

TIFFANY ROSE



Tiffany divides her time between London and Los Angeles, where she interviews Hollywood's A-list. A freelance journalist

for over a decade, Tiffany writes for The Independent, Daily Mail; Grazia and Glamour. Her radio work includes reporting for LBC, and she has interviewed celebrities on The Big Breakfast (Channel 4) and Showbiz Weekly (Sky). On page 38, Tiffany meets actor, Clive Owen, who despite his movie star status, admits he still prefers a family day out.

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Best of British

Despite being the toast of Hollywood, Coventry-born lad Clive Owen still favours football and family over anything LA has to offer, says **Tiffany Rose**

Clive Owen is passionate about two things in life. Footie and fatherhood. Not necessarily in that order, mind you. Wherever he's filming on location, you can be sure he's watching his beloved Liverpool play on a small telly in his trailer. "I've been a fan since I was a kid because they would win everything," he says. "I try and not miss too many games, but it's hard with this job." Ask the 42-year-old reluctant sex symbol about being a dad, and he'll gush that his favourite role is playing father to daughters; Hannah, 10 and Eve, 7. However, Owen has yet to make a movie suitable for his children's eyes. "My kids are too young to watch my films at the moment," he

says, "but I'd really like to do a family film for them one day."

"It's funny," he adds. "The kids are slowly piecing together what I do for a living. I get questions from my seven-year-old like: 'How much do you get for your movies?' Quick as a flash, I go: 'Have they been asking you this at school?' And she goes: 'Yeah. You told me a hundred pounds.' And I say: 'That's about right.' Owen quips: 'Either she wants a raise in her pocket money, or someone at her school is going: 'Your dad is loaded!'"

Sitting opposite him, it's hard to ignore the fact that this man is impossibly handsome. His good looks alone can make any woman nervous but despite his movie star status, he's so

unassuming which makes him even more appealing.

At a tapering six foot two, with exceptionally broad shoulders, Owen is looking every inch the movie star today. Impeccably dressed in an off the rack beige, linen suit and crisp, white shirt, he exudes a breezy self-confidence that extends even to his wardrobe. "I am a bit of a clothes horse. I do like my clothes," he nods with smile. As testimony to this he was voted 'Best Dressed Male' by GQ in 2006.

Owen's the first to admit that he comes across as quite a serious soul, and reasons it's because he takes work very seriously. Often cagey about his life out of the spotlight, if you divert the subject to his daughters, however, ☺

he simply turns to mush.

"My kids go to a really lovely local stage school, and they're really happy there. It's a fantastic environment," he offers. "They know I make films, but they probably think every parent does," he laughs, revealing perfect, porcelain teeth suggesting he has perhaps gone a bit Hollywood on us.

"Hannah notices it when people recognise me and start talking to me when we're out. She asks: 'Why are they talking to you, Daddy?' It's slightly confusing for her. But being on a film set is like one big circus for her. Some nice make-up lady paints her face and she hangs around all these people in bloody caravans. Of course, any kid would think the circus is coming to town!"

And how would he feel if his daughters wanted to follow in their father's showbiz footsteps? Owen shrugs: "I will support them in anything they wanted to do. It's been very good to me. I mustn't grumble really."

His next offering is an action drama called *Shoot 'Em Up*. Opening later this year, Owen plays a man named Mr. Smith, who delivers a woman's baby during a shootout, and is then called upon to protect the newborn from an army of gunmen.

"I was present at the birth of my two



children and those are precious moments you never forget. You can draw on those when it comes to acting," he says. "This script is so inventive and so crazy and wild. It's an incredibly ingenious action movie where I'm being put in incredible situations, where you can't believe I'm going to escape. Somehow I do. I've got high

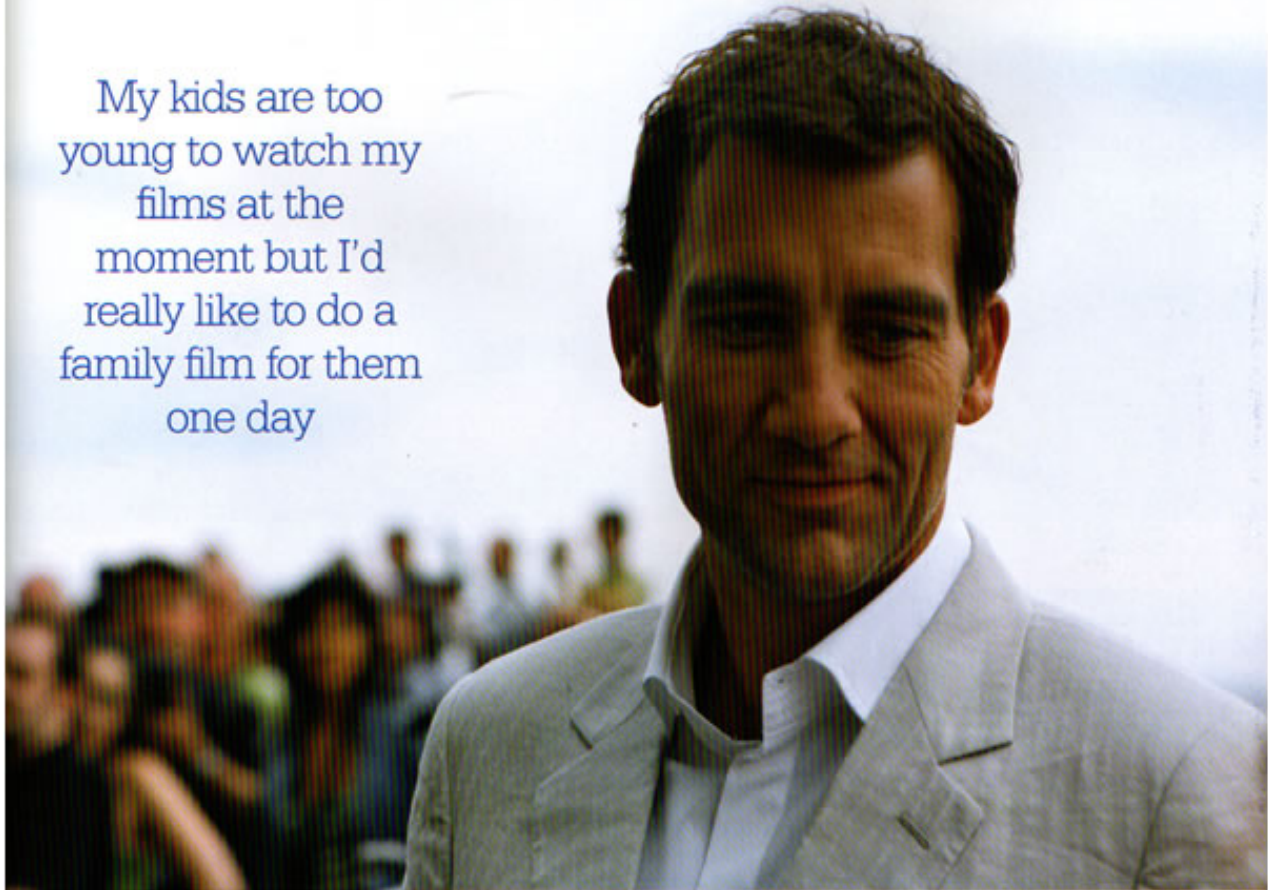
hopes for it."

His daughters took up horse riding as a result of Owen's role as King Arthur, in the disappointing Jerry Bruckheimer-produced movie. "When I signed on for the film, no-one actually asked if I could ride," he laughs. "They just asked me if I wanted to do it. I had this constant nagging voice in my head all the time going: 'Clive, you can't fucking ride a horse! What do you think you're doing?' Can you imagine King Arthur being scared of his own horse?"

Shaking his head, he adds: "But as it happens, I took the girls where I learned to ride. The film's stuntman has a sister who owns a lodge just down the road from my house and once the girls sat on my horse, they were hooked. We all go horse riding now. Who knew it'd turn into a family outing?"

Owen's charisma could instantly fill a room, and his razor sharp wit has kept him deeply grounded despite the fickle business in which he earns his corn. Complete with those brooding dark looks, it's no wonder this working-class Coventry lad has landed prime-time television shows, *Chancer* and *Sharman*; success on the West End stage in *Design for Living*; an Oscar nod; a BAFTA win and a Golden Globe for his role as a womaniser in *Closer*; a series of

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BMW mini-movies for the Internet; roles in Robert Rodriguez's *Sin City* and Spike Lee's *Inside Man*; as well as art-house features such as *Croupier*, which introduced him to American audiences.

He recently celebrated his twelfth wedding anniversary with wife, Sarah-Jane Fenton, whom he met when she was Juliet to his Romeo at the *Young Vic*. She opted for motherhood (with no resentment whatsoever – "I'm a very lucky man" he has said), while he pursued his acting ambitions. She has been fully supportive throughout his career, and when they're not residing in their North London home, his wife

a huge skeleton in the actor's closet, and avoided any questions of his father's whereabouts, and would sometimes go as far as to say that his father worked in a car factory in Coventry. It wasn't long before Owen obtained the unshakeable label of being 'obstinate'.

A lot wiser now, Owen, attempts to explain his past behaviour. "Look, I was freaked out at the time. I was very naïve, and immature. It sort of fucked me up a bit. I became resentful, and I'd refuse to talk to people and then I got: 'Oh, he's difficult with the press.' But I was just trying to create a bit of space.

good looks to play a gay man on the run from the Nazis, in pre-Second World War fascist Germany in *Bent*. After the sleeper smash, *Croupier*, offers from America came flooding his way, and he played parts in: *The Bourne Identity*, alongside Matt Damon; *Gosford Park* with Maggie Smith, and *Beyond Borders* opposite Angelina Jolie.

Owen suddenly begins to laugh at an incident which happened on one of his first visits to the States, over 10 years ago. "After *Croupier* broke big, I bumped into a very camp director I know in LA." He begins impersonating the

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brings the kids to visit him on locations.

It's almost impossible to believe that in his early career days, Owen once garnered a reputation for being mean and moody. He claims the real reason for this misconception by the British press was due to overnight stardom mixed with not quite knowing how to handle himself in interviews.

During his Chancer years of fame in the early nineties, stories leaked out of his tumultuous relationship with his estranged father, a Country and Western singer. Owen's parents had separated when he was three (his mother later remarried), and he had no contact with his father until he was 19. This proved to be

"It's a wrong notion to think that every actor enjoys being a celebrity. Sure the perks are good, but I'm not in this business for that. I am in it to act." A decade later and Owen is at the top of his game. "I'm having the best time of my life and career at the moment," he beams. "I just feel very fortunate."

After leaving school, he signed on the dole for two years doing odd jobs including cleaning flats in London, before graduating from RADA. His matinee idol looks soon helped land him the part of the slick yuppie sports car dealer, Stephen Crane, in the hit television show, *Chancer*, making him a British housewives favourite. Owen shocked fans by roughing up his

director. "He told me: 'Oh, you just made it.' He was referring to the idea that I've just broken into the American market as I was about to turn 30, and he was like: 'Oh, you just squeezed in there!' That really tickled me."

Seeing as Owen has had much success across the pond, would he move his family to live in LA? Owen shakes his head again, immediately dismissing the notion. "Nah, I'm not one for the LA lifestyle. I'm glad I live in London. It's impossible to have a life separate from the business there. Status becomes very important in LA, and I prefer to be down the pub, watching the footie than talking about movies the whole time." ■