



You Don't Know King Noire

Photography by Tarrice Love

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From quarantine, the renowned adult star opens up to Playboy about fatherhood, black joy and the responsibility of being an artist

Written by
ANITA LITTLE

SEXUALITY IN CONVERSATION

When I call Hasan Salaam, he's quarantining at his home in Tampa, Florida. I hear dishes clattering and a child cooing in the background.

The 39-year-old is confident but ruminative, always allowing some silence to pass before he responds to a question. Salaam has been on the move—touring in some form—for more than 15 years. Now during the pandemic, he's been forced to pause for the first time in quite a while, and he's basking in the stillness. Besides, he has an all-consuming reason to be home irrespective of a pandemic that's showing no signs of abating: a bouncy, bubbly two-year-old son named Majesty.

“Not being able to go shoot or see clients all over the world is semi-frustrating.

But at the same time, I got this one opportunity to watch my son grow up,” Salaam says. “I get to see all these little things he’s picking up. He’s doing colors and shapes and letters and numbers, and I get to watch all of that every day.”

Salaam’s quarantine-era fatherhood goes as one might expect. He spends the day changing diapers, cooking meals for his family and going on walks with his son. When he has a bit of downtime, he works on his rap music, plays football and responds to the daily inundation of messages on his OnlyFans account.

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Salaam’s alter ego—what most of his followers know him by—is [King Noire](#), and he’s one of the most well-known male entertainers in the adult industry.

His beginnings were humble enough. At 18, he was kicked out of his home. Unmoored, he bounced from couch to couch until a female friend asked him to appear in an adult magazine with her. His interest was piqued, and the rest is history.

“People said I was good at it,” he says. “So I picked it up. It just kind of happened more than it was completely planned out.”

From there [King Noire](#) started doing private cuckolding gigs, BDSM sessions and other adult work. Being on the East Coast limited his studio opportunities since the region wasn’t a hub of the porn industry at the time, so he left to teach creative writing at a public school in his home state of New Jersey while doing community organizing with social justice nonprofits. He missed adult work, though, and also recognized an opportunity to create a change that he had yet to see in the adult world: the representation of black men.

“I noticed that, especially within the black community, there weren’t a lot of performers that were a full person,” he says. “So I decided if I’m going to do this again, I’m going to give you all of me. I’m not just a dick and some floggers. I’m also going to talk about justice, equal rights, music, my family, cooking. I’m going to talk about all these things I enjoy, and give you an entire person.”



King Noire and Jet Setting Jasmine

King Noire recounts some incidents when he encountered racism and bigotry on major sets, including being asked to play a thug, a janitor or a prison inmate. When he called out these roles as racially offensive, the studios simply didn't book him again. With the heightened attention being paid to the Black Lives Matter movement after the extrajudicial killings of countless black Americans such as George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, many industries are facing internal reckonings over how they treat their black workers. The adult industry isn't exempt.

"I've been on set and called a nigger by another performer. The company, along with the agency I was working with, was like, 'Yeah, that's fine. Just keep working,'" he says. "I refused, and it became a whole thing. There is a problem in the industry, and it needs to be spoken about. I come from a place where you either speak on it or you ain't shit. You shouldn't show your face if you don't stand up for your people."

How black men are portrayed in the adult industry doesn't veer too far from how they're perceived in society. The term "black buck" emerged in the post-Reconstruction United States and was used to paint black men as savage and brutish. The idea of black men as more aggressive, as sexually insatiable, has persisted to this day. You see it in the oversexed and one-dimensional depictions of black masculinity in porn. A search of "BBC" on adult sites or a visit to Blacked.com proves this. When it comes to how black bodies are seen in porn, the industry suffers from a severe lack of imagination and instead reinforces tired tropes.

"We're always told as black people that our sex is supposed to look a certain

way,” Salaam says. “We’re supposed to be, as black men, the stud, or, as black women, the dominatrix. We’re not allowed to have a softer side or a romantic, passionate, sensual side.”

“Some people come into this profession and burn out really quick because they think, I’m going to bust it open and I’ll be rich tomorrow. That’s not how it works.”

He decided that instead of depending on the often racist and problematic porn studio ecosystem, he would build his own brand. He wanted to show the full range of black people and give black pleasure the nuance it deserves.

And he would do it with Jasmine Johnson (professionally known as Jet Setting Jasmine), a fellow adult performer he fell in love with after they joined forces as business partners performing at sex parties in New York. Johnson is also the mother of his two-year-old, and they co-parent their two teenage daughters, Mani and Star, as well. Salaam and Johnson started [Royal Fetish Films](#), an award-winning independent porn studio that aims to bring more inclusive porn to an industry that too often traffics in stereotypes.

“Our clientele was mostly black women between the age of 25 and 45,” Salaam says. “So many of them would ask, ‘Where is good black porn? Where can I find black porn where we’re not being called names or where people are actually lotioned up before they get on set? Where’s the passion, the romance or the kinkiness? So we decided: Let’s shoot something on our own.’”

In addition to producing original adult content, the duo did pre-pandemic live shows as part of a nationwide tour and will soon [debut the third season](#) of *Royal Fetish Radio*, a podcast where they tackle everything from polyamory to porn and parenting. Last year, Salaam also released *The Royal Fetish Experience*, a provocative rap album that details moments in BDSM and kink.





Within their Royal Fetish empire, Salaam and Johnson paint a compelling portrait that we rarely get to see in media, adult or not: a rich and layered representation of black love. The art they create together is a welcome refuge from an adult landscape that is mostly barren of honest depictions of black sexuality. There's frequently no allowance for the range of thought and feeling black people experience in their bedroom lives. Salaam sees sex as "the ultimate form of creation," and it's his mission to show it unapologetically.

"It's a way of communicating without speaking, to truly learn someone's body language, to be inside another person, to have another person inside you," he says. "However you get down, it is a connection beyond just conversation."

What Salaam knows intimately but what many refuse to acknowledge is that the adult industry is like any other industry: You have to work extremely hard to build a following and be self-sufficient. And he's had to do that against a societal backdrop that stigmatizes both sex workers and black men.

"As soon as I wake up in the morning, I'm responding to emails, I'm posting, I'm doing all these things to keep my business alive. It's a nonstop thing," he says. "I think some people come into this profession and burn out really quick because they think, I'm going to bust it open and I'll be rich tomorrow. That's not how it works. This shit is tireless."

To see King Noire is to recognize him in all of his nuance and complexity: as a father, a life partner, a businessman, an artist and, yes, an adult performer. Hopefully, the seismic societal shift currently happening will force more people to see black men and adult stars—the fraught intersection King Noire must navigate to survive and thrive—through a more humanized lens. Until that happens, he'll stay focused on protecting his art, his family and his community.

"I was told very young by my moms: If you're not doing shit for your people, no matter what it is you're doing, then you're wasting your time."

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