

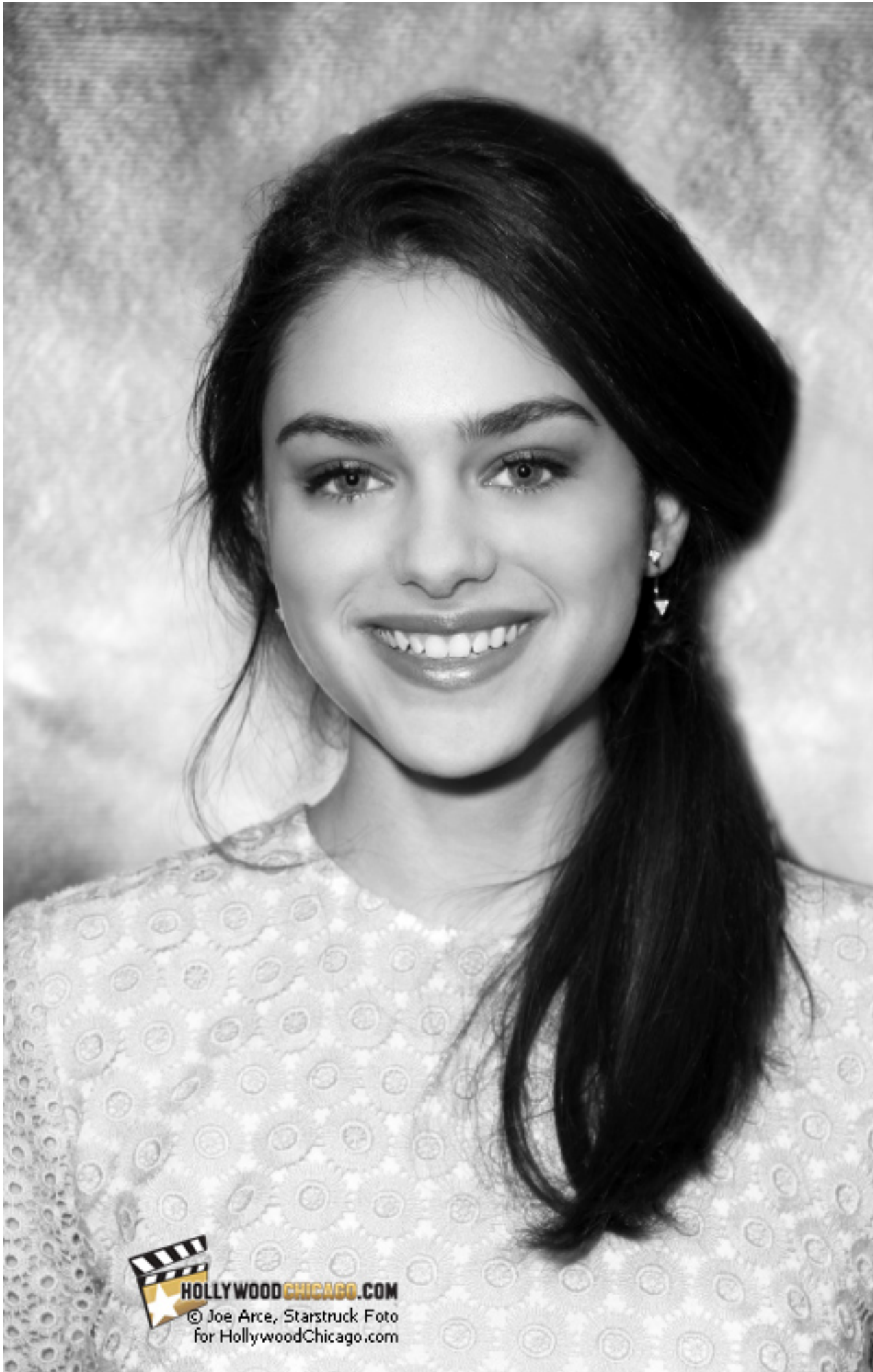
Interview: Brenton Thwaites, Odeya Rush Provide for ‘The Giver’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on August 14, 2014 - 6:01pm

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CHICAGO – Once Jeff Bridges and Meryl Streep are locked into a film about a society that limits its emotions and memories, how do you find the teenage actors to play opposite them? Australian Brenton Thwaites, and Israeli-born Odeya Rush passed the audition, and they join the Oscar winners in the adaptation of “The Giver.”

The popular book series sold 10 million copies in the 1990s, and it deals with a society that has comfort and order, but little emotion or memories. Brenton Thwaites portrays Jonas, who accepts his assigned job as “Receiver of Memories” and begins a journey with the current Receiver, portrayed by Jeff Bridges. Oyeda Rush is Fiona, one of the community who starts to have feelings that Jonas wants her to act on, and they are both seen as threats to the society by the Chief Elder (Meryl Streep).



Odeya Rush in Chicago, July 30th, 2014

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

The Australian born Thwaites was on a couple of popular TV shows there, but desired to expand into international cinema, and landed supporting roles in this year’s “Oculus” and “Maleficent.” Odeya Rush was born in Israel, but moved to the U.S. at nine years old. Her first big film was “The Odd Life of Timothy Green” (2012), and she followed that up with the independent film “We Are What We Are” (2013). She has a high profile role in the upcoming film adaptation of the ‘Goosebumps’ book series.

HollywoodChicago.com interviewed both of these remarkable young actors, and they had opinions on a range of issues, both inside and outside their roles in “The Giver.”

HollywoodChicago.com: As actors in this style of story, how do you compromise having limited emotions or memories, when inherently we all do. What was the key to that subtlety?

Brenton Thwaites: In the film, it’s all about being happy and comfortable, in exchange for the limitations on emotions and memories. It was about working with the director, looking in the book and knowing the continuity. There was a certain level of curiosity that I had to think about. The character of Jonas does reach outside the boundaries, which comes from a level of curiosity.

Odeya Rush: I think my character [Fiona] in the beginning is naive and content, which matches the atmosphere. As she goes through her arc, it’s about the state of confusion as she finds out more about the emotions of anger and love. It’s the discovery of those emotions, from a place of not understanding them initially.

HollywoodChicago.com: As you are both in a society as teenagers, do you think we’re heading towards a world like in ‘The Giver’ or are we heading somewhere else?

Thwaites: I don’t know is the answer, but the world of ‘The Giver’ is a peaceful monotony. There are so many people who don’t have peaceful lives who would look at that world and would want to live there – not having to worry about food or security, plus not having to have the anxiety of finding a spouse or dealing with the world of children. I don’t know if we’re going there as a society, but I do know that people observing it might find it comfortable.

Rush: It’s somewhat of the same reason that ideologies like Communism were set up. People were in great desperation and poverty, and there was a promise of equality, beauty and goodness. But then people realized that they didn’t have much freedom individually, with government assigned jobs and housing. It limited the individual’s growth.

HollywoodChicago.com: We are the sum of all our emotions and memories. Which emotion or memory affects you the most in your life, and how do you think you’d be different if you lived in a society like ‘The Giver’?

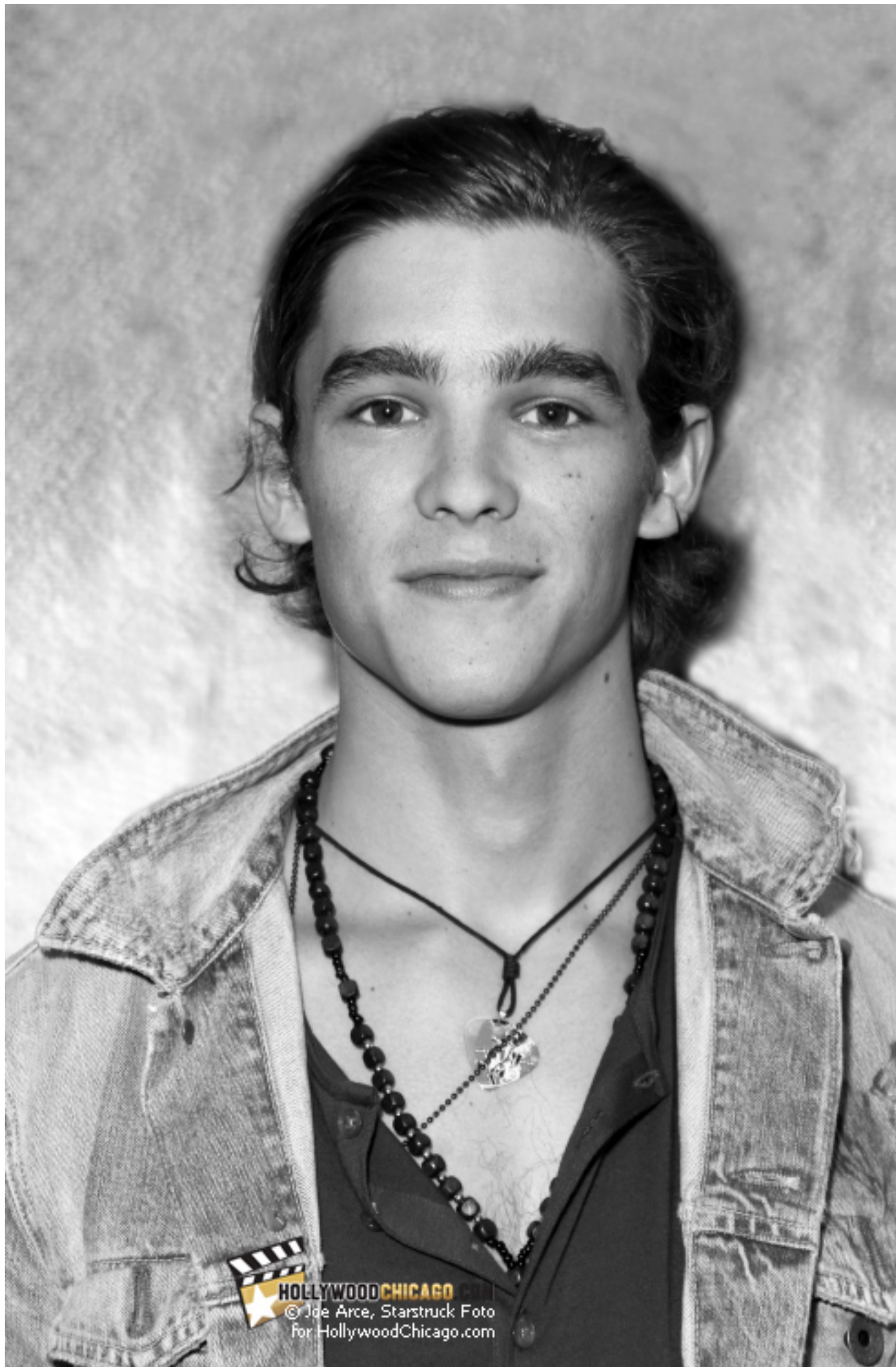
Thwaites: My fear is the emotion I would hate to lose. It inspires me to keep going, and conquer those individual fears step by step. The overcoming of those fears is key for me.

Rush: I would say love, I think my love for my life, the people in it and what I do is what propels me forward. Whether it’s helping someone else or doing something that improves my life, it’s all coming from that source of love.

HollywoodChicago.com: You are both veterans of big time production movie sets. What is the key to feeling comfortable when you first get there, and how have those rituals of comfort changed as you get on more sets?

Thwaites: I try to embarrass myself in some way before I start shooting, in front of the crew, the director or everyone. It relaxes me, and I want to feel relaxed. Pros can get there quickly – I’m not a pro. [laughs] If I embarrass myself, I get rid of my nerves.

Rush: There was no way to prepare for this set, for example, and meeting Jeff Bridges, Meryl Streep and [director] Phillip Noyce. But they were so nice, and when I felt comfortable because of that, it makes everything much easier. It’s always nerve racking for me the first day, but that’s part of it, and it’s why I want to keep doing this – because it’s a job that you never get used to, and it never will feel like the same thing.



Brenton Thwaites in Chicago, July 30th, 2014

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

HollywoodChicago.com: Brenton, What did you observe about Jeff Bridges in your scenes together that you have placed in your ‘list to remember’ as an actor?

Thwaites: He really worked with Phillip in developing his character, and as I found my character, I observed that he really works hard at getting there himself. Jeff really prepared his character, how he walked, talked, even his wardrobe and beard. I’d see him practicing at the start of the film, and he doesn’t take anything for granted.

HollywoodChicago.com: Odeya, what do you learn differently about being an actor when you are on the set of an independent film like ‘We Are What We Are’ versus a huge set like ‘The Giver’ or the upcoming ‘Goosebumps’?

Rush: I also just did an independent film called ‘See You in Vahalla’ that was a 14 day shoot. I think with those types of films, we’re going a lot faster. When I work with someone like Phillip, I know I can get as many takes as I need. With an independent, we shoot four scenes a day, and they move on quickly. There is much more work that you have to do yourself.

When I was on the set of ‘Goosebumps,’ a huge movie on a huge set, the director Rob Letterman had a lot of rehearsal in preproduction, and would take suggestions from the cast and incorporate them. That seemed more like an independent film, but I guess it just depends on the filmmaker, more than the budget.

HollywoodChicago.com: Brenton, you went from Australian television to international movie star in three short years. What was the key from moving locally to internationally, and who or what was instrumental in getting you there?

Thwaites: Well, you have to learn to do an American accent – that was years of practice and failure. [laughs] My manager helped me get my work visa and gave me feedback, but the most instrumental people were my family. My mother and sister was so supportive, they were the ones that said go for it. If you make it in Australia, it can be very comfortable, and the hours are much shorter. It was a happy life, but I broke away and took the risk, not even calculating it. I had the support, so it was cool.

HollywoodChicago.com: Odeya, speaking of the upcoming ‘Goosebumps’ movie – what can fans of the books expect from the film version, that in your opinion will satisfy their expectations regarding the book-to-film?

Rush: They’re going to be happy about all the monsters they get to see, their favorites in one movie. People love the author R.L. Stine because he combines the scares with a twist, and we have a twist coming. It has humor and heart, and Jack Black is so funny. Anything he does – a different facial expression or a random song – he just comes up with it. He just goes off.

HollywoodChicago.com: What do you think is in Australian culture that allows it to produce so many movie stars? Is it something in the attitude or the courage of the actors?

Thwaites: It’s a couple things. In our culture, it’s adventurous and travel oriented. If you ask an Aussie to go to India, they’ll say when is the next flight. [laughs] Part of it is in that willingness to travel. Also we have a relaxed culture in Australia, I feel like that comes in to play with our acting. There aren’t as many consequences. If we’re good at something, we’re good at it, we don’t need to sell ourselves beyond that. We roll with the times.

HollywoodChicago.com: Finally to both of you, what adventure in acting do you still want to go on?

Thwaites: I still want to keep making movies, so the next one is the next massive adventure. I’d like to keep traveling while I do that, in countries I’ve never been to before.

Rush: There are so many places I’ve yet to see, and people I’ve yet to work with – so it’s about the surprises in whatever comes next.

“The Giver” opens everywhere on August 15th. Featuring Brenton Thwaites, Oyeda Rush, Meryl Streep, Jeff Bridges, Alexander Skarsgard, Kaite Holmes and Taylor Swift. Screenplay adapted by Michael Mitnick and Robert B. Weide, from the novel by Lois Lowry. Directed by Phillip Noyce. Rated “PG-13”



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