

Interview, Audio: Abby Quinn, Gillian Robespierre & Elisabeth Holm of ‘Landline’

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CHICAGO – It takes a collaborative village to make a movie, and part of that collective came to Chicago to promote “Landline.” Director Gillian Robespierre, Co-Writer Elisabeth Holm and debut actress Abby Quinn were essential to the film, which is set in 1990s New York City and features Jenny Slate in the lead role.

“Landline” refers to the 1990s period just before the tech/mobile phone boom and the loss of grit in urban New York City. Based on the growing-up experiences of Gillian Robespierre and co-writer Elisabeth Holm, the story is about transitions... Dana (Jenny Slate) to adulthood, the last days of being a teenager for her sister Ali (Abby Quinn) and the dissolution of their parent’s marriage (as portrayed by Edie Falco and John Turturro). It has a bit of a “slamming doors” edge to it, as misunderstandings and family connections blend into a very human story. Slate, Robespierre and Holm last collaborated on the 2014 film “Obvious Child,” with Slate becoming a stand-in for some of the unique situations of young adulthood.

HollywoodChicago.com spoke with Robespierre, Holm and Quinn about their experiences making the film, and it’s split into a transcript and audio portion. To access the interview with Jenny Slate, [click here](#). [20]



Gillian Robespierre, Director of LANDLINE

Gillian Robespierre is said to be redefining the concept of “romantic comedy” with her two collaborations with Jenny Slate, “Obvious Child” (2014) and the current “Landline.” Her point of view is smart and human, and points out how people can overcome challenges by acknowledging all parts of themselves.



Jenny Slate & Gillian Robespierre Promote ‘Obvious Child’
Photo credit: A24

HollywoodChicago.com: We’ve seen New York City films set in the 1970s, 1980s and now you’re doing it with the 1990s. What did you want to express in the film about that particular time and atmosphere in the Big Apple?

Gillian Robespierre: It was going through a big change at the time, with Mayor Rudy Giuliani taking over the streets, and cleaning up 42nd Street. My brother found a particular place in the early 1990s to get a fake ID, but by the time I got there later in the decade, the place was

gone. [laughs] It was on the verge of a change, and it was shifting, and often Elisabeth and I said that it shifted in step with our families.

Liz and I grew up in New York City during the 1990s, and grew up there roaming the streets... that was our playground. Inside our homes, our worlds were changing as well, as our parents declared that they no longer were going to be married to each other. Our parents were taking a new form along with the city.

★ Abby Quinn Portrays ‘Ali’ in LANDLINE

Taking on her first major film role, Abby Quinn virtuously plays Jenny Slate’s sister Ali in “Landline.” She is the glue in the film, and gives a sharp edge to the older-than-her-years teenager in 1990s New York City.



HollywoodChicago.com: Not that bonding with Jenny Slate would be difficult, but what do you think was the key for you in creating a sisterhood with this daffy and unpredictable soul?

Abby Quinn: [Laughs] The key when we met each other and worked on set is that Jenny is very open in real life, which doesn’t happen much with people or other actors. In my experience, it had been the opposite, people get really guarded. Jenny had also worked on a lot of stuff and had some great success, so I went into it not knowing how it would be. Shortly after we met, we were in hair and make-up and Jenny was entertaining everyone with stories about her life, and it relaxed me in a very good way. And that’s basically how the filming went from then on.

Jenny Slate: I will say that there was a day on the set that we were filming a scene that never ended up in the film, where Abby and I had to run down a flight of stairs. And on that particular day, I was in a rough mood emotionally, and was trying to get my shit together. I was sitting outside waiting for another take, when Abby came over and gave me an iced coffee that she had bought for me. She sat next to me and just talked. We had our sisterhood on screen, but we also had this beautiful new friendship that we continue to build in the real world. And that coffee was such a nice moment of kindness, because the chances were that I’m a 34-year-old woman freaking her out. [laughs] It was a sweet and meaningful moment.

★ Elisabeth Holm, Co-Writer of LANDLINE

Holm is director Robespierre’s co-writer for the story/script of “Landline,” and worked on the story team for the previous Jenny Slate/Robespierre collaboration, “Obvious Child.” Currently, Holm and the director are in pre-production for a TV movie, now called “Untitled Gillian Robespierre/Elisabeth Holm Project.”



HollywoodChicago.com: What is your working process with Gillian? How do you bounce ideas off each other when collaborating on a story?

Elisabeth Holm: We often say it’s a lot of pajamas and wine, kind of like we are now, barefoot and my hair looks f**king insane. [laughs] This film is about sisters, but Gillian and I don’t have sisters, we both have older brothers. But even though we’re eight years apart, it sometimes feels like we were raised in the same New York City apartment, there are so many weird and unspoken connections that we have.

But at the same time we like to push and shove each other, and challenge each other by asking questions and helping each other to grow. So much of writing collaboration is just sitting around and talking, about the story and the characters, and where we want to see them go. Then we go off and write our separate scenes and bring them back to each other.

In the audio portion of the interview, Gillian Robespierre, Abby Quinn and Elisabeth Holm (and Jenny Slate) continue their observations about filming “Landline.”

“Landline” continued its nationwide release in Chicago on July 28th. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring Jenny Slate, Abby Quinn, John Turturro, Jay Duplass and Edie Falco. Written by Gillian Robespierre and Elisabeth Holm. Directed by Gillian Robespierre. Rated “R”



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