

# Interview: Jeremy Piven Delivers ‘The Goods’ on Chicago Red Carpet

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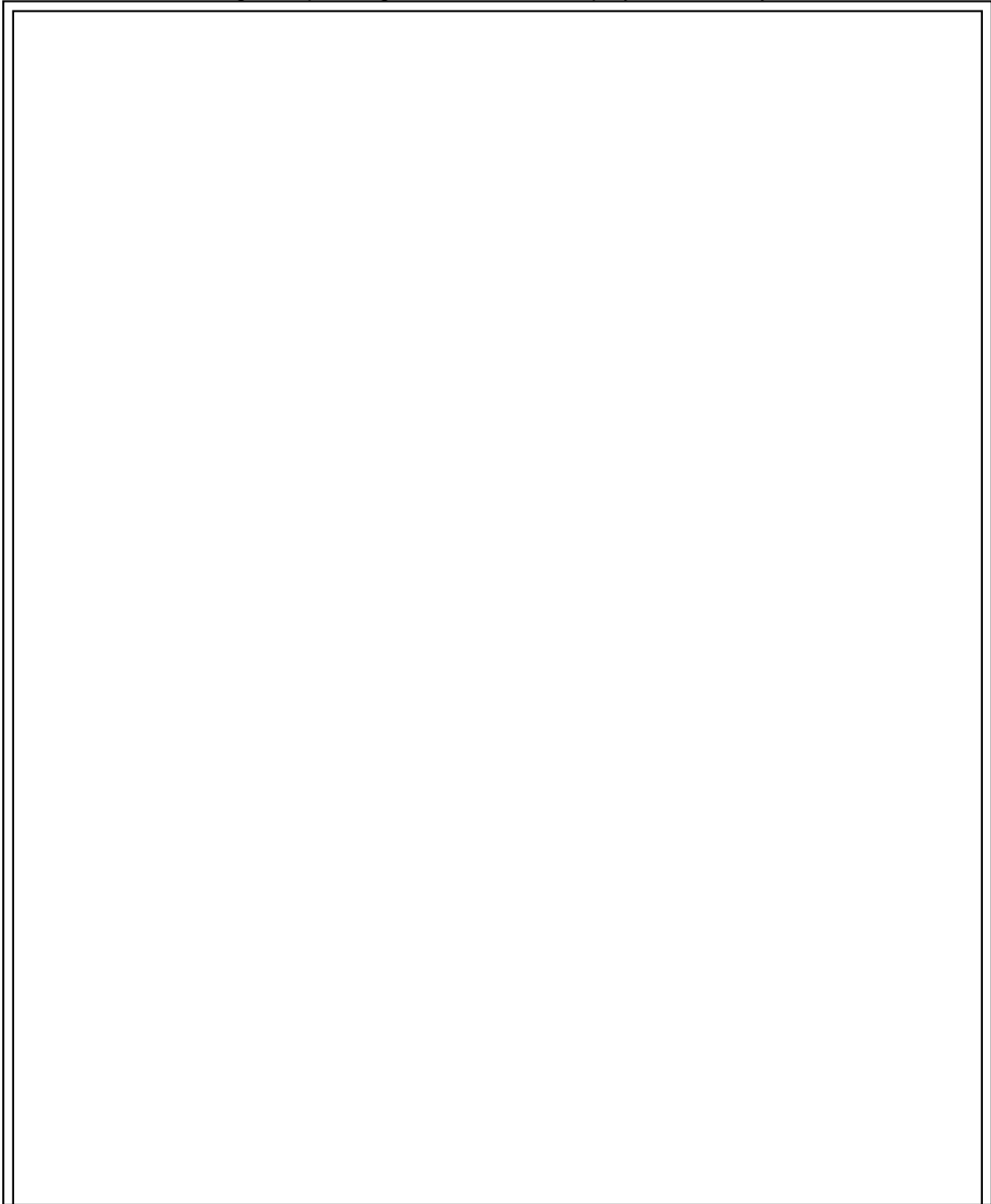
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CHICAGO – In the midst of a new season of ‘Entourage’ on HBO, actor Jeremy Piven walked the red carpet during the Chicago premiere of ‘The Goods: Live Hard, Sell Hard,’ the newly released comedy in which he plays a lead role.

HollywoodChicago.com was there, and got some bonus Q&A action with the director of The Goods, Neal Brennan, and Jeremy Pivens notable acting teacher mother, Ms. Joyce Hiller Piven.

## Jeremy Piven, star of ‘The Goods: Live Hard, Sell Hard’

This long-time character actor broke through as a lead character six TV seasons ago, playing the unforgettable Ari Gold, super-agent for the characters of ‘Entourage.’ Expanding his film career, he plays Don Ready in The Goods, and talks about the filming experience.





Jeremy Piven Walks the Red Carpet at the Chicago Premiere of 'The Goods: Live Hard, Sell Hard' on August 13, 2009.

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

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Taking the lead role in a comedy is tremendously exciting. Did you feel you had to take more of a leadership role on the set with its large cast then previous films to keep the morale and energy up?

**Jeremy Piven:** I been in a lot of comedies, and this is the funniest one I've ever been in, bar none. Even though I'm lucky enough to have the lead, Will Ferrell and Ed Helms are among the best in the business, so they all made me look really good.

I've just been doing ensemble work forever, and [Producer] Adam McKay gathered this cast together, and they are just cool guys to hang out with....I had the time of my life.

**HC:** What is different about a Chicago or Midwestern actor in Los Angeles than actors from other parts of the country and why?

**JP:** I'm lucky enough to do Entourage right now with a fellow Chicago actor named Gary Cole. And what you get with a Chicago actor is a fellow who is willing to do anything, try anything and doesn't have an ego. He looks you in the eye and does his thing.

Whenever there is a Chicago actor on set I am so happy. We had this great moment when David Schwimmer was there and Gary Cole, so the whole atmosphere was Chicago guys. That was pretty cool.

**HC:** Anything you can tell us about what will happen to Ari Gold in the rest of Entourage's season?

**JP:** Ari is going to bottom out and take over the town. It's kind of going to be ripped from the headlines.

 **Neal Brennan, director of 'The Goods: Live Hard, Sell Hard'**

Screenwriter ("Half Baked") and a former comedy scribe for "Chappelle's Show," Neal Brennan makes his film directorial debut with The Goods.



Neal Brennan at the Chicago Premiere of 'The Goods: Live Hard, Sell Hard' on August 13, 2009.

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

**HC:** What did you do on the set to keep up the energy on this very manic comedy?

**Neal Brennan:** I didn't have to do much. I tried not to cut too much. I feel as a director that when you yell 'cut,' all the actors think 'did he cut because of me?' I try to keep the camera rolling as long as I could.

Somebody told me it adds 200 grand in film costs. They did tell me to start shooting less, but Will Ferrell and Adam McKay were behind them telling me don't stop shooting.

**HC:** How much improvisation do you allow on-set? Is that hard to control with comedians?

**NB:** The great Harold Ramis once told me that he uses the script as a last resort. We do a couple takes with the script, but then we tried something else.

**HC:** As a director, what is your favorite camera shot or movement and why?

**NB:** With this movie in particular, I tried to keep up camera movement as much as possible. I shot in what is called a 'lensing style,' which is to shoot a scene from far away so it seems more real and documentary-like.

Most of the time I wanted to be about the actors and the jokes, but there were some moments where I thought, 'I can show off a little here.'

 **Joyce Hiller Piven, Co-founder of the Piven Theatre Workshop**

The mother of Jeremy Piven is a famous name in Chicago, co-founding her Evanston-based acting studio with her late husband Byrne Piven.



Joyce Hiller Piven at the Chicago Premiere of 'The Goods: Live Hard, Sell Hard' on August 13, 2009.

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

**HC:** Since you are a student and teacher of acting, what do you observe about the cutthroat business end of the type of productions that Jeremy participates in, and how do you think that business effects the art of acting overall?

**Joyce Hiller Piven:** I don't think anything is compromised when Jeremy is involved. Because he is artist and is true to himself. So I can't speak to a general kind of statement involving the industry overall.

**HC:** How have movies and the type of acting done for them effected the work you see coming out of your students over the years? Has it made a significant difference in them and why?

**JHP:** I am a little prejudiced about the Workshop. What we are noted for is trying to cultivate the individual voice. So when students go through the Workshop they find that true voice. The original voice. Not trying to be like anyone else.

We have a healthy atmosphere and I think artists thrive on health. I don't think artists have to suffer and be neurotic. They may be neurotic in life, but under on our program they're not that way on stage. They have comfort and feel easy in a stage presence.

**HC:** Finally, as an instructor and mentor, what is your best one sentence advice to student actors?

**JHP:** Cultivate your own voice, your own originality, your own creativity and love what you are doing.

*'The Goods: Live Hard, Sell Hard' opened August 14, 2009 at theaters everywhere and features Jeremy Piven, Ving Rhames, Ed Helms, James Brolin, Rob Riggle, David Koechner and Kathryn Hahn, directed by Neal Brennan.*



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