

shawn's star turn

Ever wonder what it's like to traipse in the footsteps of a successful older sibling? Ask Shawn Wayans; success is a permanent relative in his family and it goes by the names of Keenan and Damon. "A lot of people don't know I do stand-up, so they don't expect that much," Shawn says. "I know they expect me to be funny,



shawn's career is taking off, so why's he sitting?

but they don't know how funny I can be, and a lot of people are surprised."

At age 22, he has secured a coveted role on the highly popular FOX t.v. series *In Living Color*. Of course, it didn't hurt to have big brother Keenan as the top man in charge of the show, but in Shawn's case, it didn't help a whole lot, either. He still had to pay his dues. "I started out as a production assistant/runner. I would get coffee and drive the cast members around and pick them up," he explains.

The position lasted a month—until he was fired by another producer who became upset because Shawn went home sick. He was re-hired and became an apprentice writer.

From there he became the dj, SW-1.

After two seasons of working the turntables for the funky Fly Girls, he became a regular cast member.

So what's the biggest downside to all this newfound success? "There's a lot of pressure," Shawn says.

"People expect a certain quality of work from you."

Still, things just keep getting bigger and better for this brother. He, like the rest of the Wayans cast members, will not be returning to *In Living Color* next season. Instead, he's going to strike out on his own and concentrate on writing and performing stand-up. "I want

to write, direct, produce and star in my own movie," he explains. What kind of movie? "Romantic comedy, action comedy, comedy period." And true to the family tradition, the movie, which he has already started writing, will feature some of his siblings.

Shawn is certainly no stranger to comedy. Since age 12, he has aspired to be a comedian, and at age 17, he first performed at the New York Comic Strip. "Seeing my older brothers do comedy made me want to do it. All we did was crack jokes growing up. [I] might as well get paid for it."

His stand-up routine centers largely around growing up in a large family. He cracks jokes about *The Brady Bunch* and how Bobby would throw temper tantrums and run from the dinner table. Shawn explains that in his family of the 10 Wayanses, you would want to take your dinner with you. He should know, he's the ninth of 10 children.

The comedian will continue taking his act on the road this summer, making appearances at clubs and colleges on the comedy circuit. He's also been touring the country, headlining at comedy clubs and appearing in concert with Damon. Plus, there's talk that Shawn may be on a sitcom next year.

In his spare time (when he can find any, that is), he tries to get in a game of basketball and catch a few Z's, two of his favorite pastimes. Shawn also takes acting classes—he's been studying acting for about four years. You can never learn enough—and that's a sentiment this member of the Wayans clan firmly believes in.

—sibylla nash