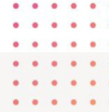




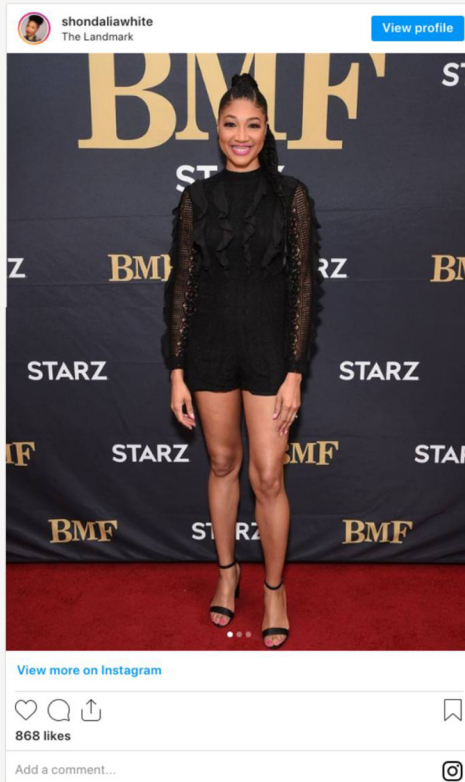
Credit: Tisha Brenee

Exclusive: Actress Shondalia White...

by Noella Williams · November 02, 2021



Michigan native Shondalia White caught up with *21Ninety* to share her recent acting projects, love for stand-up comedy, and her character on *Black Mafia Family*. White plays the role of Karen Jones on the Starz crime drama series and happens to be from the same city as her character. From executive producer Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson, the show is based on the true story of an influential crime family within Detroit during the 1980s. The two protagonists, brothers Demetrius "Big Meech" Flenory and Terry "Southwest T" Flenory, are at the forefront of the show's plot exploring love, kinship and brotherhood. White recently joined the series as a recurring role alongside co-star Tyshon Freeman.



"Karen Jones is a young, no-nonsense lawyer with a heart of gold," White said in reference to her character. "She's a Christian woman, by default, and she's that type of Christian that has the cross on her chest, even if you can't see it. And she does not go for injustice, she'll do anything to get the Flenory family the justice that they deserve."

It didn't take White long to adapt to her character. As she described, Jones is a lawyer for the Flenory family in regards to a botched surgery. Along with playing the niece of Pastor Swift, played by Snoop Dogg, Jones is willing to go above and beyond for her clients.

"Being on set was great, because with Karen Jones, I had to fully transform each day," she said. "I was not Shondalia at all. I had my wig, since [the show is] a period piece. Karen is very fashionable, which you know most Detroit people are, and she always had her hair splayed. The hair, makeup and wardrobe really allowed me to channel Karen and as soon as I went into that, I clicked right out of Shondalia."



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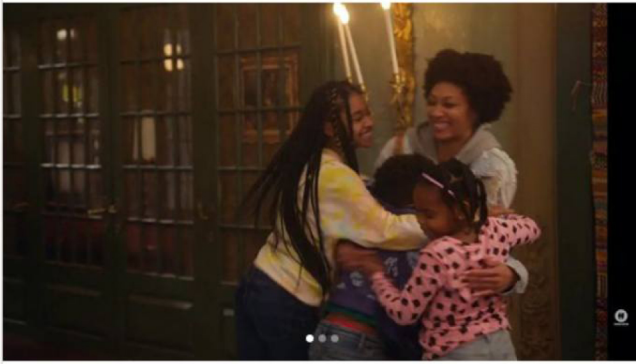
With a star-studded cast of Snoop Dogg, Da'Vinchi and Lala Anthony, White mentioned that she looks forward to being on set "each day" and described the set as "family-like and fun." Although it can be easy to be starstruck, this isn't White's first rodeo on set. Her acting credits include *Good Trouble*, *black-ish*, and *American Horror Story*, but White is clearly a triple threat. She's also done voice acting for animated films and tv shows like *Onward*, *The Casagrandes* and Marvel's *What If*. White shared that her recurring roles are fun, but she prefers a character that has a "full-blown arc" with well-deserved screen time and character development.

"With *Good Trouble*, I play Yvonne Byers, and Yvonne is like night and day from Karen," she said. "Because Karen is a put-together, very conservative and educated woman, and Yvonne is down on her luck and always in-and-out of jail, due to tickets and different things. She's someone that Karen would fight for. She has three kids and is a single parent. On *black-ish*, I was just more of a cool friend."



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White, also a prominent comedian in the Los Angeles area, said her favorite memory in her comedic career was her first performance in Las Vegas with a crowd of approximately 1,000 people. Her current role in the drama series includes room for comedic relief, so she referenced comedians like herself as being exceptionally gifted in drama roles.

"I'm a stand up comedian, so I love comedy." She continued, "As most people know, comedians do really well in drama, because without drama, there's no comedy. I actually love both. I enjoy my favorite genre when they merge the two, and I feel like *BMF* does a great job of merging the two. It's not quite a dramedy, but there's a lot of comedy in it."



shondaliwhite ✓
Los Angeles, California



With the several roles and jobs that White juggles, she prioritizes her self-care via breathing practices and meditation. She incorporates the 4-7-8 breathing technique into her morning routine and on set, which is a method of deep breathing that involves breathing in for four seconds, holding in the breath for seven seconds and exhaling for eight seconds.

"[The 4-7-8 method] definitely helps ground me, and I actually find breathing to be more helpful sometimes than meditation when I'm on set, because I don't always have that moment to take a second to the side," she said. "It's very quick and fast paced, sometimes with acting, it's always hurry up and wait, but there are a lot more times where you're constantly moving, and I think that 4-7-8 breathing is really helpful."

So what's next for White? Besides having a recurring or minor role in a Marvel or Pixar project, she hinted toward a big reveal for a role in a DreamWorks animated film along with more animated roles. You can follow her on [Instagram](#) to see the full range of her acting portfolio and dates for her stand-up comedy shows.
