



TJ HOLMES MAN OF SUBSTANCE & STYLE

On camera, CNN weekend anchor TJ Holmes looks every bit the part of a national television anchor. He is well-dressed, well-read, well-coiffed and well-spoken. Off camera, he is all of the above and a certified southern gentleman—a rarity among men under a certain age.

INTERVIEW BY ALICIA EDWARDS

*a*t 32, he has a delightful blend of confidence, youthfulness, ambition and a biting sense of humor.

The West Memphis, Arkansas native, which he points out is across the Mississippi River, is quick to tell anyone that he is not into fashion but anyone with a trained eye can tell that his look, albeit as casual as it can at times, is very important to him. But more importantly than style to TJ is his increasing interest in Third World countries and his desire to bring their plight and success to the international forefront.

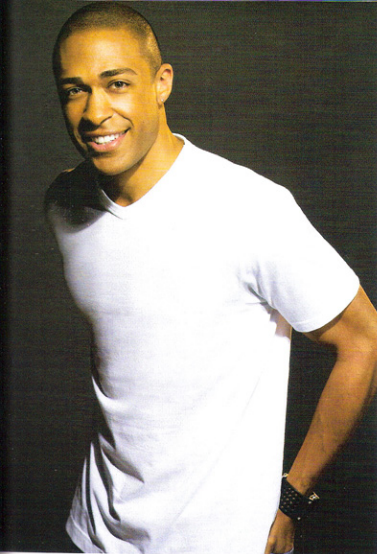
KOUTURE: So thanks for meeting with me today.

TJ: You are welcome, what are we here to discuss?

KOUTURE: You of course! So who is your favorite designer and on and off camera?

TJ: (After little prodding from yours truly) Well...I do like Kenneth Cole and suits by Calvin Klein. I do not have to wear them but I like the way they fit me.

KOUTURE: Both Kenneth Cole and Calvin Klein have an urban sensibility to them and do well suit your slender build. But you are not off the hook just yet...what do you like to wear off camera? >>



« TJ: I love jeans. I am wearing a pair by Lucky now. I am a T-shirt and jeans kind of guy. I even brave the cologne and loud music to shop at Abercrombie and Fitch. I also like American Eagle. Living in California, I developed a fondness for sunglasses. My favorite pair right now by Oliver Peoples.

KOUTURE: You seem into watches as well. You have been fiddling with the one you have on.

TJ: (Chuckling), Yes, I actually have at least 20 watches. Other than cufflinks, it is the only piece of jewelry that I wear.

KOUTURE: We all have our vices. What advice would you give to young men that are reluctant to adopt corporate or at least corporate casual dress codes?

TJ: It is always important to dress appropriately for every situation and to carry yourself well whether you are wearing flip flops or a tuxedo. The more young men see everyday examples of this the more, the lessons will sink in.

KOUTURE: Well said...what is your stand on how social media and Internet is changing journalism?

TJ: Our fundamental job as journalists has not changed. We are writers and storytellers first. I do interact with

my audience via Facebook and Twitter and it is a good way to share information. With the recent elections in Iran, we as media were virtually shut out and Twitter was very helpful in gauging how the people inside the country were reacting to election process. As media though, we are still obligated to get the facts right and show all sides of the story.

KOUTURE: You have been reported to have done some volunteer work overseas. How did you get involved?

TJ: For my 30th birthday, I wanted to celebrate by doing something completely different. So I connected with an organization called Cross Cultural Solutions. I visited a »

« very poor and isolated community in rural Costa Rica. The people had virtually nothing in terms of material possessions but were so kind and gracious. I spent a week mentoring their students and helping them build a recycling center. It was a life changing experience.

KOUTURE: You are passionate about Africa. How did your interest with that continent start?

TJ: As people of color, we have a natural curiosity of Africa and we really don't learn much African history in school or growing up. Last year I went to Tanzania last year with a non profit for a week. The country was so beautiful and rich with history. The experience has made me approach reporting about Africa differently. I push harder to be on stories that cover underexposed regions and cover them more objectively.

KOUTURE: Speaking of pushing, I found through my research that you are newly engaged Congratulations!! When is the big day?

TJ: Thanks so much, yes that rumor is actually true. I could just show up with a wedding band any day now.

KOUTURE: So you will wear one?

TJ: Of course, why not?

KOUTURE: So when is the big day?

TJ: Nice try!!

Soon to be married, T.J. Holmes co-anchors weekend morning edition of CNN Newsroom with Betty Nguyen. Holmes joined the network in October 2006. Holmes graduated from the University of Arkansas with a bachelor's degree in broadcast journalism where he now serves on the Chancellor's Board of Advisors. Follow T.J. Holmes on Twitter: tjholmesCNN ■