

Feature: The Top 15 Interviews on HollywoodChicago.com in 2011

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on January 25, 2012 - 4:28pm

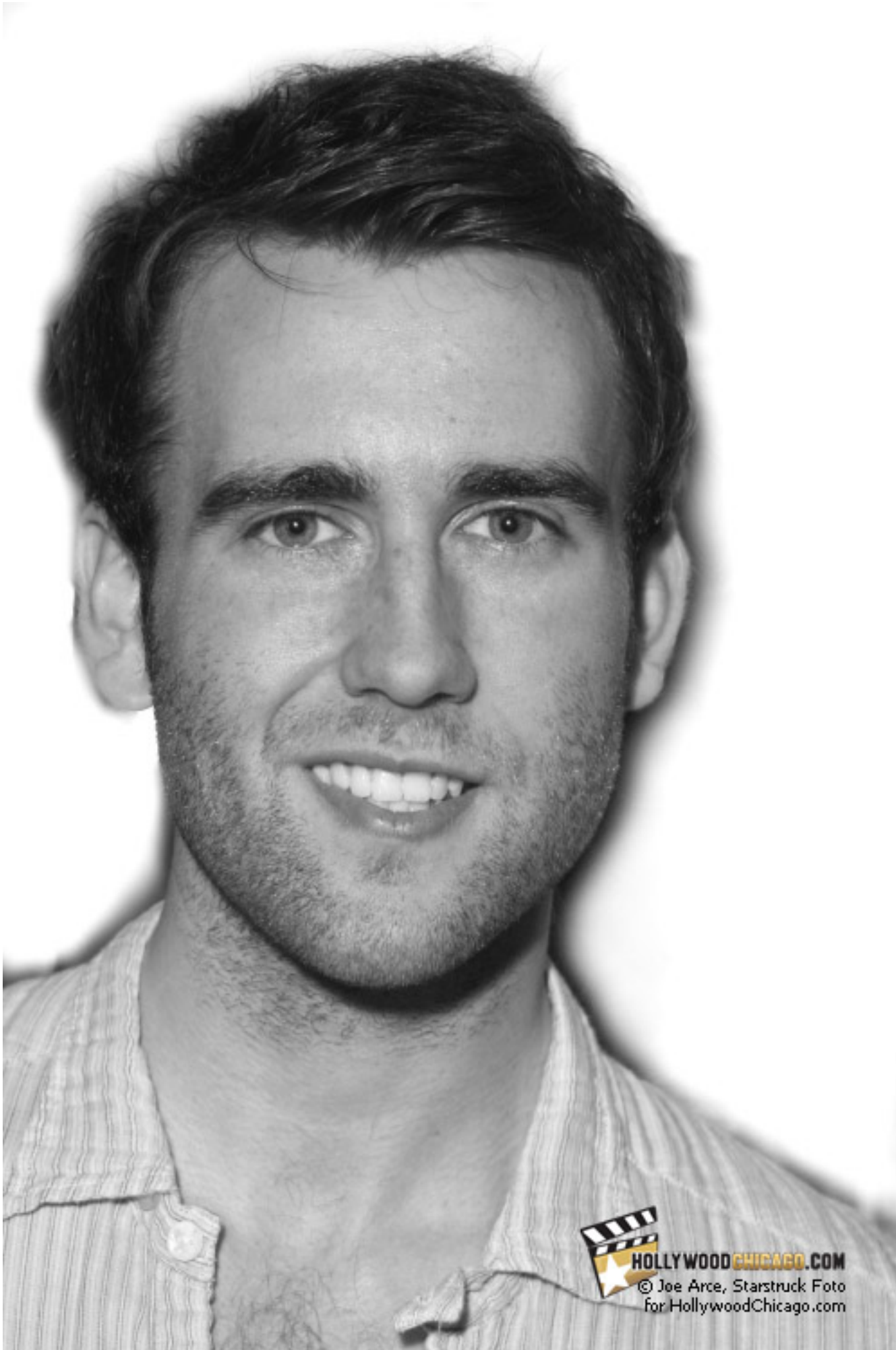
- [Brian Tallerico](#) [2]
- [Burt Reynolds](#) [3]
- [Elizabeth Olsen](#) [4]
- [Emma Stone](#) [5]
- [Feature](#) [6]
- [Gary Oldman](#) [7]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [8]
- [Interview](#) [9]
- [Jodie Foster](#) [10]
- [Joe Arce](#) [11]
- [Jonah Hill](#) [12]
- [List](#) [13]
- [Malcolm McDowell](#) [14]
- [Matt Fagerholm](#) [15]
- [Matthew Lewis](#) [16]
- [Michel Hazanavicius](#) [17]
- [Patrick McDonald](#) [18]

CHICAGO – One of the great privileges of reporting film and television on HollywoodChicago.com is the opportunity to interview the performers, directors and legends that create movie and TV content. Three of the HC critics and reporters – Matt Fagerholm, Patrick McDonald and Brian Tallerico – gathered their best interviews of the year (including Burt Reynolds, Jodie Foster, Emma Stone, Elizabeth Olsen, Gary Oldman, and more) to create a Top 15 for the year 2011.

From the luxury hotel suites to the back stage appearances, to the conventions and autograph shows, HollywoodChicago.com sought out and sat down with the stars, directors and legends of TV and the silver screen, often backed up with the photography of Joe Arce. These 15 interviews comprise the best of 2011.



[Matthew Lewis](#) [19]



Matthew Lewis

*Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com***Interviewer:** Matt Fagerholm

Background and Behind-the-Scenes: It's a rare opportunity to interview one of the major stars of the summer's biggest hit. As Neville Longbottom, Matthew Lewis had the most extreme evolution throughout the eight-picture "Potter" franchise, graduating from slapstick pratfalls to heroic swordplay. At the previous night's screening of "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2," Neville's scenes had received exuberant applause from fans of all ages. When I recounted this audience reaction to Lewis, he blushed like a giddy schoolboy. For a fleeting moment, his inner-Neville had shown through.

Memorable Quote: *"If there's someone I would say is responsible for my growth as an actor, it would absolutely be David Yates, as well as your Al Pacinos and Robert De Niros. People like Alan Rickman and Ralph Fiennes who I grew up watching in person—those guys taught me more than anything else just by being around me. The professionalism, the way they hold themselves onset—and they're genuinely good people. But David Yates really gave me that boost and that belief and kickstarted me on this voyage of discovery."*

 [Emma Stone](#) [20]



Emma Stone as Skeeter in 'The Help'

*Photo credit: Dale Robinette for DreamWorks Pictures***Interviewer:** Patrick McDonald

Opening Notes: With nearly close to 30 interviews last year, it is impossible to winnow it down to a Top Five. I will call these the Five Most Memorable. Use the search engine to find amazing chats with Simon Pegg and Nick Frost, Ernest Borgnine, Ed Helms, Octavia Spencer, Tom Felton, Vera Farmiga, John Cho and Kal Penn (Harold & Kumar), Dennis Farina, T.J. Miller, Shailene Woodley and Anthony Michael Hall, among others. I now return you to the regularly scheduled Five Most Memorable.

Background and Behind-the-Scenes: Emma Stone had an amazing 2011, continuing her rise as a bankable star and capped off by her participation in the Oscar nominated "The Help." She was present at the interview suite with co-star Octavia Spencer and Director Tate Taylor. Before we began the interview, I mentioned to her that she was one of those actresses that the camera really loved, which is why she will have continued success. For someone who I'm sure collects compliments like grains of sand she was grateful for the remark, telling me "You really know how to start an interview."

Memorable Quote: *"I wouldn't consider myself a so-called 'celebrity.' Arrrgh, for the love of God! [laughs] For sure! Quit it. I have no experience outside my own. It like people asking me what was it like not going to your high school graduation. I don't know, because I didn't go! I have no experience outside my own, so I really couldn't tell you the difference navigating my life as compared to anyone else."*

[Nicolas Winding Refn](#) [21]



Drive

Photo credit: Film District

Interviewer: Brian Tallerico

Background and Behind-the-Scenes: Riding a wave of support for his critically-beloved (and CFCA Award-winning) “Drive,” the uber-talented director sat down with me at the Park Hyatt in Chicago to talk about how his film was inspired by both Grimm’s Fairy Tales and “Pretty Woman,” why he felt Albert Brooks needed to kill someone, and the role of critics in filmmaking. As fascinating an interview subject as one would expect having seen his unique works, one really gets the feeling when talking to Refn that we’ve only seen the beginning of what he’s capable of accomplishing.

Memorable Quote: *“It makes him unpredictable. He doesn’t have normal human conditions. If you need him as a human being, he will be a human being. If you need him as a hero, he will be a hero. The transformation is always something I have been very interested in.”*

[Patrick Fabian](#) [22]



Patrick Fabian, Louis Herthum, Caleb Landry Jones and Ashley Bell star in Daniel Stamm's *The Last Exorcism*.

Photo credit: Lionsgate Entertainment

Interviewer: Matt Fagerholm

Background and Behind-the-Scenes: Regardless of a film's actual quality and merit, the cast and crew obviously want to keep interviews on a positive note. "The Last Exorcism" was a film I admired for a variety of reasons, but like many viewers, I felt that it had derailed terribly in its final act. The film's star, Patrick Fabian, was in such good spirits that I thought it would be possible to get his honest feelings regarding the film's ending. Mission accomplished.

Memorable Quote: *"I thought the ending was going to go in a different direction at one point, because the film sets itself up as being something else. I thought it was going to be more about what happens with Cotton and what happens with Nell as people as opposed to this sort of wrap up. [Stamm] creates such a viable, realistic world that to be taken out of that realism and be reminded that you're seeing a movie is a weird violation. And I think that's what people went through. They recognize the sort of ending they were being given, and that takes them out of the truly original experience of the first ninety minutes."*



[Brit Marling](#) [23]



Brit Marling in Chicago, July 2011

Photo credit: Patrick McDonald for HollywoodChicago.com

Interviewer: Patrick McDonald

Background and Behind-the-Scenes: One of the great perks of interviewing people in the film business is when you get to meet an up-and-coming actor or director. Brit Marling wrote and starred in “Another Earth,” an emotionally charged, redemptive science fiction film. Her artistry was apparent during the interview, as she spoke of daydreaming her screenplays, identity, the chaos of the world she created and discovery. Truly, this is a future player in the art of cinema.

Memorable Quote: *“I do think the reason we wanted to tell a story about forgiveness and redemption is because the other earth seemed to inspire that in us. The feeling that there was a Judgment Day, or end of days scenario, the idea that in judgment or in the last moment, it’s not an external force that is going to judge you, you’re really just going to judge yourself. It’s the question of whether or not you’re going to let yourself off the hook for the things you’ve done or the life you’ve led.”*



[Sean Durkin & Elizabeth Olsen](#) [24]



Martha Marcy May Marlene

Photo credit: Fox Searchlight

Interviewer: Brian Tallerico

Background and Behind-the-Scenes: Those of us lucky enough to do interviews can often tell when we're speaking to someone on the verge of greatness. It's often the case that we're doing the interview before the public has even gotten a chance to see the movie. It's like speaking to someone just before they get called up to the majors in baseball or just before they hit the stage for their Broadway debut. There's an energy, a feeling of inspirational hope. I've rarely felt that hope as strongly as I did with CICA Award winners for Most Promising Filmmaker and Most Promising Newcomer, Sean Durkin and Elizabeth Olsen. So smart, so engaging, and so on the cusp of breaking through to the next level. There's an awareness that the next time I speak to them will be different. You can only break through once.

Memorable Quote: *"The main thing I learned is how important it is for everyone to be collaborative and kind and helpful. You need to trust each other's opinions. Sometimes egos get in the way and there's a hierarchy and you feel that tension. That affects the ultimate environment which affects the ability to make good work. This was the most collaborative process in the world and I learned that was so important — leave that ego stuff at the door."*

[Drake Doremus and Felicity Jones](#) [25]



Felicity Jones delivers a star-making performance in Drake Doremus' *Like Crazy*.

Photo credit: Paramount Vantage

Interviewer: Matt Fagerholm

Background and Behind-the-Scenes: Interviewing two people at once does pose certain challenges. You don't want one person to feel left out, but you also don't want to make your questions so broad that they elicit generic answers. Director Drake Doremus and actress Felicity Jones proved to be an ideal pair of interview subjects, since they had a delightful rapport and would often build off each other's answers. They had both won prizes at Sundance for their heartrending romance, "*Like Crazy*," and had just wrapped another film together. Though Jones has been left out of this year's Oscar race, she's an actress that American viewers will be hearing a great deal more about in the coming years.

Memorable Quote: *"I feel that it's a very modern relationship in the sense that they are trying to pursue themselves as individuals and have their own careers. It is a complicated relationship because they have their own lives and are very passionate about them. Where does the love fit in when you want to be self-defined at the same time? It feels as though there are huge amounts of love between them. I think they probably could've been together, but it's just the way the world is now and the way men and women are. It's just harder."*



[Michel Hazanavicius](#) [26]



Michel Hazanavicius in Chicago, November 2011

Photo credit: Patrick McDonald for HollywoodChicago.com

Interviewer: Patrick McDonald

Background and Behind-the-Scenes: The setting for the interview was an empty hotel tavern in the morning, and the now Oscar nominated director was basking in the early acclaim for his now Oscar nominated film, “The Artist.” Hazanavicius is a perfect example of how bold creativity can penetrate the crowded media field and make an impact. He had done two James Bond-style spoofs, the “OSS” series, with the star of “The Artist,” Jean Dujardin. Those throwback films were a harbinger for his wholly original tribute to early cinema. He also revealed the original title for “The Artist,” it was to be called “Beauty Spot,” after a brief but key scene in the film. His producer came up with “The Artist,” because that’s how they identified the characters in some of the early silent films (The Cop, The Girl, etc.).

Memorable Quote: *“What I know is that for a long time, it was a fantasy, it was like a dream. I had to convince myself first about it. I made two films with Jean [Dujardin] and one with Bérénice [Bejo], and I married Bérénice. And the two films that I made with Jean were so different, that it kind of gave me the power for what I wanted to do with this. It also gave me the self confidence to say to myself maybe I’m able to do it. And maybe I’m able to find some money and convince people to join me in this adventure.”*



[Jonah Hill](#) [27]



Moneyball

Photo credit: Sony

Interviewer: Brian Tallerico

Background and Behind-the-Scenes: There’s something remarkably rewarding about interviewing a young man at a career turning point and I’ve been lucky enough to speak to Jonah Hill at his two biggest, before the release of “Superbad” and “Moneyball.” And seeing how this actor/writer/producer had matured in those years really fueled the entire conversation, which diverted from simple talk of the movie to what Hill wants not just out of his career but out of his life experience. I was the last interview of the day and he thanked me for the conversation, adding that he thought it was the best of the Chicago stop on the tour. Whether or not that was true, considering what he’s given to us, including one of the best performances of 2011 in one of the year’s best films, it was a true honor to be able to give something back that he felt had value instead of just another string of soundbites.

Memorable Quote: *“I thought I knew everything about the universe and I knew nothing. I wanted so badly to be respected and seen as mature. The truth is that it comes with experience. Now that I’m almost 30, I’m still learning every day. It’s a bizarre thing. I really do feel like it’s my second time around right now.”*



[Tommy Wiseau](#) [28]



Philip Haldiman and Tommy Wiseau star in *The Room*.

Photo credit: *Wiseau-Films*

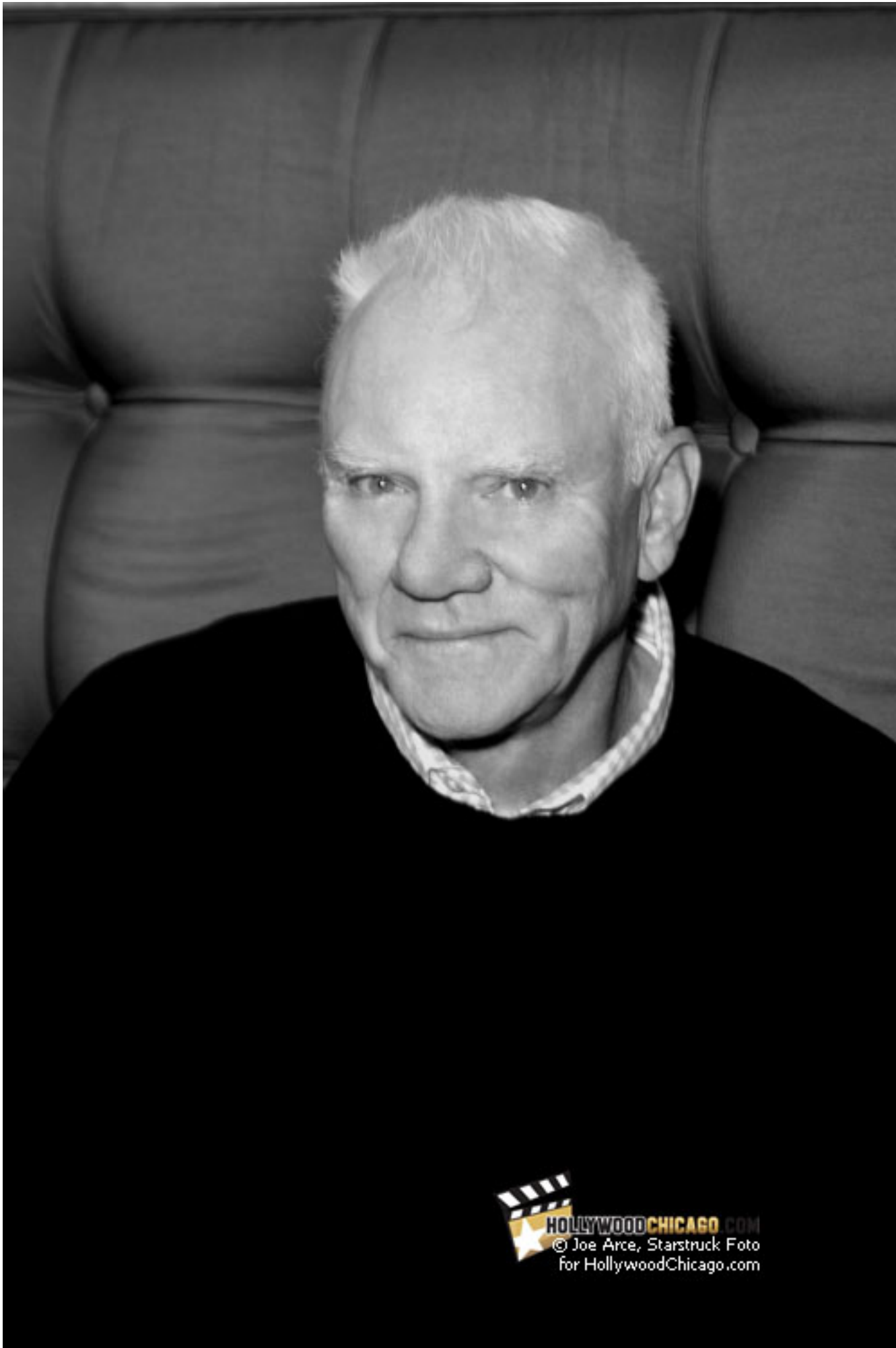
Interviewer: Matt Fagerholm

Background and Behind-the-Scenes: Few recent filmmakers have brought me as much euphoric laughter as Tommy Wiseau, who mistakenly made one of the funniest films of all time when he helmed 2003's mopey melodrama-turned-midnight movie sensation, "The Room." The experience of talking to Wiseau over the phone was nearly as entertaining as watching one of his own films. The director's inexplicable accent led him to call me, "Mott," throughout the interview, until he finally decided that my name was "Mark," and stuck to that. When our call was dropped, Wiseau immediately called me back and said, "Hello, Mark? Over," as if we were communicating via walkie talkie. I'd talk to him again in a heartbeat.

Memorable Quote: *"'The Room' has a great foundation. I always say, 'If you build a house, you need a foundation first before the window.' It's the same with 'The Room.' We had a great, solid foundation. I'm not here to bash the media, but I think the mainstream media is missing the boat as far as I'm concerned. They think everything happened by accident. I'm sorry, nothing in this movie happened by accident."*



[Malcolm McDowell](#) [29]



Malcolm McDowell in Chicago, August 2011

*Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com***Interviewer:** Patrick McDonald

Background and Behind-the-Scenes: Malcolm McDowell, who had a distinguished early career collaborating with Stanley Kubrick in “A Clockwork Orange,” was appearing at the “Flashback Weekend” over the summer, a festival in tribute to horror films. Among the mock-ups of zombies and monsters in a hotel ballroom, McDowell gave me a candid and comprehensive career overview. With an influence that was born out of the Swingin’ 1960s London scene, McDowell has evolved over the years as a sought after character actor. He pulled no punches regarding his early work, his association with The Beatles, the infamous film “Caligula” and how “A Clockwork Orange” inspired an overall social shift.

Memorable Quote: *“The great moments in ‘A Clockwork Orange’ are improvisation. And those are the moments that will live forever. The ‘Singin’ in the Rain’ part was an improv. That saved his ass, my ass and the film’s ass. It was a moment of sheer luck.”*

[Jodie Foster](#) [30]



The Beaver

Photo credit: Summit Entertainment

Interviewer: Brian Tallerico

Background and Behind-the-Scenes: Talk about living legends. Somehow still underrated (neither of her performances this year — “The Beaver” and “Carnage”) got as much press as they deserved, Jodie Foster is without question one of the smartest people I’ve ever met. She makes films that interest her. She talks about what interests her. And one gets the feeling that she truly devours life, whether it’s teaching film, taking care of her kids, or making movies. There’s no middle ground for Foster. She gives her all to what she wants or she doesn’t do it. Meeting that kind of person can be inspiring and I’ll never forget the fifteen minutes I had with this two-time Oscar winner. Talking to her was so intellectually engaging that I never even glanced at my notebook or a prepared question. We could have chatted for hours. Maybe next time.

Memorable Quote: ““The Deer Hunter” changed my life. The Russian Roulette scene, the structure of it — I remember saying “I will never be the same as I was before I saw this. I’m going to spend the rest of my life examining why that is.””

[Joe Swanberg](#) [31]

Joe Swanberg stars in his directorial debut Kissing on the Mouth.

Photo credit: Joe Swanberg

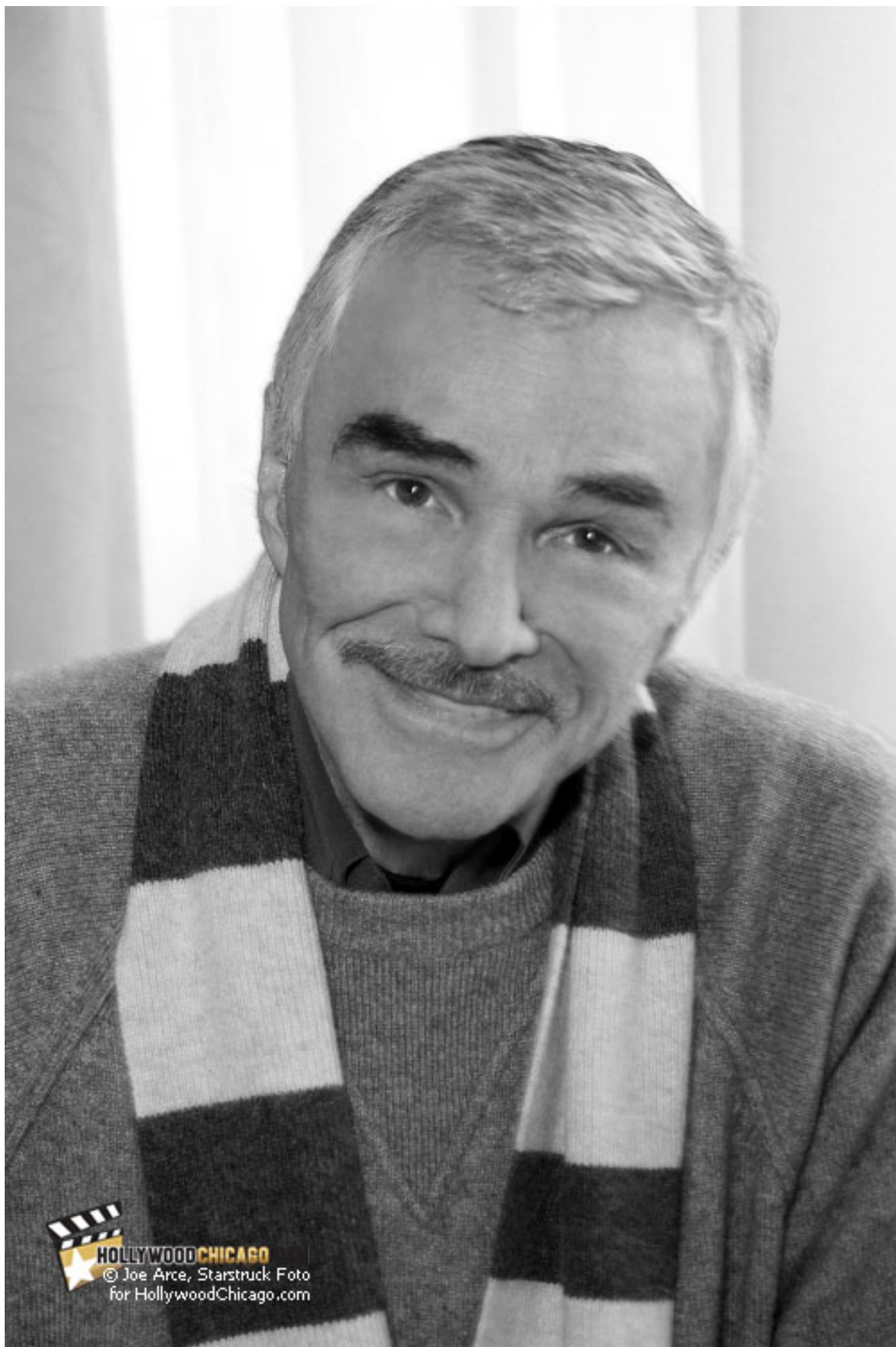
Interviewer: Matt Fagerholm

Background and Behind-the-Scenes: Joe Swanberg has long been one of my favorite local filmmakers ever since I randomly rented his debut effort, “Kissing on the Mouth,” which I found utterly galvanizing in its boldness and insight. I had previously interviewed Swanberg a few years ago, but was left yearning to conduct a more in-depth conversation about his evolution as a filmmaker. His film, “Uncle Kent,” marked a definite turning point in his career, and provided the perfect launching pad for an in-depth interview about his revitalized creative drive and audacious plans to tackle several pictures at once.

Memorable Quote: “... I felt like I had a target on my chest. My movies had been singled out as being really sloppy while some of the other “mumblecore” directors—like [Andrew] Bujalski was ‘the purest’ and he shot on film and was a real artist, and then Aaron Katz was ‘a poet’ with this beautiful cinematography, and I was just like this terrible hack who made these really crappy looking, s—ty movies with his friends. That’s why I just had to stop reading anything written about me because as soon as I stopped reading it, it went away.”



[Burt Reynolds](#) [32]



Burt Reynolds in Chicago, April 2011

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

Interviewer: Patrick McDonald

Background and Behind-the-Scenes: I called this interview “Hanging with the King,” because to me Burt Reynolds represents an era of Hollywood in which he absolutely ruled, much like Clark Gable. Now in his seventies, Reynolds still has the magnetism of his earlier days. Reynolds also worked his way up through the show business system that began with television, and didn’t hit it big until he was in his early thirties. Now in the twilight of his stellar career, he deservedly basks in his achievements. He hugged me at the end of the interview, which was surprising. I couldn’t help telling him, for all his contributions to the era of his kingdom, that I loved him for it.

Memorable Quote: *“First, I’d done a lot of bad pictures. You can learn from bad pictures. Sometimes you learn a helluva lot more from a bad picture than a really great picture, because in a great picture you have a wonderful director who is your safety net. When you are asked to do a triple [act, do stunts, etc.], it’s nice to have a net. I’ve been asked to do a triple, and there was no net. But I was young, crazy and it seemed like a good idea at the time. Sometimes I missed and landed wrong, and in this cold Chicago weather I can feel when something hurts, ‘ooh, yeah, that’s The Longest Yard.’ I can name the pictures from what hurts.”*



[Gary Oldman](#) [33]



Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy

Photo credit: Focus Features

Interviewer: Brian Tallerico

Background and Behind-the-Scenes: It was a roundtable that felt intimate. It was a promotional tool for a new movie that felt like a conversation about the entire art of acting. And it was both insightful and even hysterical. And now that I’ve sat across from Gary Oldman as he did a two-part impression of Al Pacino (the old “Godfather” era and the current one), I truly thought to myself, “OK, I’m never going to top that moment. I can retire now.”

Memorable Quote: *“I go to movies with my kids and I just feel a bit like ‘god, I need a Tylenol and nap after that.’ And that’s why I run to the DVD and I put in ‘The Conversation’ and that’s the sort of kind of movie I want to watch.”*

Click on the name of the interviewee in the headline to read the full interview. [Click here](#) [34] for details regarding the “Flashback Weekends.” [Click here](#) [35] for information regarding the Hollywood Palms Cinema, Naperville, Illinois.



[36]

By [PATRICK McDONALD](#) [37]

Senior Staff Writer

HollywoodChicago.com

pat@hollywoodchicago.com [36]

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/17216/feature-the-top-15-interviews-of-hollywoodchicagocom-in-2011>

Links:

- [1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/hankq>
- [2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/brian-tallerico>
- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/burt-reynolds>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/elizabeth-olsen>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/emma-stone>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/feature>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/gary-oldman>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/interview.html>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/jodie-foster>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/joe-arce>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/jonah-hill>
- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/list>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/malcolm-mcdowell>
- [15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/matt-fagerholm>
- [16] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/matthew-lewis>
- [17] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/michel-hazanavicius>
- [18] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/patrick-mcdonald>
- [19] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/14954/interview-matthew-lewis-reflects-on-neville-longbottom-and-deathly-hallows>
- [20] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/15177/interview-emma-stone-on-career-expanding-the-help>
- [21] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/15591/interview-director-nicholas-winding-refn-on-fueling-drive>
- [22] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/13022/interview-patrick-fabian-conducts-the-last-exorcism>
- [23] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/15063/interview-brit-marling-looks-inside-another-earth>
- [24] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/16185/interview-sean-durkin-elizabeth-olsen-of-martha-marcy-may-marlene>
- [25] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/16284/interview-felicity-jones-and-drake-doremus-aim-for-authenticity-in-like-crazy>
- [26] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/16515/interview-director-michel-hazanavicius-becomes-the-artist>
- [27] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/15689/interview-jonah-hill-makes-career-transition-in-dramatic-moneyball>
- [28] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/13357/interview-cult-icon-tommy-wiseau-revisits-the-room>
- [29] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/15363/interview-malcolm-mcdowell-on-the-clockworks-of-his-career>
- [30] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/14213/interview-legendary-jodie-foster-discusses-life-with-the-beaver>
- [31] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/14082/interview-joe-swanberg-pays-visit-to-uncle-kent>
- [32] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/14046/hanging-with-the-king-an-interview-with-burt-reynolds>
- [33] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/16745/interview-gary-oldman-finds-career-role-in-tinker-tailor-soldier-spy>
- [34] <http://www.flashbackweekend.com/>
- [35] <http://www.hollywoodpalmscinema.com/>
- [36] <mailto:pat@hollywoodchicago.com>
- [37] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/about#PAT>