



STEVIE BAGGS, JR.

**Actor, Author, Athlete, Inspirational Speaker,
Brand Ambassador, and Philanthropist**

Stevie Baggs, Jr., also known as Shakespeare, has always been making moves, whether on the football field, writing books, or using his platforms to empower youth and adults. He was in the movie "Focus" that starred Will Smith and on hit TV shows such as "Star," Tyler Perry's "For Better or Worse," "A Match Made in Heaven" on WEtv, and more.

CAN YOU SHARE WITH US THE HISTORY OF YOUR FOOTBALL CAREER?

I am a retired professional football player but played for ten years in the NFL and CFL for 11 different teams in 10 years. I played football at Lake Brantley High School, which is in Altamonte Springs, Florida. I graduated from Bethune-Cookman College. While there, I was a three-time All-American Black College Player. I was awarded the SBN/Mel Blount Defensive Player of the Year and won the Ernie Davis award.

WHEN DID YOU BEGIN YOUR CAREER AS AN ACTOR?

I began my career as an actor, unofficially in 2012/13, when I was waiting to get picked up by a team to go back to play football. One of my buddies said, "Man, look, they're looking for some real football players to do this show. They want some extras." I said, "Man, I'm not going to be an extra." So, consequently, I ended up going, and literally, my first day on set, they stood me next to the main character on the show, and the producer asked me if I would like to read for a part. I was like, "Yes, absolutely." I got a speaking role, did some stunt work, and the rest is history. The show was called 'Necessary Roughness,' where I got my first real taste of speaking for TV.

WHAT MADE YOU GO FROM BEING A FOOTBALL

PLAYER TO BECOMING AN ACTOR?

Television and film were never something that I had a vision for. I've always had a vision for playing football since I was a child. I knew that was something that I wanted to attain or achieve. But, being an actor is just something that kind of came by way of my other passion, which is speaking. When you have a big name, it's easy to parley that into more speaking opportunities. But, television and film gives me another opportunity to have my brand be known.

SO, WHAT DOES THE WORD SHAKESPEARE MEAN TO YOU?

(Laughing) I received this nickname when I was in college playing football. One of my teammates was like, "Man, you making so many plays, we are going to start calling you Shakespeare," and it just stuck with me ever since then.

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT PREVIOUS ROLES YOU HAVE TAKEN? ARE THERE ANY CURRENT PROJECTS YOU ARE WORKING ON, NOW OR IN THE FUTURE?

Yes. So, most notably would probably be Tyler Perry's show called Ruthless. I am a regular. Oliver is the name of my character. I was on season three of Cobra Kai.

The Underground Railroad that is co-produced by Brad Pitt and Barry Jenkins. I'm very thankful for working on those projects. Earlier this year, I shot a film called The Twisted House Sitter that will be out in 2022. I'm working on a show myself called Empower 3 that I'm going to produce. It's basically a motivational speaking version of American Idol, so think about American Idol but for motivational speakers. I am constantly auditioning. People don't even know the number of steps you need to go through to get to that next stage, so I'm thankful for that.

YOU WERE NAMED HEALTH AND WELLNESS AMBASSADOR FOR THE CITY OF ATLANTA BY PREVIOUSLY ELECTED MAYOR KASIM REED. WHAT WAS THAT EXPERIENCE LIKE? AND CAN YOU SHARE MORE ABOUT HOW YOU PROMOTE HEALTHY LIFESTYLES?

The experience was tremendous! The way I promote healthy lifestyles is by being an example of what I want to see. I have a nonprofit foundation that my mother and I started 18 years ago. We have nine after-school programs in the city of Atlanta where we taught young people what they wouldn't get in the traditional education system, including information on health and wellness. It's especially important, for me, for melanated people in our neighborhoods. I look at how we get bombarded with being the sickest people in the nation, and so, it's something that my family and I take very seriously. We just want to spread love, positive energy, and information to others. Kasim saw that, during that time, and I used to go around and speak to people in the city about not only the importance and health and wellness from eating right and staying active, but more importantly on the stress levels that you deal with when you recognize that emotional disease causes disease. I don't think a lot of people grasp how powerful stress can be.

I tell people all the time the most important STD that we have to deal with is Spiritually Transmitted Diseases because if your spiritual, emotional, or mental man is not intact or out of whack, then you don't have the opportunity even to be able to grasp onto new ideas. If you control the mind, then you control the man or focus on truth than tradition. Health and wellness are the most important things in my life, and I take care of it and preserve it. I think your spiritual health,

intellectual, emotional, physical are all connected.

YOU ARE AN AUTHOR AS WELL. YOU HAVE WRITTEN WOKE AND "Greater Than The Game" CAN YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT THE BOOKS? AND WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO START WRITING?

"Greater Than The Game" is a book I came up with because I was the only pro football player that played on 11 pro teams in 10 years. My experience on the field prepared me for a purpose beyond the stadium. It guides readers to self-discovery by challenging them to examine how they can elevate their own personal game. "WOKE" is a dictionary for the conscious mind and teaches us to not only question the world around us but also to be guided by principles of logic and reason.

WHAT IS THE CREATING EMPOWERMENT THROUGH AUTONOMY FOUNDATION?

Creating Empowerment Through Autonomy (CETA) is a nonprofit organization that my mother and I started 18 years ago. We have nine after-school programs in the city of Atlanta where we taught young people what they wouldn't get in the traditional education system, including information on health and wellness. Our mission is to mobilize people and resources to propel overall health and wellness.

HOW CAN WE KEEP UP WITH YOU AND STAY INFORMED ABOUT ALL YOU ARE INVOLVED IN, EVEN HOW TO PURCHASE YOUR BOOKS?

You can go to www.steviebaggsjr.com. You can also follow me on all social media platforms @steviebaggsjr.

