

By Catherine Treetorn

— UMM —

GERARD BUTLER

RIDING HIGH

GERARD BUTLER FIRST GOT NOTICED FOR HIS CONVINCING ROLE, AND PHYSIQUE, AS KING LEONIDES IN 300. SINCE THEN THE 40-YEAR-OLD SCOTSMAN HAS APPEARED IN EVERYTHING FROM THRILLERS TO ANIMATION AND OF COURSE ROMANTIC COMEDY. FOR HIS LATEST FILM THE HOLLYWOOD LADIES' MAN STARS AS THE BOUNTY HUNTER WHOSE FIRST TARGET IS HIS EX-WIFE, PLAYED BY THE LOVELY JENNIFER ANISTON. WE CHATTED ABOUT CHOOSING HIS ROLES, BEGINNING TO CALL FOOTBALL SOCCER, AND HIS LIFE IN GENERAL BEING ON AN UP SWING.

Here you are now starring opposite the princess of romcom, Jennifer Aniston. Is now about the time the love letters start pouring in by the truckload?

Well maybe, but I get a lot of them now though, so we'll see. I don't know, that would be nice... what am I talking about (laughs).

Some actors who become well known for romantic comedy can start to feel typecast, have you ever felt that way?

I think that the last thing that I would say about myself is that I have been typecast. I have always made a point, more than most actors, of trying every kind of role. I have done horror movies, dramas, romantic comedies, black comedies, animated movies, action, and historical dramas. What I have tried not to do is to be pigeonholed.

Did you feel pressure from Hollywood?

Yes, and if there's a part of my career I am proud of, it's that I didn't bend to that pressure. After 300 it would have been easy to just do action movies, that's why to do PS I Love You felt a little weird, but I knew in the long run that it would pay off, that I wanted to keep going into different areas, moving laterally as opposed to vertically.



Photos: Keystone Press Agency

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A Scene From The Bounty Hunter With Jennifer Aniston

When you decide on doing a romantic comedy such as The Bounty Hunter, what do you look for in the role in terms of how you choose it for the path of your career?

The idea that you can get involved in some quirkiness of your own personality and some surprising softer parts of yourself - and to play with that and make people laugh! You go, OK, I can get into this and do this and hopefully have this reaction. And also maybe learn something along the way. Then there are other films where you think, this would really be me going to the core of my soul and challenging something and opening a part in me that could be fascinating for myself and also fascinating for other people to see. And there's another thing, or it might be something more emotional or something that's darker. Each one is a different appeal for you in terms of what you are trying to achieve for yourself.

When you read a script do you know right away?

It's a very intuitive thing. You sit down and you read a script and it's either an issue to turn each page; you find another bunch of things to do or not. You sit and you feel good, you are having fun and you want to know what happens next.

Your Scottish accent is still intact, has Hollywood been hard on you with that?

They are much more forgiving over here if you are going to use English words. Actually it's endearing. There, they will rip you to shreds. Look, it was always a fantasy of mine, because I've been doing well over here and in Scotland people know my name, but a lot of them don't even know what I look like. It's just like, that guy Gerard Butler's doing well in Hollywood. It's easy to win an award in Scotland - it's easier because there aren't so many actors. I wanted to appear once if I won some award and put on an American accent, and go, 'I just want to thank you guys, and say what an honour it is to be here in Scotland'. Because I know I'd be shot. I was once doing an interview for Capital FM in London and I was talking about football, but not our football - soccer - and I called it soccer. I told them I went to a soccer game and literally my heart - I thought it was going to burst - and the rest of the interview all I was thinking was I said soccer, I said soccer, I said

soccer. I thought it's as good as your career being over by saying the word soccer. I know it's going to be on the radio and they will have so much fun with that. Look at him, what a sell-out, f**king Hollywood. Soccer?

In 2009 you were honoured for being the GQ Man of the Year - how was that?

It's a lovely thing. To get honoured with anything is great, but Man of the Year is pretty fabulous. It's the kind of thing you tell your mom about. I don't win many awards, so this is nice.

Your movie career seems to be going extremely well, how do you feel about your life in general?

I am always reflecting on my life and I'm in a good place now. I have had a pretty interesting ride to get me to where I am today. It's been full of ups and downs and I'm sure I'll have plenty more downs, but at the moment I am on a bit of an up; I am happy with my career. I am happy with my personal life, pretty much. I feel like career-wise I am in a really great place. I have a variety of work and I am excited about the work that's coming to me, so it's good.

You also have your own production company. Does producing give you a different perspective on your own acting?

It gives me a more complete understanding of character. Despite the fact that producing added a lot more pressure, it also allowed me, in the case of Law Abiding Citizen, to know who I am much more because I had seen so many different angles on my character and so many different conceptions.

Why is your company named Evil Twins?

That's a very good question. Basically I feel that my manager, who is my partner in the company, and I could write ten volumes of books on the shit that we have been through together - the ups and the downs. We are like two naughty little boys in all the adventures we've been on. Every movie and every break, every yes and every no has felt like a battle, and yet it's something that we've had so much fun doing. So at some point we start calling ourselves the evil twins. When we made the company he said, "well what about evil twins?" because we just couldn't decide what to call it.