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THE PEOPLE ISSUE



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Julian Morris

How Politics Tie Into His Craft

TEXT BY ZEE CHANG
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As a child, Julian Morris was shy and introverted, but found himself excelling in one of the most unlikely places: onstage. Training under Anne Scher's Theatre Program in London, Morris' shyness melted away and it was clear he had a gift for acting. After his training, he went on to spend three seasons performing as a child actor with the Royal Shakespeare Academy. As an adult, Morris' gifts took him even further where he has played popular regular characters on some of the most successful TV shows. Some of his characters include Agent Owen in "24," Dr. Andrew Wade in "ER," Prince Phillip in "Once Upon A Time," and Wren in the original cast of "Pretty Little Liars." He also played a popular guest-arc in "New Girl" starring Zooey Deschanel.

In film, he's appeared alongside acting heavy weights like Tom Cruise in VALKYRIE and Jon Voight in BEYOND. Currently, Morris is tackling some of his most challenging acting roles in "Hand of God," a new Hulu series. And also in FELT, a film covering Nixon's Watergate Scandal, where he will be playing the real-life investigative journalist, Bob Woodward. As it turns out, Morris' role in FELT ties in with a lot with his personal and political beliefs, much of which is stemmed from his family's values.

Tell me a bit about FELT.

It's really exciting. Ridley Scott is producing, Peter Landesman is directing and it stars Liam Neeson and Diane Lane. I also think, as far as moment in history, it's obviously one of huge significance but also speaks to things that I personally believe in, like freedom of speech and the power and importance of an effective press. And I also think it's good timing while we have this election to remind us what's at stake when we elect our government officials. It shows us how we need to have responsibility in choosing our leaders.

Has your family or cultural background played a role in your pursuit of acting at all?

Not in my actual pursuit, but as role models, my parents were incredible. They both grew up in Southern Africa at a time of huge racial tension, to the degree that they were so disgusted by the system in South Africa, that they left. They immigrated to England. I'm really proud of them for that.

That's great they didn't succumb to any kind of racial brainwashing.

It's something that fascinates me, being English and Jewish, how a party like the Nazis were able to come to power and stay in power in Germany. Unfortunately we see this throughout history and we see it globally that there are tendencies for authoritative figures to claim power. They are able to slip into otherwise functioning countries, and then there's that quote, which is something along the lines of "Evil triumphs when good people do nothing." So it's imperative when we're faced with people who claim some sort of medal larger than what they should be given in politics, that we're mindful of it.

You were also recently cast in "Hand of God."

It's another project I'm passionate and excited about. The thing that drew me to it was Marc Forster, who's always been one of my favorite directors. MONSTER'S BALL was a film that was very significant in my life. So at that point when I was deciding if I should pursue acting professionally, and I was overwhelmed by the film and the performances in it and recognized that I had this deep love for acting. So the opportunity to work with him was really exceptional. And he was every bit exceptional, as you would hope. Then of course Ron Perelman, Dana Delaney, and Garret Dillahunt, they're a really fantastic cast that I'm proud and honored to be working among.



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