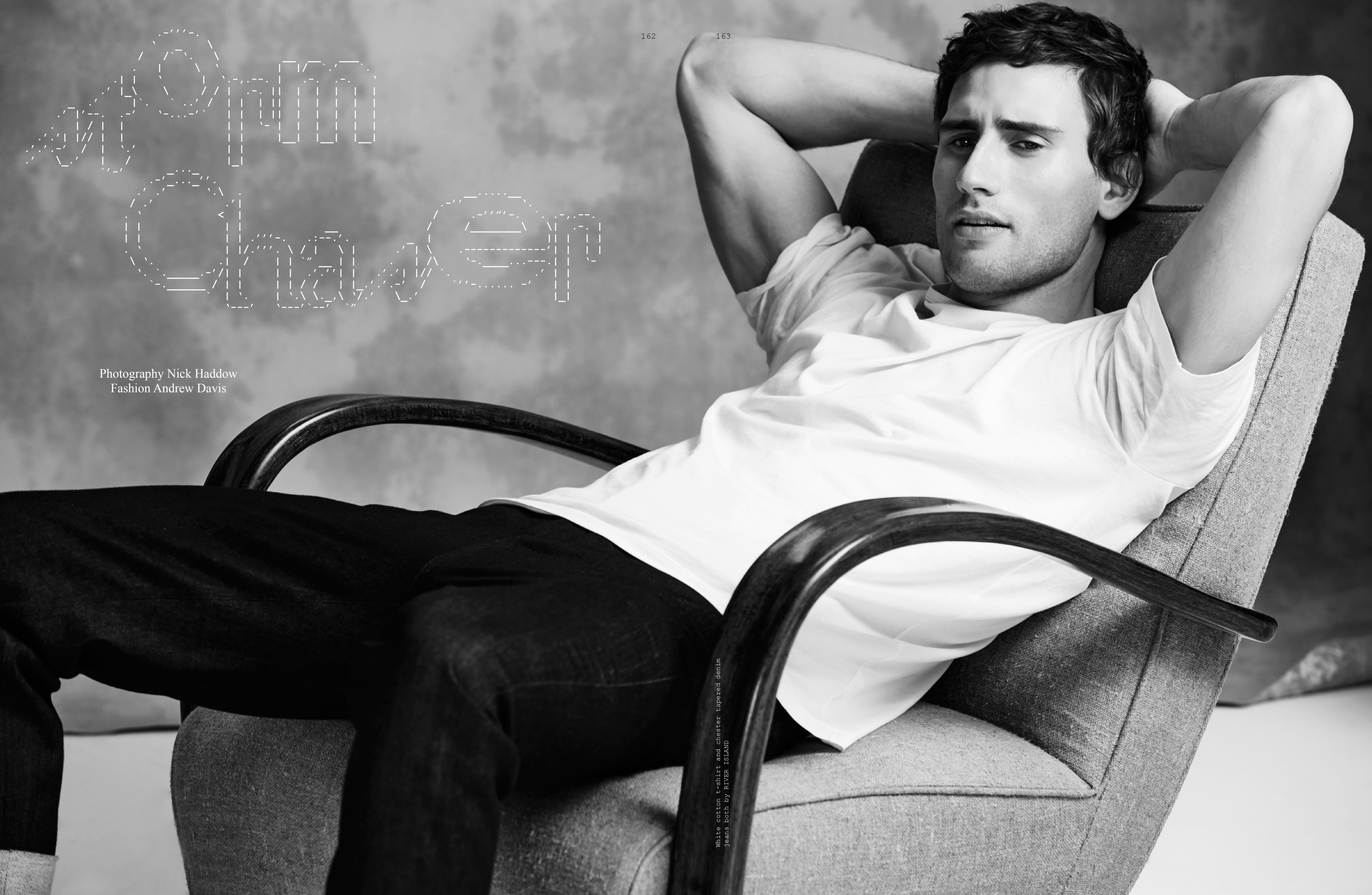


Spring Summer

Photography Nick Haddow
Fashion Andrew Davis

White cotton t-shirt and chester tapered denim
jeans both by RIVER ISLAND





164

Khaki cotton jacket with patchwork detail by BALLY and cream cotton t-shirt by PAUL SMITH



165

White cotton t-shirt and chester tapered denim jeans both by RIVER ISLAND

White cotton long sleeve top, grey snakeskin shirt, navy nylon jacket and navy nylon trousers all by PRADA

Navy and brown tiger cutout white cotton t-shirt by COACH





Black and white printed jacket by McQ, white cotton t-shirt by SUNSPEL and black denim jeans by COACH

Make up Tania Grier using CHANEL LE LIFT and CHANEL BODY EXCELLENCE, Hair Jodie Taylor at Premier Hair and Makeup using TAYLORED LONDON, Photographer's assistants Sam Hearn and Mark Arrigo, Fashion Assistants Sam Carder, Kamran Rajput and Jessica Quail

Quietly, Edward Holcroft is becoming one of Britain's most exciting screen exports. He tells Olivia Gagan why acting in 2016 means rolling with the punches.

Only two years out of drama school, 27-year-old Edward Holcroft has started assembling the kind of CV most actors 10 years older would kill for. He's already booked jobs in expensive TV dramas – as the shy, spook lover of Ben Whishaw in *London Spy*, for one – a Hollywood action movie casting with last summer's *Kingsman: The Secret Service*, and a prestigious theatre role at London's Donmar Warehouse.

None of this was planned, says Holcroft. After being, in his own words, “fucking lazy” at Ampleforth College, a Catholic boarding school in North Yorkshire, he studied philosophy at university. Training to be a session drummer, “I realised I wasn't good enough, so that dream faded, to my parents' relief.” Instead, work experience constructing the set of Jez Butterworth play *Jerusalem* meant “I got to see the production and watch Mark Rylance perform. It was enlightening. It inspired me, so I went and applied for drama school. And that was that.”

Little did he know, just a few years later he would be acting opposite Rylance in BBC drama *Wolf Hall*. “We had rehearsals, and I walked into the room and pretty much had a meltdown. I said, ‘I helped build the set for *Jerusalem*.’ He wouldn't have remembered, he had bigger things to think about than some sweaty boy running around the set. But he got up and walked over and gave me this huge hug. I nearly wet myself. And we got on really well from then on. It was bizarre.”

His most recent screen credit was for *London Spy*. Slow-burning and melancholic, it painted the capital as a grim, grey-hued hub of surveillance and paranoia. It's the kind of work he wants to keep making. “With that kind of TV, you have to have a concentration span. It's a good thing, I think it's important. But in the era of Netflix, and its ‘the next episode will start in 10 seconds’ thing, people want it all very fast.”

Privately-educated British men are doing well in the industry, both in big, studio films and on TV. Holcroft's the first to admit he falls into that category, and his cheerful take on the situation is that, “I think Hollywood will wise up soon and realise we're all pretty shit. They'll suddenly be like, ‘Wait, hold on, what's so great about them other than the fact they all sound posh?’” For now, he's happy to stay living on English soil. “I love London way too much. I'm sure LA is wonderful in its own way, but I'm a home boy.”

Holcroft says he'd like to build the quiet profile of his co-stars, despite a summer romance with British socialite and actress Cressida Bonas, which briefly flared up in the

tabloids last year. “Ben Whishaw's an amazing guy and what I really respect about him – and about Mark Rylance and Jim Broadbent, actually – is that they all manage to keep their lives quite private. They're not particularly interested in the industry side of it, and I quite like that.”

Not that the perks of the job aren't seductive. “It's very easy to be drawn in to,” he says. “There are always people who will tell you it's good to go to parties, but I think, especially as an actor, it's important to keep an air of mystery. People won't believe you in roles if they're seeing you pissed in the *Daily Mail*. Those guys – Jim, Ben, Mark – you never hear anything about them, ever, and I think that's the way to do it, if you can.”

Instead he hangs out with a close-knit circle that includes fellow young, Brit up-and-comers Douglas Booth and Freddie Fox. “I have a very small group of friends in the acting world. Literally about four, who are gems. There're lots of lovely people, but my family aren't actors, and none of my friends from school went into it. They're all very excited for you, but there's only so much they want to hear. When I'm with them, it's back to talking about football [Holcroft is a Chelsea fan].”

Right now, Holcroft is playing Le Chevalier Danceny in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* at London's Donmar Warehouse alongside Dominic West. Once that finishes, he's back on set reprising an earlier role for *Kingsman 2*. His most-recently wrapped film, an adaptation of Julian Barnes' novel *The Sense of An Ending*, sees him reunite with *London Spy* colleagues Charlotte Rampling and Broadbent, alongside *Downton Abbey*'s Michelle Dockery.

Other than appearing to be part of a casting package deal with Jim Broadbent, is there a game plan? “In this industry? Fuck, no. The game plan is to try and get paid. I've learnt, even in the two years I've been acting, never to expect too much. Otherwise, you open yourself up for constant rejection. You learn as you go that so much of it is timing. You might not get a role which you thought you were destined for, then the next month you get something that's even better. It's so driven by politics. There's always other reasons as to why you do or don't get a role. What your name means, what you're offering, what money you'll bring in – that part of a career is out of your control, so you have to just go with the flow a little bit. And hope people think you have something to bring to the party.”