

Tinsel Magazine Features Actor and Filmmaker Don Worley on the Rise of Pastor Shepherd

Feature Profiles Worley's Return to the Character He First Introduced in 2019, the Performance Craft Behind It, and the Audience Response That Has Followed

LOS ANGELES , CA, UNITED STATES, August 11, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Tinsel Magazine has [published a new feature](#) on actor and filmmaker [Don Worley](#), examining the resurgence of his fictional character [Pastor Shepherd](#), a televangelist parody Worley has performed across TikTok and



Instagram since January. According to the publication, the character has drawn more than 100 million views across platforms in six months, including 81.8 million views on Worley's own channels and, by his tally, another 20 million views on more than 180,000 reshares onto other accounts. The article notes that a single clip in which the character panics upon realizing he cannot delete his own live footage has drawn 24.1 million views.

“

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Don Worley

Tinsel Magazine describes Pastor Shepherd as "a televangelist of the recognizable American type. Good suit, better hair, a voice that has comforted thousands of people out of their savings." The publication reports that the character is played entirely straight — there is no wink, no break in performance, and no on-screen acknowledgment that the character is fictional. That commitment, the article writes, is what has made the

phenomenon possible: "Pastor Shepherd only works if enough of the congregation believes the collection plate is real."

The publication reports that Worley, an attorney and filmmaker Tinsel Magazine profiled earlier

this year, first developed the character years ago in a YouTube series called Prayer Hour. That version led to a 2019 feature film with Danny Trejo before Worley set the character aside. According to the article, the return in January was prompted by Paolo Moreno, a friend who ran social media for Jake and Logan Paul from 2014 to 2020 and who kept telling Worley the timing had changed. "He felt the timing was right to reintroduce the world to this character," Worley tells the publication. "With everything going on in the world today, from televangelists being even more bold now to MAGA and the success of verticals, it appears Paolo was right." The first post went up January 10.

The article spends much of its length on what the wider entertainment press have not yet worked out about the character — that the phenomenon is not the view count but the audience reaction. According to Tinsel Magazine, Pastor Shepherd's TikTok account has roughly 7,700 followers, and a single video on that account has 15,300 comments. "People are not subscribing to Pastor Shepherd," the publication writes. "They are stopping mid-scroll to fight about him." The article reports that the top comment across the run, with 306,000 likes, reads: "That's the creepiest thing I've ever seen." Under one clip about giving, the article reports, someone wrote "God doesn't ask for money" and nearly 200,000 people pressed like. According to the publication, viewers have taken the character's catchphrase — a line about the ministry accepting Zelle — and begun quoting it back at each other "like it's scripture."

Worley tells the publication he has to work to stay out of the comments. "I have to resist every day replying to a comment and questioning the intelligence of the poster," he says in the article. According to Tinsel Magazine, he has been resisting since January, and "the discipline is the whole ballgame."

The article reports that a significant share of the audience believes Pastor Shepherd is real. TikTok's own autocomplete, the publication writes, now offers landing pages including "Pastor Shepherd skit or real," "Pastor Shepherd explained," and "Pastor Shepherd controversy explained" — the last of which, according to the article, is "a page dedicated to a scandal that does not exist, attached to a man who does not exist." One viewer, the publication reports, filmed a reaction video confessing on camera that he had believed the character was real. That confession drew 2.7 million views on its own.

Worley tells Tinsel Magazine that the confusion is not new. "It was always this way, even in the old YouTube days," he says in the article. "Sad that we can't tell a real televangelist from a parody, but true. It takes most people a few videos to 'get it.' Some get it immediately and, sadly, some never get it."

The publication reports that the character has a clear line Worley will not cross, and that the line has held since the YouTube version. According to Tinsel Magazine, Pastor Shepherd is written as a man performing goodness over something colder. "He wants to be good and certainly has that online persona, like most televangelists," Worley tells the publication. "But on the inside, he is selfish and narcissistic." Worley tells the magazine that the character never mocks anyone with

real faith: "This is a parody of the televangelists or other ministers who abuse religion for their own personal financial gain."

The article closes on what happens next. According to Tinsel Magazine, television producers have begun approaching Worley about the character, encouraged in part by the appetite The Righteous Gemstones revealed and by half a year of evidence that Pastor Shepherd's audience has already assembled itself. "We shall see if a network picks it up," Worley tells the publication.

The publication notes that Worley is currently juggling six films at once through his production company, Second Chance Pictures, and that his award-winning indie feature A Time for Sunset is currently streaming on Apple TV, Amazon Prime, and Tubi. According to the article, the earlier Pastor Shepherd feature film with Danny Trejo is also available on major platforms.

The full profile, written by Daniel de Castellane, a contributing voice on arts, culture, and entertainment, is available now at Tinsel Magazine.

Pastor Shepherd appears on TikTok at @shepherdprayerhour and @shepherd.caught, and on Instagram at @shepherd.caught. Don Worley's A Time for Sunset streams on Apple TV, Amazon Prime, and Tubi. For additional information about Don Worley and Second Chance Pictures, visit: <https://secondchancepictures.com/>

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