

Ask the stars of

INTERVIEW BY MATT MCCORMICK

Body Shots, opening around the nation in the near future, is yet another film about young twenty-somethings looking for love — or at least sex. Praised for its uncompromising and unflattering look at the mating process in the '90s, this film features a young and talented cast including Sean Patrick Flanery, Reid, Jerry O'Connell and Amanda Peet. *The Battalion* spoke with two of the film's stars, Emily Procter (who plays Whitney Bryant) and Ron Livingston (who plays Trent), about their experiences making the film.

What drew you to this project?

Procter: It was really a couple of things. It was nice to do a big studio movie. I had been hovering below the radar a little bit. I liked that it was with a group of people my age, and that doesn't happen very often. It's a really fun experience. It was a challenge. The subject matter is something that was little challenging to embrace fully.

How did you prepare for your roles?

Livingston: I have a lot of lines. If you look at a page, somebody says a sentence and then [Trent] says four; someone says a sentence and then [Trent] says five. So I figured he better talk fast. People that talk fast tend to come from either Boston or New York, someplace like that. At least those are the voices I can do that talk fast.

I figured he was kind of small, because I wanted him to be small next to Jerry [O'Connell]. So I had to figure out how to play him [my character] smaller than I am. Then the rest of it was just figuring around.

Procter: I usually keep a journal for my character, and I go through from the beginning of the movie to the end. I keep a nightly journal and just write as I would if I were a regular person. I write what I think has transpired in their life and how they think about it. I always do that. I find that's a great preparation to get you really grounded, because then you become a little stained by your day's events, which hopefully shows in the acting.

One thing I didn't prepare [for] was how to drive a stick-shift car, which I don't know how to do. I

show up on the second day of shooting, and they are like, "Here's your car." I was like, "Oh my God, a Jeep! I don't know how to drive that."

? How much fun was it to shoot the dominant scene in this movie?

Procter: I was just like "oh, oh, oh."
Livingston: I was handcuffed to a bed.
Procter: And Ron was like, "Can someone hand me a magazine?" And then we chit-chatted a little bit, and then the director asked if we could improv. All I was able to do was laugh.

Livingston: It was fun and all, but [there is a] thing that you don't see when you come to the movie. In between the takes, everyone else is getting a smoke break, and I'm still handcuffed to the g—d—n bed with my a-s hanging out. There's grips and Teamsters walking around, and I can't even reach down to pull my pants up. For the first two or three times, everyone is sensitive, but after everyone gets used to it I had to go, "Hello. Can I get a little help here?"

? How did you feel about being the funny guy in this movie?

Livingston: I loved it. Especially in a script like this, we both got to kind of be the funny ones. The movie has so much power that people really need to laugh in the movie. By the time we had set up that we were funny, all we really had to do was take a hat off and set it down and everyone would start laughing. It was the perfect situation to be in as far as that goes. Because we got to be funny, we got to say some of the things that I think some of the other characters wouldn't necessarily have gotten to say.

? Do you believe that sex can be that casual [as portrayed in the movie]?

Procter: For some people it can. I think it is a nice thing that women have been liberated sexually. I think that if a woman wants to be that casual sexually, then it is her choice. That's kind of the tone of the movie with regards to sex. It is the individual's choice, and if two people consent, then it's great.

Livingston: It's a little bit mythicized, made bigger for the movies. I do think that it is a trend. Thirty years ago, well, there's just things that we do now that are ...

Procter: Wait. Thirty years ago was 1969. They were "Summer of Loving" it.

Livingston: They weren't taking it for granted. When you bust out of that mindset, it's different from when you grow up. Your parents had casual sex, and they raise you to have casual sex, and you have the talk about birth control when you are eight.

Procter: Things are changing.

? The tag line for the film is, "There are movies that define every decade." Do you believe this film does that?

Livingston: I think that every generation is influenced most by what their parents didn't have. If you look at the '50s, it's kind of material and stability and the American Dream. It really came out of parents growing up in the Depression. I think the '60s and the '70s came out of their parents not having the freedom to break out of the mold. So I think that what we are growing up with is kind of the backlash of the '60s, which is, "If all this sex is so free and easy, then what's the point of making that intimate, one-on-one personal connection with somebody?" It really takes a lot of work. I don't think that we as a generation really understand that or even know that it is there. I think we are a little bit lost when it comes to that, but I think we know that. We're looking for it.

Procter: Our generation is really looking to connect and to be understood by other people.

? What would you like for people to take away from this film?

Livingston: I think to take away questions. It is not a movie that starts with questions, then gives you the answer. I hate it when a movie does that. It is like in an hour and a half, "Here's the answer to life." This film starts with a bunch of people who really think they know everything, and by the end of it they don't know what the hell to think. The movie really attacks your own cockiness.

Procter: Ditto.



PHOTO COURTESY OF NEW LINE CINEMA
Emily Procter plays Whitney Bryant, an innocent girl who loses her self-control for one night in *Body Shots*.

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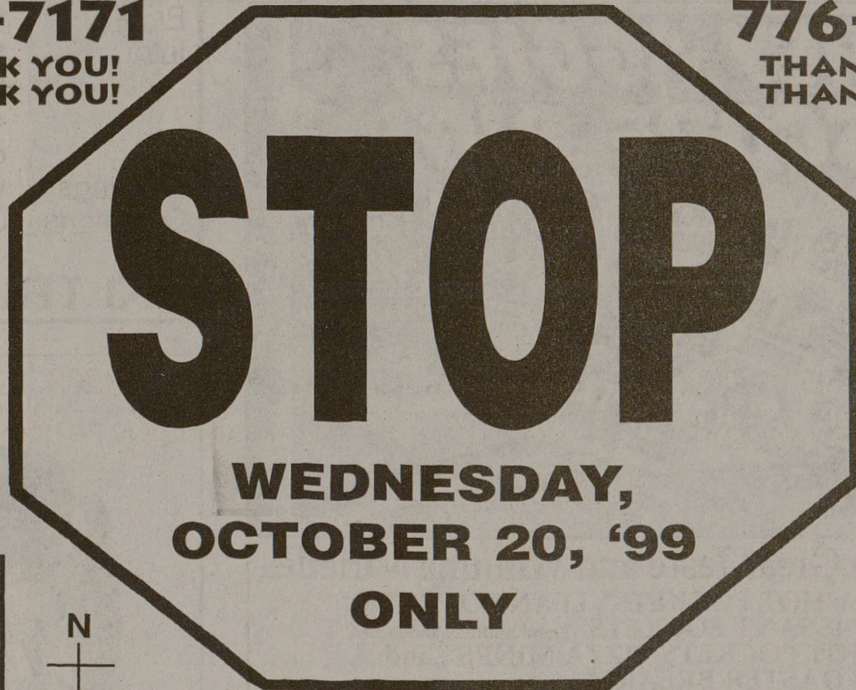
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