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Danny Dyer

24 Apr 2009

When my editor asked me to interview Danny Dyer, I laughed. Why would Gaydar be interested in the lads' mag's favourite hooligan actor? An actor who's spent his whole career taking drugs and kicking people in the head on screen? An actor who's sole vocabulary seems to be "yoo fuuuckin' cuuuuuuuunnnnt!" I was mystified, and actually a bit nervous.

Dyer has a new film out called *City Rats*, where a group of depressed Londoners get tangled up in various sexual encounters to alleviate their loneliness. He doesn't play gay but there are three gay characters in it. That explains it then.

Somehow I had missed most of his movies. I'd seen *Human Traffic*, his breakout role, but couldn't remember him in it. I'd also seen the surprisingly funny Brit horror flick *Severance* and remembered thinking that he wasn't quite as much of a knob as I'd imagined he'd be. That was it.

I had no real concept of the Danny Dyer phenomenon so I straw polled my friends. Unsurprisingly, my "geezer" acquaintances were all fans of films like *The Football Factory* and *The Business*, thought he was a good actor and reckoned he'd be quite a laugh to talk to. One of them made the interesting point that he's adored by a certain demographic because he lives out the fantasies of working class straight men who spout off down the pub about what they'd like to do to that bloke who nicked their bird, or that bastard who gave them a shifty sideways glance, but are too chicken. Another said he was a Southern scally with something to prove.

When I started digging around in Dyer's back catalogue, I learned that his first acting role on TV was as a rent boy in *Prime Suspect 3* at the age of 14 and he played full on gay juvenile delinquent in *Borstal Boy* in 2000. And then there's the semi-naked photo shoot he did for Attitude in 2006. Not to mention a stint at London's Almeida Theatre playing gay in *Certain Young Men* by Peter McGill.

My preconceptions were being allayed, he was obviously gay friendly and the more I watched footage of him on YouTube playing Jack the Lad on various TV shows, the more I started to look forward to our interview. He's just a cheeky cockney chappie with no pretence who's kept it real and champions British movies like no other actor of his generation.

So when the big day arrived, I was fully prepped and open to persuasion that there's more to Mr Dyer than a beer swigging, football loving loud mouth. He proved me right. He was chatty, funny, open and gave good quote – a journalist's wet dream...

...that rapidly turned into a nightmare.

As far-fetched as this may sound, the little digital recorder that held every word he'd said was smashed to smithereens by a bendy bus. You probably don't believe me. I could barely believe it myself. Listening to the interview on my way back to the office, it slipped out of my hand right into the pathway of a number 73 taking the finest words Dyer had ever spoken (honest) with it. The hysteria that followed is unrepeatable, even for the internet.

So, how do you write up an interview with no quotes from the interviewee? Make it up? Well, I wouldn't be the first, but I decided my ethics wouldn't allow it. Ask for more interview time? Unprofessional, not to mention the extreme embarrassment of having to explain the reasons why. Write down what I think he said and add 'allegedly' at the end of each sentence so Gaydar doesn't get sued? Mmm.

I decided to write my interpretation of a conversation with one Daniel Dyer on this day thereof, legal blah, blah and here it is. Just add the odd "fuck" and "bollocks" at your own discretion.

"He courts controversy and we lap it up because he's a breath of fresh air from the carefully orchestrated movie star interviews we're used to."

It seems fitting to begin with any misrepresentation Dyer may have suffered at the hands of the press. I asked him what the strangest thing he'd ever read about himself was and he said that only the other day it was reported he'd signed up for the part of Jack Tweed in Jade Goody's forthcoming biopic, which was strange because he couldn't remember having a conversation with anyone about the part at all. And, in case you're wondering, Michelle Ryan will be playing Goody, but she's probably not aware of it yet.

Dyer has cultivated a persona that's tabloid gold dust. Well known for his opinionated public outbursts, he's reportedly been through 'media training' to teach him better publicity skills. He courts controversy and we lap it up because he's a breath of fresh air from the carefully orchestrated movie star interviews we're used to.

I asked him if various newspaper reports about his famous foot in mouth disease were true:

Is it true he was chatted up by Boy George at an after show party for Certain Young Men?
Yes.

Did he decline politely?
Yes. He's a big fan of George's, but not that big a fan.

Is it true he'd love to have a threesome with Gillian Anderson and David



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Duchovny?

No, although he admits to saying he would. He doesn't want Duchovny anywhere near him (think about it, what with *Californication* and the reports of sex addiction, would you?) and he's already "had" Anderson in the film *Straightheads*.



Is it true he's suing Channel 4 because they gave him toxic hair dye that's subsequently made his barnet fall out?

No, he's not suing them. But he couldn't get the dye out for about six months and now he's starting to lose his hair, so he has his suspicions.

Is it true he turned down a role in Eastenders because he was scared of the publicity it would bring?

No. He was offered a role, but wanted to concentrate on his film work and then read in the press he was joining the show as its saviour.

Is it true that he thinks Orlando Bloom, James McAvoy and Mathew Horne are crap actors?

Bloom, yes. McAvoy, no. He once jokingly said that if he grew a floppy fringe he'd get more roles like James McAvoy, but he thinks he's a good actor. Horne, yes. Dyer thinks he's over exposed, doesn't understand what all the fuss is about and thinks he's up his own arse, allegedly.

This brings me on to one of the eight movies Dyer has in the pipeline for the rest of 2009. He stars as one of a group of blokes who go on holiday to a remote village that's advertised as having four women to every man in order to cheer up a mate who's been dumped. When they arrive they realise the reason there are so few men is because all the women are man-eating cannibals. Is it better than *Lesbian Vampire Killers*? Too "fucking" right, allegedly.

Dyer has nothing but praise for *City Rats* – a fragmented tableaux of frustrated characters all desperate to make sense out of their individual pain and loaded with so many closeted characters, writer Simon Fantauzzo may as well have built a revolving door into the script. Dyer was attracted to the small Brit flick because it was something a bit different from his usual tough nut role. He plays Pete, a miserable ex-con and just about the only character in the film who doesn't get his end away, who goes on a journey with the mother of an old friend to find the son she fears is dead. Much dark humour ensues during their mini road trip.

"Shyness isn't something Dyer is too familiar with. When pressed on whether he's embarrassed during a sex scene or if he's happy to let it all hang out, he plumps for the latter."

So what about that Attitude shoot then, right in the middle of publicity for one of his TV documentaries on *Footballs' Greatest International Gangster Factories* or some such programme? He has no problem with the gay community and once again wanted to do something different from what he's known for. He loved it, he says, and thinks he looks pretty sexy (we agree), but he was nervous about what would happen to the pictures afterwards. (Our advice would be not to think along those lines.) When asked what his friends thought about him posing nude for a gay mag, he said none of them had the nerve to buy it and he still gets flack, but doesn't care.

Shyness isn't something Dyer is too familiar with. When pressed on whether he's embarrassed during a sex scene or if he's happy to let it all hang out, he plumps for the latter. In fact, he has been known to get his meat and two veg out in scenes with no nookie at all in order to break the ice with his leading lady. Quite how successful this tactic is I didn't manage to ascertain.

His fans aren't backwards at coming forwards either and he recently met a jubilant female who hoisted up her skirt to reveal a tattoo of his signature on her inner thigh. He has no idea where she got his paw print from because he didn't write it.

So how does he manage to keep his feet on the ground when mad episodes like that happen? Up until a few months ago 31 year old Dyer still lived in Canning Town, East London, where he grew up. He hasn't defected to Hollywood, only Essex, but loves having green spaces on his doorstep. He's been going out with the same girl since he was 14, Joanne Mas, and they have two daughters. So sorry boys and tattooed groupies, he's not available.

Finally, just to burst the bovver boy bubble out of the water, Dyer's guilty pleasure is *Antiques Roadshow*, which he says he can happily watch back to back to back. Who'd have thought it?

[Read Our Review Of *City Rats* »](#)

Click for our review including image gallery, trailer, verdict, plot and queer ratings.

City Rats [2008]

Studio: Revolver Entertainment

Released: 27 April 2009

ASIN: B001QVI18U

Want to see more of Danny Dyer? Get *City Rats* online now. You'll save some money to put towards other Danny Dyer flicks like *The Business* and *Borstal Boy*.

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