



**\*\*Offices located in LA & NYC\*\***

8060 Melrose Avenue

4th Floor

Los Angeles, CA 90046

Email: [AGPR@AndersonGroupPR.com](mailto:AGPR@AndersonGroupPR.com)

O: 323.655.1008

## **MAX TALISMAN**



# BIOGRAPHY



Actor, singer, writer and creative force, Max Talisman is set to make his directorial debut in his upcoming gay romantic comedy, THINGS LIKE THIS. The film has assembled an ensemble cast of **Tionne “T-Boz” Watkins** (TLC), **Eric Roberts** (The Dark Knight), **Michael D. Cohen** (Henry Danger), **Jasmin Savoy Brown** (For the People) **Charlie Tahan** (Ozark), **Dyan Cannon** (Kangaroo Jack), **Santwon McCray** (MTV’s Wild n’ Out), **Krista Allen** (Significant Mother), **Miles Tagtmeyer** (Broken), **Terry Moore** (Hollywood Golden Age Academy Nominated Icon), **Mitchell Hoog** (“Saved by the Bell” Reboot), and **Willam Belli** (“A Star is Born”) and many more.

Being an openly gay millennial man in the industry, he felt that there was a need to create a movie that didn’t tell a story about coming out nor a story about two men already established far in life, but rather a story of the in between. THINGS LIKE THIS answers the questions about what happens when you fall in love in a big city and suddenly you experience misunderstandings, a reckoning with destiny and all the turmoil that arises in relationships. The story will not only speak to the LGBTQ+ community, but it will also share a universal message of love and how we all run away from those who we need the most.

Growing up in Washington DC, Max started performing in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. He participated in musical theatre, including productions at the Musical Theatre Center (MTC), one of the leading performing arts education organizations for young people in the Washington DC area. It was the moment when he played the 2<sup>nd</sup> lead role in the through-composed musical, “Caroline, or Change” that he felt theatre was his calling. When his senior year of high school began, Max made the courageous move to NYC to follow his passion for theatre. He joined the Broadway Artists Alliance, a professional training academy for promising young musical theatre performers right in the heart of New York City. After living in the big apple for 5 years, he decided to make his way to Hollywood, California. He’s appeared in Netflix’s “Orange is the New Black,” The Orchard’s SUPER DARK TIMES, HBO Max’s “Search Party” and NBC’s “The Blacklist”.

Overcoming Legg-Calvé-Perthes disease (LCPD) and anxiety, this rising star doesn’t let these challenges prevent him from enjoying his life. He has a keen love for sports and when he’s not watching games on TV or at stadiums, he keeps up with the standings/scores on teams such as the LA Lakers, the Washington Redskins and the Baltimore Orioles. He is also an avid tennis and ping pong player, crediting Serena Williams as his role model.

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# DEADLINE

## Max Talisman To Helm ‘Things Like This’



Orange Is the New Black actor Max Talisman is marking his screenwriting and directorial debut with modern-day, romantic comedy, *Things Like This*. Talisman has assembled an ensemble cast of Tionne “T-Boz” Watkins (TLC), Eric Roberts (The Dark Knight), Michael D. Cohen (Henry Danger), Jasmin Savoy Brown (For the People) Charlie Tahan (Ozark), Dyan Cannon (Kangaroo Jack), Santwon McCray (MTV’s Wild n’ Out), Krista Allen (Significant Mother), Miles Tagtmeyer (Broken), and Jake Reiner, grandson of the late Carl Reiner. The plot centers around two young gay men with the same name living in NYC that fall in love and it appears that the universe has brought them together. Buzz Koenig of Opposite Field Pictures and Andrew Burrill of Sovereign Talent are producing. Talisman, also known for horror drama, *Super Dark Times*, is repped by Sovereign Talent Group and Connecting Talent Company.

<https://deadline.com/2020/07/gina-prince-bythewood-kasi-lemmons-black-carpet-speaker-series-max-talisman-things-like-this-freestyle-digital-the-silent-natural-film-briefs-1202991441/>

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## ‘They Aren’t Just Playing The Funny Fat Friend’: How TV And Film Is Redefining Plus Size Representation On Screen

Shows like *Shrill* and *This Is Us* are presenting more progressive and complex images of plus sized people, but there is still a long way to go.



Max Talisman, an actor based in the States, has created a plus size role which he feels speaks to his experience. It’s a response to how he feels there is a lack of available roles which truly reflect his life.

“That’s why I started writing,” he says, “in order to create the roles I didn’t see already in the landscape of what plus size actors can play.”

Max has written and stars in the forthcoming rom-com *Things Like This*, where he plays a queer plus size lead.

“Funding has always been an uphill battle for the film because not only are we telling a queer story made by queer people, but also one of our romantic leads is plus sized,” he says.

## **HUFFPOST**

“I’m lucky that I have a never give up attitude, and that has allowed me to keep getting my movie made, but the truth is that the body shamers aren’t just in Hollywood, but in the queer community at large as well, and that absolutely needs to change.”

[https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/plus-size-actors-industry-change\\_uk\\_601ab4a9c5b6f41348c5bcb8](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/plus-size-actors-industry-change_uk_601ab4a9c5b6f41348c5bcb8)

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# Bella

## Max Talisman



Breaking Barriers with Max Talisman

Max Talisman is a force within the filmmaking industry as an actor, director, and writer. Max started performing at a young age and continued to work on projects like Super Dark Times. Dedicated to representation in entertainment, he went on to write his own romantic comedy which he will star as

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the lead role in. Max spoke with us about his dreams and aspirations, his love for Serena Williams, and about his exciting new movie Things Like This.



What inspired you to write THINGS LIKE THIS?

When I was originally writing my first feature, I was drawn to something a little darker. Originally, I was writing a horror movie about sleep paralysis. Basically, while I was writing that, I was noticing that there were (finally) some queer romantic comedies being released. Love, Simon was first, followed by Alex Strangelove, and then there were a few more. All of these movies were mostly about coming out and the romantic part was a subplot, to the major struggle of these characters coming out. All of the sudden I was struck by the fact that there is no romantic comedy about two gay men, after coming out, just falling in love. Coming out is such a specific part of the journey, but my story as a gay man only began when I came out and that was a long time ago. During my whole adult life, I have been out of the closet and I know that there are thousands and thousands of gay men who haven't felt represented by seeing a true love story between two men, where coming out has already happened, and the fact that they're gay is just a fact. For this reason, Things Like This had to be made and is in the process of being made. When I realized there was a need, I stopped writing my sleep paralysis script and, in a week, and a half I had my first draft of the script

for Things Like This. I wrote this movie because I can't imagine anything else being my first script, at the end of the day. I am so proud to be bringing a genuinely funny, and heartwarming gay love story to the screen.

How did you select the amazing group of cast members?

Luck. I'm kind of joking, but the absolutely stunning cast that we have assembled is beyond my wildest dreams. The first person I sent to with the script is my good friend and costar from Super Dark Times and "Ozark" star Charlie Tahan. When you make connections on a set, like the one we made working together, it just makes you want to work together again and again – I love Charlie! Let's talk about all the other breathtaking talent we've been able to secure. Academy Award Nominee Eric Roberts, this man stars in, The Dark Knight, which is my absolute favorite movie of all time. I just wish someone could have whispered to "little Max" watching TDK in 2008 and told him, you're going to work with that actor playing Falconi. It's just too much for words. We also have 3X Academy Award Nominee Dyan Cannon; we had always hoped we'd find someone who would knock her part out of the park. My mom showed my family Heaven Can Wait, when we were very, very young and now, I have the opportunity to work with one of Hollywood's greatest icons. So, this

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is another situation where I'm pinching myself at the casting because it's almost serendipitous. Jasmin Savoy Brown, is one of the most talented young actresses around and I've known her since we were juniors in high school, so when we were casting this part, I knew she's who I wanted. There are so many iconic people in this film that I am only scratching the surface. With that said, 4X Grammy Award Winning Superstar T-Boz is gracing us with her fabulousness – Beyoncé called her one of HER heroes. This is a cast that doesn't come around every day. Michael D. Cohen (Henry Danger), Romy and Jake Reiner, and Krista Allan (Liar, Liar) are some of the other stunning actors we have. It would be remiss of me not to mention Primetime Emmy Nominee Miles Tagtmeyer, who will be playing the other romantic lead. He sent me the greatest audition tape I have seen in my life and his third scene on the tape made me cry. It was not an easy role to cast at all but he is the perfect actor to bring Zack Mandel to life and he's such an incredible person beyond that. Miles and I have created a true friendship, that will make our chemistry palpable. I'm just so excited!

What was your favorite part about working in theater?

My favorite part of working in theater was getting to interact with an audience. There's a special relationship between a theater performer and the audience, when it's live. Its hard to put into words but I genuinely miss that part quite a lot. I think that performing in a live setting makes you more ready to be on a film set. You can imagine how an audience would react to your scenes and your lines. I will also say that performing as a child in Washington DC, was the beginning of a dream that would come into fruition. It just shows that any stage is an important stage to be performing on, because you never know where the next stage will be.

How did your theater career help prepare you for the big screen?

I think it helped me in a lot of ways. As a director, I think it's made me be much more collaborative, at least off the bat. My natural instinct, because of theater, is to make each scene a team effort, with me really as a team leader more than anything else. Theater is such a collaborative art and everyone is working together to make something beautiful. I think that can be true to film too, especially when you're working with the right team. So, transferring that kind of work ethic to the screen has been extremely helpful for me. Also, it has given me a deep love for improvisation, which while working on comedy, is one of the most important devices to getting some comedy gold. I love when a director gives me permission to riff on a set. I remember when I did "Orange is the New Black" Matthew Weiner was directing the episode,





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and he gave us permission to just go for it and create some beautiful organic moments. Kevin Phillips did the same on Super Dark Times. When a director gives you the support for improvisation, my theater background has given me all the tools I need to create some magic. Dyan Cannon texted me asking if I would allow improvisation on set, and I told her that I think we'll be making a huge mistake not to and she just responded, "bravo." Improv can create moments that become truly iconic. They create life in comedy.

Discuss your first memory of performing.

When I was 12 and 13 years old, I starred in the regional premiere of *Caroline, Or Change*, in Washington DC. I took two days off during the run of the show for my bar mitzvah but I was so excited to get back because that show was really my first taste at what it was like to be a working professional in this industry. All of my cast mates have such a deep love for performing, and I'm extremely grateful that they let me feel like one of the gang. I was invited to all dinners, all hangouts, and even after show drinks, although I had soda! I felt that being part of the show, validated the fact that performing and working in this industry was my calling. To be able to experience that at such a young age is something I'm deeply grateful for. I'm not sure I'd be the performer or actor I am, if it weren't for that production and time in my life.

Do you have a favorite memory working on Super Dark Times from on or off set?

I have a lot of amazing stories about Super Dark Times and filming that movie was one of the best months of my life. I would say my favorite part is making the connections and friendships that I made on the set of that film. My favorite moment was probably our last day of filming. We had all created a family, it's true. On the last day of filming, I had a scene where my character has a monologue and so for two hours, I just got to hang with some of my new best friends and shared a crazy story, while walking in a gorgeous setting. When we wrapped the scene, the entire team had flowers ready for us. We laughed, we cried, and we drank. Then we partied the night away. Those moments stay with you forever.

Who is your dream dinner guest and why?

Serena Williams. She's just the most inspiring person in this world to me. What she has done goes far beyond tennis, and her impact on the court. I'm a huge fan of her as a player, but more importantly a human being. I really would love to just hear how she became such a fierce force of nature. Her work ethic, her drive. It goes beyond what almost anyone has done, and so I'd love to learn what pushes her forward every single day. I'm currently writing her a cameo in the movie, which if she does it, it would be beyond words. She is such a paragon of what it means to be a fighter. She has been close to her deathbed twice, and both times has come back to play at Wimbledon. Her will of spirit is something we all need to learn from. I hope someday I have the chance to sit in a room with her and just tell her how her journey has inspired me every single day. Every day I wake up and I tell myself "live today like Serena and push yourself to be the best version of yourself that you could ever be." That's what she does every day. I'm in awe and I could go on about the importance of Serena Williams for days.

What is your dream role?

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I will say getting to play a romantic lead in a gay romantic comedy that I wrote is pretty dream role worthy. Especially as someone who doesn't fit what some misguided people consider a "normal" leading man should look like. I hope to have the chance to have many dream roles, and dreams be realized. I want to keep pushing boundaries on what people would expect me to play. I think it's



important to challenge these parameters we have created in what we think a person should play on screen.

Is there someone you would love to collaborate with? What kind of project would you want to do?

I am waiting to be a series regular on a sitcom and really sink my teeth into a show and character for at least one season! I even have 13 episodes of a show I wrote ready to go. As far as collaborators, I love "You're the Worst" and "Happy Endings," so working and collaborating with either Stephen Falk, or David Caspe would be a dream for me. They both have created shows that are funny but hit you in the heart when you least expect it with real beauty, and deeply human moments. I would love to work with Australian Comedian, Actor, and Writer Josh Thomas. I think he's creating some really amazing work, especially in the queer community, and I think we'd have a lot of fun collaborating together. Lastly, Pamela Adlon is doing some of the best work on TV right now both behind the camera, and in front of it, on "Better Things."

What does representation in the industry mean to you? What would you like to see more of?

Representation means that I don't have to use the word "gay" to describe my romcom. Right now I do, and I know I do. I'm honestly just so happy that I get to make this movie and that it can break some barriers, but I just want to refer to it as a romantic comedy, with no other qualifiers. These questions are deeply important because we need to take stock of how we are representing every single community. The world is so gorgeous but it's gorgeous because of humanities differences. Everyone is beautiful, special, and deserves to have their story told, and deserves to see themselves on screen. I would like to see more of movies where there are many, many different identities, and people. I want to see many, many more trans stories told. The fact that there isn't a movie honoring Marsha P. Johnson, or Sylvia Rivera yet is shocking. These trans women of color began the LGBTQ rights movement, and no one had thought to tell their story? This goes far beyond that. Until our content reflects the beautiful diversity that this world truly is, then I think we need to do better.

<https://bellomag.com/max-talisman/>

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# PHOTOBOOK

SUSTAINABLE FASHION MAGAZINE



## MAX TALISMAN

Max Talisman will be directing and starring in *Things Like This*, a film he wrote. Being a gay millennial man in the industry, he believed there was a need to create a movie that didn't tell a story about coming out or a story about two men already established in life, but rather a story of the in-between. He wanted to make sure that many GenZ and millennial gay men can relate to the narrative he will portray. He thinks there's little content for the LGBTQ community

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in entertainment, but he is happy with the many pioneers who fight for diversity, and he wants to be part of the shift in film.



Where did the connection of the arts come into your life as something to pursue? What led you to the film industry in the first place?

I grew up doing theater professionally in New York City and while I loved the direct connection with the audience that theater gave me, I craved the connection to a larger audience to make a difference. I needed to expand my reach. So, when I realized that film offered that ability through art, it became super clear where I needed to put all of my artistic efforts. I love acting and writing, it gives me a way to connect to people. Being able to grow the audience in this incredible way, that's a gift.

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Your current project, *Things Like This*, is set for production this year, how did the horror script turn into comedy, and what was your purpose/inspiration for writing it?

I would be writing something and all of the sudden what was meant to be terrifying would become hilarious. Characters would make side comments that were super funny, or even the villain would do something that was a joke. Then, all of a sudden it just became clear to me, it's not what I was supposed to be writing at that time.



Around this time, movies like “*Love, Simon*” and “*Alex Strangelove*” were being made. While I loved both of these films, and I am so happy they were made, they started a trend of LGBTQ movies being made and solely dealing with the issue of coming out. But the thing is that coming out is just one beginning of a queer person’s journey. I’m sure to a straight person the idea of coming out seems fascinating, but for me, I just needed a movie about two gay people falling in love, without coming out being part of the equation. I didn’t realize how my need was in itself revolutionary until I started writing something that was what I was craving.

When I started writing *Things Like This*, I finished the first draft in a week. So much has changed in it since that first draft. But once I started writing, I could not stop. From the beginning, making this movie has been a necessity.

What is your specific role in the film, and what thoughts, or ideas, did you have when you first began to write it?

My role in the film is a romantic leading man. For me, having someone who is gay, and my size, playing a romantic lead in a feature is a game-changer. I always knew that it was something I needed to do. Challenge the ideas of what a leading man is, and what it can be. I know that I have the capabilities to be a leading man, I just needed the project, and the space to do it. So, I created that space.

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You want to make a difference to the LGBTQ community in Hollywood. How does your lens on this film project impact your perspective? How do you hope to change it?

I hope to change it by opening the door to telling more queer stories, with diversity in what those stories are. I think we need to see queer or trans leading characters where their sexuality or gender identity is never the point of the story. They just are who they are. I am so excited to be leading a cast of incredible actors, and we have one of the most openly queer casts that have ever existed. Imagine being a young queer person and seeing this movie, with all of our actors. That's beautiful. That's exciting to me. That's how I want to impact this industry.



You've had an exciting acting career with filming Super Dark Times, Orange is the New Black, and more. Do you prefer acting or screenwriting?

I actually prefer acting. I find it incredibly exciting to get to bring a character to life on screen. At the

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end of the day, I find it just as exciting to bring someone else's writing to life as my own. I started writing to create more roles for people like me and I will continue to do that. I hope other people start to create more roles like that as well. That's why I'm doing it.

How long did it take you to write your current project, Things Like This?

The first draft took me a week but after that, it was a year-long process. I don't think you ever stop editing until you're shooting it. That's what I have learned.

What are your most exciting moments in Things Like This? What was your main intention behind the film's genre?

The most exciting moments for me are those I have never seen on screen before. And in some ways, those are the quietest most simple moments. My main intention is to show a love story without any need to qualify it as a gay story. This is a universal love story, and any person will be able to relate to it. I can't wait for all audiences to fall in love with our movie, and the deep love story within it.

What is your life motto?

Trust your instincts.

Can you link us with your social media's?

Social: [@themaxtshow](#)

Website: [maxtalisman.com](#)

Interview by [Alaina Randazzo](#)

<https://www.photobookmagazine.com/features/2021/1/27/max-talisman>

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**AUTHORITY MAGAZINE**

## **Rising Star Max Talisman: “It’s about knowing your value over what people say your value is”**



As a part of our series about pop culture’s rising stars, I had the distinct pleasure of interviewing Max Talisman.

Actor, singer, writer and creative force, Max Talisman is set to make his writing and directorial debut in his upcoming gay romantic comedy, *THINGS LIKE THIS*. The film will star Charlie Tahan (Netflix’s “Ozark”), Eric Roberts (*THE DARK KNIGHT*) and Miles Tagtmeyer (*DISNEY DESCENDANTS: SCHOOL OF SECRETS*), about two men falling in love. It seems like everything is aligned for them to fall in love; they have the same name, they have a lot of the same traits and it just seems like fate has brought them together. However, what is meant to be isn’t always what it seems. Max was drawn to write this story because he felt that there were stories portraying high school students “coming out” or stories about gay couples that were far along in their lives but not many stories about the in between.





When his senior year of high school began, Max made the courageous move to NYC to follow his passion for theatre. He joined the Broadway Artists Alliance, a professional training academy for promising young musical theatre performers right in the heart of New York City. After living in the big apple for 5 years, he decided to make his way to Hollywood, California. He's appeared in The Orchard's SUPER DARK TIMES, TBS' "Search Party" and NBC's "The Blacklist".

With a life of travel, art, and hobbies, Max hopes to incorporate all his current and future life experiences in all he does. He hopes to be a role model for the LGBTQ community and break stereotypical barriers/roles in Hollywood.

Remember your worth.... it's about knowing your value over what people say your value is. I think that we have to know who we are and what we deserve. So trust in that!

Thank you so much for doing this with us! Can you share a story with us about what brought you to this specific career path?

I have always felt like this was my only path. I used to tell my mom growing up that I wanted to "write,

direct and star in my own shows", and now I'm weirdly enough doing it. It's a crazy thing to actually be following your passions and dreams, but I wouldn't trade it for anything else and I'm so incredibly lucky to begin this journey. There's so much I want to do, and I am just so excited to do it!

Can you tell us the most interesting story that happened to you since you began your career?

When I did "Super Dark Times" they made a dummy of me so they could have scenes with my body \*SPOILER ALERT\* after my character unfortunately gets brutally killed. But because we filmed my death scene in the rain, the producers noticed that when my hair gets wet, it curls in the front.

Because my hair curled in the front, they had to do that with the dummy. Unfortunately for me, and the film, the budget didn't allow for a more expensive wig that could curl. Which meant that I had to be in the scenes that was meant for the dummy and I spent hours holding my breath, in the wet leaves, while it rained. So that was an adventure!

What are some of the most interesting or exciting projects you are working on now?

THINGS LIKE THIS began because I was writing a horror movie, and the scenes kept deviating into a comedy. So, I thought that the signs were pointing me to write what I know, which is a comedy. Around this time LOVE SIMON and ALEX STRANGELOVE were released, which are incredible films and I'm so grateful they were made. However, both of those movies are so focused on the struggle of coming out. While, I came out seven years ago, my adult life truly began once I came out. So, I felt it was important to tell that part of the story. Where gay people just fall in love and coming out isn't in the equation anymore. I wanted to tell a story that was universal in it's journey of two young people falling in love. We haven't seen that with a gay couple and that's where this movies journey began.

Can you share a story about the funniest mistake you made when you were first starting? Can you tell us what lesson you learned from that?

So many! I'm not even sure where to begin. I think a script can be improved every day until you shoot the pages. Since I'm so new to writing film, and directing a movie, I'm learning new things every single day. I'm completely open to learning those things and I'm here to learn. I think the biggest mistake I made was the original way it ended. The ending has changed multiple times, in



many ways. I think I've been searching for that ending this entire time, when the truth was that the simplest answer turned out to be the best way to go. The lesson I took from it was that sometimes overthinking things can have a negative effect on the process, and the film.

We are very interested in diversity in the entertainment industry. Can you share three reasons with our readers about why you think it's important to have diversity represented in film and television? How can that potentially affect our culture?

I'm very interested in diversity in film too. The reason I want to make films is so underrepresented people feel seen on screen. The biggest reason this is important is for the youth who need to feel represented. I believe deeply that we need to encourage young people to be proud in who they are. And we can do that by telling stories that they can relate to. If I had a movie like THINGS LIKE THIS growing up, it could have done so much good for me.

Another reason this is important is because the face of our country and the world in general is changing. Diversity exists in the world around us, and that should be reflected in film. And the last reason I'll say now, although I believe there are innumerable reasons why this is important, is to educate. There are people who are afraid of the "other". They fear what is different from them because they don't understand it. I believe that through film and all media we are able to educate those who feel this way, to understand that all humans are human, even with different backgrounds. We're all so much more alike than we are different. I think movies can help people understand that. That's why movies like THINGS LIKE THIS are so important.

What are your "5 things I wish someone told me when I first started" and why. Please share a story or example for each.

Trust your instincts. This is the most important one for me. Trust your gut about people who are truly worth working with, and those who are better left out of your journey.

Remember your worth. This is similar to the first because it's about knowing your value over what people say your value is. I think that we have to know who we are and what we deserve. So trust in that!

Celebrate everything you've done. I think sometimes I haven't allowed myself to enjoy my accomplishments because I always want to do more, but I think it's important to recognize all the milestones along the way and savor them.

Let yourself relax. I'm someone who hates not working. I hate it. I don't like to be bored. Sometimes I have to remind myself that resting is important, so when those big moments happen I'm ready for them.





Treat everyone with respect. I knew this when I first started but some people forget it. Always make sure that you're treating everyone with respect. They all work just as hard as you.

What tips would you recommend actors starting out in the industry to help them to thrive and not "burn out"?

Create a family of friends, and collaborators. People who you trust implicitly. Find the unicorns and hold on to them. They're going to be your greatest joy in the darkest times.



You are a person of influence. If you could inspire a movement that would bring the most amount of good to the most amount of people, what would that be? You never know what your idea can trigger.

LGBTQ homelessness, especially in young people. It's so awful, and painful to me. I can't believe that someone would kick out their child for being different from them or not being what they originally imagined their child to be. I would want to create a movement of foster homes for the displaced young people, where they are placed into the homes of adult members of our community. I think that way they'll be treated with the love they deserve, and we can pay forward our good fortune with being able to provide them a home.

None of us are able to achieve success without some help along the way. Is there a particular person who you are grateful towards who helped get you to where you are? Can you share a story about that?

Jody Prusan at Connecting Talent Company has been my manager for eleven years. She fought for me when no one else would. She's believed in me from the very, very beginning. A good story is on the opening night of SUPER DARK TIMES; She stayed with me from sunrise to sunset and made sure I was taken care of.

Like I said, she's always there for me. She also secured my current relationship with Andrew Burrill at Sovereign Talent. He's one of those unicorns I mentioned earlier. I'm holding on to him!

Can you please give us your favorite "Life Lesson Quote"? Can you share how that was relevant to you in your life?

This may be lame and cliché, but the opening monologue to Ferris Bueller's Day Off remains shockingly poignant and deep. "Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it."

<https://medium.com/authority-magazine/rising-star-max-talisman-its-about-knowing-your-value-over-what-people-say-your-value-is-8e07fcab6724>

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L'EFFRONTE

# INTERVIEW

with **MAX TALISMAN**

photographer / **ALEX STONE**

style / **AMBIKA**

grooming / **ARLENE WILLIS**

About love and positivity in life and work. Where everything started and what is the most important message to translate to the audience - sincere interview with Max Talisman.



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**We are really happy to have this interview with you!**  
Me too! Thanks for having me.

**So, let's start!** Sounds good!

**Honestly, when I checked your Instagram account, it looked like one big smile. Tell us, what your everyday goal is and where your happiness comes from?** Thank you for that! That's so sweet. My goal every day is to lead my life with positivity and to continue to make myself a better person in every way. I know that sounds like something you would read on a pillow, but it's true! I can only hope I'm a better person than I was yesterday. I think naturally I'm just an extremely optimistic person, and that has served me incredibly well over the years. I think it comes from my assurance in who I am and what I have to offer this world and this business. It's so exciting that I get to have this job and that I get to share my life with the world. That's incredibly special.

**How many years have you been in show business? Time after time, does it become overwhelming and you feel that you need a break with a bit of quiet time? Or vice versa - do you enjoy every second of it?** I have been in show business since I was in elementary school and middle school. I started in musical theater. I had some extreme success while being a performer in Washington D.C. in my youth. To be honest, I've never been fired of this job for a second. I just am incredibly lucky that I get to be a part of this. Like my job is to make movies and television. To act, and to write, and to direct. It's incredibly special. And I don't like taking breaks, if I'm being honest. I like staying as busy as possible, because this is the greatest job in the world.



**Can you share what led you to writing a script and turning it into THINGS LIKE THIS? What was the biggest challenge for you?** When I started Things Like This I had been struggling to write a horror script. And then everything in me shifted and I just suddenly felt like I had to write this romantic comedy. And I let the script lead me wherever it needed to go. I wanted to tell a universal love story that just happened to be about two gay men. And I'm incredibly proud of this script, and the cast that we've been able to assemble. Academy Award Nominee Eric Roberts, Charlie Tahan (Ozark), Primetime Emmy Nominee Miles Tegtmeier, and Jake Reiner just to name a few. If you had told me when I started the script that this would be the cast I would be gifted with, I wouldn't have believed you. And I think that this cast, and everyone who I'm working with, feels like this script and this film is a game changer, and they're incredibly proud to be a part of something like this.

**What is the ultimate message of the film that you would like the audience to take away from it?** That wanting to be loved is a universal feeling. That all human beings aren't that different because we all want love, and we want to be loved. I want people to see the similarities between the gay characters and themselves whether they're straight, or however they identify. I think that's important.





What was your favorite part about training at the Broadway Artists Alliance? And what was the main reason you made the transition from theater to film/TV? Broadway Artists Alliance was a great training program. Getting to take classes with Broadway vets was incredibly educating. I think they really invested in me, and because of that I met my manager, and my career has really stemmed from that. I think that the ability to tell stories at such a global level really excites me about film. The potential reach is bigger, in the end. And so it's an incredibly exciting medium to be a part of. Also, film acting is a really personal thing. Like it's so intimate between just the camera and the actor. And that relationship between the camera and the actor, is honestly extremely addicting. It was too incredible to pass up, I guess.

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Can I ask you to describe your life in a few words or one short sentence? I'm a fighter, and when I get knocked down I get back up, stronger than before.

Sometimes we reach everything by ourselves, sometimes we have helps from others. Is there someone that has helped you along your career path? There have been many people who have helped me. My agent Andrew Burtill at Sovereign Talent Group, has really been a hugely positive influence for me. He works so hard, and he and I work so well together. Also, he's just such a special person. He's a light, and I'm lucky to be working with him, and I know we'll be working together for years to come. And my manager Jody Prusan at Connecting Talent Company. I've been working with her for ten years. I feel like that's such a beautiful working relationship for me to have too. And I'm not sure if she'll ever see this, but over the years, any time I would visit NYC I would have dinner with the Broadway actress Trisha Jeffrey. And those dinners had a huge impact on me, and the performer I've become, but more importantly the person I am now. Trisha taught me how to work harder than I'd ever known before, but to lead my life with grace and humility. I feel like she never would realize how impactful she was for me, but she has been. Anyway, if she reads this, I love you Trisha, and thank you for taking the time to have dinner with me!

Readers can follow Max Talisman on Instagram @themaxshow

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## Max Talisman: “Treat everyone with respect”

Remember your worth.... it's about knowing your value over what people say your value is. I think that we have to know who we are and what we deserve. So trust in that! As a part of our series about pop culture's rising stars, I had the distinct pleasure of interviewing Max Talisman. Actor, singer, writer [...]



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Actor, singer, writer and creative force, Max Talisman is set to make his writing and directorial debut in his upcoming gay romantic comedy, THINGS LIKE THIS. The film will star Charlie Tahan (Netflix's "Ozark"), Eric Roberts (THE DARK KNIGHT) and Miles Tagtmeyer (DISNEY DESCENDANTS: SCHOOL OF SECRETS), about two men falling in love. It seems like everything is aligned for them





to fall in love; they have the same name, they have a lot of the same traits and it just seems like fate has brought them together. However, what is meant to be isn't always what it seems. Max was drawn to write this story because he felt that there were stories portraying high school students "coming out" or stories about gay couples that were far along in their lives but not many stories about the in between.

Remember your worth.... it's about knowing your value over what people say your value is. I think that we have to know who we are and what we deserve. So trust in that!

When his senior year of high school began, Max made the courageous move to NYC to follow his passion for theatre. He joined the Broadway Artists Alliance, a professional training academy for promising young musical theatre performers right in the heart of New York City. After living in the big apple for 5 years, he decided to make his way to Hollywood, California. He's appeared in The Orchard's SUPER DARK TIMES, TBS' "Search Party" and NBC's "The Blacklist".

With a life of travel, art, and hobbies, Max hopes to incorporate all his current and future life experiences in all he does. He hopes to be a role model for the LGBTQ community and break stereotypical barriers/roles in Hollywood.

<https://thriveglobal.com/stories/max-talisman-treat-everyone-with-respect/>

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**ENTSCOOP CHATS**

**WITH**

**MAX TALISMAN**



<https://entscoop.com/filmmaker-max-talisman-talks-about-his-film-things-like-this/>

###

## Celebrity Spotlight: Max Talisman



Max Talisman is a powerful force of nature. His personality is engaging and he is perhaps one of the most animated, effervescent people I have met in a long time. He is also hardworking, kind and is guaranteed to put a smile on your face after one conversation.

The multi-talented man, who was most recently seen in *Blacklist*, has a new project coming out called *Things Like This*. The movie, which tells the story of two people with the same name falling in love and the adventures they face, is set to be released soon. The movie, which he wrote and starred in, is also his directorial debut, showing off his triple threat of power.

In a recent interview with TVGrapevine, Max said this movie is a love letter to NYC and a character in itself. It is a project he is very proud of and one he is looking forward to sharing with the world. He credits co-star Eric Roberts for the comparison, which led to him showing off his favorite places and how special it is to him.

However, he admits there were some challenges! He says it was scary and risky doing each part and focus on each part when needed. (When it was time to act, direct etc.) Max did say that he actually ended up becoming more of a team leader than a director because he ended up working and accepting help and advice from others working in the movie.

## **TV**GRAPEVINE

So what else is he up to? He is not only starring in the new season of Search Party, but he also has a small part in Marry Me, with Jennifer Lopez, Owen Wilson and Sarah Silverman.

Max will continue to succeed in anything he does, due to his talent and work ethic. However, he will be remembered due to his heart and how he treats others, making him even more successful in his own special way.

<https://tvgrapevine.com/2020/04/celebrity-spotlight-max-talisman/>

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Entertainment magazine for the everyday A-List

# STARCENTRAL

## One On One With Max Talisman: The Director Of The Upcoming Romantic Comedy “Things Like This”



Actor, singer, writer, and creative force, Max Talisman is set to make his directorial debut in his upcoming romantic comedy, THINGS LIKE THIS. The film stars Charlie Tahan (Netflix's "Ozark"), Eric Roberts (THE DARK KNIGHT) and Miles Tagtmeyer (DISNEY DESCENDANTS: SCHOOL OF

SECRETS), and tells a story of two guys who fall in love and while everything seems to align for them to be together, they begin to question fate as they encounter an obstacle.

Growing up in Washington DC, Max started performing in 3rd grade. He participated in musical theatre, including productions at the Musical Theatre Center (MTC), one of the leading performing arts education organizations for young people in the Washington DC area. It was the moment when he played the 2nd lead role in the through-composed musical, "Caroline, or Change" that he felt theatre was his calling.

When his senior year of high school began, Max made the courageous move to NYC to follow his passion for theatre. He joined the Broadway Artists Alliance, a professional training academy for promising young musical theatre performers right in the heart of New York City. After living in the big apple for 5 years, he decided to make his way to Hollywood, California. He's appeared in The Orchard's SUPER DARK TIMES, TBS' "Search Party" and NBC's "The Blacklist".

Overcoming Legg-Calvé-Perthes disease (LCPD) and anxiety, this rising star doesn't let these challenges prevent him from enjoying his life. He has a keen love for sports and when he's not watching games on TV or at stadiums, he keeps up with the standings/scores on teams such as the LA Lakers, the Washington Redskins and the Baltimore Orioles. He is also an avid tennis and ping pong player, crediting Serena Williams as his role model.

Consumed by wanderlust with a curiosity for cultures, Max has traveled all around the world from Argentina to Zimbabwe, Austria, Germany, Italy, England, Iceland, Greece, Africa, and Costa Rica.

With a life of travel, art, and hobbies, Max hopes to incorporate all his current and future life experiences in all he does. He hopes to be a role model for the LGBTQ community and break stereotypical barriers/roles in Hollywood.

StarCentral Magazine recently caught up with Max to discuss his upcoming projects and here's what went down:

How and when did you catch the acting bug?

When I was 3 my Saba (grandfather in Hebrew) took my twin sister and me to see Cats. I was immediately hooked. I just knew right then and there that being an actor was all I could ever do.

What do you like most about acting?

Telling stories. What I get to do is the greatest thing in this world. I think that to have the opportunity to let people live vicariously through you, that's the greatest part. To know that people are watching something that you brought to life. A story you brought to life. That's incredibly special.

Can you tell us how you were inspired to develop THINGS LIKE THIS?

I think it's a huge part of the job of an actor, and a writer to stay up to date with what's happening in the film and television world. So, I watch a lot of content that comes in the pipeline, and basically what I noticed is that there's no gay content that speaks to my demographic. When I say my demographic, I don't only mean young gay millennials, but I mean all millennials. I wanted to write something that everyone I know can relate to, while still being a gay romantic comedy. Therefore, that's really where the idea for THINGS LIKE THIS was born from.

What was the process of writing the film like for you?

Honestly, it's been a joy. From the beginning, I had a very clear vision of how I wanted to attack the story, and so I never felt tripped up or blocked. The first draft was finished in a week. Obviously, there have been innumerable edits, but at the end of the day, the core story and heart has remained the same from the beginning. Writing it was never a struggle though. All the ins and outs of making a movie are the more challenging part. But writing it has truly been the biggest joy.

Who will be the demographic audience for this movie?

As I stated before, I wanted to write a movie that appeals to everyone. A lot of past and current Queer films have a campy nature to them. And yes, those movies have a great level of fun to them for a very specific gay demographic. I wanted to write something that was universal in its appeal. So, I'm going to quote another great romantic comedy, TRAINWRECK, when I say our demographic is "every-f\*cking-one."

Do you relate to the main character? What are your similarities and/or differences?

I think when you write something like a movie, there are pieces of you in every character. But obviously, the role I wrote for myself has a lot of me in there. We have similarities. We both say everything on our mind with no filter, we're both creative people, and we both have a close-knit family of friends. But we have a lot of differences as well. I would hope my life is a little more together than his is. And I'm more willing to let people in than he is, at least initially. But I also have many similarities and differences with the other lead role. I really believe that all of the characters are strange variations on a part of my brain if that makes sense.

What will be the biggest challenge in directing this film?

I think the biggest challenge will be finding the balance between being the actor, the writer, and the director. I have a strong belief in myself that I can achieve it, but I want to find the right balance. As an actor, you never want to feel that another actor is directing you. So I want to approach the scenes I'm acting with other actors in, and directing, as more of a collaboration. My background is very stage-based, which is incredibly collaborative and I believe that's the best way to approach most art. So I want the actors, and crew on set to always feel like their voices are being heard, and I want the set to feel like the set of a team, not just my set.

Besides yourself, what director would you like to work with in the future?

There are so many. Number one is probably Christopher Nolan. I just think he's such an innovator. And I know saying him is almost a cliché for an actor, but there's a reason why. He makes actors want to work with him because he's so brilliant. And when I met with Eric Roberts, to discuss Things Like This, we talked for about thirty minutes just about what working with Chris was like for him. And Eric



has worked with a lot of stars. So to have that kind of impact on an incredibly accomplished actor like Eric, you have to be one of the very best. I would also love to work with Adam McKay. His background is so drenched in comedy, but I think his most recent films about politics and finance have been incredibly game-changing, and I think he'd be a very exciting director to work with as an actor.

If you could play any character in this movie besides the lead, who would it be?

I love the part of Margie so much. And I know that's a gender switch, but that would be such a fun role. To play one of the most powerful players in New York Entertainment, and just a bad bitch, in general, would be so much fun. She was also one of my favorite parts to write. She plays with a lot of different tones too. So yeah, definitely would be an incredibly fun experience playing her.

What has been the most memorable experience of your career so far?

I would probably have to say Super Dark Times. The entire process of that film, from filming to finally being released on Netflix, was the greatest journey I've had so far. Working with Kevin Phillips and the entire team was such a beautiful gift. And to get to create a deep friendship with Charlie Tahan, and now have him be joining THINGS LIKE THIS, I'm so grateful for that. Just every part of that film. I just felt like we created something timeless, and something that I believed in deeply as well. To have my first feature be something that I was so incredibly passionate about, is something I will be forever grateful for.

Who have been the most interesting people you've met so far?

I like that you didn't ask who the best people were. Interesting is a great adjective. I think the most interesting people are people who challenge you and stimulate you in every sense, but especially intellectually. When I appeared on NBC's The Blacklist, I was incredibly blown away by James Spader. I gained such deep respect for him. He understands filmmaking and storytelling on such a deep level. He can tell you why Camera 2 should actually point in another direction, instead of this one. By that, I just mean that he's so in tune with everything on set. He knows everyone's names, he connects with people. And then when it's time he does incredible work on screen. Like who wouldn't want to perform with someone like that? He really was marvelous.

How active are you on social media?

I'm fairly active! I love Instagram, so I use that the most. But I'm a big fan of Twitter too! I would say those are probably my most used social media sites right now. Still don't have a TikTok. Might at some point. I'll keep you updated! All my social media's are @TheMaxTShow! Please follow along.

What is your favourite social media platform?

Instagram is definitely my favorite. I love it because I think it's so simple to use and easy to reach an audience. Also, a really great way to connect with your fan base. So I definitely like Instagram the most of all social media.

What are your future plans? Inside your career or out of it.

Well once we wrap filming on Things Like This, I'll begin developing my next film. The script is already written, and I won't say much, but I will say it's a Queer Horror/Comedy, and I'm absolutely in love with what I have so far! I'll also be working on other film and TV projects. I love telling other people's stories just as much as telling my own. I think it's such a privilege to bring someone else's scripts to life. So that's why I still love being able to be an actor in other projects that I haven't written. Personally, I don't know. Maybe get a boyfriend? Any Australians looking for a cute Jewish guy hit a boy up.



Entertainment magazine for the everyday A-List

**STARCENTRAL**

The 'LIGHTNING FAST' Round:

Last good movie I've seen... I just rewatched Clueless, it's iconic.

What do you consider beautiful and why? Food, because it's food. And filmmaking because it's how I bring beauty into the world.

What haven't you done yet that you wish you could? Seen Serena Williams win her 24th grand slam! I am waiting with all of you. WE BELIEVE IN YOU SERENA!

Complete this sentence: "If I had no fear, I'd..." Finally, try beets.

What is the one "flaw" you wouldn't change about yourself? My love of chocolate. It's just too good.

<https://www.starcentralmagazine.com/featured-post/2020/05/01/one-on-one-with-max-talisman-the-director-of-the-upcoming-romantic-comedy-things-like-this/>

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## **Max Talisman A Millennial Creative Force on the Rise**

We had the absolute pleasure of speaking with actor Max Talisman. When we spoke to Max, he was visiting his parents making sure they were okay due to the coronavirus pandemic. We took full advantage of Max's downtime and leisurely chatted with him about a variety of topics. Max is so much fun to talk to. He's funny, sweet, and excitedly looking toward the future.

Max grew up right outside of Washington D.C. It was in his very first acting role that he discovered where he was meant to be. "I fell in love with musical theater in the third grade performing in a youth production. I love singing and acting. As soon as I started, I knew this was exactly what I was meant to do. Right away I felt this is my space. This is my center."



From then on Max continued to fill his space and focus on “his center.” It was in his senior year of high school that he landed a national Coke commercial and his career took a definitive turn. “My schedule became so busy in my senior year of high school. I was so grateful to my parents who knew what was best for me and my career and had me homeschooled.” Max began traveling back and forth to New York auditioning and for call backs. He was also traveling to audition for colleges. Max graduated from high school, attended Syracuse University for two years, and then made the move to New York City. “I lived in New York City for five years. I stayed busy. I worked on *Orange is the New Black*, *Blacklist*, *Search Party*, the Netflix film *Super Dark Times* and during my free time I wrote. I’m very thankful to have started my career in New York. It was the right place for me to begin.”

There came the time when Max knew it was time for him to make his next move. He moved to Los Angeles this past January. We learned during our conversation that Max and I are kindred spirits. For one he is an overthinker like me which can be good at times and not so good at other times. LOL. “The focus on my career has been on television and film. Therefore, it was a part of my path that I would live in Los Angeles at some point. I didn’t plan to make the move so soon. It all happened rather quickly. When you have to make a decision quickly, I think all the other stuff that is in your head impacting your decision doesn’t matter as much. You tend to focus on the core of the decision and when you do that it becomes a simpler decision. You don’t have time to overthink it. And for someone who “criminally” overthinks everything it was nice not to have that option this time.” Max, I overstand!

Secondly, we share a similar passion regarding equality and equal representation.

#RepresentationMatters. *It always matters.* Max’s upcoming romantic comedy film, also his writing and directorial debut, *Things Like This* that stars Charlie Tahan (Netflix’s *Ozark*), Eric Roberts (*The Dark Knight*) and Miles Tagtmeyer (*Disney Descendants: School of Secrets*), is another step in Max’s push for representation. “The story is a gay romantic love story. It’s about two men falling in love. It seems like everything is aligned for them to fall in love. They have the same name. They have a lot of the same traits and it just seems like fate has brought them together. But what is meant to be isn’t always what it seems. There are two reasons I was drawn to write this story. There are a lot of romantic comedies with people in their thirties or in high school but not a lot with people in their twenties. Also, I didn’t think there was enough representation in the LGBTQ community. I felt like many stories were about coming out. But





for people like me who are past that there wasn't much. I want to fall in love so I wanted to tell a universal love story.”

Max and I long for the day when equal representation will also be a universal practice. “We need more diverse stories. Every story should be diverse in my opinion. It should have diversity of thought. As a writer, it's very important for my stories to have representation for gay people. I didn't see it in a way that would have been helpful to me when I was a child.



In the midst of #QuarantineLife, it's still a “busy busy busy time” for Max. He is preparing to begin filming Things Like This in the fall (fingers crossed.) Max wrote the film, will direct it and is starring in it. He wears multiple hats yet Max is an actor at heart. And whether it is his own project or someone else's Max just loves acting. “I'm an actor at my core.

With his acting loving heart, Max is focused on learning, creating, and continuing to build his career. “I'm excited about the film and how things are progressing for me overall. I'm here ready to learn as much as possible. I have so much to learn. I am so fortunate to be in a situation where I have the opportunity to learn from some amazing people and be able to build my career while I'm still learning. It is an unbelievable gift. More than anything, I am focused on growing as an artist and as a creator of content.”

In any other interview, this is where we would end as that would be a great way to conclude. However, these two kindred spirits ended our chat talking about our Queen, our SHEro...Serena Williams. When I read that Max

was a Serena fanatic like me, I was so elated. And though tennis like everything else is on hiatus it is always the right time to talk Serena Williams.

<https://weareentertainmentnews.com/2020/05/08/max-talisman-a-millennial-creative-force-on-the-rise/>

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## Interview with Actor, singer and writer Max Talisman

Max is set to make his directorial debut in his upcoming romantic comedy, THINGS LIKE THIS. The film stars Charlie Tahan (Netflix's "Ozark"), Eric Roberts (THE DARK KNIGHT) and Miles Tagtmeyer (DISNEY DESCENDANTS: SCHOOL OF SECRETS), and tells a story of two guys who fall in love and while everything seems to align for them to be together, they begin to question fate as they encounter an obstacle.

Growing up in Washington DC, Max started performing in 3rd grade. He participated in musical theatre, including productions at the Musical Theatre Center (MTC), one of the leading performing arts education organizations for young people in the Washington DC area. It was the moment when he played the 2nd lead role in the through-composed musical, "Caroline, or Change" that he felt theatre was his calling. He's appeared in The Orchard's SUPER DARK TIMES, TBS' "Search Party" and NBC's "The Blacklist".

With a life of travel, art, and hobbies, Max hopes to incorporate all his current and future life experiences in all he does. He hopes to be a role model for the LGBTQ community and break stereotypical barriers/roles in Hollywood.

Follow Max at [@themaxtshow](https://www.instagram.com/themaxtshow)

Describe yourself in 3 words?

I am passionate, creative, and determined.

Who was your role model as a child?



Serena Williams has been my role model for my entire life. I know that she's a tennis player and I am an actor/writer/filmmaker, but the passion that she brings to her job is what I strive to bring to mine every day. Her level of focus and dedication, it's an "awe" inspiring. As for someone in the film industry Tina Fey has always inspired me as someone who writes brilliant comedy, and then is able to act incredibly well too. Her comedy is something that has definitely inspired my writing through all of my career thus far.

How has this changed your life?

I think my life is in the process of changing. I'm not sure that anything has changed in my everyday life so far. I moved from New York to Los Angeles which was a huge change for many reasons. I made the move because of my work in film. I went from the life I had created in NYC for 5 years to creating a new life here in Los Angeles.

Tell us about what the process was like writing THINGS LIKE THIS?

The process began because I was writing a horror script and then every time, I would be writing a scene it would deviate into something comedic. I felt like my subconscious was telling me to write what I know, which is comedy. It was around the time that movies like Love, Simon and Alex Strangelove came out. I loved both of those movies, I saw Love, Simon 6 times in theaters, but what I noticed was that gay millennials didn't have a movie made for us. Everything that gay people had was content about people coming out of the closet. We had nothing about people who had already come out, and just were figuring out how to fall in love amidst the chaos of living a modern life. I came out of the closet when I was nineteen, and yes, it was a hugely pivotal moment of my life. At this point, I don't remember what life was like before coming out. I have been out of the closet for seven years so the idea of coming out isn't something I deal with on a daily basis. The residual

effects of a closeted life definitely have repercussions in how I'm able to allow myself to fall in love and I think that struggle is universal among the Queer community. So that's where this film was born from.

What is the message(s) that you want the audience to get from THINGS LIKE THIS?

The main message I want to get across is that love is universal. That falling in love is something we all want to do. I want this movie to appeal to everyone – gay, straight, bisexual, or any identity. I think that this film has the power to bridge the gap between people who aren't inherently homophobic but are afraid of something that is different than them. I hope that those people see a little of themselves in our characters and our love story. I also hope we can start a conversation on how humans are all just humans from there.

What are some projects you really liked being a part of?

Super Dark Times was something that was life changing for me. It was my first feature and doing something that I loved so much is something I'll always be deeply thankful for. Working with Kevin (Phillips) and the whole team, really brought out some of my best work and I was able to create deep friendships, like with Charlie Tahan, who will be costarring in Things Like This. Because of Super Dark Times, he (Charlie) was the first person I went to with this script. The kind of work that makes you want to work with the same people again, is the best kind.

What is the most rewarding part of your work?

For me, the most rewarding part is creating work that has an impact. I wish I had seen a movie like Things Like This when I was growing up to let me know that I wasn't alone, and that I had the power to live my life proudly. I'm excited for the reaction from the next generation when they see this movie, and anything else I create. My greatest goal is to make underrepresented people feel seen. That's what film should do. It should make everyone feel like they are seen, valid, and that their stories deserve to be told.

What kind of roles do you like or would like to play and why?

I want to play roles that challenge me and that are different. The best part of being an actor, is playing a character who is nothing like you. So, I want to play everything from a cowboy, to a superhero, to a deeply disturbed psychopath. I want to do it all!

<https://www.naludamagazine.com/interview-with-actor-singer-and-writer-max-talisman/>

###



## Max Talisman in his LGBTQ+ film debut



Max Talisman, a young filmmaker who is set to make his writing and directorial debut with his film, *THINGS LIKE THIS*. Instead of focusing on the struggle of coming out, he felt it was time to write a story about gay people falling in love and coming out wouldn't be in the equation. He wanted the movie to be universal love story that hasn't been seen on-screen with a gay couple yet.

Actor, singer, writer and creative force, Max Talisman is set to make his directorial debut in his upcoming gay romantic comedy, *THINGS LIKE THIS*. The film stars Charlie Tahan (Netflix's





“Ozark”), Eric Roberts (THE DARK KNIGHT) and Miles Tagtmeyer (DISNEY DESCENDANTS: SCHOOL OF SECRETS), about two men falling in love. It seems like everything is aligned for them to fall in love; they have the same name, they have a lot of the same traits and it just seems like fate has brought them together. However, what is meant to be isn’t always what it seems. Max was drawn to write this story because he felt that there were stories portraying high school students “coming out” or stories about gay couples that were far along in their lives but not many stories about the in between. Growing up in Washington DC, Max started performing in 3rd grade. He participated in musical theatre, including productions at the Musical Theatre Center (MTC), one of the leading performing arts education organizations for young people in the Washington DC area. It was the moment when he played the 2nd lead role in the through-composed musical, “Caroline, or Change” that he felt theatre was his calling. When his senior year of high school began, Max made the courageous move to NYC to follow his passion for theatre. He joined the Broadway Artists Alliance, a professional training academy for promising young musical theatre performers right in the heart of New York City. After living in the big apple for 5 years, he decided to make his way to Hollywood, California. He’s appeared in The Orchard’s SUPER DARK TIMES, TBS’ “Search Party” and NBC’s “The Blacklist”.

Overcoming Legg-Calvé-Perthes disease (LCPD) and anxiety, this rising star doesn’t let these challenges prevent him from enjoying his life. He has a keen love for sports and when he’s not watching games on TV or at stadiums, he keeps up with the standings/scores on teams such as the LA Lakers, the Washington Redskins and the Baltimore Orioles. He is also an avid tennis and ping pong player, crediting Serena Williams as his role model. Consumed by wanderlust with a curiosity for cultures, Max has traveled all around the world from Argentina to Zimbabwe, Austria, Germany, Italy, England, Iceland, Greece, Africa and Costa Rica. With a life of travel, art, and hobbies, Max hopes to incorporate all his current and future life experiences in all he does. He hopes to be a role model for the LGBTQ community and break stereotypical barriers/roles in Hollywood.



When did you realize you wanted to be a filmmaker and when did you decide to make your writing debut?

The writing came first. We were two years into THINGS LIKE THIS’ process when I started to feel like I should direct it. I always wanted to write a film and direct one as well. I didn’t think I’d be doing it now but the further down the road we got with this project, it just became clearer and clearer to me that I needed to be the director for it. Handing it over to anyone else just didn’t feel right to me and so, it became clear to me, and everyone I work with that I was the only person who could direct the movie.



Where did you get your inspiration for THINGS LIKE THIS?

I got the inspiration from everywhere and nowhere. I say that because I have been inspired by other movies my entire life, but I didn't want this movie to be like anything that had been made before it, because I feel that nothing exists that's the same. This movie is going to change the game for how an LGBTQ movie can be made.



How important is to be out as an LGBTQ+ individual and artist?

I think it's incredibly important. I was texting someone who I'm going on a date with, and he said he thought it was very critical that I was a public figure who was so open about my sexuality, and my identity. I said that I felt I'd be doing a disservice to myself, and the community to not do that. I would have loved to see someone like me out and proud when I was struggling with my demons in my high school years. I think having someone who you can relate to, who you see, publicly being proud and being happy. That could change someone's life.

When did you decide to come out? What was this process like?

I came out when I was 19. I had just gotten college a day before. I just felt like I was starting a new life, and I wanted to be my true self from the beginning. The first person I called was my twin sister,



then I called my brother, and then I Skyped my parents. The first thing my mom said was, “so?” I just remember feeling like I could breathe. Everyone says it feels like a weight is lifted and that’s such a real feeling. This pressure. This immense pressure. It just goes away and you’re actually who you are. What a feeling.

What was your experience like growing up as a queer child?

I was always involved in musical theater and theater, since a very young age. So, I had been around queer people my entire life. I still had a lot of trouble accepting myself. I remember I would spend a



lot of time thinking, “If I only have one life to live, can’t it just be normal?” Whatever the hell normal is. I had an ex-boyfriend who once said, “the hardest person to come out to is yourself.” To me, that is one of the most true statements of my life. The hardest person I ever had to tell I was gay was myself. It took me 19 years and I really believe that when I came out, my life really began.

What advice would you give to the young LGBTQ+ children who are bullied and hide their identity?

There are people out there who love you for exactly who you are. They are there and ready to be your fiercest advocates. Use every resource you have. Reach out to queer people you respect. A big change for me was when I was in high school, I used Trevorspace by The Trevor Project and having a place to just talk to other gay and queer and transgender young people changed my life.

Do you think there is enough LGBTQ+ representation in the entertainment industry?

Absolutely not. I’ve been speaking about this a lot recently. I think it’s why I’m so intense about making the content I make. Every single movie, TV Show, or any other form of entertainment NEEDS LGBTQ+

representation. Every single one and show us what diversity in the community looks like too. I want to see an asexual biromantic queer Latinx person on my Netflix. I want to see a Black transgender woman who is a lead of a movie, and it’s not about how she’s trans. That’s what we need. Until we have that, I’ll be fighting for it.

Have you ever received any homophobic moment in your career?

To be honest, not to my face. I think the one thing about being a young gay man in this industry is I just feel like I’m coming out every time I go on a new set. I want to be me; I want everyone to know



I'm me and it's important I do that. I haven't faced anyone who's been openly homophobic to me but I've been very lucky, so far.

What helps you move forward? Where do you find your motivation?

In making young people feel seen on screen. Not just young people but just anyone who needs to see themselves on screen. I think that's incredibly important.

How are you coping with anxiety? What advice would you give to people that are in the same situation?

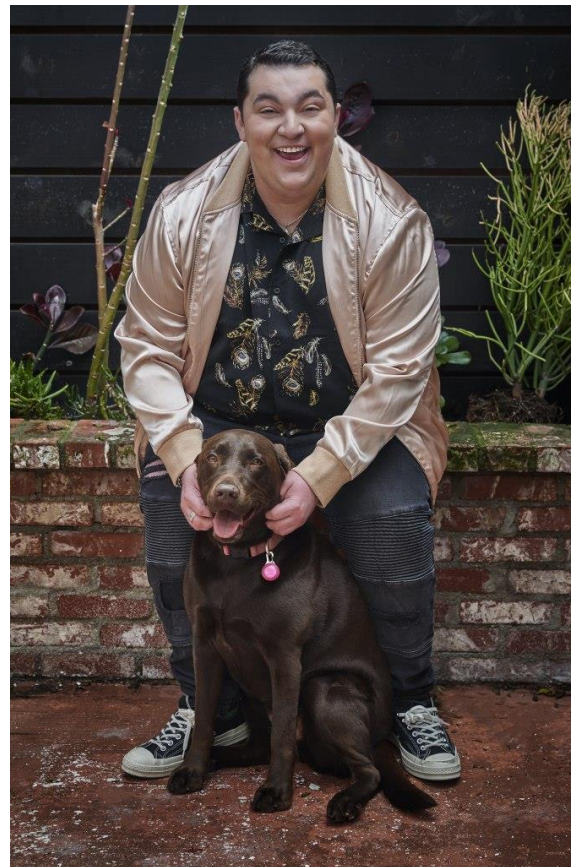
I mean, I think coping with my anxiety is an everyday struggle. Some days are easier than others. Some moments are more challenging than I felt five minutes before that. I will say that the greatest gift my most recent ex gave to me, was the support to work on my anxiety while being in a relationship. Because I felt supported, I never felt my anxiety was what was going to break us up and it never did. Distance did, but that's an answer to another question.

Do you feel that you are a role model?

That's a complicated question. I'm aware that there are people who look to me, yes. I want to be more of a role model as I get older. I guess I would say I'm aware of how I need to work harder to become the role model I want to be, and I hope I get there.

Do you think that the world is going to be better and easier for the future LGBTQ+ generation?

I think hopefully, yes. I mean if you look at the last two or three generations that has in general been somewhat true. I was recently interviewed for a podcast and was asked if I thought this was the best time to be gay in history. I said yes, but that doesn't mean it's easy. I think some people assume because they aren't homophobic that their friends or loved ones probably don't deal with homophobia. I once played a tennis match with a man in his forty's through the USTA, and after we had stopped playing, I told him I didn't enjoy playing with him. The man then said that I didn't like to lose because I was a "f---t." I told him that he couldn't say that to me, and then he said, "well you are a f---t aren't you?" I said it didn't matter if I was or wasn't, he could not say that to me. He then told me to get up and fight him and then proceeded to call me that terrible word again and again. This match was part of the USTA and when I reported it, and gave a full report I heard nothing back except that we were both on watch, and if either of us had another incident with other players we would be removed from the USTA. A company that's national center is named after LGBTQ+ living began Billie Jean King, and they did absolutely nothing to help. My point is I would hope someday





everyone is accepted everywhere. But until that happens, we have to keep fighting because moments like this happen to many, MANY members of the community and will continue to happen for generations to come. I hope we can start leading the future into a place of pure love. That would be the best thing that could happen.

How has the global pandemic affected your life and your work?

It's made it really simple, I guess! I sleep in more and go to bed later. I text people (ex's) because I say that there are no rules in quarantine!

How does your daily routine look like now?

Wake up at 11 am, do work until 8 pm, make some sort of pasta dinner (cajun chicken pasta is my specialty), and then watch TV until I go to bed at like 4 or 5 am.

What has been the most beautiful moment in your career and in your life?

I think it's been the whole journey of THINGS LIKE THIS. Having this beautiful film and getting to lead it's life. It's been the greatest gift. I know I needed this movie when I was young, and so now getting to make it is special.

What are your future plans?

Filming THINGS LIKE THIS and beginning to work on my next feature! It's a horror/comedy.

<https://yassmagazine.org/2020/07/14/maxtalisman/>

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## “Mis personajes tienen mejor vida amorosa que yo”: Max Talisman

Al ser su debut como director tras una larga carrera en actuación que comenzó a los 10 años, Max destaca el aprendizaje de este proceso, al tomar un rol más colaborativo y abierto con el elenco y el resto del equipo. “Al final del día es una historia con un significado muy particular para mí y que considero resonará con muchas personas; incluso si no forman parte de la comunidad LGBT+, pues antes que nada es una historia de amor y para mí es un gran privilegio poder contarla, así que quiero hacer el mejor trabajo posible”.



La diversidad sexual cada vez tiene más presencia en el cine y las series. Prueba de ello se encuentra en filmes como Love Simon y Alex Strangelove que muestran el despertar sexual y los cuestionamientos que estos desencadenan dentro de la comunidad LGBT+. Sin embargo, gran parte de estas producciones suele enfocarse en el “salir del clóset”. Este hecho fue lo que motivó a Max Talisman, un joven creador que comenzó en el mundo de la actuación, a escribir y dirigir Things like this”, una cinta que toma el género del romcom para contar la historia de una pareja homosexual cuyo centro se aleja de esta convención y se vuelve la relación misma. Talisman explica que si bien al empezar a trabajar en el guión no esperaba que fuera una comedia, este viraba en esa dirección constantemente: “Después de un tiempo decidí dejar de intentar combatirlo y abrazar el género. Yo crecí como un ávido consumidor de las comedias románticas; las amo, pero nunca me sentí representado en ninguna historia y eso es algo que mi yo adolescente necesitaba. Lo que busco con la cinta es mandar un mensaje: decirle a todos que ellos valen y que

aquello que sienten es amor y es válido”. El también actor detalla que no busca emular las convenciones del género como tal; sino en su lugar homenajearlas al traer el género al siglo XXI: “Fue un constante pensar en cintas como Cuando Harry conoció a Sally o Serendipity y reimaginarlas en nuestro contexto. ¿Si estas cintas fueran hechas ahora, cómo serían?”; aunque confiesa que no se basan en alguna historia personal: “La verdad es que mis personajes tienen mejor vida amorosa que yo. Los envidio”, declara entre risas.



Al ser su debut como director tras una larga carrera en actuación que comenzó a los 10 años, Max destaca el aprendizaje de este proceso, al tomar un rol más colaborativo y abierto con el elenco y el resto del equipo. “Al final del día es una historia con un significado muy particular para mí y que considero resonará con muchas personas; incluso si no forman parte de la comunidad LGBT+, pues antes que nada es una historia de amor y para mí es un gran privilegio poder contarla, así que quiero hacer el mejor trabajo posible”.

Además, añadió que será una película “icónica”, pues contará con un gran elenco que incluye a Charlie Tahan —estrella de Ozark que por primera vez mostrará su talento en la comedia—, Miles Tagmeyer y Eric Roberts.

Si bien la cinta apenas comenzará grabaciones y espera estar lista a finales del próximo año, Talisman no descarta nuevos proyectos a futuro para dirigir e incluso producir, aunque explica que su principal pasión es la actuación: “Quiero poder contar la mayor cantidad de historias posibles, de todas las formas que existen. Hay algo increíble en poder darle vida a estos personajes para transmitir un mensaje de aceptación y sobre todo para lograr una industria más incluyente que se preocupe por encontrar estas historias”, concluyó.

<https://www.playboy.com.mx/guia-playboy/en-playboy/entrevista-con-max-talisman/>

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## Intervista all'attore della serie tv 'The Blacklist' Max Talisman



L'attore, cantante e scrittore Max Talisman farà il suo debutto alla regia nella sua commedia romantica, *Things Like This*. Il film è interpretato da Charlie Tahan (*Ozark* su Netflix), Eric Roberts (*The Dark Knight*) e Miles Tagtmeyer (*Disney Descendants*), e racconta la storia di due ragazzi che si innamorano ma che iniziano a mettere in discussione il loro futuro.

Cresciuto a Washington DC, all'inizio del suo ultimo anno di liceo si è trasferito a New York per seguire la sua passione per il teatro. Si è unito alla Broadway Artists Alliance, un'accademia di formazione professionale per giovani artisti di musical. Si è poi spostato a Hollywood, lavorando al film *Super Dark Times* (su *The Orchard*), *Search Party* della TBS e *The Blacklist* della NBC.

<https://www.mauxa.com/intervista/intervista-all%E2%80%99attore-della-serie-tv-the-blacklist-max-talisman-trama-cast-quando-esce-nuova-stagione-streaming-notizie?page=2>

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DailyBloid

## Interview with director Max Talisman: 'Things Like This' is the new film



Actor, singer and writer, Max Talisman is set to make his directorial debut in his upcoming romantic comedy, Things Like This. The film stars Charlie Tahan (Netflix's "Ozark"), Eric Roberts (The Dark Knight) and Miles Tagtmeyer (Disney Descendants: School of Secrets). Max worked also in TV series The Blacklist.

<https://www.dailybloid.com/interview/interview-with-director-max-talisman--things-like-this-is-the-new-film>

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=25kYumAJfg4&feature=youtu.be>

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# Your Money Geek.



Max Talisman will make his screenwriting and directorial debut this year with his upcoming gay romantic comedy, *Things Like This*. He has assembled a talented ensemble cast, casting names like Charlie Tahan (*Ozark*), Eric Roberts (*The Dark Knight*), and Miles Tagtmeyer (*Disney Descendants*; *School of Secrets*) to bring to life his story about two young gay men, who happen to have the same name living in NYC, as they fall in love.

Talisman is also a talented actor who starred in the 2017 film *Super Dark Times*, and has appeared in *Orange is the New Black*, *Search Party*, and *The Blacklist*.

Before the holidays we chatted with Max Talisman about *Things Like This*, coming out, and his post-pandemic plans.

Maggie Lovitt (ML): So when did you first know that you wanted to be part of the film industry.

Max Talisman (MT): It was a mix of a lot of different things. I felt like I could make the biggest impact if I did film, instead of theater. I love theater and I love my background in theater. My whole thing is that I want people to feel represented and seen. In theater, I can do that, but in film I can do that in a global way. I wouldn't be able to have the same reach in theater.

I started to realize that film acting, writing, and directing was a way for me to go right around when I left college. I just felt like that was where my journey needed to go so I could tell the stories that I needed to tell, at the level that I needed to tell them.

ML: So what were some of your first professional theatrical projects in the D.C. area?

MT: The first professional thing I ever did in D.C. was *Caroline, or Change* at the Studio Theatre. I was young during the production period, I [even] took two weeks off to be bar mitzvahed. It was a

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really exciting and thrilling time because it was the regional premiere of that show. It had only been on Broadway and toured in a few places. It was a big production. It was exciting.

I felt for the first time like I was really getting to do what I love to do as a job. I felt like there was nothing else I'd rather be doing. It was my life. I loved it so much. There's not a day that goes by that I don't feel like I'm the luckiest person in the world to get to do this job.

ML: You grew up in such a great area too. D.C. has so much fantastic theater.

MT: A lot of people who aren't from the area don't really know just how many highly reputable theaters exist in that city. I learned so much getting to work with them and getting to learn from professionals from New York and from all over who came to D.C. because it was such a theater hub.

There are multiple theaters that have won the Tony for the regional theater of the year. D.C. is amazing and it really is a great place for theater and there's a lot of really cool experimental work there.

ML: So who are some of your role models?

MT: The biggest role model in my entire life is not film-related. It's Serena Williams. I think that she lives her life in a way that is a way that we should all kind of aspire to. She's so passionate, she's so driven. She wears her emotions on her sleeve. But she never lets them get in the way of her success. I get inspired by Serena every single day. I think she has so many different business ventures and then obviously, in tennis, she's the greatest of all time. She's always been driven to be that. I just draw a lot of inspiration from her.

In terms of film, I would say the truth is that there are not a lot of openly gay and queer filmmakers and actors. I would say probably someone like Craig Johnson, who directed the Skeleton Twins. He's directed a few other great movies as well. He's queer. He was able to make movies about the queer experience and I also want to be able to bridge the gap and tell stories about every one as well. I think the point is that I want to be someone who's kind of a voice for the voiceless as much as possible.

Also someone like Ava DuVernay. Someone who is fighting for all different kinds of diversity and people. Shonda Rhimes. I mean, these are people who fight for diversity in many ways and fight for voices to be heard. So [I look up to] people like that. People who were driven to tell the stories of people who don't get their stories told.

ML: What inspired you to write Things Like This?



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MT: When I started writing Things Like This I was in the middle of writing a horror script. The horror script kept deviating back into being a comedy. It was one of those things where it's kind of like, write what you know. It was the same time that movies like Love, Simon were coming out. (laughs) And they were about that. They were about coming out. I just noticed that so many queer films are specifically about that moment in the gay experience. That's such a specific moment. That doesn't last forever, once you've done it. Obviously, it's a major part of a person's life, but it's not everything.

For me, I only felt like my life as a gay person started once I came out. That was a long time ago. So for me, it's like, what happens next? Why don't we have any films about two people existing and falling in love? Because the thing is, it's a universal experience, right? The fear of falling for someone? So I just wanted to tell that from the lens of a gay experience. So I'm really excited.

ML: Why do you think it is that so many films focus on the coming out experience?

MT: I'm honestly not 100% sure. I think because these movies are made by executives or by people who identify as straight, I don't think they realize that coming out is just part of the process. I think they probably feel like coming out is very dramatic and very cinematic in its scope. I don't think that makes any other part of the journey less film-worthy. That's probably what people think in their mind. But that's just the beginning of an interesting story. It doesn't even need to be shown in the films that I want to watch. It exists. When you see a movie about a queer person you can already assume that the person has come out at some point.

ML: What is the core message of Things Like This?

MT: The core message of Things Like This is that falling in love is terrifying. I think that's what it is. I think love is one of the most beautiful things that a human can experience. All different kinds of love. Falling in love romantically, with one person, is the most terrifying form of love, but it's also the most rewarding. It's a universal feeling. That feeling of being terrified and really trying to allow yourself [to feel] and diving off the cliff into it. At some point, the fear gives way to beauty.

ML: Was there anything when you were writing the screenplay that surprised you? Did a character take a turn that you weren't expecting?

MT: When I'm writing something I very much let it lead me wherever it does. I think that's really exciting. I'm not a huge storyboard person initially, at least. Obviously down the line it's important. Recently, I've been talking to a lot of filmmakers who won't write anything until everything is laid out before them. I wouldn't be able to do that process.

I find it really exciting when you're writing something and all of a sudden someone's character is like "No, let me do this." And you're like, "Yeah, that sounds cool. I'll let you do that." There were some moments in Things Like This that really surprised me. It was really exciting to let the journey of the characters lead me.

ML: I understand that you love traveling. So when COVID is over, where's the first place that you plan to travel to?

MT: I'm already starting to plan a few things. My sister has a travel blog, [Lita of the Pack](#). She plans a lot of trips and she does an amazing job. My dad also has planned the trip for years and does an incredible job. So even though I'm also going to take a few trips out here next year, I'm asking her like, "Help me plan it!"

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But as a family, the big one we're talking about is maybe going to Japan, which will be really exciting. That's kind of new and we're exploring it. I was the one who suggested it and the entire family was really excited by it. So I think that's definitely something that we will be doing. Once I wrap production on Things Like This, I want to take a week without my phone somewhere tropical with a beach.

ML: I've always joked that I got into acting because I love set catering. So what is the best meal you've ever had on a set?

MT: [Orange is the New Black](#). When I did that show, I was there for three weeks. Every day they just had the most amazing foods. It was like a carving table, pastas, salads, and it was the best thing I've ever had. They would have beef tenderloin carved. It was unreal. They also had juicers and smoothie makers.



ML: What do you always have to grab at crafty on set?

MT: Candy. More specifically, whenever chocolate is there. On Super Dark Times, they would have a lot of different chocolates especially for me. Unfortunately [I would] also probably grab a soda, at some point throughout the day, to give me some energy.

ML: I always poll everybody about which sparkling water is the best. La Croix, Bubby, non-sparkling water, or another brand?

MT: I'm actually really passionate about this. I've only been drinking Berry La Croix.

ML: One of the best flavors.

MT: I'm obsessed. I think it's delicious and it reminds me of childhood. I cannot stop. Right now that's all I've been drinking and I love it. I would say in general, I really do love La Croix and their flavors. Some of them are not my favorite flavors. Razz-Cranberry is on that list, unfortunately. But in general, it has an amazing bubble ratio. In terms of plain sparkling? I grew up on

Perrier. What a horrible statement! (laughs)

ML: I love that though!

MT: My mom would get it for me because I loved it. These days I've been enjoying the lighter version with Pellegrino.

<https://yourmoneygeek.com/interview-max-talisman/>

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## **The Neil Haley Show**

Total Tutor



Today on The Total Media Network's The Dr. Christopher Hall Show, Dr. Chris and The Total Tutor Neil Haley will interview Actor Max Talisman.

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/actor-max-talisman/id426609228?i=1000470940139>

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<https://www.instagram.com/p/CBi1dsXgyhX/>

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# BOLD



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NCgN7ucRRel&feature=youtu.be>

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# ONWARD *and* UPWARD

The image shows an Instagram post from the account **bryanwesttv**. The post features a video player at the bottom with the title "ONWARD *and* UPWARD with @bryanwesttv" and a progress bar at 0:27 / 2:02. Above the video is a grid of 12 photos from the show "The Maxt Show". The post text reads: "Onward and Upward: Ep. 47 @themaxtshow talks about changes in Hollywood and his new movie he's shooting this winter! #onwardandupward #onedayatime". The post was liked by "therealshawncyrus" 1 day ago. The Instagram interface includes the profile picture of bryanwesttv, a "Follow" button, and navigation icons for likes, comments, shares, and bookmarks.

<https://www.instagram.com/tv/Cp65O4HYYf/?hl=en>

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