

TEN QUESTIONS WITH

PAMELA ANDERSON

The *Baywatch* star is delighted to have started a whole new career – and be taken seriously

Pamela Anderson is enjoying a much-deserved return to the spotlight, after securing Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild nominations for her role in the acclaimed independent movie *The Last Showgirl*. The Canadian-born actor and former *Playboy* model rose to fame as bathing suit-clad lifeguard CJ Parker in *Baywatch* in the 1990s, but has now become a make-up-free arthouse movie darling. Her path to awards recognition has been long – but she's now being praised for her art rather than her assets...

Your comeback story is filled with award nominations and rave reviews. What do you make of all this buzz?

I'm blown away! I'm very excited and I'm very honoured – no one expected this. I'm just taking it day by day and enjoying it. This experience has taught me that your past doesn't dictate your future. It's never too late to start again.

You were tipped for an Oscar nod, too. Were you disappointed not to be nominated?

I don't know. For me to even be in the conversation has been a blessing. I mean, come on... This is crazy! This is wild. What a great thing for me, although I feel like I have a lot more to give. I can't wait to do more films.

Was a meaningful role in an independent film like *The Last*

'I had to constantly prove I was more than a red swimsuit'

PAMELA ANDERSON



BEACH BABE
Baywatch defined her as just a blonde bombshell

Showgirl always your goal?

People often ask me, "Why didn't you do things like this before?" Well, no one was offering me these roles before. Being a part of pop culture can be a blessing, but it's also a bit of a curse because you start at a deficit. I had to constantly prove myself to be more than just a red swimsuit. That's why I decided to go back to Canada and reassess my life. I said to myself, "I'm going

home to my garden on Vancouver Island because I need to re-evaluate everything. I want to look at the choices I've made. I want to think about what I'm going to do next and how I'm going to do it." I reinvented myself, but I really just turned back into me.

On recent red carpets you've made an impact by wearing minimal make-up. Was this part of your reinvention?

This is something I've been doing



INDIE ROLE
The Last Showgirl has allowed Anderson to act with depth

for myself. It felt unrealistic to be made up every time I left the house, whether it was to walk a red carpet or to walk around the corner. I thought, "Why am I playing a character in real life when I should be playing them on screen?" It didn't look that great on me anyway.

What were some of the biggest misconceptions about you during those *Baywatch* years?

I don't think people understood that back in the *Playboy* and *Baywatch* days I was sitting at Samuel French [a long-gone, beloved Hollywood bookshop for actors] reading Tennessee Williams and Eugene O'Neill plays. I was completely drawn to this world, but I didn't know how to get there. I just wasn't taken seriously. Now that I'm here, I feel like this is the tip of the iceberg for me. This is hopefully a new beginning.

Do you have any regrets about the *Baywatch* years?

Doing *Baywatch* was wonderful. I could bring my dog to the beach and I had a lot of fun, but I never really got to apply myself. I think I needed life experience to be able to draw on in order to play other roles. When I look back now, I think this was the way it was meant to happen. There are no regrets. There's only opportunity.

Did you ever feel despondent about not being taken seriously as an actor sooner?

I come from a tiny town in Vancouver and I didn't expect to be in this business, so everything has been a blessing. Of course, my life

took different twists and turns. Being in the public eye, I felt that maybe being an actor wasn't on the cards because certain things happened in my personal life – but that changed eventually.

What did you think of Pam & Tommy, the 2022 drama about your relationship with your ex-husband Tommy Lee?

I didn't have anything to do with it. I didn't even know they were doing it. I was focused on other things.

Do you have any plans to return to the small screen?

My kids [Anderson has two sons in their late 20s with Lee] always say to me, "Mom, don't give up on TV." I have a little cooking show that's coming out and I'm always all over the place because I love to work. I'm a workhorse. I'm better when I'm busy. There are some really great limited series out there, so let's see what happens.

What about working in the UK? You did *Chicago on Broadway*. Maybe the West End is calling?

I love musical theatre. I would absolutely love to do more theatre and I'd happily do it in the West End. I'd also be happy on Broadway again. I'm open to it all. I'm eager for everything. Even though I'm 57, I feel like I'm just beginning. I feel like a little kid. I'm soaking up the world like a sponge. I always say there's a five-year-old in me that deserves this. There was this little girl I once was and then life happened – but now, here she is again. What an exciting time. ADAM TANSWELL

The Last Showgirl is on release in UK cinemas now

WHAT IT'S LIKE...

to turn a podcast into a TV series



Award-winning broadcaster Charlie Webster, 42, from Sheffield, rocked the true-crime community with her worldwide chart-topping podcast *Scamanda*, which documented the true story of American blogger Amanda Riley, now 39, who "scammed" her family and friends into thinking she had cancer and donating more than \$100,000 (around £75,000). Now, Webster has adapted her podcast into a TV series.

TELLING DIFFICULT STORIES

When I was a teenager, I ran competitively to a high level. Then my running club coach was sent to prison for sexual abuse. It messed me up and I made a documentary about it. I then presented live sports events, from the Olympics and Paralympics to Wimbledon, and made half-hour sports documentaries.

THE LION'S SHARE

I got a job creating an audio division for Lionsgate. A guy there introduced me to a friend who was already pursuing Amanda [pictured above] and trying to get her stopped. I read her blog posts and was captivated – I couldn't believe it was all a lie. I wanted to investigate further, so I came up with the idea of a podcast.

EXPOSING NARCISSISM

I started the podcast before Amanda was convicted [she pleaded guilty to wire fraud and was sentenced to five years in prison in 2022]. I wanted to showcase her manipulative behaviour and narcissism, which I've experienced in my own life.

LISTENER FEEDBACK

The podcast was an instant success [less than six months after its release in May 2023 it hit 30 million unique downloads and became the most downloaded and shared podcast on Apple that year]. Many people were saying it needed to be on television. I'd done a lot of research, so I already had 70 per cent of what I needed to make a TV series. Showing Amanda – in pictures, videos and her blog posts – alongside victim testimony and interviews I did with her childhood friends helps us to understand what she did and why.

DID AMANDA TAKE PART?

I told her it was happening and it was an opportunity for her to explain herself, to say sorry. But she decided not to participate. But she did tell me she was sorry and gave me a message, which is shown at the end of the TV series.



STORY TELLER
Charlie Webster has made her hit podcast visual

Watch *Scamanda* on Disney+

CHARLEY ROSS