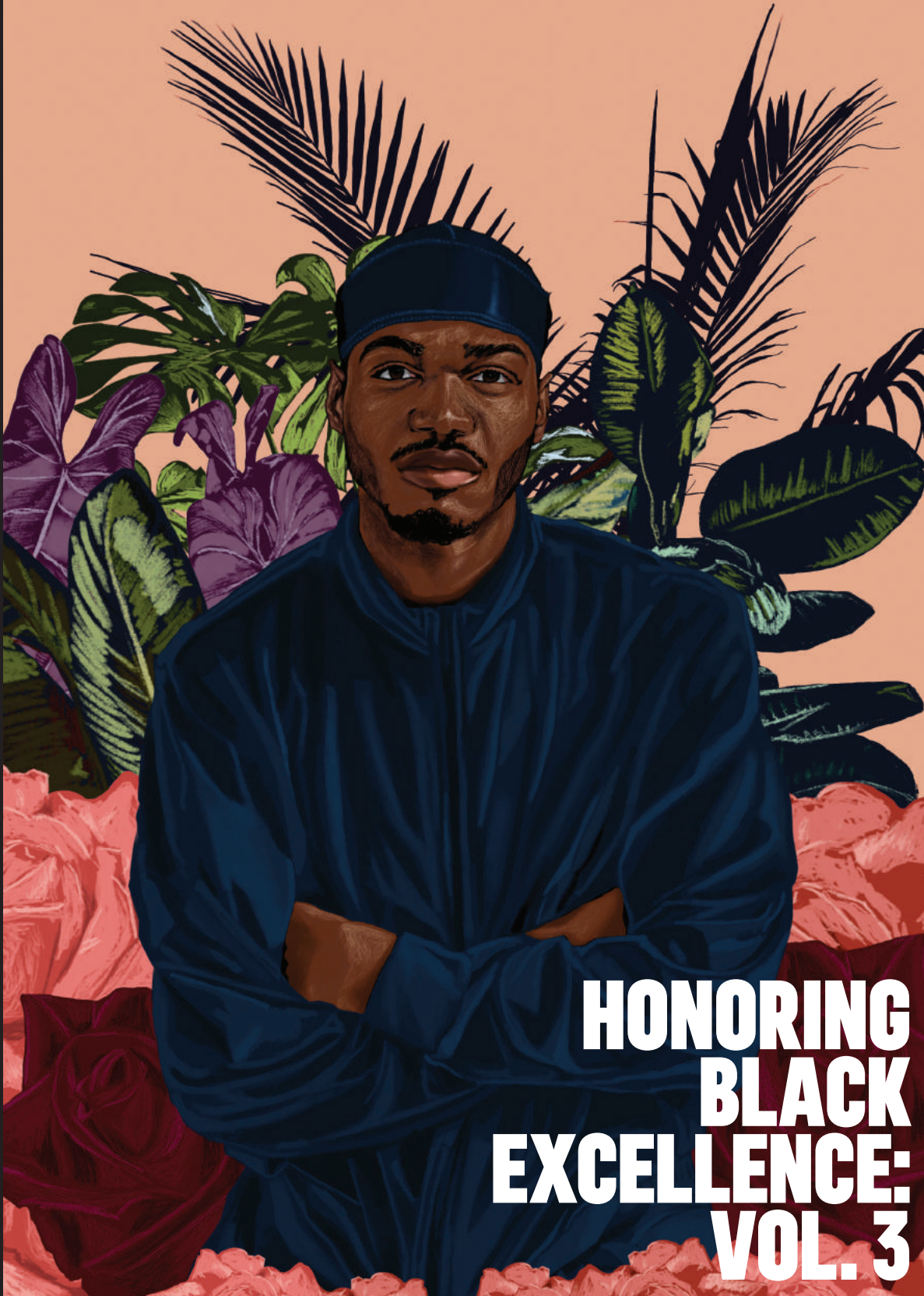


TYSHAWN JONES

BRONX, N.Y. / BRONX, N.Y. / BRONX, N.Y.

**HONORING
BLACK
EXCELLENCE:
VOL. 3**



THE KING DOM



IS WHERE BLACK EXCELLENCE LIVES

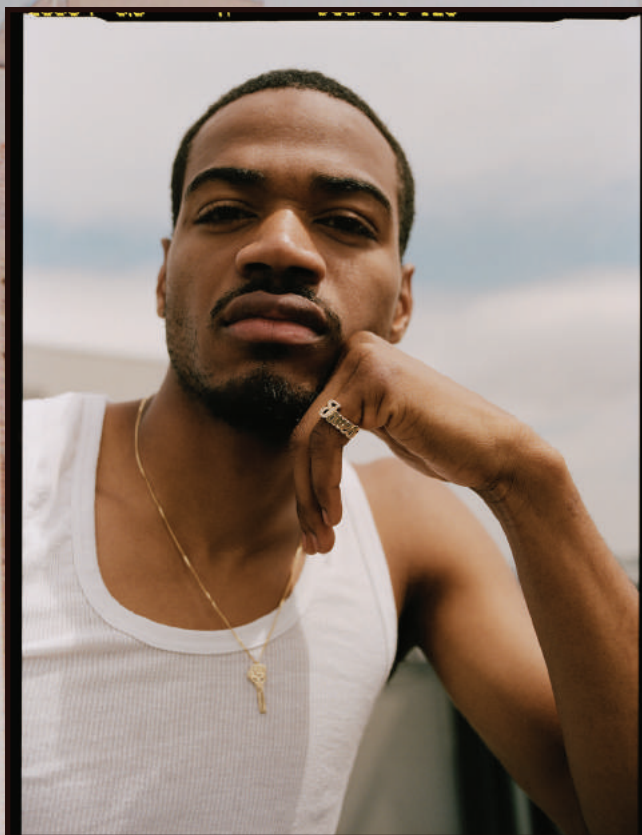
Honoring Black Excellence is an adidas initiative that celebrates the achievements of Black individuals and Black culture as a whole. Sport, culture, and service are rooted in the Black community. For that reason, we're highlighting honorees from all across the country, from elite athletes like Tyshawn, to everyday individuals dedicated to service, offering each one a platform to help give back and share their stories.

We are honored to bring you the story of Tyshawn Jones' athletic career and love of service.

Photos by Zander Taketomo



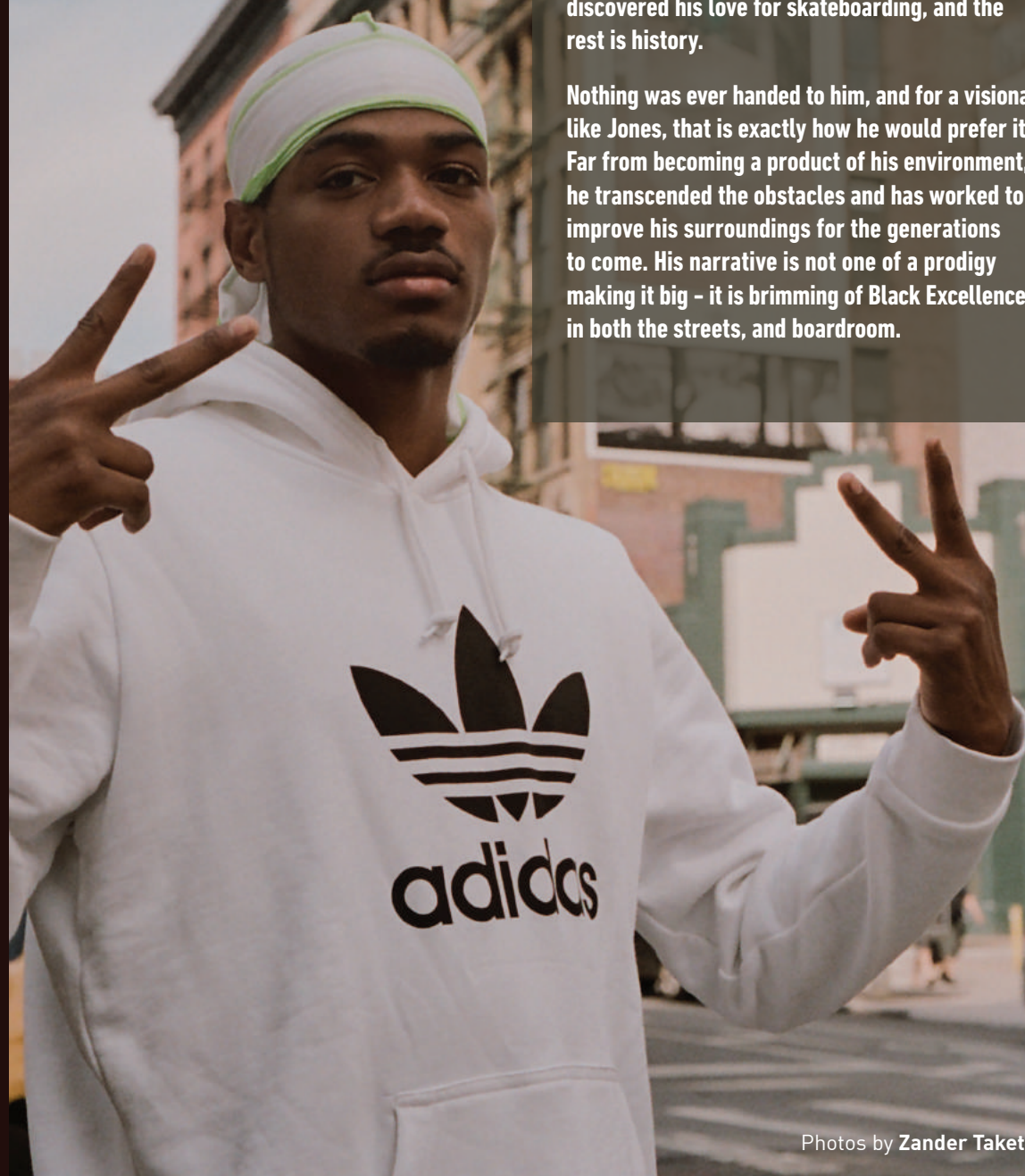
Photos by Zander Taketomo



INTRO

Tyshawn Jones is applying pressure on any and everything around him. He has a combination of intelligence, talent, and work ethic. This is the foundation that helped him break through to become one of the most celebrated talents in recent years. He has emerged as a famed professional athlete and accomplished entrepreneur, after finding his calling in an unconventional way. Nonetheless he discovered his love for skateboarding, and the rest is history.

Nothing was ever handed to him, and for a visionary like Jones, that is exactly how he would prefer it. Far from becoming a product of his environment, he transcended the obstacles and has worked to improve his surroundings for the generations to come. His narrative is not one of a prodigy making it big - it is brimming of Black Excellence in both the streets, and boardroom.

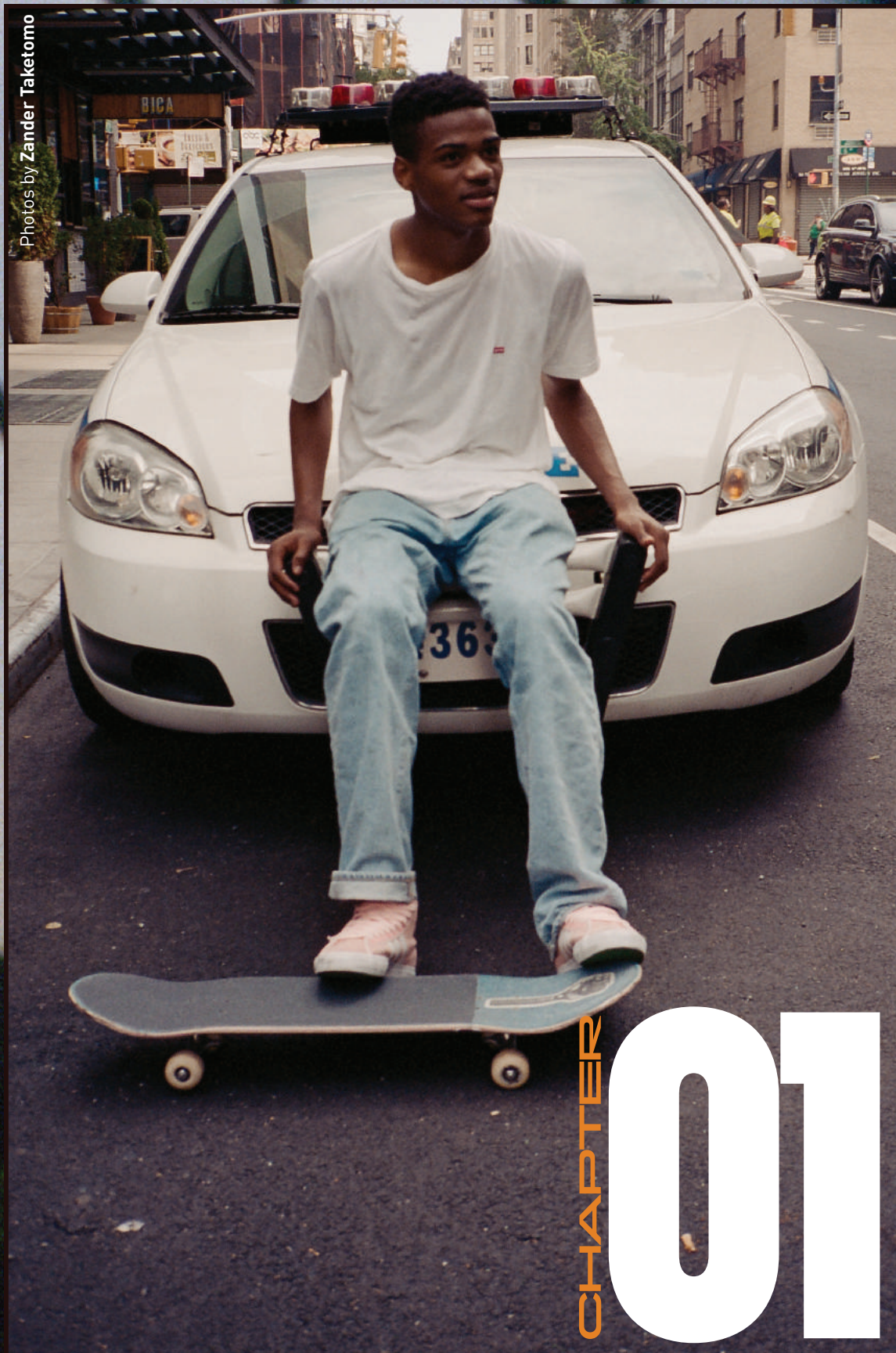


Photos by Zander Taketomo

GOOD KID MAD CITY

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Photos by Zander Taketomo



CHAPTER 01

Photos by Zander Taketomo

DESTINY'S CHILD

Tyshawn's love of all things skate didn't actually start with a skateboard itself, but with a skateboarding video game.

"When you play video games ... you try to learn about the game. We didn't even know about skateboarding at the time, but we were just playing that game," said Jones. "And then my mom was like... 'yo, get out the house... it's summertime, all y'all doing is playing video games.' "

He elaborated further, "we were playing the video game everyday, so we were like, 'let's go buy some skateboards.' Copped those and just kinda kept it going. [My brother] quit after a while because he didn't like falling, but... I just kept skating."

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Photos by Zander Taketomo
Illustrations by Brandon Breaux

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Growing up in Soundview, a secluded section of the Bronx northeast of Manhattan, could leave someone with a feeling of desperation. But for Tyshawn, it quickly became a training ground for him to hone his skills. Armed with spare time and the freedom that comes with owning a skateboard, he began to blossom into a star with raw abilities and an attitude that would never quit.

“You at that age where you starting to use transportation by yourself ... and [we] was ripping and running the streets and meeting new people who were way better than me,” remembers Jones. “So that kinda forced me to progress because, you know, I want to keep up.”

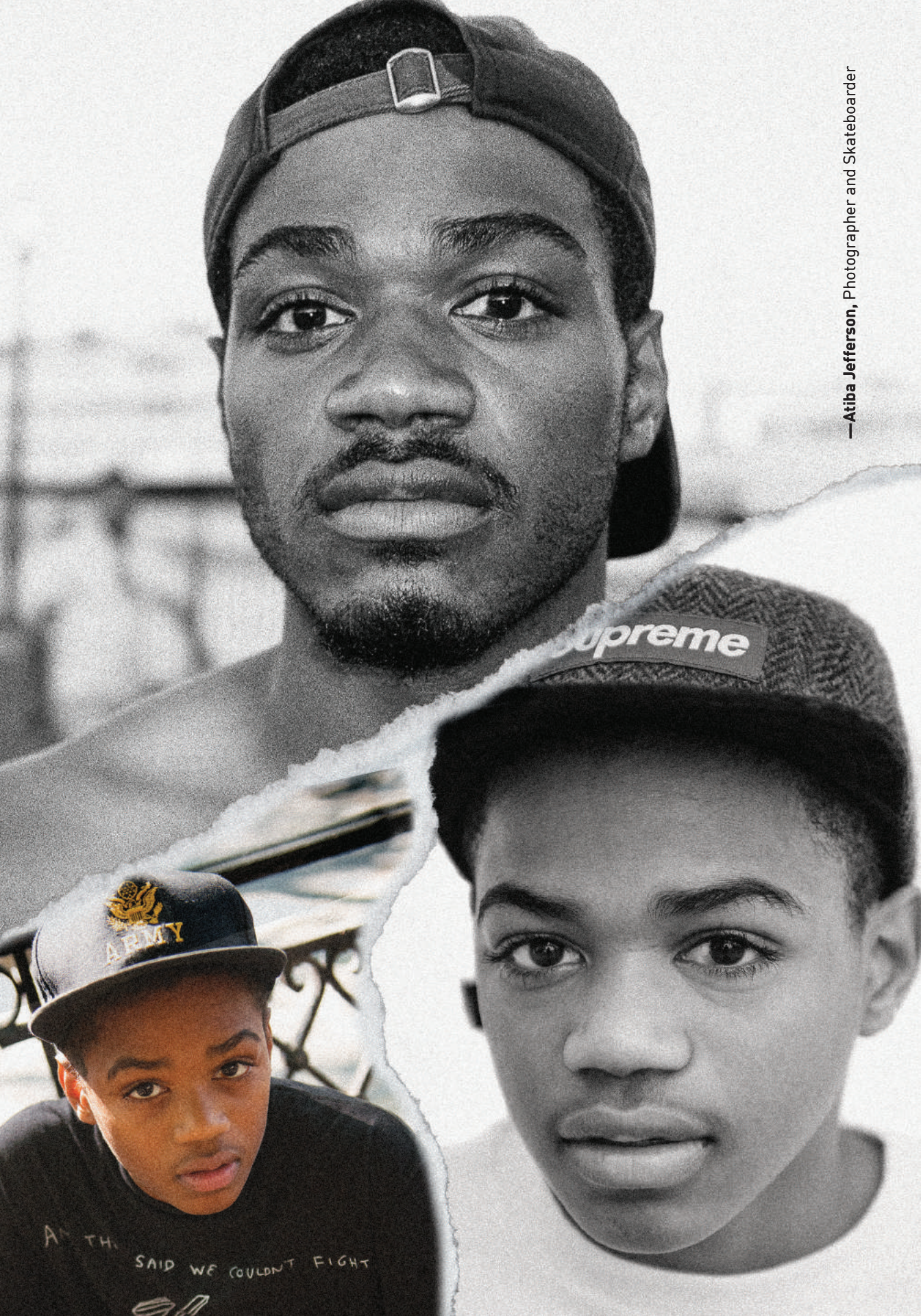
Photos by Zander Taketomo

Tyshawn quickly emerged as one of the fresh new faces on the NYC skateboarding scene, known for his precision, efficiency, and raw talent. He left an impression wherever he skated, with an effortless form and an ability to master tricks that belied his age. A few years after buying his first deck, Jones had separated from the pack and started getting sponsorships. He was garnering the type of attention that can change a person's life and give them the autonomy to truly live out their dreams.

Serendipity struck in 2014, and the fledgling prodigy pushed himself to the precipice of stardom and critical acclaim. He started appearing in clips by videographer Bill Strobeck, which eventually led to him being featured in the “cherry” video, Supreme's first skate video in decades. It proved to be a resurgence for the now-ubiquitous skate brand and a coming-out party for Jones.

Photos by Zander Taketomo





—Atiba Jefferson, Photographer and Skateboarder



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I HAVE KNOWN TYSHAWN SINCE HE WAS 14 AND HIS ONLY FOCUS WAS TO BE GREAT, AND WITHIN 5 YEARS HE BECAME THRASHER SKATER OF THE YEAR.

HE IS A GREAT INFLUENCE TO SO MANY YOUNGER SKATERS, SHOWING THAT NO MATTER THE



COLOR OF YOUR SKIN, YOUR GENDER OR WHERE YOU COME FROM, WITH FOCUS YOU CAN BE GREAT.

AWARD TOUR

In 2018, the skating world honored Tyshawn's tireless efforts and he was named *Thrasher Magazine's* Skater of the Year. While he has never been one to dwell in the moment, he understands the magnitude of the award, stating, "I feel like, once I got it, I ain't never really think nothing of it, like...oh for sure, that's something I wanted to work towards, that's something I wanted to accomplish,' and then I got it and I was like 'for sure...I'm going to chill a little bit then get back.' ... Took a little break, and then got back to skating."

Skater of the Year is no joke. People work their entire lives to be mentioned in the same breath as those who have been anointed with that title. Jones is appreciative of the recognition and honor that comes with the distinction. He attained the highly-coveted title, and his ambition keeps him focused on the next big thing. He is all about enjoying things, then forging forward toward a new task or challenge.



Photos by **Zander Taketomo**
Illustrations by **Brandon Breaux**



CHAPTER 02

Photos by **Zander Taketomo**

"It's a prominent thing and people really love that achievement. I'm like, 'wow, that was in 2018!' I'm still doing interviews to this day and people are like, 'you got this award.' And I hate it, to be honest, because it's like a hit song. ... I want to make a new hit, so that's where I think of it. I love that everyone loves it, but ... I need another one, you know what I'm saying? ... We're about to be in '22. It's about that time. We're going on four years. I need another joint."

For Tyshawn, his "next up" mentally keeps him focused on his craft and riding around the city. No matter the time of year, day, or place, TJ is always looking for the next location to perfect his skillset, which often means skating in places that are less than "skater-friendly."

"I tell them, 'just call the police. Let them make us leave. We ain't hurting nobody. We just trying to skateboard man.'" Jones says, matter-of-factly. "At the end of the day, I get it. That's your job, respectfully. But I gotta do what I gotta do. This is what I want to do and that's it. ... It's passion there too ... because I want to do this and ... this is something I care about."

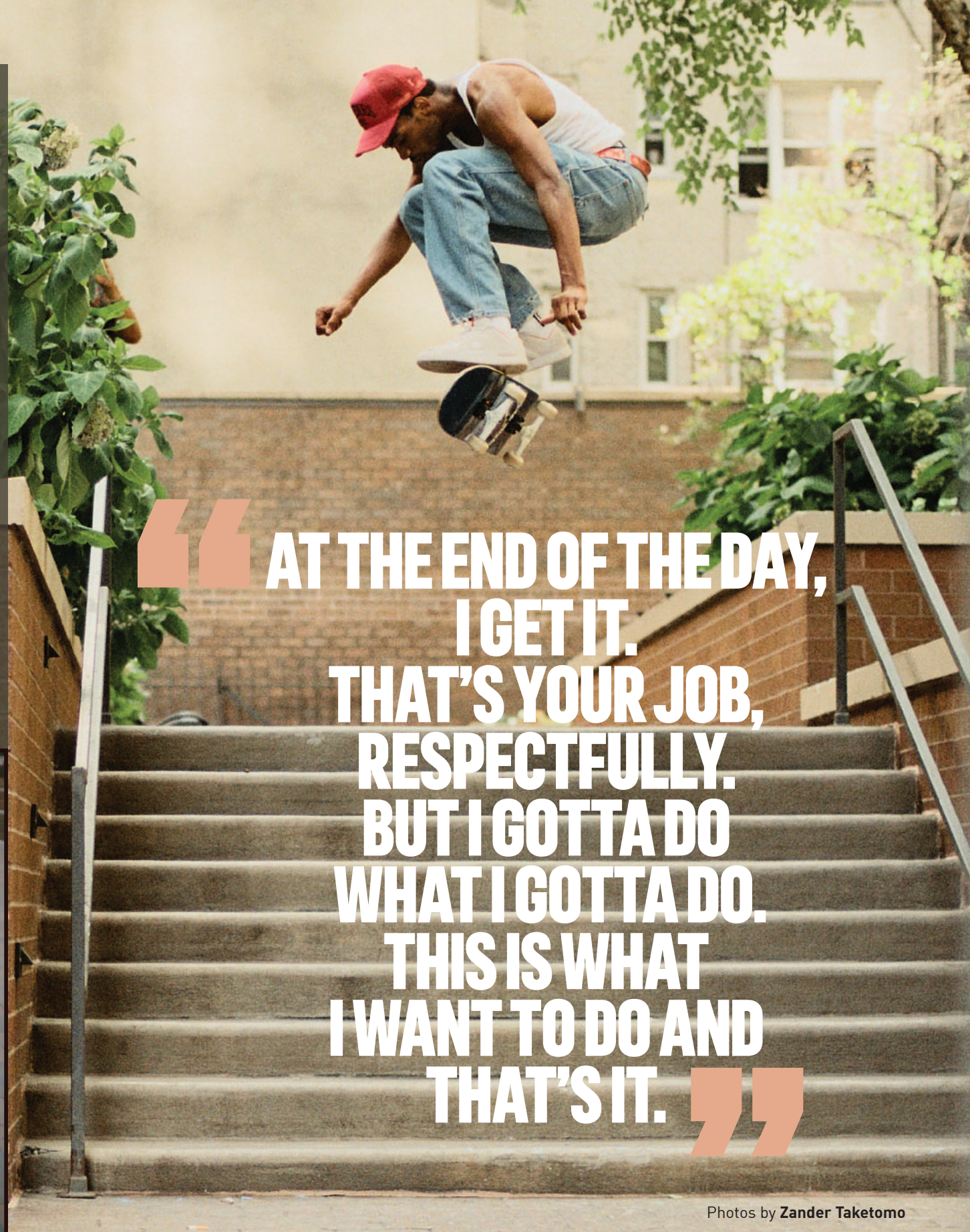
Just like the momentum on a skateboard, Jones' thoughts and dreams are constantly moving forward. He does everything to keep his mind focused more on his sport and businesses, than on the accolades and fanfare. He aspires to always be greater than the day prior. That mindset not only fuels him as an athlete but also as a business professional. He is the owner of Taste So Good restaurant and he co-founded Hardies Hardware, a hardware and accessories line that's become well-known in the skate industry.

He is constantly in search of making today better and brighter. His drive keeps him both humble and hungry. Instead of basking in the glow of his success, he continues to work and prepare for the not-too-distant future.

Through it all, his endearing, Trinidadian mother has been a catalyst for achievement, and his skateboarding. With her support, he has been able to go higher and further than his mind's eye could have ever imagined.

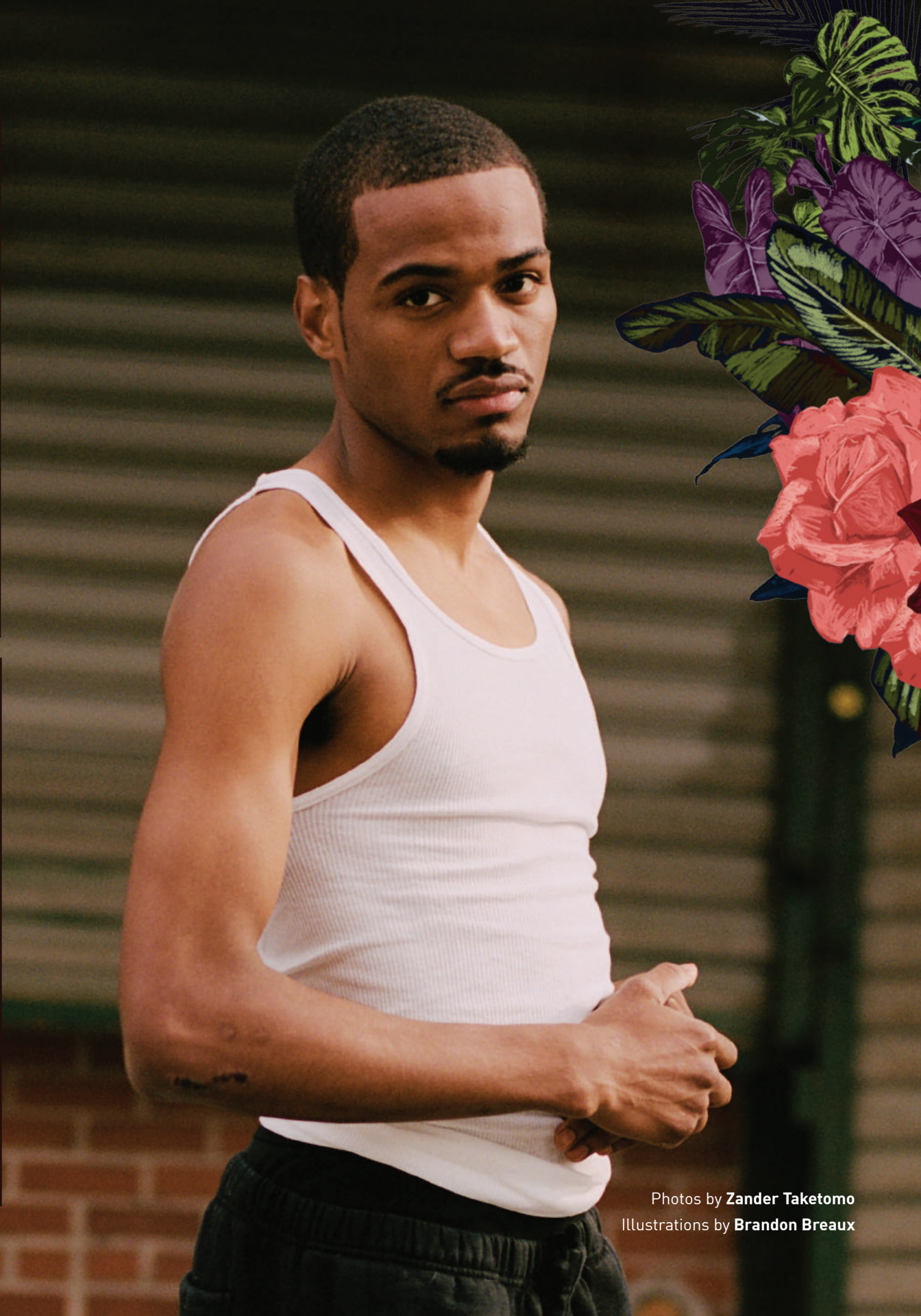


Photos by Zander Taketomo



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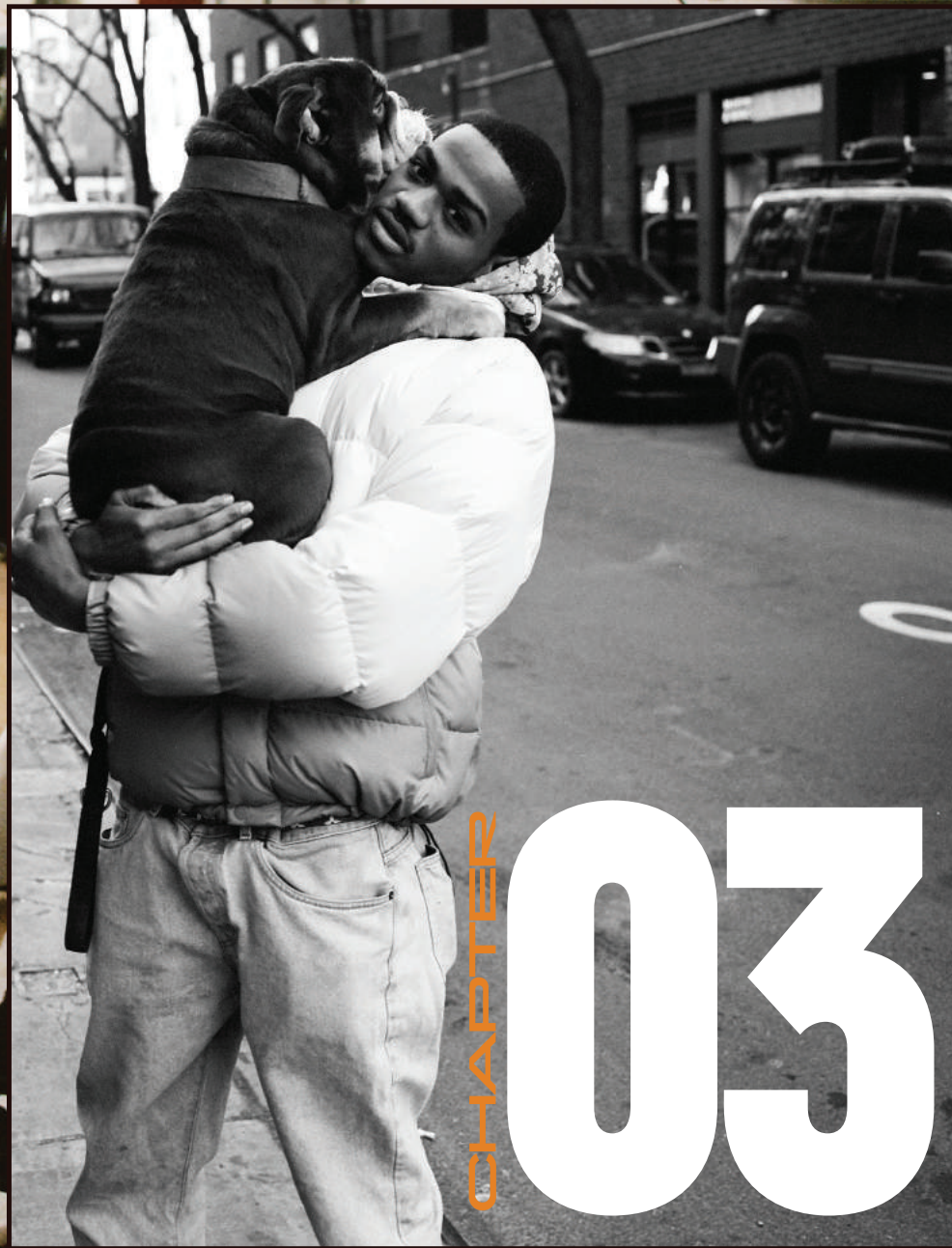
Photos by Zander Taketomo
Illustrations by Brandon Breaux

THE BLUEPRINT



Jones understands the power of his voice, and he acknowledges the time and sacrifices that people gave so he could follow his heart and reach his full potential. His accomplishments propelled his name, image, and likeness around the globe and back; nevertheless, Jones has kept his focus on things that have a deeper meaning and impact on the people who are closest to him and part of his community.

Photos by Zander Taketomo



CHAPTER 03

Photos by Zander Taketomo



Shortly after winning Skater of the Year, he used that success to explore other interests and pour his energy back into his old Bronx neighborhood. The result was Taste So Good, a Caribbean/American restaurant where his mother is head chef. Taste So Good provides his Soundview neighborhood with high-quality food options amidst the vast food deserts that exist in the Bronx. In addition to high-quality meals, the restaurant provides opportunities for his family and friends to achieve and reach higher with jobs that would not necessarily be available to them.

"I've definitely always been a person who ... I want to put the people on," Jones says. But he adds, "I want to put everybody on around me, but you also gotta want it for yourself. Right? You got to want to be there. [If] someone doesn't want to do something, it ain't going to work no matter how good of an idea."

Jones pays homage to one of his mentors, Eric Kelly, a two-time Golden Gloves-winning boxer who runs a training facility in the South Bronx. Kelly has been a leader through his example to Jones. The knowledge and life

lessons he imparted on Jones early in his skate career have had a lasting impact that he now passes to others.

"Whenever he sees a skateboarder, he'll FaceTime me and say, 'yo look who I know,'" says Jones.

Kelly reminds Jones that he's a role model to kids from his neighborhood and that the impact he can have on their lives is hard to measure.

"He always tells me, 'when I was coming up in the boxing world, it was this one boxer who would come to the gym and ... he would spar with me, he would talk to me, and he would come give me gloves and stuff. You don't know what that did for my confidence... That really changed my life. ... He's one of my heroes to this day. I want you to be like that man. I want you to really give back to your community and be there for them, because you don't know what that could do for the next kid coming up under you.'"

**“ ANYTHING
THAT I DO,
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NESS
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There are no limitations to what Tyshawn Jones can and will do. He is a well-known, world-renowned skater, but even more importantly, he wants to make tomorrow brighter for the people and places around him.

“Anything that I do, I do it out of the pureness of my heart,” says Jones. “I’m not trying to get points. I’m not trying to have people look at me and say, ‘he’s a good person ... this is why we should support him.’ I feel like we all see those videos with rappers or somebody handing out money, and their friend is recording it or something. That’s corny. When I do things, I just do it behind closed doors. ... I want it to be genuine.”

SKATE ON BY

Photos by **Zander Taketomo**
Illustrations by **Brandon Breaux**

Photos by **Zander Taketomo**
Illustrations by **Brandon Breaux**



DRIVING IN CARS WITH TYSHAWN

BY RUBA ABU-NIMAH

Anyone who has had the privilege of being a passenger in a car driven by Tyshawn can testify to how scary this can be. Don't get me wrong, TJ is a very good driver. He is skillful behind the wheel and his reaction at any given moment is extraordinarily fast, on a par with his super-human skills as an athlete.

None of this has stopped me from being absolutely infuriated, and at times terrified, with him in a car.

I have often thought about the correlation between his driving and his drive. To say that Tyshawn is relentlessly compelled by the need to accomplish goals, that he's very hard-working and ambitious, is an understatement. He has a compulsive, kinetic, urgent quality, and a driven sense of obligation. He is determined to succeed under any circumstances. Just don't get in his way.

In our world of massive and constant change and ever-increasing complexity, the power rests with those who do, and especially those who act with independence, persistence and self-motivation. Our motivation is our most valuable commodity. Multiplied only by action, its value increases with how we invest it. We are all born with limitless potential, but some, like Tyshawn, know how to sow and reap the seeds of that potential. His God-given talent as a skateboarder, pushed to almost super-human levels, is one thing; but his overarching persistence and internal motivation is something else. TJ sees far into the future and that future does not just involve his sport but areas that most people don't even see as options. He looks through the windshield but rarely through the rear view mirror. TJ doesn't waste time judging, he pushes beyond his comfort zone (and mine).



Photos by Zander Taketomo



I'll get random calls with random questions about this idea or that idea and, most of the time, I hang up and have to wonder where the hell that insane idea came from - but he is dead serious. Tyshawn is humble, but he has little respect for others who lack the same drive. He simply cannot wrap his head around it. So to understand all this is to understand his driving skills. His drive and his driving are consistent with one another. And success is not just about greatness but also about consistency; that is what leads to greatness. Tyshawn's consistency in motivation is what defines him, what drives his absolute need to succeed and also his terrifying driving skills. I don't know how many times I have screamed at him to slow down, but that's just not in his nature.

The bottom line is this: TJ drives too fast, doesn't listen to good (or any) advice, never heeds a warning, respects no authority and certainly fears no risk. I am pretty sure all these traits are the very ingredients to his ultimate success.

Illustrations by Brandon Breaux



Photos by Zander Taketomo



THE
NEXT



adidas

GENERATION

Meet Tyquan Davis - one of the many young skaters inspired by Tyshawn's talent and passion.

When Tyquan was a young kid, he spent his time playing basketball in the local parks of his Miami neighborhood. At age 12, while shooting hoops, he saw a young Tyshawn Jones pulling tricks on a neighboring court and walked over to say hello. "I wasn't even into skating [at the time], I was into the streets - I didn't have no idea who Tyshawn was." The connection between the two was instant - the impact immeasurable. "He meshed with my energy, I liked his energy, and we just locked it in from there."

That chance interaction has changed the course of Tyquan's life. "[Meeting Tyshawn was] a whole turnaround. My life is different. I was... just out here banging around in the streets, in the hood, regular kid, could have fell back to the streets. I met TJ and a lot of stuff just went different."

Since meeting in 2015, Tyquan has spent his summers in New York City, hanging out with Tyshawn and becoming a talented skater in his own right. His love for the sport shines through. Asked what he loves about skateboarding, Tyquan says "the love from it - the way people are about it. It's like, just pure love ain't it? It gotta be in you, it gotta be somethin' you love to do."

Now 18 and a member of the Hardie's Hardware Crew, the future is bright for Tyquan. "I'm still young," he says, "the world's still free for me to figure out everything I wanna do in life." Wherever the future takes him, Tyshawn's love of service will be an influence. "I see how TJ [gives back] and I think it'd be dope for me to do it down here... for my community."

Photos by Ysa Pérez

Photos by Zander Taketomo



Illustrations by Brandon Breaux

Photos by Zander Taketomo



Illustrations by Brandon Breaux

“BLACK EXCELLENCE IS DREAMING BIG”

— TYSHAWN
JONES



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Excellence

Cover art and illustrations by **Brandon Breaux** | @bbreaux