

2003 www.aidan-gillen.com Q&A

<http://web.archive.org/web/20051218170055/http://www.aidan-gillen.com/qanda.html>

Questions from Alexis

1. **Honestly, Dice was a bit frightening. Glenn, the character was creepy, but in the best way possible. How do you go about getting into the headspace for a character that was definitely like night and day?**

I think no matter how you look at it, anyone who is an actor has a split personality, or likes to play at it. I try to play interesting people, and damaged people tend to be interesting. As far as getting in the characters headspace goes, an actor may have an instinct for how people are.

2. **Okay, I have to know. When Francis looks under Gloria's throw rug in 'Buddy Boy', what does he see?**

That's open to interpretation. I saw body parts.

3. **"The Low Down" was especially poignant for me. The whole idea of being in that age group, where people are either growing up, or fucking up, or both. How close did you feel to the character, and what experiences were you able to bring to the part?**

I was more or less being myself here, at Jamie Thraves' (Director) request, or myself as I once was, inarticulate; unsure.

4. **You've done a few period films. Is there any historical period that you would be particularly interested in playing?**

I've done a couple of 1950s things I liked, I wouldn't take on a part cos it was/wasn't period, I think playing contemporary is easier, period roles demanding different speech rhythms/patterns etc, I don't know. I don't want to say too much about this, everything changes all the time.

Questions from xof

5. **Your body of work continues to be satisfyingly diverse, always branching out and returning to tried and true avenues. For each project that gains you a higher level of media attention (Queer As Folk, The Low Down), you then follow it up with a smaller independent film, mini-series or stage production. Do you make a conscious effort to chose projects that continue to harken to actor as artist - giving you a sense of growth you might not find in more commercial films; or is it just a matter of what you find of interest at the moment?**

I'm looking for great parts in great scripts that will be seen. Scale is not an issue. I will try to change direction or stop/start in order to keep it interesting, and things often turn out differently than you would think. Queer as Folk turned into a much bigger thing than I think anyone expected, and The Low Down was a very small independent film that attracted attention because it warranted it. Shanghai Knights is a commercial film but the part looked like fun. Its budget was 50 million dollars. The project I just worked on which is a feature length drama on digital video had a budget of 20,000 pounds sterling (about \$30,000).

6. **The media machine that comes into play with the promotion and sale of large motion pictures can be overwhelming it seems. Your participation in "Shanghai Knights," which I'm greatly looking forward to, will be exposing you to a considerably larger audience world-wide than anything you've done in the past. Do you plan on being actively involved in the promotion of this movie on both sides of the ocean? Media junkets, and the like?**

I won't be required to do any media stuff for Shanghai Knights as far as I know. This is a Jackie Chan film (I believe it's going to be very good) and what it requires to get an audience in is cinema tv print and internet ads with JACKIE CHAN written big on them. Owen Wilson is very funny and will be great in it. I play the bad guy, but it's kind of a cartoon. I don't think there's much I could say about it that's not apparent.

7. **Two films you've done, "The Final Curtain" and "My Kingdom," have or are still taking quite a while to be released from their initial completion dates. With the recent passing of Richard Harris, more attention may be shown to "My Kingdom" which would be rewarding both to the viewers and cast. However, your role in "The Final Curtain" is one that I've personally been looking forward to seeing. Has there been any word on the release of that film, and can you tell us your thoughts on the film and working with Peter O'Toole?**

Recently it dawned on me that meeting and working with Harris and O'toole has been a real personal highlight. I don't know where Final Curtain is, lost somewhere in post production, it felt good when we were doing it though and Peter O'Toole is an extraordinary man really. The same goes for Richard Harris although they're quite different people. My part in My Kingdom is small really and I only had one short scene with Richard. He gives a fine performance and I think it has already been seen in many places. This film could have benefitted with a bit more time to shoot it, some scenes were shot quickly, etc, the plot gets complicated. I hope he doesn't get an Oscar after he's gone - I don't think he'd like it. I had a fine night out in Liverpool in his company, I'm grateful.

Question from Linda Dellicolli (England)

8. **I saw you last year in Platonov and enjoyed it and was wondering will you be considering or do you have any more theatre work in the pipeline?**

Not at the moment, no.

Question from Alexandra Gebhart (Austria)

9. **I would like to know from you how you prepare yourself for your movie characters (movieparts). Do you do some field research, or do you rely on personal experiences?**

Well I'd say instinct and imagination. I'm not huge on research unless of course it's something specific like flying a plane or something.

Question from C. Forster

10. **Do you have any plans to return to stage (especially once the Almeida reopens in spring of 2003)? I saw you in Platonov in November 2002 and you were brilliant.**

Same as above. I think Platonov or that version of it is a very good play. I found it strange, difficult, rewarding. It was elusive and I didn't get it every night, that's the nature of playing parts like that.

Question from Sue Mayor

11. **What has been your most rewarding piece of work?**

Both film and stage versions of *Mojo*. When I first read it I felt a connection, like I knew it already. I played different parts in the theatre and film versions, flipsides to a coin. I hold that film in high regard, I know not a lot have seen it.

Question from AMCapelli

12. **Please list your top 5-10 films ever and why each made the list.**

Well, in no particular order, these are some films I like: ***The Deer Hunter***. This is a great film about America, the American working class, at a confused time (of the Vietnam War). With brilliant performances from Robert DeNiro, John Cazale, Christopher Walken, Meryl Streep and others.

When Michael comes back from Vietnam and sees his friends waiting to welcome him he tells the cab driver to keep going. They don't see him, and he goes to a nearby motel. There's no words in the next scene but it says it all. Also the next scene, the following morning when he goes down to see Streep, he's explaining how he feels or is trying to, and she doesn't really know how to react, what to say. But she's pleased to see him. They go for a walk through town and various people greet Michael. It's melancholic, and nobody knows what happened to Nick (Walken) over there. You can see Streep is proud to be with Michael though. They have a strange relationship in this film. There are of course many other great things about this film.

King Kong (1933 version).

This is a classic, everyone must have seen this **Rumblefish**. I saw this on my 16th birthday, it had a strange (to me) setting, the city of Tulsa, Oklahoma , it was timeless and dreamlike - with Dennis Hopper, Matt Dillon and Mickey Rourke all being superb. Mickey Rourke's character is so intriguing, and the atmosphere is hard to fathom. You don't know where its going but when it ends you know there was no other way to go really. There's really good sound design and music by Stuart Copeland in this too.

Days of Heaven, directed in 1978 by Terrence Malick, who earlier made **Badlands**, another favourite. This is narrated by Linda Manz who's ten or eleven and it's beautiful.

Odd Man Out, made by Carol Reed. A film about an IRA man on the run. It gets stranger as it goes on and his life is running out.

Other Irish films I admire are **The Dead**. John Huston's last film, based on the James Joyce short story, with a great ensemble cast headed by Angelica Houston and the late Donal McCann.

Angel, Neil Jordan's film starring Stephen Rea is also really good.

The Godfather Part 2. The first is good too of course but I think this one's better. John Cazale, DeNiro and Al Pacino all excellent. Al Pacino sitting alone at the end as the leaves blow round him.

Mean Streets is another blistering film, huge energy, music everywhere, everyone talking all the time. Harvey Kietel.

Then you've got people being great in things that may not be so great, like Sean Penn in **Falcon** and **The Snowman**, at close range.

Then there's **Matter of Life and Death** and **The Red Shoes** by Powell and Pressburger.

Nights of Cabiria by Fellini, (also **Amarcord**, Fellini), **My Own Private Idaho**, **Ed Wood**. I like **East of Eden** too. James Dean of course, but when his brother puts his head through the train window it's chilling.

Picnic at Hanging Rock. This is a genuinely creepy and beautiful film.