



Bobby Lockwood.

Photography by Phil Sharp

Credits.

Talent. **Bobby Lockwood**
Interview. **Vanesa Miraglia**
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On the cover



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Bobby Lockwood's candid conversation reveals a seasoned actor grappling with self-doubt and imposter syndrome while striving for authenticity in his roles. As he explores the complexities of his character Lee Coutts in "The Tower," Lockwood shares his personal experiences that inform his performances, underscoring the emotional depth he brings to the screen. With a career spanning from child actor to leading roles, Lockwood's journey is marked by both successes and setbacks, shaping his perspective on courage, perseverance, and the enduring power of storytelling.



V: Bobby, welcome! It's a pleasure to sit down with you. As we chat about your role as DC Lee Coutts in *The Tower* Season 3, I want to explore the nuances of your character and the intricacies of your craft. We often hear about the physicality and the dialogue of a role, but I'm curious about the emotional landscape you navigate as you embody Lee Coutts. Could you share with us a moment in this season that challenged you to dig deeper into his psyche? Perhaps there was a scene or an interaction that forced you to confront something unexpected within yourself?

B: Pleasure to be here with you, thanks for having me. *The Tower* is an interesting one from a performance perspective as so much of Lee is exposition and going through dates and details. At first, I found this quite tough to adjust to and had to strip it all back to be able to get through it.

Saying that, this season Lee makes a severe blunder which almost has grave consequences. As a green detective but someone who has lofty ambitions within the force, this really shakes him. Is he good enough? How could he make such a mistake? The feeling of imposter syndrome is something I have carried with me so could relate to him in that level.

V: How do you prepare for such emotionally charged scenes? Do you find that you draw from personal experiences, or do you create a fictional backstory for Lee that informs those moments?

B: I'll create a backstory for almost every character I play, how detailed depends on the character/role and what I need. Sometimes it's very simple. Lee puts a lot of pressure on himself, on top of the high stakes that naturally come with the job. I then find myself relating his experiences with mine and try and find some familiarity or context to the emotions or mental state of what he's going through so I guess I do both.

V: That emotional authenticity must be key in portraying a character like Lee, especially when the stakes are so high. In this season, how do you feel Lee has evolved from the previous season? What aspects of him did you find particularly compelling this time around?

B: He's a little less green and frustrated at Elaine (played by Ella Smith) being promoted ahead of him. He's still trying hard and is becoming more outspoken with his opinions. I hope this builds as it's forming a great relationship between Lee and Elaine. But also I'll be honest with Patrick Harbinson's writing it's easy to be authentic, it al-

ways flows effortlessly.

V: Vulnerability is such a powerful tool in storytelling. How do you think this evolution of Lee—his willingness to be vulnerable—affects his relationships with other characters in the show?

B: His vulnerability comes from the fact he cares. He sees Elaine, as she prioritises being a mother before the job (at least that's how he sees her), as someone who doesn't care, or doesn't care enough. He respects Sarah (Gemma Whelan) as she gives her all to the job. Lee needs to either grow up or learn to bite his tongue otherwise he risk rubbing more of his colleagues up the wrong way.

V: As you approach these intricate relationships on screen, do you find that your interactions with the other cast members influence your portrayal of Lee, and if so, how?

B: Always, with every character, in any production. So much of my performance is dictated by my colleagues. For me, it's all about listening and responding, you know, watching and being present. It's very rare that my performance wouldn't be I think. I go in knowing where I'm at emotionally and my intention and then the scene plays out how it does and that is often dictated by my costars performance and what they give and I receive and visa versa

V: Speaking of characters, you've portrayed such a diverse range of roles throughout your career, from *Wolfblood* to *Dunkirk*. How do you balance the different aspects of your craft when transitioning between such varied characters?

B: I try to take quite an open approach to roles. Sometimes, something will resonate with me really early on in my prep. A feeling or a mood and I can riff off that and then other times it will take me longer to "find it".

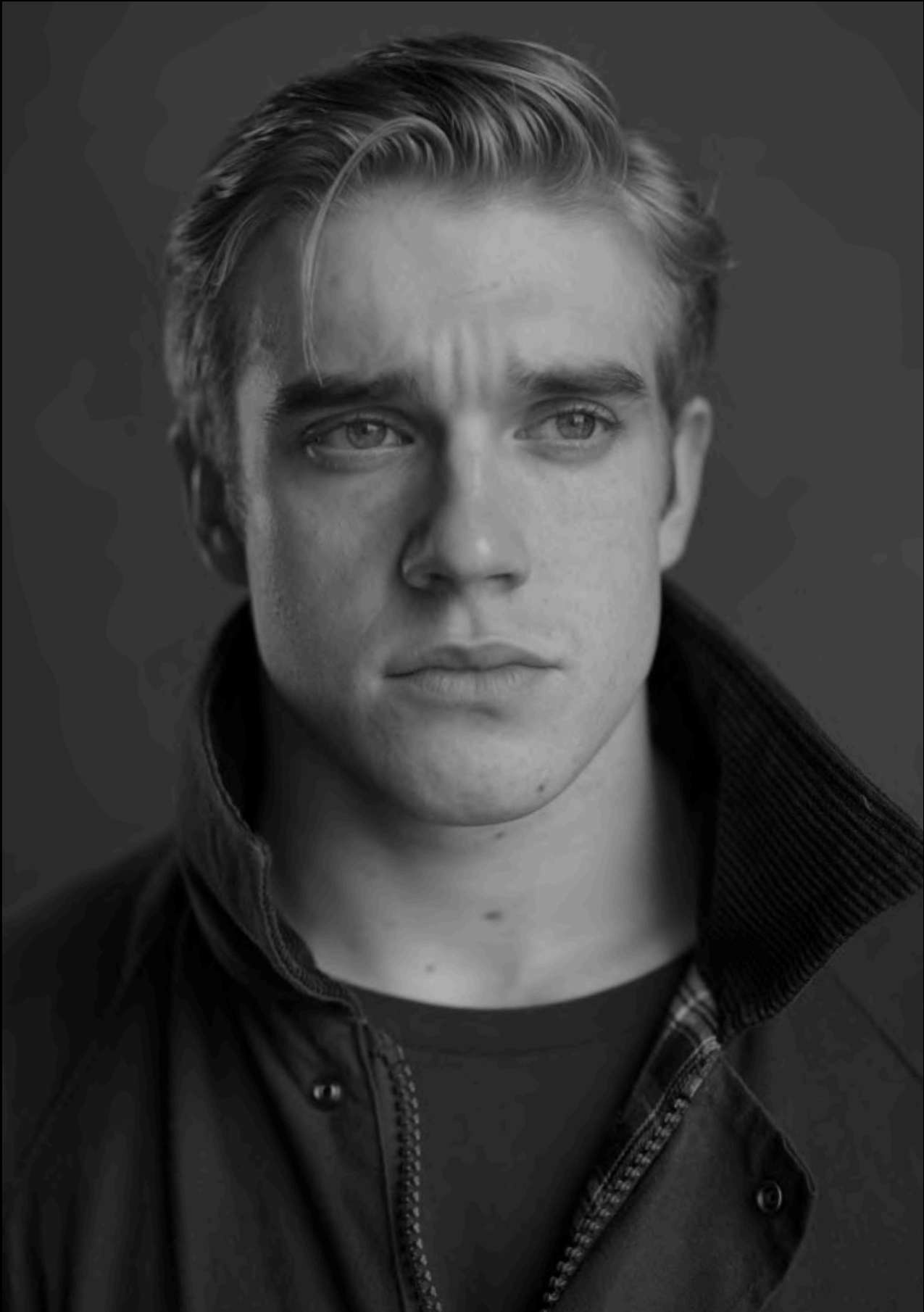
As long as I know where they've come from and what they've been through I then just try to imagine their wants needs and desires, their insecurities and flaws. The more prep helps me feel more prepared but then sometimes I feel I don't need to do that much and can keep it simple. It all depends on the role for me.

V: It's evident that you have a passion for growth. Reflecting on your career, have there been moments where you faced failure that felt starkly different from your own sense of achievement? How do you navigate those experiences of setback, and in what ways do they shape your understanding of success and fuel your artistic growth moving forward?

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B: Growth is so important to me as a person. I feel like I change all the time and try to embrace it. I'm always looking to improve in all aspects of my life.

I think you could look at my career and see I first acted at 6 and then won a children's BAFTA at 20 and think that perhaps my career has been all plain sailing but I've had years where I haven't worked, I still have to work other jobs to pay bills, I still feel like I have no idea what I'm doing and constantly question if I'm good enough. I've learned over time that that's just part and parcel of my career and the way I think and, I'm going to act until I die so either way, I might as well enjoy the ride. There will be good times and days where I feel I've acted brilliantly and awful barren times and days where I feel I can't act to save my life. Because of this I try not to be too hard on myself, as long as I give it my all. I might not get a role for whatever reason, I tried my best and that's all I can control.

I've been cut from a number of shows in my career already and every time it's ended up a positive in the end and I've been able to do something else that I wouldn't have been able to do otherwise. I try my hardest to have perspective and trust that what seems bad now might be okay tomorrow. As long as I'm healthy, I try to be a good person and look after to those I care about, then all is good. Being an actor doesn't define me. I love it and it's what I want to do but I'm not owed it and it's also not the most important thing in the world.

V: Bobby, I'm curious about the moment an actor truly begins to identify as one. In your experience, does that feeling come with professionalism, awards, or the validation of critics? Or is it more of an internal realization that unfolds when you first immerse yourself in the craft? At what point did you feel that shift for yourself?

B: I'm not sure I've ever felt that shift. I try my hardest to prepare as best I can and then just try and let it all go when I per-

form. I'm my own worst critic so I really try and aim to just be proud of what I've done. I'm not always but then I watch and try and figure out why, what could I have done better. I used to hate watching myself but then I realised it wasn't constructive or helping me so I got over that and now study my work. I know what intention I had at the time, did that come across? Why not? Had I not prepped enough, was I distracted by some game that day and not focussing, was I tired? I just ask questions and try and watch honestly.

V: As we come to the end of our engaging conversation, I'd love to hear your thoughts on a quality that many admire yet find difficult to define—courage. How do you perceive courage in your life, especially when navigating challenges? Do you see it as a natural extension of your passion for acting, or is it something you believe is cultivated through experience and action? I'd be interested to hear any personal moments that have shaped your understanding and appreciation of courage along your journey.

B: To me courage is not the absence of fear. It's action, in spite of it.

I do think you need a certain level of courage to act, to put yourself out there like that, I guess that's true. I'm trying to be braver and bolder in my choices as an actor all the time but am also acutely aware that it's acting, it's make believe at the end of the day.

I'm also, and I think more importantly, trying to be braver in life. Speak up when I should and do the right thing for not other reason than because it's the right thing to do.

Maybe one day I'll have practised being courageous so much in my acting choices that when real life puts a literal or metaphorical burning building in front of me I'm able to impulsively make the right choice and have courage. (Instead of just faff around which is what I'm most likely to do)

The Tower Series 3 is now available to stream in full on ITVX.

Interview by Vanesa Miraglia for **VIEWTIES**. For more information, visit viewties.co.uk



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