Tashia: Thanks for noticing my contribution and hard work.

Q How did you get started in business? Take us back to the very beginning to the very first thought:

A. The entrepreneurial seed was planted in me at 14 years of age while living in Denver, Colorado. My family just moved from California and me being the young go-getter that I was, found my way to The Urban League where they were hosting an event for high school kids. I didn't know it at the time, but the topic was about Entrepreneurship. But somehow I ended up going to that event and it sparked the dream–"wow I really can own my own business." That's when I decided that was what I wanted to do.

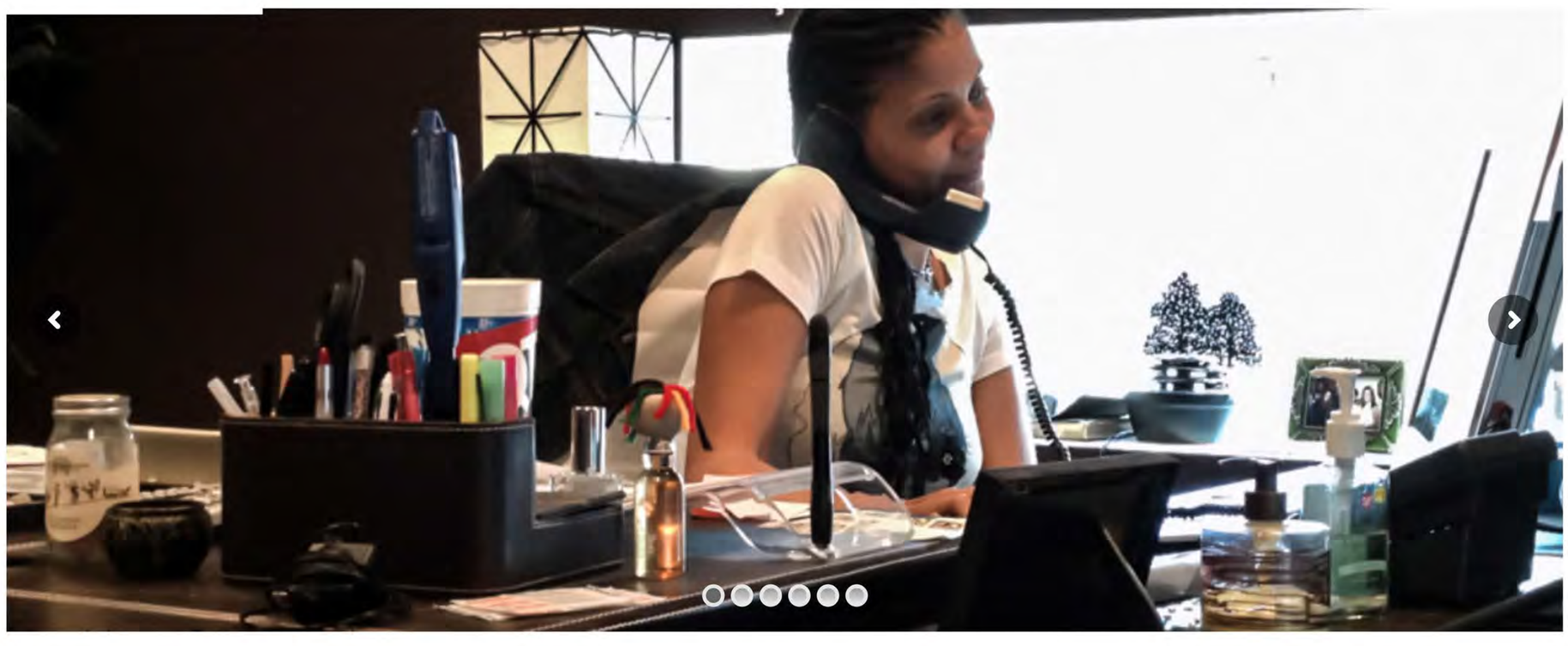
Fast forward to years later, after graduating high school, and working multiple jobs, I moved to Atlanta and went to Georgia State University. I enrolled late and the only elective classes left were in the music industry. On the first day of class, my instructor asked if there was anyone interested in doing a free internship. Me, being the risk-taker that I was (and still am), raised my hand and that internship ended up being at Sony Music in the Rock A&R dept. I ended up interning all the way through college. Before I graduated, I decided to produce a talent showcase to introduce myself to the industry. My goal was to let industry professionals know that I was out there and what I was capable of. I started putting the showcase together 9 months prior to graduating. I auditioned and rehearsed the talent, I found a venue and obtained a lot of sponsors (primarily on a barter basis). Ultimately, I was able to land ASCAP as my main financial sponsor which paid for the venue and most importantly legitimized the entire showcase. The showcase was a success and I ended up being offered a job by Ian Burke at Elektra Records.

I was officially employed as the assistant to the A&R director and I worked there for 2 years. However, what pushed me into Entrepreneurship was when my boss at Elektra Records got let go. This left me in a position without a job even though I did nothing to get fired myself. That experience rubbed me the wrong way and forced me back to my initial direction of Entrepreneurship. This happens a lot in the music industry–the way the musical chair shuffles. Your boss gets fired then the whole team is fired and the new boss brings in their own team. This is pretty common in the music industry which I caught on to early and decided then that I wanted to be responsible for my own success or failure.

What I noticed during my time spent working at the labels was that there was an unfilled niche in the industry among male producers. They seem to have a need for some administrative assistance. So, I put myself out there as an assistant to various music producers and ended up landing two big producers at the time that were signed to Puffy Bad Boy Hit-men named J Dub and Anthony Dent (Credits: Kelly Price, The Notorious B.I.G., Puffy, Jay-Z, Destiny's Child,). This started my business Enlight Entertainment.

From there, I picked up multiple other clients such as Grammy Award-Winning Producer Kevin "She'kspere" Briggs (Credits: Destiny Child, Beyonce', TLC, Sinéad O'Connor, Boys II Men, Pink, Mariah Carey) and Teddy Riley (Credits: Michael Jackson, Snoop Dogg, Black Street, Bobby Brown, and Usher).

Throughout the course, I continued to build my business and my brand and in 2002 I was recognized as being a Power Player behind some of the biggest music producers in the city of Atlanta. I eventually evolved from being an Assistant to an independent A&R Administrator for clients as Akon and Justin Bieber to name a few. An A&R Administrator is the person that works behind the scenes to help coordinate and pull the album paperwork together. This includes booking studio time, doing the credits, interacting with lawyers for the contracts, dealing with all the various producers and their manager that worked on the album. Overall position ensures that all of the necessary paperwork is in place for the album to be released. From here, I decided to build a recording studio and book clients in my space and that is how ICON Studios was born. Today, I own both Enlight Entertainment and ICON Studios. ICON Studios opened in 2008 and is still thriving today. Enlight Entertainment is still very active with clients that I both manage and also consult on an executive level. My new venture Do Good Entertainment with business partner Nate Butler, offers artist management.



Q What is your highest point to this date in your business?

A. My highest point was being recognized by Billboard Magazine and the Mayor's office as being a Power Player in Entertainment in the city of Atlanta. I also love being involved in the careers of successful artists and musicians – knowing that I had a small part in helping them fulfill their dreams which is very rewarding to me. Overall the highest point for me is being able to do what I want to do, when I want to do it, on a daily basis. I love the fact that I can wake up without an alarm clock and go to work when I want with my dogs (which still takes a lot of hard work, late nights and self-discipline).

Q. How do you Pay It Forward?

A. Through providing internship and hiring employees, I love that I can give opportunities to the younger generation of industry creators and professionals and be a positive gateway for them to pursue their goals and dreams.

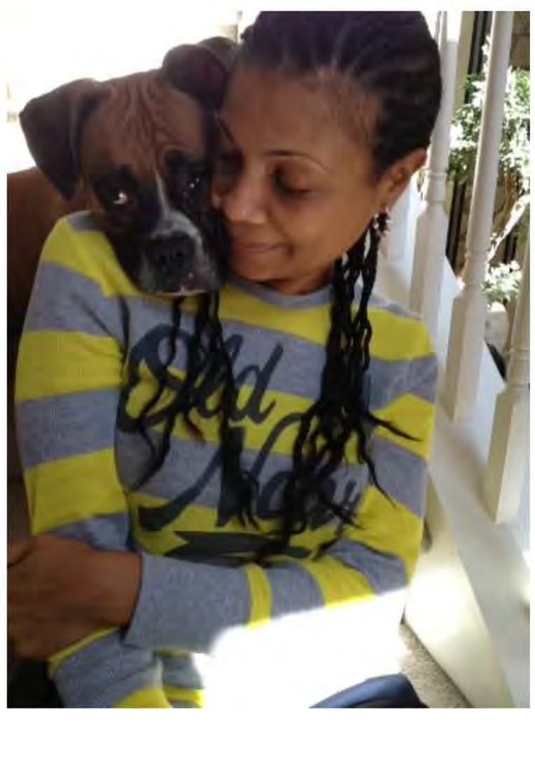
Q What is the toughest and roughest part of the business and what did you learn about yourself:

A. The toughest part of my business is never really knowing where my next client is coming from or how long they will stay. No situation is guaranteed , and yet at the end of the day, I still have to pay my bills, handle employees and do all the daunting administrative tasks that come with owning your own business. A low point would be when clients drop off unexpectedly. When finances get low and your old business model just doesn't seem to be working, you have to reinvent yourself and [ask] "what is the next step?" Overcoming that problem and really digging deep down to know that I have the ability within myself to create wealth and make money and tap into that. It's a scary thing as an entrepreneur, when you don't have the security that a job would provide for you or a 401K plan waiting for you at the end of a retirement rainbow. I believe what's been most important for me and the security of my businesses since I started is that I have been a faithful tither since day one. I really feel in my heart that tithing has been a key to my sustainability and continued growth without being subject to many of the pitfalls that the music business can bring.

Q What can you say to another 14 year old that will help them to get motivated or start thinking about it at an early age?

A. Make up your mind to do something and just do it. Don't make excuses. Don't let other people discourage you. Although I decided at the age of 14 that I was going to be an entrepreneur, that didn't mean that I was capable of starting my business the next day. I knew I had to get a job, and I knew I could not be an Entrepreneur without experience. Make a decision, go for it, and stick to it. Find resources. There are so many resources that I didn't have at 14 that are available now. One of the regrets that I have is that I never had a mentor. I wish I had someone guiding me or holding my hand saying, "Let's go this route," or putting in calls for me. One of my setbacks has been that I tend to present myself as if I do not need help, or as if I can do this myself, which is not always the case. Ultimately, I have to take responsibility and say it was my fault for not having a mentor because I didn't pursue one diligently. So, what I'd advise is to find a mentor that is passionate about helping you fulfill your dreams and see how you can be of some service to them as well.

Q It is very important to surround yourself with positive people within your friendships and family. How do you balance your marriage and business?



A. Having a supportive family has been a crucial part of my life and career. My mother (Carol Lawrence) has put up with me and my crazy antics all of my life, but when I decided to start my business, she allowed me to do so while I was still living at home. I've had two sisters (Aishia & Janelle) and two cousins (Gordy and Misty) that have all worked for me at some point and time. In fact, two of my sisters (Janelle and Charisse) and a brother-in-law actually invest in my dream of owning and building Icon Studios. As for my husband, where shall I start. Being married has helped keep me grounded and happy throughout my journey. I'm not saying that I depend on my spouse for my happiness, but having a companion that has taken the journey with me has been an awesome experience. My husband has been with me since I started my businesses and has been through the craziest moments of all my business adventures (even the ones that failed) . When I first started Enlight, there were times when I would get calls at 2 o'clock in the morning because a client missed their flight and needed help finding a new one, or some other random request. Whatever, it was, he was right there getting up with me when I was going through all of that. Let's just say, I could so relate to the movie "The Devil Wears Prada" when it came out and I'm so glad those days are behind me. All of those challenges early on made us stronger as a couple. There are not too many men that could handle his wife working in such close proximity with so many male clients on a daily basis, including those phone calls in the middle of the night that sometimes required me to get out of bed and go to a client's house to handle an emergency. All I can say is that God put the right man in my life and that he is a very secure individual. The key to our marriage is friendship and God. We started out as friends going to bible study together. That was something that we had in common when we we started dating 16 years ago and he's been in the trenches with me ever since. He never gives me grief about my business or the crazy ideas I come up with. He just supports them. He lets me run with them–some have failed while others worked out. I'm just glad that I trusted God (and not myself) to bring the right man into my life.

Q Would you do it over again after going through all of your ups and downs?

A. Oh Absolutely! I wouldn't change a thing. I love my