

Actress Rayven Ferrell Becomes Tupac's Sister In All Eyez On Me (Interview)



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Rayven Ferrell is building a name for herself as a prolific young actress who is now taking on the role of Tupac's sister Sekyiwa in the highly anticipated *All Eyez On Me*. The Atlanta by way of Ohio transplant took the challenge with the confidence of living out her own truth and finding the similarities in Shakur's life. It is her biggest job thus far especially considering the fact that Tupac fans are some of the most particular about the posthumous presentation of the icon and anyone connected to him. As a newer face, she has already appeared on *Greenleaf* and Lee Daniel's girl group drama *Star*. But it is the role of Sekyiwa Shakur that is poised to take her work to her biggest audience yet.

“I feel like Tupac was a perfect example of that just being that voice for minorities, for Blacks for people in poverty for everybody”

How did you become an actress?

I attended performance arts schools all my life since I was eight until I graduated. I kind of had a few concentrations I had ballet, I had acting and I had creative writing and I had violin. Then as I got older I had to narrow it down at first to two and then it was one because it was so time-consuming

and I ended up picking acting.Â

I saw where your mom named you after Raven-SymonÃ©, was she an inspiration for you or did you have others?

As a kid it was definitely Raven-SymonÃ© I used to love her show *Thatâ€™s So Raven* on the Disney channel but then as I got older it became Viola Davis. Thatâ€™s definitely my inspiration right now.

How did you get cast as Tupacâ€™s sister in *All Eyez On Me*?

I did the audition as I would any other project the only thing with that one was it took a longer process. I auditioned for it and then like a month later I got called back for it but the thing was before I got called back I had a dream about it. I had a dream that I booked it so when I actually got called back I felt like I had it because I connected with the role so well. It was a really good affirmation I just felt it. And then another few weeks went by and I found out that I got casted the night before we had to shoot the first day.

Did you know much about Tupac before filming the movie?

Before filming the movie I was fan of Tupacâ€™s music, movies *Poetic Justice* is one of the movies I learned like the back of my hand like word for word. I could probably say every line of that movie. I was a fan of Tupacâ€™s art but after filming the movie I became a fan of who he was because I learned so much about him just the way that he worked and his mindset his goals and the things that he went through. So he became an inspiration as a person

How were you able to identify with his sister?

We had the same similarities in our childhood as far as living in poverty living in a single-parent home. I had my mom but you know she worked a lot so a lot of times it was just me and my siblings so I know the importance of the sibling bond. And

how important it was to depend on each other. A lot of those situations I was able to put myself in. Like she was more to herself but when she was with her family she was more of how she actually is as a person. Iâ€™m more of an introvert when Iâ€™m around people but when Iâ€™m with my family Iâ€™m a completely different person. And her esteem issues. You know how it is when youâ€™re growing people pick on you because you donâ€™t have this or that middle school kids are cruel they really are so those things made you have low self-esteem because you feel like you arenâ€™t up there like everybody else.

Did you meet her or speak with her?

I have not yet. I had a lot of research with interviews I learned a lot from LT the executive producer as well as the coach Angelo who was on the set. You know grabbing all that information together I got a sense of who she was as well as just reading the script.

What was the whole experience like? What was it like working with Demetrius Shipp Jr.?

It was a huge huge blessing. Everyday I was on the set I was like â€œIâ€™m on the set of *All Eyez On Me*. Still to this day when I see myself on screen Iâ€™m like what how is this even happening? Iâ€™m super grateful for it. As far as Demetrius heâ€™s like a big brother to me now in real life. Heâ€™s super super humble and super helpful. Heâ€™s that person when you have a conversation with Demetrius he will have you thinking. You can have a five-minute conversation with him and heâ€™ll have you thinking. Heâ€™s just one of those people who drops knowledge Iâ€™m glad he was one the chosen to play Tupac because I feel like heâ€™s going to use it in a really really good way.

Has your perspective of Tupac changed at all after making the movie?

It hasn't changed but it's enhanced. I feel like Tupac knew he had realized his purpose at an early age you have to think about he was on earth for 25 years. I'm 21 years old he was four years away from me when he got killed and I'm just thinking about the platform he created. He had to know at an early age 'Ok, this is what I was put on this earth for so I have to accomplish this' and knowing that he had this talent gave attention to him from the people. He used that platform to go ahead like 'This is how I'm going to do it.' And you had all those times he got ridiculed times he got into trouble with the law people judging him he didn't care. At the end of the day, he had to make this happen. And that's how I feel about my life goals. At the end of the day, you can only control what you can control and I feel like Tupac was a perfect example of that just being that voice for minorities, for Blacks for people in poverty for everybody.

Stepping away from the movie I have to ask you about your experiences working on *Greenleaf* and *Star*.

Yeah, I was actually on my way back from L.A. when I got the audition a lot was going on and I had the audition and kind of forgot about it. So when my agent called me like a few weeks later he was like 'Clear your schedule tomorrow because you're on set.' But that experience was crazy because I was on the second episode of the premiere I don't know if you remember the scene at the lunch table where we're talking about the party that happened the night before we were making beads and drawing. They put us in a room I played Nora and Sophia's friend. They put us in a room like an hour before the shoot so we could bond together and literally within five minutes you would've thought we were friends for years. It was a super good experience and part of that scene was improv. We were talking and getting set-up and they were like 'No, no we like that do it over again.' A lot of that was really natural.

How was *Star*?

Iâ€™m a huge huge fan of Lee Daniels so I kind of fangirled a little bit. He was like â€˜Hi my name is Lee Daniels.â€™ That was a huge blessing because I feel like he created a lot of diversity when it comes to television to this day I feel like he started that path. And I am super grateful for him for that just for us as people because none of us are the same. But working with Brittany Oâ€™Grady and the girl who played my younger sister her name is Darielle Stewart she was a character. She made the entire shoot super super fun. She had a swear jar so anytime anyone would cuss she would say you had to put a dollar in it. She got everyone on set then she got Lee Daniels and she was like â€˜Wait, you owe me a dollar â€™ so she wouldnâ€™t do her second take until he gave her a dollar. He was like, â€˜You know what? Iâ€™ll give you \$100 for anytime I cuss.â€™ He said a few words and she ended up walking out with \$700. That little girl is a hustler. We had a really good time. I played Brittany Oâ€™Gradyâ€™s foster sister.

Whatâ€™s your vision for your career?

Yes, Iâ€™m super-blessed As of right now Iâ€™m in the middle of a few things and I havenâ€™t officially gotten it yet Iâ€™m just trying to work on being as diverse as possible As actors, we get character-typed a lot. Iâ€™m 21 I go in for 13 and 17-year old daughter and sister all the time. I want to be known for doing this kind of role and that too. My current goal is to get series regular on a television show. Television is more of my goal now.

Why are more interested in television now?

Iâ€™m a binge watcher I love the consistency of it. I feel like television is more of a reality because things happen and once things go good something else happens then something else happens.

What do you want to see people get from *All Eyez On Me*?

I hope people can gather who Tupac was and who he needed to be, I hope more people see Tupac as view him and judge him from his personality Â versus what people saw him as.

[All Eyez On Me](#) is in theaters now.Â

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Actress Rayven Ferrell Lands Pivotal Career Role In New Tupac Film, All Eyez On Me



Atlanta – When Rayven Symone Ferrell was born, her mom had a strong vision for her. She knew her daughter was destined for great creativity and named her after Raven-SymonÃ©, her favorite character on *The Cosby Show*. Twenty-one years laterÂ and a mother’s intuition has proved true. The young aspiring actress has already landed a career-defining role, playing Sekyiwa Shakur, the baby sister of rap icon Tupac Shakur, in the soon to be released blockbuster film, *All Eyez on Me*.Â Directed by Benny Boom, and starring another newcomer, Demetrius Shipp Jr. as Shakur, the film is slated to hit theaters on June 16, the late rapper’s 46th birthday.

The role is the opportunity of a lifetime for the aspiring young actress who performed her first play in the sixth grade and booked her first on-camera gig at 17 years old. The film's debut follows a string of successful appearances for the budding thespian, including the Oprah Winfrey executive produced series *Greenleaf* on OWN and working with Academy Award nominated director, Lee Daniels, on the popular Fox series, *STAR*, starring Queen Latifah. To say that Rayven is on a roll is an understatement. Under the tutelage of Atlanta-based talent agents, Christopher Young and Tay Smith at J Pervis Talent Agency, Rayven is quickly building up the kind of screen credits that actors dream of in Hollywood.



Actress Rayven Ferrell

A Cincinnati, OH native, residing in Atlanta, Rayven is currently an undergraduate at Kennesaw State University majoring in Communications, Media Studies. She is humbled by her selection to play the famed actor's sister. In fact, Rayven reveals that the role struck a special chord with her as she shared similar childhood experiences with her character.



Actress Rayven Ferrell and actor Demetrius Shipp Jr. who plays Tupac Shaker in new film, "All Eyez on Me."

"I have never connected to a character in an actual project as much as I connected with this one," reveals Rayven. "Sekyiwa Shakur and I shared similarities in our childhood, so I found myself really relating to her. My mom was a single parent of six so we didn't have much at all. Some days we would have to go without food, water, and electricity, so I understand that struggle and the pain she experienced in her early years." "Sekyiwa was the baby of the family so she depended on Tupac.

As her big brother, he was the first man in her life and in a sense, the head of their family. They had a very close relationship early on. My mom had to work multiple jobs at times throughout our childhood so I know the importance of that sibling bond. It is that feeling that your family is all you have so you must be there for each another. As Tupac's baby sister, they shared a very distinct relationship and I am honored to bring that bond to life on the big screen."

All Eyez on Me is one of the year's most anticipated films, detailing the life, times and controversy of one of hip hop's most prolific figures, Tupac Shakur. The movie is named after the artist's last Death Row Records release.

With her appearance in the film, Rayven Ferrell is creating her own legend, just like her mother knew she would. Like her namesake, Raven-Symoné, she brings depth, authenticity and passion to her roles. Follow her on Twitter and Instagram at @RayvenFerrell. Catch her in *All Eyez on Me* on June 16.