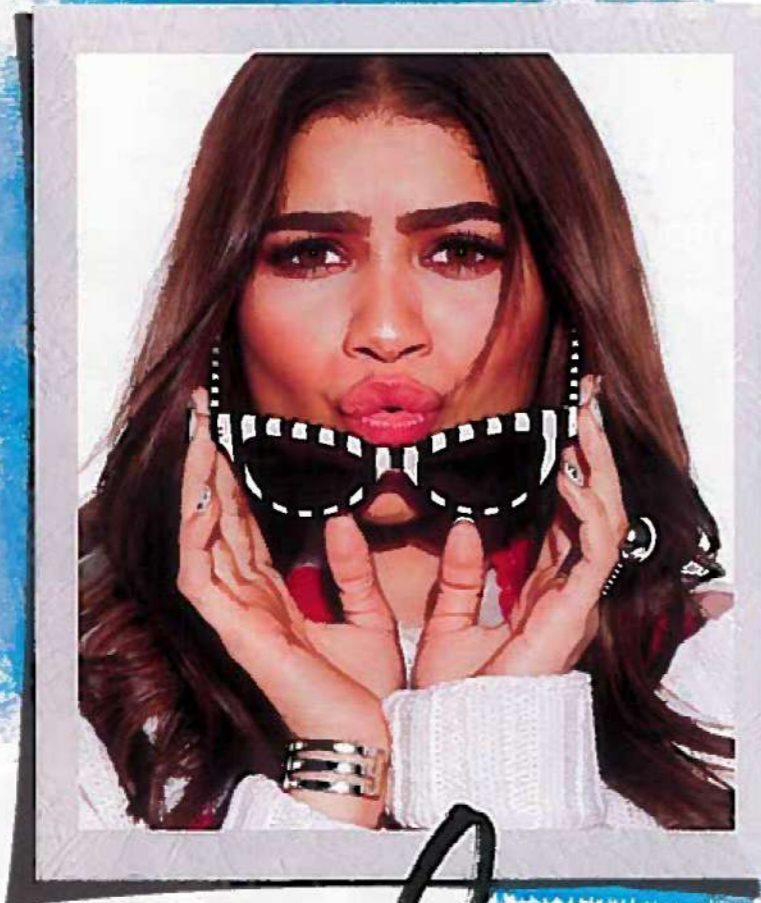


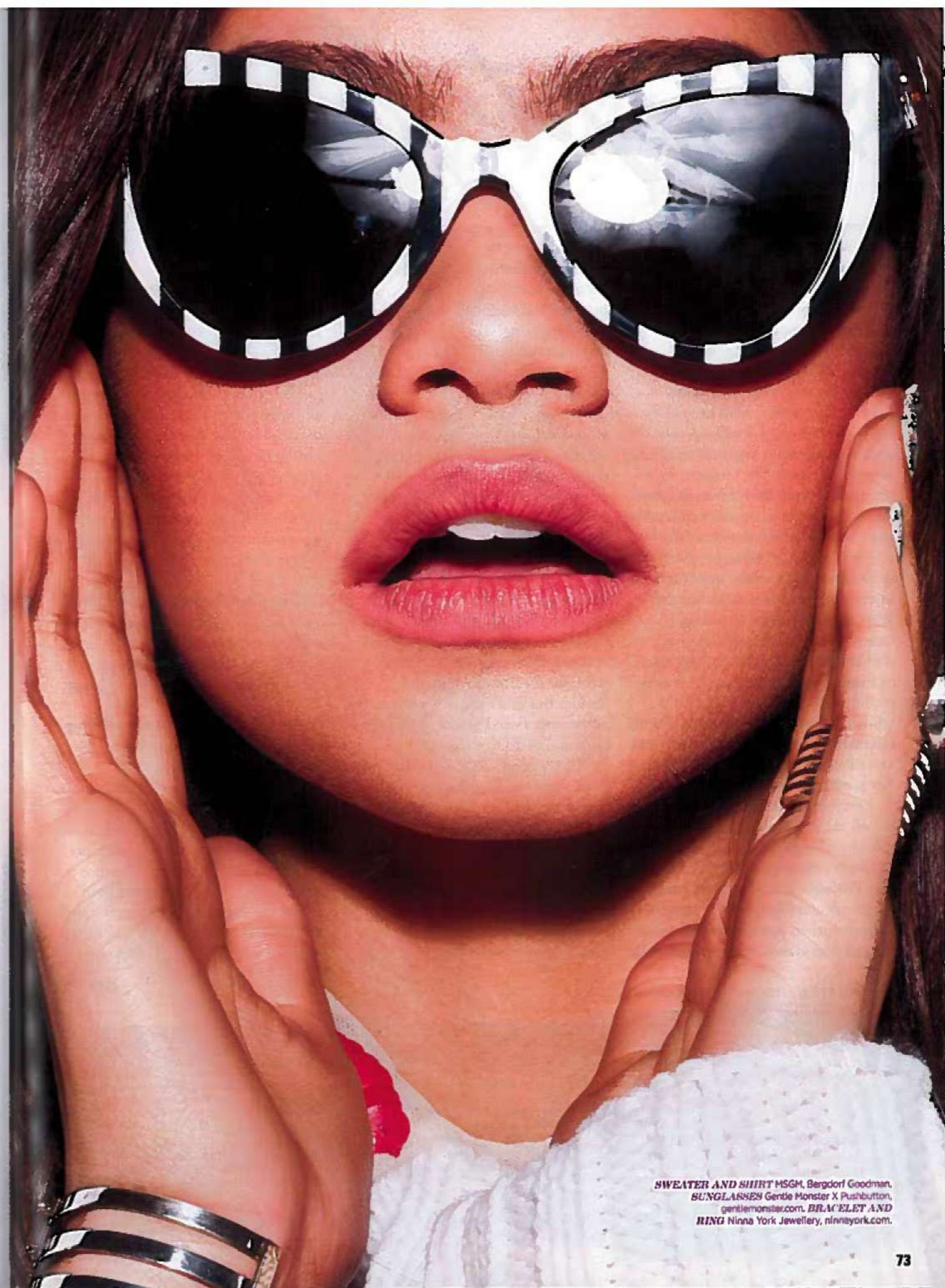
"It's okay to be like,



*"Dang,
I'm the bomb!"*

Zendaya Coleman targets haters with precision and never misses when it comes to the red carpet. Her confidence is her best weapon—and she wants you to feel just as powerful. Boom!

By JESSICA HERNDON Photographs by JAMES WHITE Styled by AYA KANAI



SWEATER AND SHIRT MSGM, Bergdorf Goodman,
SUNGLASSES Gentle Monster X Pushbutton,
gentlemonster.com. BRACELET AND
RING Ninna York Jewellery, ninnayork.com.

"My style is very undefined."

It's been a long day for Zendaya. After waking up early to shoot her TV series, *K.C. Undercover*, the singer-actress is back at her modern L.A. home. She's chilling with her dad (her parents live in the house, too); her miniature schnauzer, Noon; and her *K.C.* costar Kamil McFadden, when her mom texts her from the kitchen that her guest is there. Moments later Zendaya appears, looking as cool and laid-back as you'd imagine: She's dressed in cozy gray sweats and wearing glasses. She has her hair in a messy bun and not a trace of makeup on her face.

Most celebs, let alone people, probably wouldn't show up for an interview looking this real, but that's what makes Zendaya Coleman (whose first name means "to give thanks" in Shona, a Bantu language of Zimbabwe) so awesome. "I would go out to eat like this!" she admits while sitting at her kitchen table. "I'm not one of those people who really cares about what other people think. I'm just happy with who I am."

Zendaya's confidence is a big reason the 20-year-old has a legion of ZSwaggers—more than 11 million followers combined on Instagram and Twitter—and why she's become a legit role model for how to stand up for yourself. Remember how she reacted to criticism of her dreadlocks?

Or her amazing response to being called anorexic by a comedian? When it comes to dealing with haters, she says, "It's not about what happens, but how you handle it and turn it into something that can be positive, inspirational, or enlightening."

She has also learned how to handle the critical voices in her own head. "I remember when I was in middle school, I would get test anxiety," she says. "My teachers had to take me out of the classroom and talk to me because I thought, If I don't get an A+, I'm going to lose my s***." Nowadays, Zendaya still gets anxious, but that doesn't hold her back. "Like, the way I see it in my head, I should be nothing shy of Beyoncé," she says. "But you can't freakin' put that much pressure on yourself. That doesn't mean don't strive for the best, because you should. But don't kill yourself over it. Sometimes I need to realize that I'm human. I'm doing pretty good."

"Pretty good" is an understatement. Aside from crushing it on the Disney Channel, Zendaya is a red-carpet queen, a published author, and one of the faces of CoverGirl. Plus, she has a Barbie in her likeness and a shoe line, and she's hard at work on her second album. Next year, she'll hit the big screen in her first major movie, *Spider-Man: Homecoming*. But first,

she's ready to talk about her own super-slaying ways.

You're really coming into your own, but you still live with your parents, and your dad helps guide your career. How do you find independence?

I'm very much in charge of my career and what happens in my life. I have the final say in everything I do. But I still listen to my parents, and I respect them. And they respect me too. They have never sheltered me from anything. They expose me to every aspect of my business—they want me to know where my money is going.

Do you guys fight about anything?

Yeah! Of course! We fight about stupid stuff. For example, my dad just yelled at me because my dog took a poop in his man cave. But it's fine. He's a puppy.

Okay, let's talk about something totally different: your style.

What inspires your look?

My style is very undefined. I made it that way so that I can do whatever I want. I love dressing up just as much as I love wearing casual dingy sweatpants, some good old used socks, and a nice little T-shirt. It's just different sides of myself. It's liberating. So many young women are concerned with how other people think they look. I would not



Beauty tip
Keep skin looking glowy, not greasy, with a mattifying base. (Try CoverGirl Clean Matte BB Cream, \$9, drugstores.)

be able to rock a mullet to the Grammys if I was afraid of what people thought.

That was very '80s punk. You often flip your style with wigs.

I've been working with my stylist, Law Roach, since I was 13. We're very inspired by past looks—we're just doing a different version of it. I get inspired by random things I see. I might stumble across an old picture of Cher or Bianca Jagger, or I could be inspired by someone I see walking down the street.

Was there a point where you weren't confident enough to wear something daring?

Absolutely. When I started working with Law, I was a little bit more reserved. There was a time when I picked out my own outfits for red-carpet events and I was a little like, "What are people going to think? What do I wear?" But after experimenting so much and growing up, that just kind of slowly went away.

Do you read the comments on pictures and things you post on social media?

I'm not really a comment reader because what I post on Instagram is about my outfit or my faith, and those are things that no one can tell me anything about. If I like it, I like it. But if I'm posting something that is political, sometimes I do read comments to see what people are talking about and thinking.

TOP AND TROUSERS
Barbara Bul, barbarabul.com.
CHOKER Zane Bayne, shop.zanabayne.com.
CUFFS AND RINGS
Beauville, Forty Five Ten, Dallas, TX. **BELT** Nine West, ninewest.com.

Tricks of the Click

ZENDAYA REVEALS THE THINKING BEHIND HER SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS.

1 / LOOK YOUR BEST

"Get a good photographer and give instructions to let them know what you like. I use my mom and I tell her, 'Hold the camera right here.' It's okay to stare at yourself for a while and figure out your good side, so you go to it right away."

2 / BE SELECTIVE

"I'm kind of anal about posting. If I take a picture of my whole body and my toe looks weird, I'm not posting it. Someone will zoom in on my toe and be like, 'What the hell is wrong with her toe?' I don't criticize myself, but it's going to bother me."

3 / KEEP IT VARIED

"On Instagram, I show my fashion, makeup, and also things I'm passionate about. It's very real and honest. I screenshot my selfies—pages and pages of someone's face is annoying. I post memes now and then to spice things up."

4 / WORK THE APPS

"People can really see my personality on Snapchat. I like to be funny and make people laugh. Twitter is where I interact with my fans and get to know what they're into. I kind of stalk them. I'll send a little 'Hey, girl' or favorite their tweet."

Beauty tip

Want lashes as dramatic as your fave fall coat? Sweep on **CoverGirl The Super Sizer Fibers** by **LashBlast Mascara** (\$8, drugstores).

COAT Missoni, Missoni 1009 Madison Ave., NYC. **RINGS** Beaufille, Forty Five Ten, Dallas, TX.

HAIR Kim Kimble @SixK.LA. **MAKEUP** Allan Avendaño at Opus Beauty using CoverGirl Cosmetics. **MANICURE** Kimmie Kyees for Orly Int'l. at celestineagency.com. **PRODUCTION** Michelle Hynek at First Shot Productions.

Her favorites

FOOD

"Ice cream. Anything Häagen-Dazs."

CITY

"Oakland, California, because that's where I'm from."

EMOJI

"The laughing face with the tears. I overuse it. It fits everything."

SPORTS TEAM AND PLAYER

"Obviously the Golden State Warriors. So because of the Warriors, Steph Curry."

APP

"Postmates. They go pick up food and stuff for you. If I need tampons or ice cream, they get it for me."

ITEM IN HER CLOSET

"My sweatpants."

STYLE OF JEANS

"Boyfriend jeans are my go-to. They're comfortable and they look good with everything."

WAY TO DISCOVER MUSIC

"Through my friends who are dancers. They usually come up on the new stuff way before anybody else. They give me the lowdown."

MAKEUP MUSTS

"A concealer, a color lip balm that can also go on your cheeks—like CoverGirl Colorlicious Oh Sugar! lip balm—and mascara."

NAIL COLOR

"A good nude—one that is a couple shades lighter than your skin tone so it doesn't look like it's part of your finger."

HAIR CARE ESSENTIAL

"Coconut oil. Do a little coconut oil treatment now and then, and you're good to go."

So you don't care if you see negative comments?

No. But it also depends. If they attack my character as a human being, that affects me more than like, "Ugly outfit. Change your hair." When people question my integrity, that's what bothers me. Even then, I have to remember that it's a stranger and that person is going through something that I have no idea about. I think social media has helped us communicate when we're using it for good, but it's also desensitized us. You see a profile, not a human being. That's why when I respond to haters, I try to make it as fun and lighthearted as possible. But a lot of people find courage to say terrible stuff on the Internet. I have more respect for people in the old days. Back then, if you didn't like me, you'd have to come up to me and tell me you don't like me. Now you just tweet it. That really doesn't mean anything.

Can you remember an instance of something that really stung?

Not really. I feel like I brush it off pretty quickly. I gotta walk the walk and talk the talk. I can't be like, "Be confident and brush things off and move forward," and not actually do it in my own life.

There have been harsh comments directed at your parents' looks.

How do you cope with that?
You can't fight fire with fire. But I can't just act like the comments don't exist. My mom is a prime example of someone who fought to find herself. She lost 80-something pounds and is now super-healthy and coming into her own. I've always thought she was beautiful, and now she sees it too.

Your mother is white and your father is black. What's that been like for you?

It's awesome. I'm proud of who I am, and my parents instilled that in me. I can't sit here and pretend like being half white doesn't give me privilege, though, because it does. I don't go through the same struggles as my darker brothers and sisters. But I can use that privilege

to shine light on their issues. I think that's important, especially being a black woman, which I do identify as. It's important to use the special place that I've been given not only to uplift all people but also to uplift my black side. That is the side that has to do the most fighting. [She reveals a necklace that's been covered by her T-shirt.] I wear Queen Nefertiti around my neck because she was one of the first queens from Africa who ran things.

Being biracial, have you ever had a hard time finding makeup to match your skin tone?

I've had the horror stories—I've been orange. I think a lot of times when makeup artists see a mixed girl, they just pick the middle shade, which is not my shade. In fact, I'm probably like four different colors. I do my makeup myself now because I know the products I like and what works for my skin.

Let's talk relationships. Do you have any good dating lessons?

You can't be mad at yourself for feeling and living. I'm a very guarded person, but you can't be so guarded that you don't allow yourself to feel. If you get hurt along the way, that happens! It makes you stronger; you move forward. Love can be a great thing. Also, you can't force anybody to be what you want them to be. You'll be a lot happier when you feel like you don't need to change someone.

When it comes to friendships, how do you deal with drama?

I don't play that. Friend drama—those two words shouldn't even go together. Your friends should hold you down. If your friends are causing you drama, maybe they're not your friends. I have a very small circle. They are all people I grew up with, met through the people I grew up with, or am literally related to. My best friend is my niece [her oldest brother's daughter]. She's 21.

Bella Thorne is still one of your close friends, right?

Yeah! We'll post things to each other on social media, but we know everybody's

looking at that, so if she wants to talk, she'll call me or text me.

You missed out on going to a regular high school because you were working full-time. Anything you wish you'd experienced?

I kind of wanted to go to prom, but I heard Beyoncé missed her prom. So if Beyoncé can miss her prom, I can miss my prom.

You've accomplished so much at a young age. How does it feel?

Honestly, I think it's awesome. Sometimes I forget how young I am. Sometimes I feel like I'm like an 80-year-old grandma because I don't like to go out. Going out to me is staying in with friends, watching Netflix, cracking jokes, ordering some food. Easy.

So you don't think you'll turn up for your 21st birthday next year?

I'm just not a "turner-upper." It doesn't sound fun to me. I don't like not being in control of my surroundings.

You always seem so confident. Are there ever moments when you feel insecure?

I hold myself to such ridiculously high standards that if I don't meet or surpass them, I doubt myself. That fear of not being as good as you want to be can limit you from doing things. I feel a lot of people doubt me in the acting space because I've never done a big movie, and that's why I'm excited about doing *Spider-Man*—I have no preconceived notions about how I'm supposed to deal with it. But I auditioned just like everybody else, and clearly I did something right.

Any advice for girls trying to feel as self-assured as you are?

It takes time. Nobody just wakes up and says, "I'm confident and life is great." It's a process. It's okay to be like, "Dang, I'm the bomb." That's not conceited. I can't say that I am there with everything in my life, but there are certain things that I am secure about. You just have to take time to love yourself and be in love with yourself. ●