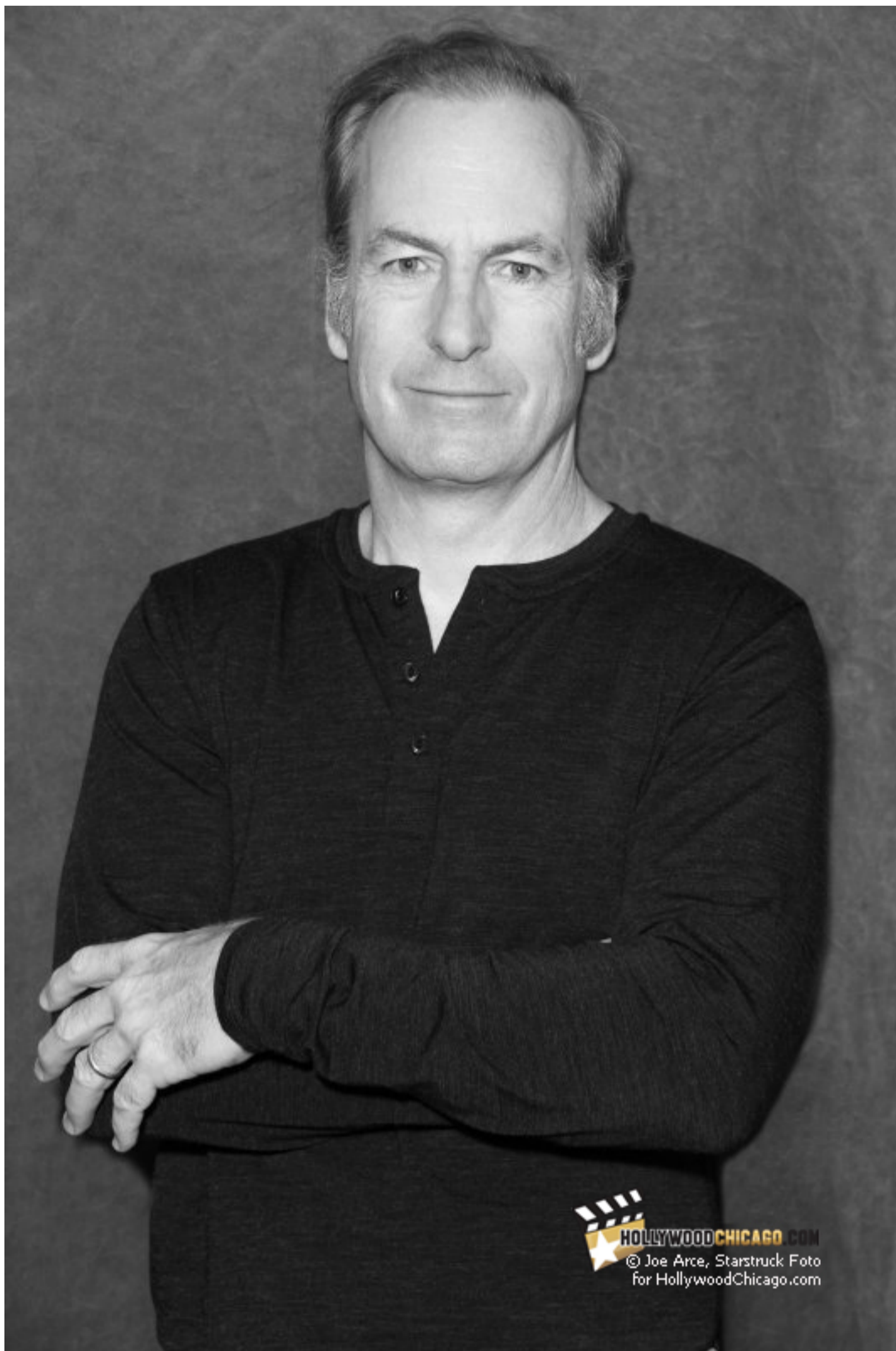
At only 20 years of age, Amandla Stenberg is already being called one of the most influential voices of her generation. The actress – whose big break came in playing Rue opposite Jennifer Lawrence in 2012’s “The Hunger Games” – has developed quite a taste for empowering political and social activism. Her 2015 video “Don’t Cash Crop My Cornrows,” which was aimed at cultural appropriation, went viral and earned her almost two million followers on Instagram. Her later subjects... embracing intersectional feminism and queer identity... got her named “Feminist of the Year 2015” by the Ms. Foundation. TIME Magazine named her one of the most influential teens in 2015 and 2016, and placed her on its cover in October of 2018.

In addition to acting, Stenberg co-authored the graphic novel series “Niobe: She is Life.” It’s the first comic series to feature a black woman – who is half elf and half human princess – and it’s also illustrated by a black female artist. As the violinist member of the folk rock duo “Honeywater,” she released an EP in 2013 and is currently writing songs for another. In her latest film, “The Hate U Give,” Amandla Stenberg gave an Oscar worthy performance, and many critics have argued her role should be front and center for a nomination. No less than Oprah herself named Stenberg one of her “Visionaries and Future Leaders” of 2018. I photographed this voice of her generation at the Chicago International Film festival premiere where “The Hate U Give” lead star delivered nothing but sweet love to my camera.

LOCATION/DATE: Chicago International Film Festival Red Carpet, October of 2018.



7. Bob Odenkirk of BETTER CALL SAUL



Bob Odenkirk of 'Better Call Saul'

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

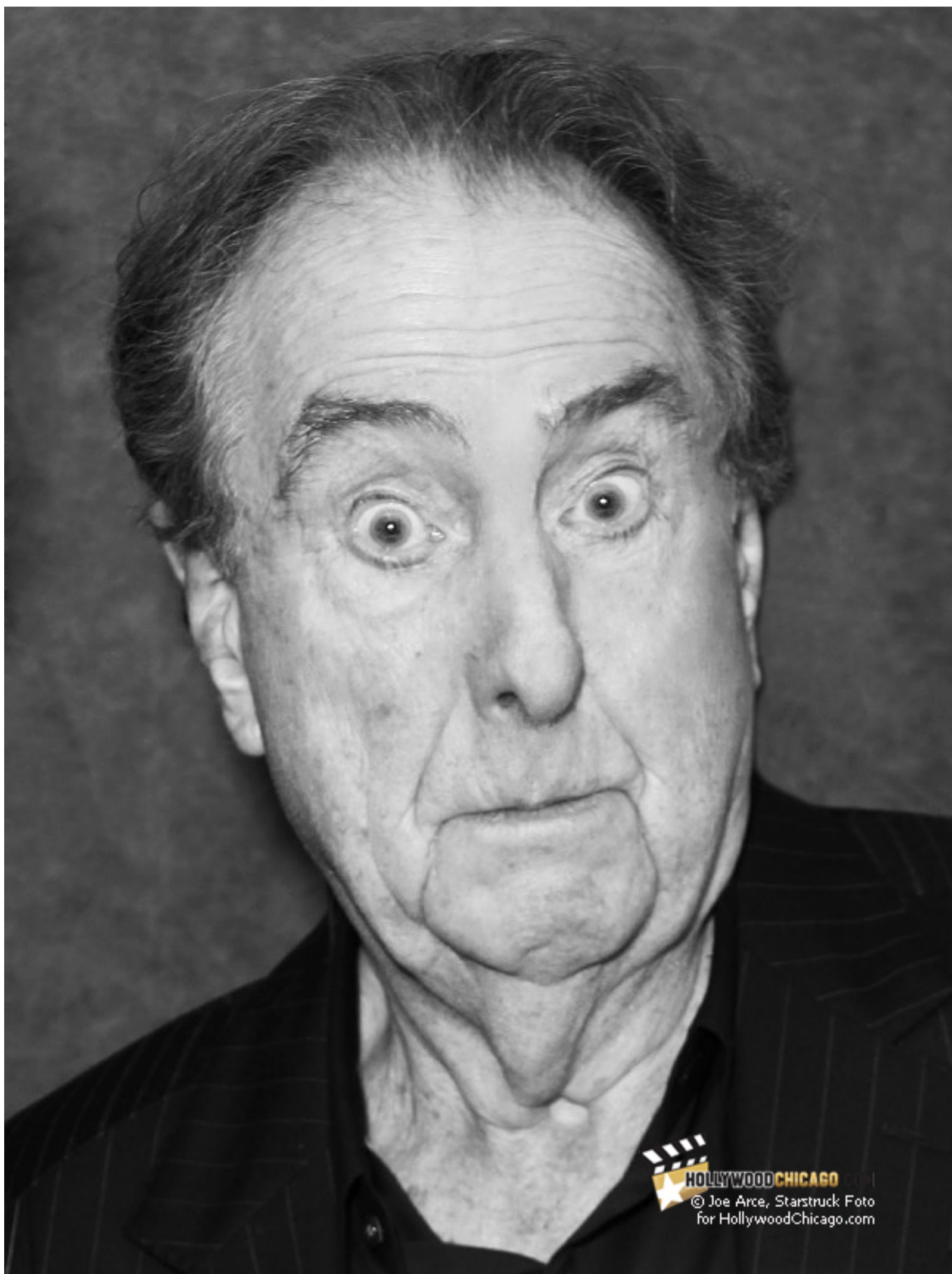
In 2014, I named Bob Odenkirk the “one to watch” for 2015. Last year, he again made my “Top 25 Celebrity Portraits” list. For 2018, Naperville’s (Illinois) favorite son returns to this list like a seasoned habitual offender. As “Better Call Saul” completes its fourth critically-acclaimed season, Odenkirk’s star only continues to rise... it honestly couldn’t happen to a nicer guy.

Fans of the show in 2018 anxiously awaited his character’s metamorphosis from Slippin’ Jimmy McGill to Albuquerque’s morally bankrupt barrister. Yet my encounter with Bob behind the scenes further confirmed – that unlike his character – Odenkirk just might be the most decent, unaffected and down to earth celeb in Hollywood.

He was hosting and moderating a Q&A event with Monty Pythoner Eric Idle at North Central College, and I thought, “I’ll be damned,” because he was pitching in to help book store and venue employees move and set up backstage tables before Idle’s (his idol) arrival. Sure, posing for a selfie or two backstage is one thing, but you just don’t expect the guy sharing scenes with Meryl Streep offering to help volunteers rearrange furniture, but Odenkirk is obviously the guy who can do it all. He is set to appear in the film adaptation of “Little Women” in 2019. Yes, you read that correctly...“Little Women.” I guess as his character recently sang, “The Winner Takes It All” and for Bob Odenkirk “It’s All Good Man!”

LOCATION/DATE: Anderson's Bookshop North Central College (Naperville, Illinois) Event, October of 2018.

 **6. Eric Idle**



Eric Idle of 'Monty Python's Flying Circus'

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

By seventh grade I no longer gave a rat's ass about sports stars. My pantheon of heroes consisted primarily of Rock-and-Roll guitar gods and counter-culture jesters like Cheech & Chong. But then came another British Invasion. The year was 1975 and the outlet was Chicago's Channel 11, the PBS station. Watching "Monty Python's Flying Circus" for the first time was akin to hearing Eddie Van Halen just three years later. There was no greater gift for a 12-year-old budding juvenile delinquent. My buddies and I tuned in religiously every Sunday night and then rehashed the skits ad nauseam every chance we got. We bought their comedy albums, went to their film "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" at midnight showings, and spent many a wasted afternoon silly walking through busy supermarkets.

John Cleese and Eric Idle were my two favorite Pythoners, especially after watching the latter's brilliant 1978 Beatles mock-umentary "The Rutles: All You Need is Cash." I photographed John Cleese in 2014, and he made my top ten celebrity portrait list for that year. In 2018, I got to focus on the far more chipper Eric Idle before his sold out evening of conversation at North Central College. He was celebrating his best

selling sorta-biography “Always Look On the Bright Side of Life.” As I raised my lens backstage, he delivered those classic lines. “Oh photographs, he said knowingly, Nudge Nudge, Snap Snap Snap, Grin Grin, Wink Wink, Say No more Squire!” Nope, It doesn’t get any brighter that that!

LOCATION/DATE: Anderson’s Bookshop North Central College (Naperville, Illinois) Event, October of 2018.



5. Carey Mulligan



Carey Mulligan of ‘Wildlife’

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

Since her Oscar nominated role in “An Education,” it’s been British actress Carey Mulligan that has been schooling her rivals by consistently burning up both the stage and screen. In 2018, she gave another scorching performance in “Wildlife,” as a woman left to simmer along with her son while her husband leaves them to go off fighting fires. Mulligan delivered a painstaking performance as a woman raging out of control, which mirrored the dangerous conflagrations burning down the homes that her husband had left to save. The actress has always preferred the dark and often tortured roles, and selects them as if she is agonizing over if she can stomach one of her rivals possibly playing it better. But few ever could, as she has become comfortable embracing the uncomfortable, and in that case just may be the best actress of her generation.

I photographed her on the "Wildlife" Red Carpet, as she literally came straight from the airport after a delayed and harrowing redeye flight from London, that had lasted 12 hours. She immediately apologized for her tardiness, and stepped on her mark, but after two photo flashes asked if we could stop so that she could apply eye drops to her burning eyes, and take some aspirin to relieve her splitting headache. She excused herself from the Red Carpet, her eyes welling with tears, but she promised to return. Her handlers escorted her to the nearby Green Room lounge so she could regroup. In her absence, I remembered that the notoriously shy and media averse actress had once described standing in front of a photographer as a personal nightmare, so I repositioned myself about six feet off her mark. When she returned about ten minutes later for the second attempt, I immediately greeted her with "Better now?" As she smiled with her eyes in response, "click-boom" I got the shot I wanted, even before she could even return to her mark. Sometimes the photographer's role is to help take the subject out of their tortured minds, if only for the necessary moments, and sometimes a "Mulligan" becomes a game winning shot.

LOCATION/DATE: Chicago International Film Festival Red Carpet, October of 2018.



4. Ethan Hawke



Ethan Hawke

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

Ethan Hawke has often been referred to as a modern renaissance man. He wears many hats, including actor, screenwriter, best selling novelist, director and musician... he also cleans up pretty nicely for the camera. Hawke was honored with the "Gene Siskel Film Center Renaissance Award 2018" for career achievement, and it was there I photographed him for the third time. And you know what they say...

He was named Best Actor by the Chicago Film Critics Association and others for his performance as Ernst Toller – a reverend struggling with his own faith in the film "First Reformed" – and Hawke just might earn his fifth Oscar nomination. He also directed last years "Blaze" the biography of the late country singer Blaze Foley. Win or lose, Ethan Hawke has long made us believers, and to quote one of my girlfriends... "This close up portrait is like a gift from baby Jesus." Hallelujah!

LOCATION/DATE: Gene Siskel Film Center Renaissance Award Red Carpet, Chicago, June of 2018.



3. Viola Davis



Viola Davis

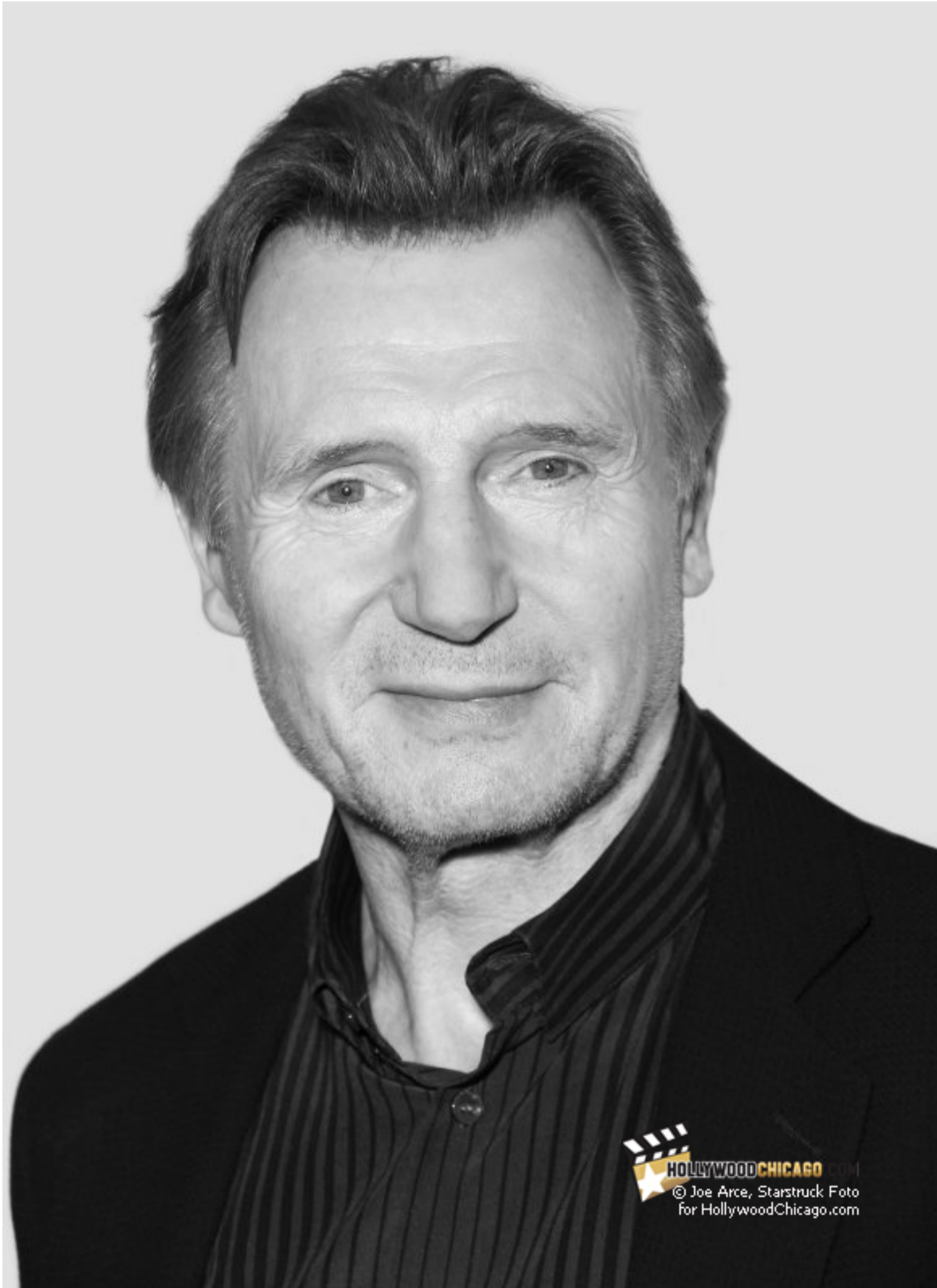
Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

When Viola Davis' picture graces the cover of TIME magazine, and Meryl Streep writes in the article inside that Davis has already carved her face into the 21st Century actor's Mount Rushmore, chances are Davis chose her career wisely. Viola Davis is one of the rare artists that have won the triple crown of acting with the Oscar, Emmy and not one but two Tony Awards.

Her director for the 2018 film "Widows," Steve McQueen (himself an Oscar-winner for "12 Years a Slave"), compares Davis' on-screen talent with such Hollywood legends as Marlon Brando and another Davis, Bette Davis. In the opening scenes of "Widows" not only has that other Davis stolen the heart of her onscreen husband (Liam Neeson), but in real life – taking a page from Liam's actor playbook – she is indeed getting away with murder by killing it onscreen and taking all the loot, as she portrays a latter day and unconventional action hero. Also, her speech at the 2018 January Woman's March echoed her character in "Widows," as it not only spoke, but actualized, her truth to power. Amazon Studios, in late November, signed an ongoing deal with Davis's JeVee Production Company. Look for her series "Troupe Zero" in 2019, as she continues to roar and to "take" what she has so rightfully earned.

LOCATION/DATE: Chicago International Film Festival Red Carpet, October of 2018.

 **2. Liam Neeson**



Liam Neeson

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

The year 2018 marked the 25th anniversary of “Schindler’s List,” which featured actor Liam Neeson. The Oscar winning Best Picture of 1993 (one of seven Oscars it won) is not only considered Steven Spielberg’s masterpiece, but one of the most historically significant films of all time. Many critics argue that the film has risen beyond just the scope of cinema... as it has long become required viewing in many high school history classes. Yet Liam Neeson, in another crime against humanity, lost the Best Actor Oscar that year to Tom Hanks in “Philadelphia.”

But Neeson has always been an actor possessing... “a particular set of skills, skills he’s acquired over a very long career.” Following the tragic death of his wife Natasha Richardson in 2009, Neeson managed his grief by working as much as possible, taking on roles he might have said no to previously. The success of the film “Taken,” and the roles that followed based on its success, transformed his onscreen image from a professional art house brooder to Hollywood’s most reluctant action hero. Neeson classed up the genre with legitimate acting chops, one throat punch at a time.

He’s now eligible for AARP, but this Order of the British Empire (OBE) medal recipient and fighting Irishman shows no sign of slowing down. Long on MY want-to-photograph list, I managed to capture the six-foot-four cinematic badass with his “Irish eyes a smilin’” at the Chicago International Film Festival premiere of “Widows”... a film where his character uncharacteristically bites the dust. His next body count revenge romp, “Cold Pursuit” opens next month on February 8th. Coming in ranked at number two, this kick ass portrait was something our readers were quite TAKEN with.

LOCATION/DATE: Chicago International Film Festival Red Carpet, October of 2018.



1. Carol Burnett



TV Icon Carol Burnett

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

If Carol Burnett isn't the very definition of what a legend is made of I don't know what is... in fact, four days ago on January 6th, the 85-year-old Queen of Comedy was awarded The Golden Globes inaugural "Carol Burnett Award" the new top honor for career achievement in television. She already is the recipient of five Golden Globes, seven Emmys, a Tony Award, a Grammy, a SAG Lifetime Achievement, a Kennedy Center Honor and The Mark Twain Prize for American Humor. Burnett, as the first women host of a skit variety show (one that won 23 Emmys in its run), is at the point in her career when the entertainment industry is forced to create new honorary awards just to bestow upon her.

Unbeknownst to even Burnett, she has also obtained the rare honor of being the only celebrity my mother seemed genuinely interested in... enough to press me for the details about my experience photographing her. Then I remembered as a kid "The Carol Burnett Show" was the only show she cared enough about to watch and truly enjoy.

My experience photographing the legend consisted of two clicks of the shutter backstage before her show at the Chicago Theatre. It took literally the time required as a successful ear tug, which I promised myself I wouldn't ask her to do. Photographing her longtime partner-in-crime and iconic costume designer Bob Mackie just the week prior (for "The Cher Show") was no doubt instrumental in winning her approval... she attended his final dress rehearsal of that show, which was just down the street, the very next night. Sometimes the key to a

great photo is less about technical skill and more about successful social networking. When the art of photography is built on flashes and shutter speeds of 1/60th of a second or less, I was just so glad we had this time together. That's all it takes for a photo to last forever, along with the memory.

LOCATION/DATE: The Chicago Theatre, June of 2018.



The One That Got Away... Cher

In September of 2017, when it was announced that "The Cher Show" was going to premiere in Chicago the following summer, and I was giddier than any straight guy should probably be. I had photographed her once before in 1998 and was hopeful and quick to "Believe" that if I could get to the show costume designer Bob Mackie first, I might have another shot. Eight months later I would photograph both Mackie and the three actresses playing Cher but the "Dark Lady" was too busy filming "Momma Mia: Here We Go Again" to make the show's press day. Mackie did help pave the way to my years biggest photo with his other BFF, Carol Burnett, but I had my heart set on pulling off a major photographic hat trick.

Naturally Cher flew in "Just like Jesse James" completely unannounced and under the radar. She attended the Sunday afternoon matinee during the Gay Pride weekend – when her primary distracted fan base wasn't looking – and not a publicist was working. Seated in the third row, she was escorted in and out from backstage. And to pour salt into my wound, she would walk the Red Carpet at the Los Angeles premiere instead, patiently posing for every camera. My luck sadly didn't prove "Strong Enough" and I was forced to hum Meatloaf's "Two Out of Three Ain't Bad" at the end of 2018 instead of a victorious "I Got You Babe." Alas... "If I Could Only Turn Back Time," but a New Year has arrived and "Still The Beat Goes On."

RIP to this list of the following celebrity subjects, who I had previous worked with, and that we sadly lost in 2018 (Click the highlighted link for the photo and article where applicable), **Barbara Bush**, [Bill "I Dream of Jeannie" Daily](#) [35], [Steve "Friday the 13th Part 2" Dash](#) [36], Aretha Franklin, [Margot Kidder](#) [37], [Stan Lee](#) [38], **John Mahoney**, [Penny Marshall](#) [39], **Senator John McCain**, [Burt Reynolds](#) [40], [Verne Troyer](#) [41], [Scott "The Walking Dead" Wilson](#) [42] and my mentor **Ed King of Lynyrd Skynyrd**.

To directly access the portraits of photographer Joe Arce, of Starstruck Foto and HollywoodChicago.com, [click here](#). [16]

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