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## Movie Reviews: Leslie Jordan's Trip Down "The Pink Carpet" is Worth Taking, and "The Adonis Factor" Provokes

Posted by Brent Hartinger on September 15, 2010

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### MY TRIP DOWN THE PINK CARPET



Is there anyone who doesn't like **Leslie Jordan**?

**No, seriously. Is there?** It's a cliché to call him America's answer to **Quentin Crisp**, but there are definitely similarities. It's not his demeanor I'm taking about — it's the fact that he knows, and is completely comfortable with, exactly who he is. And he's so authentic to that person that it's actually really difficult for me to imagine anyone, gay or straight, not loving him.

Jordan is the star of a new film, *My Trip Down the Pink Carpet*, now out on DVD, and the bad news is that this is just a taping of his a one-man show — a stage show that was pretty bare-bones to begin with. I'll say upfront that while actors may love their one-man shows (for obvious reasons), I generally don't. Satisfying theater is all about dramatic tension, and it's almost impossible to generate much tension with only one person on stage. One-person shows are basically a person talking for ninety minutes.



**But *Pink Carpet* works anyway**, mostly because the person doing the talking here is someone as interesting and funny as Jordan.

He isn't what I expected. In the show, he is, by turns, impish, bitter, foul-mouthed, bitchy, air head-y, raunchy, angry, and — guess what? — ultimately, very thoughtful. Jordan's harmless gay-buffoon act is just that: an act. It's easy to get distracted by the quips and the over-the-top guest spots he did on *Will & Grace* (where he won an Emmy for playing Karen's rival, **Beverley Leslie**), but he's clearly very, very smart.

He also has a heart as big as all of America.

Jordan's own story is pretty by-the-numbers as celebrity stories go (rejection, humiliation, drugs, triumph). But what makes it work is (a) the sometimes funny, sometimes surprising celebrity anecdotes (about **George Clooney**, **Cloris Leachman**, **Faye Dunaway**, **Beverly D'Angelo**, and others); (b) Jordan's own intelligence and genuine wit; and (c) his willingness to completely bare his soul.

Jordan's story is partly universal — it's about finding yourself and sticking to your dream — but it's also very specifically *gay*, especially for men of a certain generation. Who could hate himself more than an effeminate gay man born in the 1950s? Jordan's answer may surprise you, and it goes a long way in explaining how he turned his own self-hatred into love.

I said I didn't like one-person shows because there's only one person on the stage. Well, there's only one person on stage in *My Trip Down the Pink Carpet*, but *boy* is he there. I defy you not to be enamored.

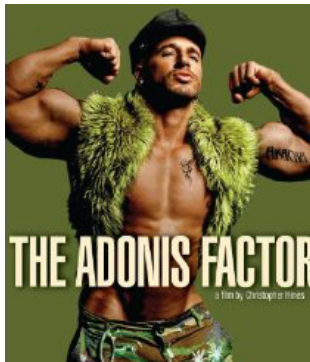
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**Are gay men obsessed** with the way we look? If so, why — and what are the costs? And how much are we driving the culture at large when it comes to the relatively new (or rediscovered) interest in male looks?



Director **Christopher Hines** explores these questions in a new documentary, *The Adonis Factor*, a follow-up to his previous film, *The Butch Factor*.

Hines gets a lot of different perspectives from a lot of different gay men, exploring their attitudes and opinions about the way they look, and the gay community's attitudes about looks in general. It's a diverse bunch of men, some of whom are almost jaw-droppingly superficial. Others, including at least one porn star, have a much broader perspective.



## RECENT COMMENTS



LOL

Posted by [butthuggingjeansofdreidoliver](#) about 4 minutes ago

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he's kinda cute

Posted by [butthuggingjeansofdreidoliver](#) about 8 minutes ago

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My problem more than

Posted by [John](#) about 8 minutes ago

About: [The Week in Gay TV: "Smallville"'s closing act, Vanessa Williams moves to Wisteria Lane and Brittany meets Britney on "Glee"](#) (22)



HOW REFRESHING

Posted by [Ginelle](#)

It's an interesting discussion, even if a lot of it reinforces the most extreme stereotypes of gay men as catty and superficial. Still, whether it's intentional by the filmmaker or not, the movie leaves the distinct impression that those who are least obsessed with their looks are the ones who are happiest with themselves and their lives.

My quibbles? I think the movie overstates its case, and the degree to which gay men in the urban club and gym scenes represent "the gay community." It mostly focuses on Los Angeles, which is truly a world apart — for gay people *and* straight people. Plenty of gay men happily exist outside the Los Angeles bubble — and not just the bears, who are presented as sort of a reaction to the rest of the gay community's obsession with looks.

Then again, the fact that many gay men do tend to act this way when they gather together in groups must mean *something*.

Because the movie lets the men mostly do the talking for themselves, it also sometimes has something of a "college paper" feel to it: present an opening thesis followed by a bunch of different arguments, and then just kinda wrap things up at the end. I appreciate the movie's point-of-view is that it doesn't really take a point-of-view — that's a perfectly valid perspective for a documentary to take. But I suspect its lack of coherence, and a strong central "point" or driving metaphor, will keep it confined mostly to gay and bisexual male viewers, with little cross-over to the community at large.

Still, there is much food-for-thought here of a topic that is often referred to by gay folks, but is rarely frankly discussed.

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## Comments



### Straight men

Posted by [the herald](#) (1685 points) (419 posts) on September 15, 2010 at 02:52pm

are just as obsessed with women's appearances as gay men are with their own. We just happen to be the objects of our own desire.

no votes

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### I thought I smelled gin and desperation.

Posted by [Chicklet](#) (340 points) (70 posts) on September 15, 2010 at 02:55pm

(Not you, Brent! That was one of Beverley Leslie's remarks to Karen.)

Thanks for the review of *Pink Carpet*; I'd been waiting for it to hit DVD, and I've added the movie to my Netflix queue.

no votes

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### Leslie Jordan

Posted by [R-B](#) (195 points) (38 posts) on September 15, 2010 at 03:00pm

I don't dislike Leslie Jordan because I don't know him. I've only ever seen him in *Will and Grace* and heard his voice in *American Dad*, and I disliked both those characters. I've heard good things about him though...

I don't think the obsession with looks is specific to gay men at all. Of course there **are** gay men obsessed with looks...just like there are straight men who are obsessed with looks, and straight women, and gay women, and bisexual men, and bisexual women....

no votes

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### Leslie Jordan in Sordid Lives

Posted by [sor\\_bet](#) (481 points) (100 posts) on September 15, 2010 at 08:47pm

You should try to rent "Sordid Lives", the TV series and the movie. Leslie Jordan is AMAZING in both. Actually, the entire cast in both the TV show and the movie is amazing. :)

no votes

[see individual ratings](#)

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### Leslie Jordan

Posted by [Jamie](#) (3329 points) (720 posts) on September 15, 2010 at 03:05pm

We saw his one man show live about 2 summers ago, and it was very entertaining. Plus, we had the pleasure of meeting him after, and he was a super nice guy. The DVD is definitely

about 27 minutes ago

About: [Weekend Meme: New "Glee" Preview and Photos](#), [Elmo Likes Katy Perry's Cleavage](#), and [Is Uncle Saul Done With the Walkers? \(29\)](#)



### Just wow.

Posted by [g\\_whiz](#)  
 about 32 minutes ago

About: [The Week in Gay TV: "Smallville"'s closing act](#), [Vanessa Williams moves to Wisteria Lane](#) and [Brittany meets Britney on "Glee" \(22\)](#)

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**Color Choices:** "You ask some interesting questions. I don't think that choosing colors is as easy as we think. I once knew a designer for a sportswear company whose job was to choose the colors they used in..."

Posted by [MizLiz](#) about 3 hours ago

### Changing last names when married (16)

**My fiance and I had a very:** "My fiance and I had a very brief discussion on this and decided that we will both keep our own names. Part is simple practicality: our marriage will not be legal in PA at this time, so the default..."

Posted by [Tricksterwolf](#) about 7 hours ago

### CRAZED LOVE BETWEEN BOYS/MEN (212)

**"LAST EXIT TO BROOKLYN":** "PaperMoon, you should make every effort to track the film down - it is really and truly a one-of-a-kind experience, believe me - of course, the fact that it failed so miserably at the box-office..."

Posted by [rayban](#) about 7 hours ago

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worth checking out!

"I've heard it too many times to ignore it, there's something that I'm supposed to be." - Kermit the Frog

no votes

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### Saw the show and read the book

Posted by [tommyboy10](#) (120 points) (24 posts) on September 16, 2010 at 09:12am

Love Leslie Jordan!!! Met him a few years ago and he is a very sweet man, with an interesting story to tell. In his younger days...he was a beauty!! He talks about that in his one-man show.

As far as gay men's obsession with looks...I think it depends on where you live, because city guys (gay or straight) hit the gym regularly. it is just part of that lifestyle. However, I will say this the reason so many gay men are obsessed as women are is because MEN are visual creatures...women are NOT, women are emotional. So, they can be hooked up with a less attractive partner and be satisfied. MEN are attracted to the physicality first and foremost...just like straight men are attracted to a good looking woman.

I am fitness instructor and I see it all of the time. a woman comes in trying to lose weight and get in shape and land a husband, a man comes in trying to lose weight to land a husband. LOL

no votes

[see individual ratings](#)

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### Hey! Some of the best gay shows I've seen have been one-man

Posted by [dback](#) (3339 points) (681 posts) on September 16, 2010 at 11:09am

I've seen Dan Butler, David Cale, and I think James Lecesne do solo pieces, and all have been great. (Not to mention Lily Tomlin.) If the material is gripping enough and the actor talented enough, it can definitely work. Before I die, I want to see Whoopi Goldberg do some of her characters live. (If you've never seen "Whoopi on Broadway," you. Must. Rent. It. Immediately. It could change your life.)

I loved loved LOVED "The Butch Factor," and thought it was one of the best docs (let alone gay-themed docs) I'd seen in years. I'm thrilled to know there's a follow-up, and will definitely check it out--by renting it on DVD, as opposed to seeing it on LOGO. ("Butch Factor" went from being 88 minutes to less than an hour plus commercials by the time it hit LOGO.)

And I wouldn't use Los Angeles OR New York as yardsticks to measure anything--since the pinnacle of human beauty American-style tends to concentrate in those two cities (and maybe Miami), it completely skews the perspective. It's like saying kids who go to Harvard (or, by contrast, Fresno State or Slippery Rock University) are average, typical college students.

no votes

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### Spasm of wisdom

Posted by [relater](#) (165 points) (33 posts) on September 16, 2010 at 02:37pm

" the movie overstates ... the degree to which gay men in the urban club and gym scenes represent "the gay community."

OMG! You're revealing a secret that millions, MILLIONS, are spent trying to cover up! Gay men who AREN'T part of the "scene"? They actually EXIST?

What are you trying to do? Kill the cash cow?

no votes

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