

IT'S GOOD TO BE JAIME KING

By Noelle Hancock

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When she swept onto the modeling scene in 1993, Jaime “James” King was the ultimate good girl gone bad. Living in New York by way of Omaha, she landed her first major ad campaign, for Abercrombie & Fitch, and was then featured in Allure, Mademoiselle, and Vogue. Along with international superstardom came all the trappings: rock-star beaus (like Kid Rock), tattoos (including KING on the back of her neck), rehab for booze and heroin (she now says her vices are chocolate and coffee), and roles in not-so-amazing flicks (Pearl Harbor, White Chicks, Bulletproof Monk).

Now that the 28-year-old has transitioned from modeling to acting full-time, a curious thing has happened: Her star is rising even higher. Her half-dozen upcoming movie roles are eclectic enough to challenge any actress; they include the 1940s period piece *The Pardon* and two films directed by Frank Miller, Will Eisner’s *The Spirit* and the highly anticipated *Sin City 2*. This month she appears in *Fanboys*, about a group of Star Wars nuts. Last November she married *Fanboys* director Kyle Newman, leading to sild newlywed nights of Scrabble at home. It may be that Jaime is no longer a wild child. But that doesn’t mean she no longer has a penchant for speaking her mind.

Did you miss out on being a teenager, considering you started modeling at 14?

I never fit in like a typical kid. My sister was captain of the drill squad, but the cheerleader jock thing was never for me. Instead, I took photos and developed my own film. I loved modeling because I loved the photography aspect.

Did you encounter lots of slimy dudes?

I run into slimy dudes pretty much anywhere, not just in the modeling world.

Well, what was the upside?

When I shot an ad for Rocawear, they helicoptered Jay-Z to the location, and he started rapping, which was amazing. He has a big heart. That’s the cool thing about meeting celebrities. People think they know us by reading about us, but when you meet us you get a glimpse of who we are as human beings.

Why have you traded modeling for the rat race of Hollywood?

Because I love acting, and I love making a lot of money doing it. Having money gives you freedom to do whatever you want in life. But when you get attached to being the cool kid in all the magazines, you’re just a rat on a wheel.

While filming *Fanboys*, you fell for the director. How did he win you over?

He’s creative and passionate like me. We’re both obsessed with films and comics.

Are you telling us that you’re a closet nerd?

I love Star Wars and Lord of the Rings, and I’m obsessed with Harry Potter. When Sotheby’s was auctioning off an autographed book by J.K. Rowling, I was online

zooming in to see what she'd written. I was so pissed when someone else snapped it up – not that I could've paid \$4 million. I get bored watching romantic comedies – couldn't care less about them.

Good thing, since you're in the ultra-violent Sin City movies. Did you read the graphic novel first?

Yeah. I'm actually writing a graphic novel that Frank Miller is helping me take to some big publishing companies. I love that medium.

So you're cool with gore and violence?

Actually, I'm a scaredy cat! Whenever there's blood in my films – even if it's fake – I have to keep reminding myself that it's not real.

What was your most gruesome on-screen moment?

There were a few gnarly scenes in *The Tripper*. In one scene I walk in on my friends having sex in a van, and they're hacked up into tiny bits.

Did you have a hard time doing *The Pardon*, in which you play the first woman ever executed in the state of Louisiana?

That was intense. She was a real person, and I felt connected to her. The whole time I was filming, I was extremely depressed. I had to do a scene where they sat me in a real electric chair, and I was like, "Get me the fuck off of it!"

So do you prefer indie flicks or big-budget movies like *Pearl Harbor*?

Indie films can be so ghetto. You don't have all the physical comforts that you have on the big ones. I did one movie where the trailer only had saloon doors in between my room and the other rooms. I'd rather not pee for 15 hours than go in front of someone I don't know.

You've got several tattoos. Any new ones?

Ha! No, I don't have the angst I did when I was a teenager. Sometimes I wonder why I didn't just dye my hair pink or blue like a normal teenager. Now I have to spend two extra hours in the makeup chair covering them up!

Do you regret any of your tats?

Not really. Some people make stupid comments. I have KING tattooed on my back, and people will be like, "Did you do that because you might forget your name?"

Is it true you were lampooning Paris Hilton or Nicky Hilton in *White Chicks*?

Oh, my God, Paris and Nicky are my friends. I wasn't lampooning them. I was just playing the character that was in the script.

Do you think some celebs need to cool out on the partying? God bless them, I don't want to judge, because we all have to battle our demons – but when you're 21 and have millions of dollars and other people's jobs riding on your back, you have a responsibility to get to work on time.

It seems that women in Hollywood are wilder than ever these days, doesn't it?
I stay out of it because I have other things to do. When I'm working I can't stay out till
four o'clock in the morning, because that's when I have to get to the set. My husband
took me to the L.A. club Hyde the other night, but only because he wanted their special
hot cookies and milk. That's how we roll.