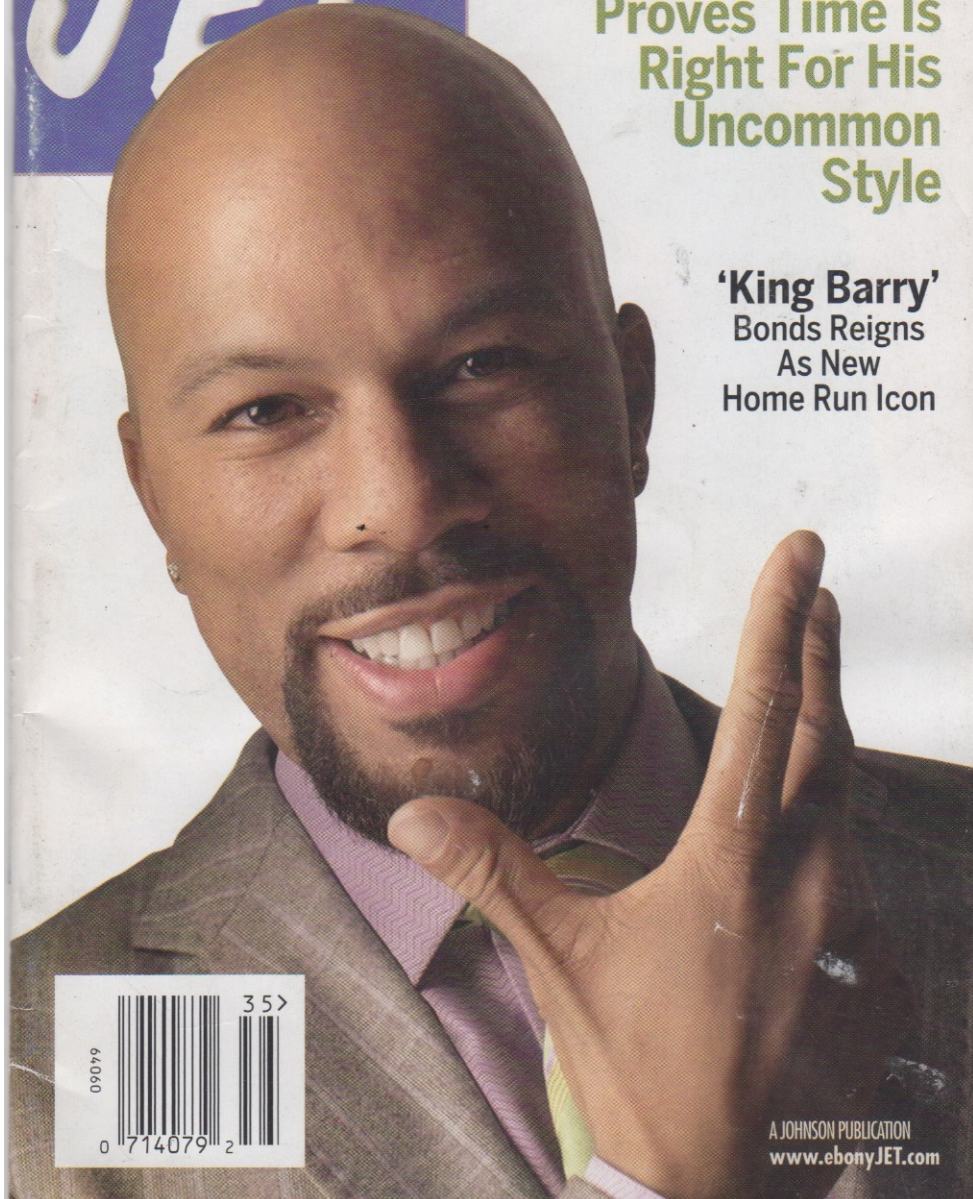


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▲ Vy Higginsen, writer and producer of the Off-Broadway musical *Mama, I Want To Sing!*, greets identical twin brothers, Kenneth George Smith (l) and Keith Louis Smith, who worked together on the film, inspired by the historic production.

Twins From New Orleans Find Niche In Film Industry

By Margena A. Christian
JET MAGAZINE

Filmmakers have been flocking to Louisiana since 2002 because of the tax incentives, which boosted the state's economy to \$344 million in 2005, according to the Louisiana Department of Economic Development. The state now ranks third—behind California and New York—in the number of films produced.

Identical twins Kenneth G. Smith and Keith L. Smith have been right at home. Keith, a Director of Photography (DP), and Kenneth, a dolly grip, are New Orleans natives who recently filmed *Mama, I Want To Sing!* in Baton Rouge.

"When I found out the film industry was taking off in Louisiana, it was perfect for me," said Kenneth, who returned to New Orleans after a four-year stay in

Los Angeles.

Keith, who's been in the industry for 12 years—six as a DP—lives in Los Angeles. A cinematographer, also known as a DP, is the chief over the camera and lighting and works closely with the director.

"Not many Blacks helm a film," said Keith, who earned a master of fine arts in cinematography from the American Film Institute (AFI). "The one thing about the industry is that it's like a forgotten thing. It's like the Black quarterback. They don't consider that because it's a very technical position. You're out in front and you're the catalyst behind the film and you don't see it that often."

A graduate of Xavier University, Keith shot news and promotion photography at WWL, the CBS affiliate in New Orleans. On a whim, he applied to AFI.