



Benjamin Hollingsworth.

Photographed by Dylaina Gollub

Credits.

Talent. **Benjamin Hollingsworth**

Interview. **Vanesa Miraglia**

Photography. **Dylaina Gollub**

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On the cover



Benjamin Hollingsworth.

Benjamin's passion for his craft shines through as we dive into an engaging conversation about his remarkable journey from the indie film scene to landing a standout role in Netflix's hit series "Virgin River." Our discussion flows naturally, uncovering his profound connection to his character, Brady, who battles a troubled past while seeking redemption. Benjamin opens up about the valuable lessons he's gained over the years, emphasizing the importance of resilience and teamwork in the art of storytelling. As he shares his dreams of stepping into directing and producing, it's clear that his commitment to authenticity and emotional depth not only elevates his performances but also fuels his desire to connect with audiences on a deeper level.





V: Benjamin, it's a delight to have you here. Your journey from the indie scene to a leading role in one of Netflix's biggest hits is truly inspiring. As you've portrayed such a diverse array of characters—from the troubled teen in "The Joneses" to the intense doctor in "Code Black"—how has this journey influenced not just your acting, but your understanding of yourself as an artist and individual?

B: I've had one heck of a ride, but I also feel like I'm just at the beginning of reaching my potential. I am thankful for all of the opportunities I've had along the way. Some projects I thought were going to be big hits ended up not being hits, and then there were some projects that ended up doing really well that I never thought were even going to survive. Show business never ceases to amaze me. I've learned some tough lessons along the way, but the most important one; never give up on yourself. Jobs come and go, but it's important to understand that very little of a project's success comes from just one actor. It's a team telling the story. That's what brings me to my current pursuit which is to start directing, producing and acting in my own projects.

V: Turning to your role in "Virgin River," it's fascinating how Brady embodies a man grappling with his turbulent past while yearning for redemption. What was it about this character that resonated with you on a personal level? How did you navigate the complexities of bringing such a multifaceted individual to life, especially in moments that reveal his vulnerabilities?

B: There was a class I took in my second year at The National Theatre School that was focused on mask work; the idea that we all wear a mask in our day-to-day lives. For example, when we meet new people or confront old enemies, we put on a front. I believe it's to protect or shield ourselves from rejection or defeat. Often my approach to characters stems from this idea. There is a mask and then there is the inner person. Brady wears a rebel, tough-guy mask. His inner person is much, much different. In many ways he sees himself as not worthy. Not worthy of valor, respect and tragically so, love. This is why he is always on the run, living on the fringe and is shut down emotionally. It offers up an opportunity as an actor to take the audience on the journey with Brady to discovering himself. They then identify the inner Brady, the real Brady, confronting his imposter syndrome and trying to navigate the world. All of this is inspired by finding the love of his life in Brie.

V: Brady's journey is fraught with significant inner turmoil. How do you approach the delicate balance of portraying a character who is both a victim of circumstance and a contributor to his own suffering? What unspoken internal battles do you believe Brady faces that echo the struggles many people encounter in real life?

B: I rely on my own instincts because Brady is a man of instinct. Sometimes that gets him into trouble and sometimes that saves his life. He is always at battle with himself. He has made mistakes and yet, I think, a lot of people root for Brady because his intentions are usually good. I don't know one person who hasn't struggled with something at one point in their lives. We relate to struggle because struggle is the universal battle. The struggle between doing right and wrong. It's often more complex than that, but that's what people see in Brady - that battle to be a good person and do the right thing.

V: It's rare to see male characters engage with their emotions so openly. Can you share your thoughts on how this representation challenges traditional notions of masculinity, and what personal experiences informed your portrayal?

B: Vulnerability is something that takes great strength. It's ironic that society's idea of masculinity involves not vocalizing your emotions. Brady is a character that, up until his relationship Brie, was very closed off to his inner self. He lowers his mask when he is with Brie and I think that is what makes Brie so attracted to him. The paradox of strength and vulnerability is sexy.

V: Can you walk us through your creative process when developing a character's backstory? Do you find it more fulfilling to collaborate with writers, or do you prefer to immerse yourself in building an internal narrative that shapes the character's journey?

B: I think it's a bit of both. My road map of where I want to take the character is often directed by a destination. Where we are going is often the writer's decision and how we get there is left to the performer. I am careful to curate a route that is engaging for the audience and at the same time true to the intended story.

V: As I mentioned at the beginning of the interview, your journey is truly inspiring. It makes me wonder if you ever feel a sense of having "arrived," or if this is something you don't think about and simply enjoy the ride as it unfolds.



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If you do contemplate this concept, could you share your personal experience of what 'arrival' means to you?

B: : I would hate to think that I've arrived. Everyone's career is a journey. I hold high hopes of retiring at the age of 80 with a smile etched on my face because I spent my whole life being gifted the incredible privilege of having made a career out of doing what I love. When I'm 80 and I can say that, THEN I have "arrived." Until then I'm happy taking selfies with strangers :)

V: And how do you perceive respect and belonging in your career? Do you find these areas something you struggle with, or are you increasingly gaining respect and feeling included as a professional actor?

B: I've always felt like I belonged, even during early times of struggle and unrest or failures. I've always maintained the same sense that I was born to do this; that it is a calling I couldn't ignore. It still hasn't quite hit home that I've been acting professionally for almost 20-years. But something I am always battling these days is the want to tell my own stories. I haven't taken the steps because I've been busy focusing on acting, but I really want to start directing.

V: Creative failure is a crucial and intriguing aspect of an artist's journey. Can you recount a time when criticism or an event left you feeling utterly discouraged? How has dealing with such failures or setbacks shaped your path as an actor?

B: My first series regular lead role was on a CW show Ashton Kutcher produced called "The Beautiful Life." It was cancelled after only two episodes on air. We were in the middle of shooting a scene from Episode 7 when we were told midday that the show was done and we had 30-

minutes to clear out of our dressing rooms. It felt like I had "made it" only to abruptly have had the rug pulled from under me.

Every actor faces rejection or failure. It is the one consistent thing an actor can rely on. Having the show cancelled so quickly wasn't the worst thing. In hindsight it was one of the greatest things that ever happened to me. I learned a lesson they don't teach you in theater school. Take nothing for granted; nothing is guaranteed or owed to you. Resilience is earned, not inherited. I didn't give up on myself or my dream. In fact, the thought never crossed my mind. Quitting for me was never an option because when you love something as much as I love acting you'll do anything it takes to keep doing it. I'm not sure if it's courage or insanity, but I'm in it for the long haul.

V: To wrap up our conversation, I'm curious about your take on courage. How does it show up for you when facing challenges? Do you see it as a result of your passions or something you earn through your actions? Can you share any personal experiences that have shaped your understanding of true courage?

B: You don't need to be a hero to be courageous. Courage comes in all different shapes and sizes. We just spoke of how respect, courage is the gateway to respect. Anyone at any point can choose to be courageous. It can be as small as asking for forgiveness or as big as standing up for someone or as passive as getting out of the way for another. Personally, I won't know if something I did took courage until after I did it. I try to embrace life and run full speed towards whatever is in front of me. This is something that makes me, at times, fearless, but also apologetic.

"Virgin River" relaunches on December 19th.

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



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