

# Close Encounters

FACE TO FACE WITH THE BIGGEST STARS

## CHEYENNE JACKSON

The *American Horror Story* veteran talks about his new movie

Words by Steve O'Brien

**A**s SFX hooks up with actor Cheyenne Jackson over Zoom, he's coming to the end of a 14-day quarantine, ahead of filming a new comedy that he's under strict instructions not to talk about.

"I can't even leave the hotel," he tells us. "So I've been memorising my lines, exercising, FaceTiming with my kids [Willow and Ethan] and watching a bunch of TV that I don't normally have time to watch."

Quarantine aside, life is good now for the 45-year-old actor and singer. He's a regular fixture on *RuPaul's Drag Race*, he's a four-season veteran of *American Horror Story* and he has a lead role in the US version of our own *Miranda*, *Call Me Kat*. Not only that, but he's one of the stars of the new horror comedy *Werewolves Within*.

**We thought the movie was very funny. While you're filming, can you always tell when a movie's going to turn out well?**

➔ You do get a sense that things are working, but you just never know if that special sauce that's happening on the set is going to translate in the finished product because there's editing, there's timing, there's special effects. But [director] Josh Rubin created such an amazing playground for us to bounce off each other and improvise that I thought, "Surely they're getting some good stuff."

**Josh Rubin is also an actor. Does it make a difference being directed by somebody who knows what it's like to be in front of the camera?**

➔ 100%. He knows exactly what we need. If you're coming in for your close-up, he knows to give you time – it's not just about knocking off the shots. Josh is one of the best directors I've ever worked with. And he's just beginning, and that's an exciting prospect.

**Your character in this film is gay. Do you think that LGBT+ representation has improved over the years? We're talking a lot more about diversity, but do you actually see real change?**

➔ Oh yeah. I've been a working actor since I was 27 and it's just grown exponentially, from being the token gay character in a sitcom to now not having it be an issue anymore. There's such a wonderfully diverse array of juicy characters. Queer, not queer, bisexual, none of that stuff

### BIODATA

From  
**Oldtown, Idaho.**

Greatest Hits  
**9/11 victim Mark Bingham in *United 93*, Danny Baker (not that one) in *30 Rock*, various roles in *American Horror Story*, *Hooded Justice* in *Watchmen*.**

Random Fact  
**Aside from being an actor, Jackson is also an accomplished singer and has released three albums to date: *The Power of Two*; *I'm Blue, Skies*; and *Renaissance*.**

matters to me when I'm choosing a part. I just want to know that I can bring him to life. With this character Devon, being gay was the least interesting part of him to me.

**You were in four seasons of *American Horror Story*, but you've sat the last couple out. Will you ever go back for another season?**

➔ I never say never. I've worked with Ryan on three separate occasions and he creates this really fantastical, perverse, sexy, out of this world universe. I've had really fascinating and interesting times on those sets.

**Did you know on that first series that you were going to be part of the *AHS* rep company for quite a while?**

➔ I didn't. I mean, I had hope. I met Ryan [Murphy] years ago when he saw me in a show on Broadway and after that he wrote me into *Glee*. I think once he sees something in you, he tries to find something for you. But yeah, I didn't expect to be in four seasons of that. It is kind of like an old-time theatre troupe in that every season, it's exciting to see like, what's Kathy Bates going to do? What's Sarah going to pull out this year?

**And what about *RuPaul's Drag Race*? Have you any more of that lined up?**

➔ Yeah, I shot them about a year ago as they do them about a year in advance. I love Ru, he's been a friend for maybe nine years. He's one of my mentors, and anytime he asks me to come on and play, it's always such a fun thing. It's one of my favourite shows, I love it. The UK version too.

**Would you do the British one?**

➔ Sure. Of course, I would do any of them! I loved the UK version because the British sensibility is so much drier and so many of the queens are naturally comedy queens.

**So what's next for you? Apart from this new project you can't tell us about?**

➔ I'm just getting ready to do season two of *Call Me Kat*. They're revamping, and we have a new showrunner. Shows always take a second to find their legs and I really love the six of us. Apart from that, I just want to keep working and creating new, diverse characters and keep providing for my family. It's just all chugging along. I'm very, very happy. 🍀

*Werewolves Within* is available on DVD and digital platforms from 19 July.

PHOTO: FOX MEDIA/GETTY

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