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THE HOTTIE STOP INTERVIEWS THE FOLLOWING AND SWEET TALK STAR NATALIE ZEA

Dec. 16, 2013 by: **Paul Shirey**

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You've no doubt seen the lovely Natalie Zea somewhere in your roster of TV shows. The prolific actress has been a part of many high-profile series, including Passions, The Shield, Eyes, Dirty Sexy Money, Hung, Californication, The Following, Under the Dome, and my personal favorite, Justified. It would be pretty hard to avoid Ms. Zea on the boob tube and now she's making a case to be seen in features (we'll watch you in anything, Natalie, it's all good) with her latest film, the Red Shoe Diaries-esque SWEET TALK, where she plays a phone sex operator who takes part in some rather elaborate fantasy role-playing with a male caller.

I chatted with Zea about whether or not she actually tried phone sex for research, who her preferred leading man co-star is, her favorite TV shows, last great movie she saw, her affinity for hip hop and making lists, what to order her at the bar, and of course her celebrity crush (which will likely surprise you). Zea was sassy, smart, and a lot of fun to chat with. It's no surprise she keeps turning up everywhere.



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So, let's talk about Sweet Talk...

(sexy voice) Let's talk about Sweet Talk...

(repeating) Let's talk Sweet Talk. Um, Oh my God, getting into awkward territory already...

I know!

I just watched the movie this morning so its very fresh in my mind

It's fresh, okay.

So, you play a phone sex operator who gets tangled up in this fantasy/role play exchange with a customor. I'm curious what the draw was for you personally, playing a character like Delilah?

Well, I don't often get to play characters that aren't tethered to a leading man, if you will, and who aren't dependant on a romantic relationship with someone else, so the independence of this woman – it's more or less her story – I mean, Jeffrey's [Vincent Parise] character has such a huge impact on the film that it's really kind of a two-hander, but because I'm an actress I'm going to say it's her story. I just...thought it was so different than anything I had ever been approached to do. There were so many different facets to her just as the actual character and on top of that I got to role play and do all these other characters, most of which were from different periods, and again, as an actress if you get to dress up that's all you ever want to do anyway.

There was nothing about it that I didn't love. I mean, the budget was microscopic and I obviously didn't do it for the money. None of us had any idea if it was ever going to see the light of day, but just the opportunity to be able to tell the story just felt so intriguing to me, so it was really a very easy "yes."



I guess that's accurate, too. It's kind of a dream gig with all the different costumes-

And the arc, the journey that she goes through in just one night is sort of more in-depth and rich than some of the arcs I've gone on in several years playing various characters. You know, the fact that I get to do this multi-faceted woman who goes on such an emotional journey in such a small period of time. And the whole, like, real time aspect of it, that's always just so much fun to play because its just built on intensity and it just raises the stakes so much more and, yeah, that's really great, too.

Did you actually do any phone sex research before taking on the role?

No, but it's okay because our director did (laughs) So, she took the bullet for me. She actually- Carrie Hammer – who directed this movie who is our fearless leader was just-one of the best directors I've ever worked with- she played this role in the stage version of this movie that her husband wrote. So, she was as intimately familiar with the character as I was and...much more dedicated, obviously, to her craft and actually did- she went out and did research- phone sex research- and so we talked in depth about that and just the sort of psychology that goes along with it.

And, I actually thought about doing it- I was in college, I thought about doing it for a hot minute, because I had a friend who did it and knew that I couldn't wrap my brain around– there's a line you have to cross– I didn't think it was dirty or that there was anything wrong with it, but obviously on some level I was judging

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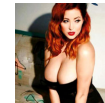
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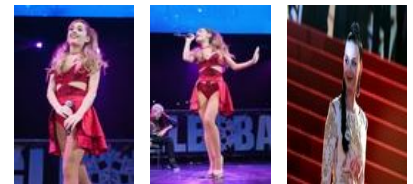


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I don't know, it seems like for an actress that would be not too tough of a gig...

MENU

That's where you're wrong, though, because again, it's like, the psychology of knowing what's going on on the other line you have to really really be able to disassociate and that's kind of the whole purpose of being an actor is to try and not disassociate— try and be present in the moment— so, I don't know, I feel like it could also be counterintuitive



Now, you also star on one of the best shows on TV, Justified, Do you have a favorite story from working on that show?

Um. I'm sure I do (laughs). The only thing that comes to mind— and I never drink on set— but, I think it was the last day of shooting...I *think* it was the last day of shooting so there was maybe a little bit of wine on set. And, I decided that I— I'm about to implicate myself— I wasn't drunk driving— but I had a couple bottles of wine and I wanted to take my name plate on my parking spot home, I really wanted to, I don't know why, I just really wanted it. And, I couldn't get it, it was like glued on, so now every time I park in my parking spot it's so, like, janky and crooked and half-broken and I'm like 'Oh, that's appropriate.' That's the only— it's not a great story- it's actually a shitty story, but that's all I can think of.

Hypothetically, who would you be more likely to fall for Raylan Givens, Ryan Hardy, Joe Carroll, or Boyd Crowder?

In *my* life?

Yeah.

None of them, throw them all in the river, they're all, just, so broken, forget it. None of the above (laughs).

Had you said Boyd Crowder or Joe Carroll I would've been curious...

No, forget it. Forget all of them, I'm mad at all of them (laughs).

What's your favorite TV show right now?

You think I'd be prepared. It's funny, my fiancé is an actor and he always ends up doing the stuff that I want to do — all the comedies. He's done, uh, It's Always Sunny and he's on Community and we're fans of the people on those shows in general who are really great people. So, I would say that...those (laughs).

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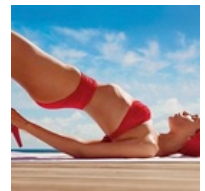
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Love the Cleavage Why All Chicks Should
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What's the last great movie you saw in the theater?

Um...shit. It's terrible that I don't have an answer to this. (pause) We don't go to the movies very often, um...We have a screening room in the house and we tend to do a lot of our movie viewing in the house, um, and we did...I don't choose these movies, but what was it called...? I'm the worst!

(several minutes of us trying to figure out the movie later...)

That's my answer: It starts with an "A" and ends with a number. I sound like an 85-year-old man (laughs)

(note: after some time on IMDB, it is probably EUROPA REPORT that Ms. Zea watched)

What kind of music are you into?

I'm a big hip hop fan. Which is not all that popular with my friends. I have a handful of friends that are with me on this. I really, really need a beat. I went to a wedding recently where they had a no hip-hop policy on their playlist and I thought I was gonna stab myself in the eye.

So, you seem to work A LOT. You're in Under the Dome, Justified, The Following. Do have any time for hobbies or outside interests?

I actually have a lot more down time than people think. Like right now, I'm about to go stir crazy 'cause the holiday – between Thanksgiving and Christmas it's generally a really slow time. So, I make A LOT of lists. That could be counted as a hobby. I'm really nesting right now, I'm really getting into furnishing and refurbishing and arranging and rearranging my house. I guess you can count that as a hobby.

Lists alone will keep you busy...

Lists will kill you if you're not careful. Lists will really, like, hurt your mind. So, yeah, I keep myself busy. I like being a housewife when I have down time, I like cooking and just maintaining the house and doing errands, like the really mundane stuff that people tend to bitch and moan about I really enjoy. Because when you're working you don't get the opportunity to do that. You come home, eat, and maybe have a box of wine, and go to sleep and you're up at whatever hour and are back at work, so I tend to really wallow in the mundane when I have time off.



Do you have a workout routine for staying in shape or are you naturally fit?

No, I do, it's the most boring answer around. I do yoga. Ugh. My fiancé plays tennis so we belong to a tennis club and they have, like, cardio classes and shit. He's really trying to get me on the court. I'm just not ready (laughs). And he says the same about yoga, I'm like (cause he's really flexible), dude you would be so good, he's like "I'll do it when I'm 40." You ain't got long.

Do you have a cheat food?

I don't really restrict myself. It's so weird, a couple of years ago (I've been the same size my whole life), I put on, about, ten or fifteen pounds, which for someone my size that's very significant and I don't really know to this day what happened, but um, as this was happening I had to sort of give some clothes away. And one day I was trying on all my pants and none of them fit and I said to my fiancé, I was frustrated, I was like "What the fuck is going on, I can't put my pants on, what's happening?" And his response was, "Well you have been eating a lot of cheese lately" So, apparently it's cheese.

Cheese is your enemy. Or frenemy, however you want to look at it.

Yeah, I love me some cheese.

What is your favorite drink of choice?

Um, I think I've settled into white wine territory. If I'm gonna have a cocktail I love me a good Hendricks martini. I go big or go home. Or white wine.

Either that or just a box of wine...

Yeah, I'll drink a boxed wine. I have no shame.

Do you have a celebrity crush?

Do I? Yes! Jake Johnson. I was ready for that.

Nice. You were like "If I answer one question in this interview it's gonna be who my celebrity crush is"

Exactly. I'm like, I know he's gonna ask at least that.

What's next for you?

Well, I just shot a pilot. And that airs streaming in January for Amazon. So, we're just gonna wait and see how that goes. And in the meantime I'm shooting a movie called Supreme Ruler in February with Ron Livingston and Marcia Gay Harden. And, then I'm getting married. And then, hopefully sometime in the fall I'm shooting a movie that I wrote. We've been trying to get this shot for years and my TV schedule has been getting in the way so I need to just, put my foot down and do it.

Awesome. Well, I wish you the best of luck. It sounds like you are as busy as you try not to sound.

Yeah, no problem, thank you!



Natalie can be seen in **SWEET TALK**, now available on **iTunes**, and can be seen in FOX's **The Following**, FX's **Justified**, and CBS's **Under The Dome**. Follow her on Twitter [here!](#)

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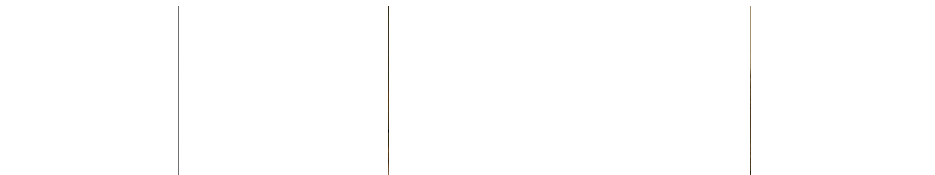
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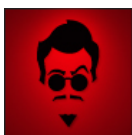
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