



Style Knockout

As a big-screen boxer and in his bold fashion choices, actor Michael B. Jordan makes us believers. He's a Creed with cred. By **Haley Longman**

To “B” or not to “B?” That is the question when you’re sorting out Michael Jordans. One, the longtime Chicago Bulls star, is arguably the greatest basketball player ever. Another—the one with the middle initial—is a versatile actor of growing renown who has played a football quarterback on TV and a champion boxer in the movies. Indeed, 33-year-old Michael B. Jordan has won plaudits for his performances and rave reviews for his sartorial choices too—and that’s no Bull.

“My name is Michael Jordan, so I’m always being compared to a person of greatness,” the actor has said. Greatness? So far, he seems respectful but not cowed.

Michael Bakari Jordan was born in Santa Ana, Calif., but spent much of his childhood in Newark, N.J., where he attended a high school for the arts (and took on the short-lived hobby of street racing, inspired by *Fast & Furious*). He started out as a model for brands like Toys “R” Us (R.I.P.) before deciding he wanted to give acting a go. His first big break was playing 16-year-old drug dealer Wallace, a minor yet pivotal character on *The Wire*, which proved his professional prowess from the get. That gig led to a three-year stint on *All My Children*, as well as additional guest appearances and recurring roles on TV, most notably as a high school quarterback on the NBC drama *Friday Night Lights* and as a leading character’s love interest on the same network’s *Parenthood*.

By 2013, MBJ was hitting the big screen as the breakout star and male lead in the critically acclaimed *Fruitvale Station*, based on the real-life story of a black man murdered by a white cop at a San Francisco subway stop. He then went on to play Zac Efron’s best friend in *That Awkward*

Moment, Johnny Storm in *Fantastic Four* and, perhaps most notably, the titular character Adonis “Donnie” Johnson Creed—Apollo Creed’s son—in the two 21st century follow-up films to *Rocky*, *Creed* and *Creed II*.

Like his most identifiable character, Jordan’s style packs a punch. He’s known primarily for two very different yet important elements in men’s fashion: dapper formal wear and stylish streetwear. He loves a good black-on-black red carpet moment, a mock-neck shirt under a blazer paired with slim-fit trousers, a double-breasted suit with a subtle pattern or print. He pairs classic pieces such as tailored shirts or polos with an out-there accessory or pair of shoes, but he isn’t a trend slave—he only follows those that work for him. People can’t forget the 2019 SAG Awards, at which Jordan boldly rocked a lilac and pink Louis Vuitton harness emblazoned with the brand logo over his double-breasted navy suit. Only Timothée Chalamet and Chadwick Boseman beat him to the punch with that divisive male fashion trend. And what good company to keep.

Of course, Jordan has more in common with Boseman than their willingness to take fashion risks. They co-starred together in *Black Panther*, the highest-grossing film of 2018, with Boseman in the title role and Jordan playing the supervillain, Erik Killmonger. By some accounts, Jordan stole the show. The role took an emotional toll; he admitted to seeing a therapist after filming due to the intense method acting required. But *Black Panther* was a career game-changer for Jordan. By the following year, Coach tapped the then 32-year-old to be the first-ever brand ambassador and spokesmodel for Coach Men’s. He made

his debut in its spring 2019 campaign, and even worked with the Coach creative team to design his look for that year’s Met Gala, an all-black satin-and-sequin tuxedo, the jacket worn down to the knee for extra drama. Jordan still works with Coach, collaborating with creative director Stuart Vevers on gender-neutral capsule collections sold both in-store and online.

What else helped him snag his Coach gig, undoubtedly, is that Jordan has lots of street cred when it comes to streetwear. The guy knows how to rock a bomber jacket, cinched just perfectly to highlight the bulk up top, with slim-cut black jeans and Chelsea boots or high-top sneakers. He has a collection of graphic knit sweaters that most young males wouldn’t dare attempt (though his ring-ready upper body doesn’t hurt here). And his statement outerwear makes us wish it were cold year-round; the dude perfectly combines plaids with checks, neutral colors with bright ones, denim with denim.

Next up for this millennial powerhouse? Off the heels of his 2019 role as Harvard lawyer Bryan Stevenson in *Just Mercy*, he’ll star in the action thriller *Without Remorse*, based on the book by Tom Clancy, now set for release in late February 2021. Jordan also has his own production company, Outlier Society, which strives to tell diverse stories through film.

But despite his budding résumé, Jordan isn’t here for the money, the awards or the free clothes. The actor, who still lives at home with his parents in a house he bought in Sherman Oaks, just likes to make movies. “That’s one of the fun parts of becoming an actor,” he has said. “You can become whoever you want to be.”

That’s whoever you want to, B.

Top, left to right: “I’m a big fan of vests,” Jordan told *People* in 2014 of his red carpet style. “I like vests and ties—the three-piece look without the blazer.”; a bomber jacket atop a casual knit was Jordan’s go-to on the press tour for *Black Panther*. Bottom, left to right: The actor wears his signature graphic sweater under a double-breasted coat during an appearance in New York City; Jordan, photographed here for *GO*, makes a Prada suit look casually cool with sneakers and a quarter-zip sweater.