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# *A Woman's Touch*

*Alyssa Milano gives  
a whole new meaning to sports apparel*

by C. Moon Reed

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It seems like the classic Hollywood “Fame and Fortune Contract” now includes a clothing line. No matter the price point, you can’t buy a t-shirt without first tripping over several celebrity designer duds. So in preparing to interview child star-turned-adult-star-turned-sports clothing designer, Alyssa Milano, I couldn’t help but wonder why she refused to create a normal fashion line like all the other celebs. Was she trying to be contrary? Corner a niche market? Or was this the doings of Tony Danza?

Somewhere between our interview and her official MLBlogs, network baseball blog [[alyssa.mlblogs.com](http://alyssa.mlblogs.com)], the answer became clear. This brunette beauty loves sports more than most people love sports bars and sports drinks. Above all, the five-year Dodgers season ticket holder loves her Cali teams best.

What’s the No. 1 way to tell a true Dodgers fan? By their colors, of course. However, the petite, stylish starlet always left the team shop disappointed. “Everything on the market was really boxy or pink, which I think was the man’s answer to licensed sports apparel,” she says. So with a work ethic forged from growing up on the set, Milano set out to fix the problem herself. She pitched the idea of a fashion-forward women’s sports clothing line to her agent, who in turn pitched it to the MLB, and presto, a flattering hoodie was born. With humility seemingly out of place in a veteran actor and third-generation clothing designer, Milano says, “I think that Major League Baseball responded more to the fact that I was such a huge baseball fan than anything else. They decided to give me a shot.”

The line, TOUCH by Alyssa Milano, went on the market last year. Success brought the addition of sports hats and jewelry, and this year TOUCH is opening up to the NFL, NBA, NHL and CLC. When speaking about her tailored triumph, Milano beams, “It’s such a rewarding thing to have this idea and see it through all the stages. It’s been really overwhelming. I’m very proud.”

Stereotypes aside, the 5’2” actor seems an unlikely candidate for a sports enthusiast. If anything, eight years of filming *Who’s the Boss* wouldn’t provide her many leisure hours to enjoy America’s Favorite Pastime. In the end, it was love of family — a recurring theme throughout the interview — that introduced Milano to the joys of sports. “I was an only child until I was 10 years old,” she says. “Sports was always a way for me to connect with my father. When I was 10, my parents had another baby and that was a little boy. So it also became a way for me to connect with my brother.”

Milano started acting at age 7; she’ll be 36 in December. For the last 29 years, she has been honing her craft. Most people — and child stars are infamous for this — eventually melt under the glare of the limelight. But talking to Milano, she comes across as especially grounded, content, fulfilled and nice. Not that she doesn’t have a lot to be happy about, but this grown-up child star seems more normal than most “normal” people. Milano, yet again, thanks her family for her phenomenal and unusual sense of well-being. “I would credit my family having more influence over who I am than anything in the business,” she says. “I’ve always lived a sort of sheltered life and I’m very close to my family.”

Of course, when talking to the former on-screen daughter of Tony Micelli, one can’t help but wonder if a TV family starts to feel like a real one after so many seasons. Heck, the Micellis and the Bowers felt like family to most of America. Fortunately for everybody who loves the ‘80s, Milano gives a deeply satisfying answer, “It was natural for all of us to relate to each other as a family.” And yes, she and Danza still keep in touch. Though, like all father-daughter relationships, this one has evolved to gain an equal dynamic as she has matured.

Milano later goes on to reveal just how she found peace in Hollywood, “I feel really blessed to have the foundation of *Who’s the Boss*, which was a great way to grow up in this business because it was stability for eight years straight.”

Then there was her stint on *Melrose Place*. Milano describes it as a great experience. Despite the fact that she and co-star Heather Locklear were on-screen enemies, the alum says, "Heather was incredibly gracious." She also credits the show with starting her long relationship with "Mr. Spelling."

Perhaps because it's recent in her mind, Milano has the most to say about *Charmed*. "It was just a hoot," she says. "*Charmed* was so much fun to do. None of us ever took ourselves too seriously. We just went to work and had a great time." Fully grown, Milano was able to savor her success in a way that no child star could comprehend. She says, "It was such an important time in my life. To be an adult and understand what it all meant. We did almost 200 episodes, so it was a long, successful run."

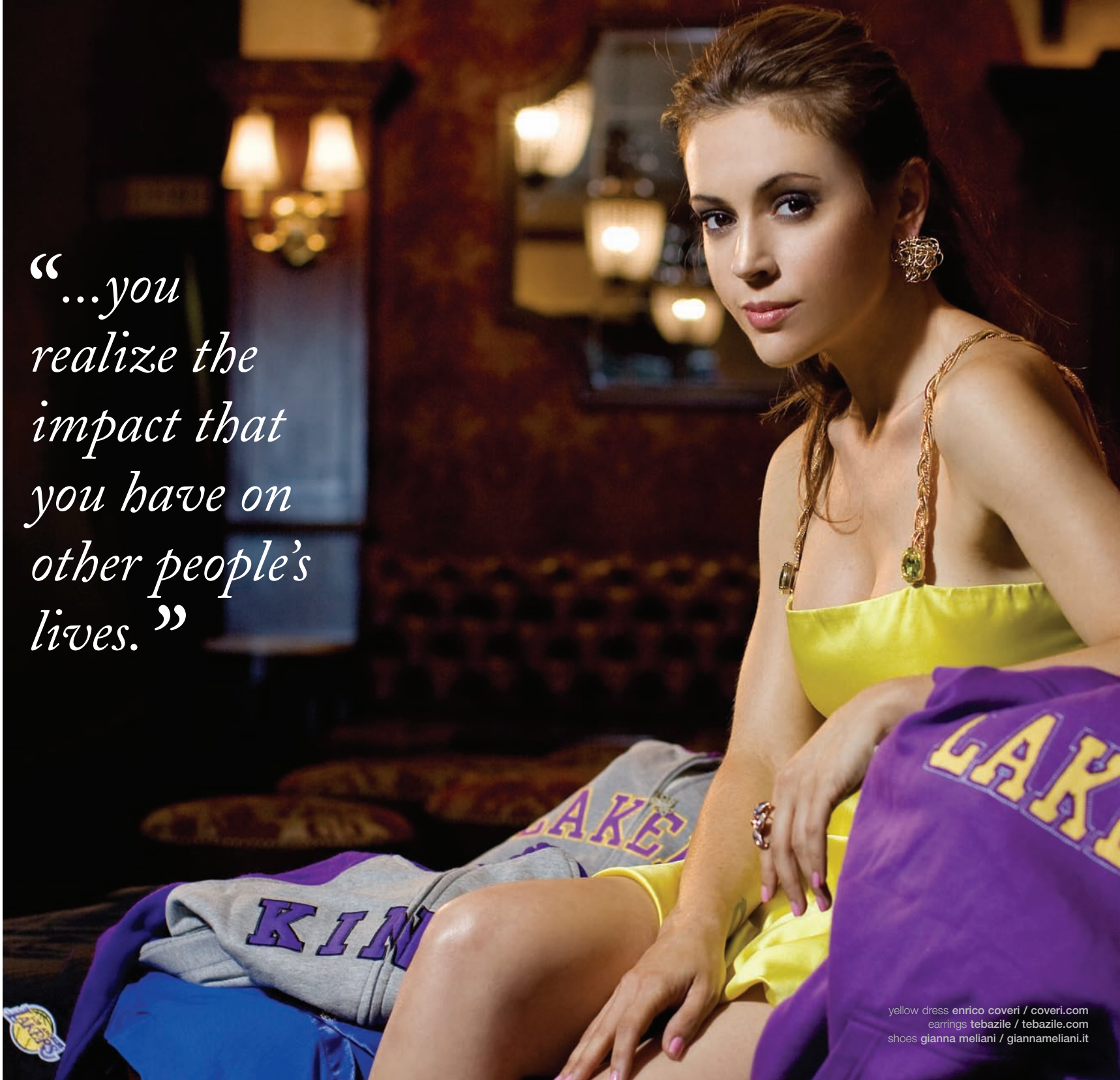
But just because her life reads like an actor's fairy tale doesn't mean it didn't include lots of hard work. When filming *Charmed*, Milano would work 70-hour weeks. For months, she would forget what it was like to wake up without an alarm clock. Still, there are special moments when all the effort is rewarded. For example, when she meets die-hard fans at comic book conventions that have tattoos of the Triquetra, an ancient Celtic symbol made popular by the *Charmed* Halliwell sisters. "It's an interesting thing because you realize the impact that you have on people's lives," she says.

In addition to her acting and her clothing line, Milano finds time to do humanitarian work, traveling around the world to help the less fortunate. "I feel that there is no reason to be a celebrity if you can't use your voice to affect positive change in the world," she says. To find an actor who is as beautiful on the inside as she is on the outside is rare. But to find one who loves sports as well, that's what makes Milano truly special.

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