

A portrait of a young man with short, dark, curly hair and light brown eyes. He is wearing a dark navy blue V-neck sweater. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a solid, muted blue-grey color.

VIRTUES

calvin crawley.

Photos by Yellowbelly

Credits.

Talent. **calvin crawley**

Interview. **Vanessa Miraglia**

Photography. Courtesy of
Yellowbelly and **Marty Morris**

With Thanks to.

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CALVIN *Crawley.*

Calvin Crawley is a brilliant actor who trained at RADA and uses the Meisner technique, which helps him be disciplined but also spontaneous in his roles. His performance as Larry in the film *Happy as Larry* is particularly amazing, showing real vulnerability and honesty. It shows how his collaborative approach and theatrical background helped him create a powerful and truthful performance.

The film won the Audience Award for Best International Feature at the Dallas International Film Festival. Critics have said the on-screen relationship between Crawley and his co-star, Kevin Walls, is "magically awkward, sincere, and utterly believable," highlighting the film's sensitive and emotional story.

In this profile, we look at Crawley's journey to the film, from his time in theatre to his work with the writer-director, Hugo Andre.



V: You have a very strong background in theatre, with roles ranging from classical Shakespeare to contemporary works. How did your extensive stage experience and training, particularly your Meisner training, prepare you for the nuanced and intimate character of Larry?

C: I think it definitely helped me with approaching the script. When you do a fair amount of theatre work, the thing that you start with is always the text, and you want to make sure you pay respect to the story that is being told. With Hugo having written as well as directed the film, it's really helpful to have someone who can answer any question you have, and also gave so much trust in Kevin and I's performances. I think the Meisner work that I've done helped me with being able to 'let go', and react to Kevin, and be surprised. It also allows you to focus on the smaller moments, as not every reaction has to be big, it can also be small or subtle, something that's helpful for screen.

2: As a performer, was there a pivotal moment in your life—or perhaps during the process of a specific character like Larry—when it truly clicked for you, and you thought, 'This is when I feel like a genuine actor'? Or do you believe that a deep sense of being an actor is something you're simply born with, and the craft is just the journey of finding it?

C: I think you feel like an actor in many different ways at many different times, but for me, I feel like there is a 'before' when I did the film, and an 'after'. With the film, everything seemed to come together in a remarkable way. From before the second audition where I was able to read the whole script and became really excited about it, to the time I had before the film started to work on the script, to doing the first online read through, to the first day of film-

ing and everyone staying in Airbnb's together, to catching different shots on the day, to the food we had and the time we all spent together, to the project itself being, in my opinion, a real work of art and something I'm incredibly proud of. It all clicked and was an incredible experience, which stemmed from the script Hugo wrote, and the people that he brought together. As a working actor, you're often juggling day jobs with auditions and self-tapes, and it's the most that I've ever been able to not worry about anything else but the work itself, and when the work is so rewarding it really is a delight.

V: The film is described as a "quiet triumph" and a "small story told with a big heart." What were the unique challenges and creative opportunities of conveying such profound internal struggle and emotional weight in a film that relies on subtlety rather than spectacle?

C: I think the both the challenge and opportunity is trusting yourself more than anything and knowing that you will do justice to work so heartfelt. I think it's as well knowing you don't have to 'act' the emotional weight, you just have to carry it with you. Kevin and I didn't get to see behind the camera during filming, so you must trust that whatever you are doing will get picked up, and that the shot that you are in works, which can sometimes feel weird because what feel 'natural' in life isn't always the same on screen. I remember when Kevin and I first saw it at Dallas, we were so excited because we were able to see what the rest of the crew was seeing through the monitor, and it looked fantastic, and told the story so well.

V: Hugo Andre is known for his "emotionally intimate story-

telling," and your previous comments on filmmaking describe its transformative power. Can you speak to how this shared artistic philosophy manifested on set, and what it was like to collaborate with a director who also acts in the film?

C: I think it manifested in a great degree of trust. For me, I know that Hugo will have spent a large amount of time and thought working on and writing the script, and it shows in the care and craft of the storytelling. To do the best that I can, I know that I need to make sure I'm treating it with respect, and assisting in telling that story, especially when on set and making sure I'm prepared for anything. I think for Hugo, it's trusting me as well, to bring this person to life and know that I can tackle any scene, especially the emotionally intimate ones. I think the fact that Hugo acts in the film as well, is such a testament to him. Between the singing and the throwing himself into the freezing cold sea, which are things I don't think I'd be brave enough to do myself, never mind write them into a script, as an actor you're assured knowing that the director won't ask anything of you that he wouldn't be willing to do himself. This was so reassuring when it came to locations and hiking, because you know it's all been checked and wherever you are standing has been somewhere Hugo has stood and made sure it works.

V: The chemistry between you and Kevin Walls is frequently praised as "magically awkward" and "utterly believable." How did you and Kevin build that rapport, and what was your collaborative process like in creating such a genuine on-screen connection?

C: I think the odd thing is I feel we didn't have to work very hard at all for the rapport. I think the fact that we shared a cot-

tage together for the first couple of weeks with Izzy (who plays Yas) helped, as we started the day together with coffee, and once we were finished for the day we were able to chill out together. I think when you get on together it's almost easier to be awkward, because you can just be the opposite of how you've been otherwise. Other than going over lines occasionally for the larger scenes, it felt quite easy. I think so much of it was down to Kevin as well, there's definitely some great bloopers that are mostly him improv'ing and making everyone laugh.

V: The Isle of Skye is as much a character in the film as Larry himself, and the production was shot entirely using natural light. How did the raw, unpredictable Scottish landscape affect your performance and the creative process on set?

C: There were just times during filming, especially in locations like the mountain, or the forest, in between set ups, where I could look out at everything, and it was incredible, and really let it affect me. Larry as a character picked Skye because of its natural beauty, and there was constant confirmation that he was right about it. It became very easy to understand why someone would visit. There were some challenges, sometimes with the weather, but mostly with midges, but everyone was part of it, so it wasn't like anyone got off easy. Especially weather wise, we got so lucky, and some locations we found as we were filming, but each location perfectly suited the scene that we were doing. It really helped the immersion, from my perspective, because everything was tangible.

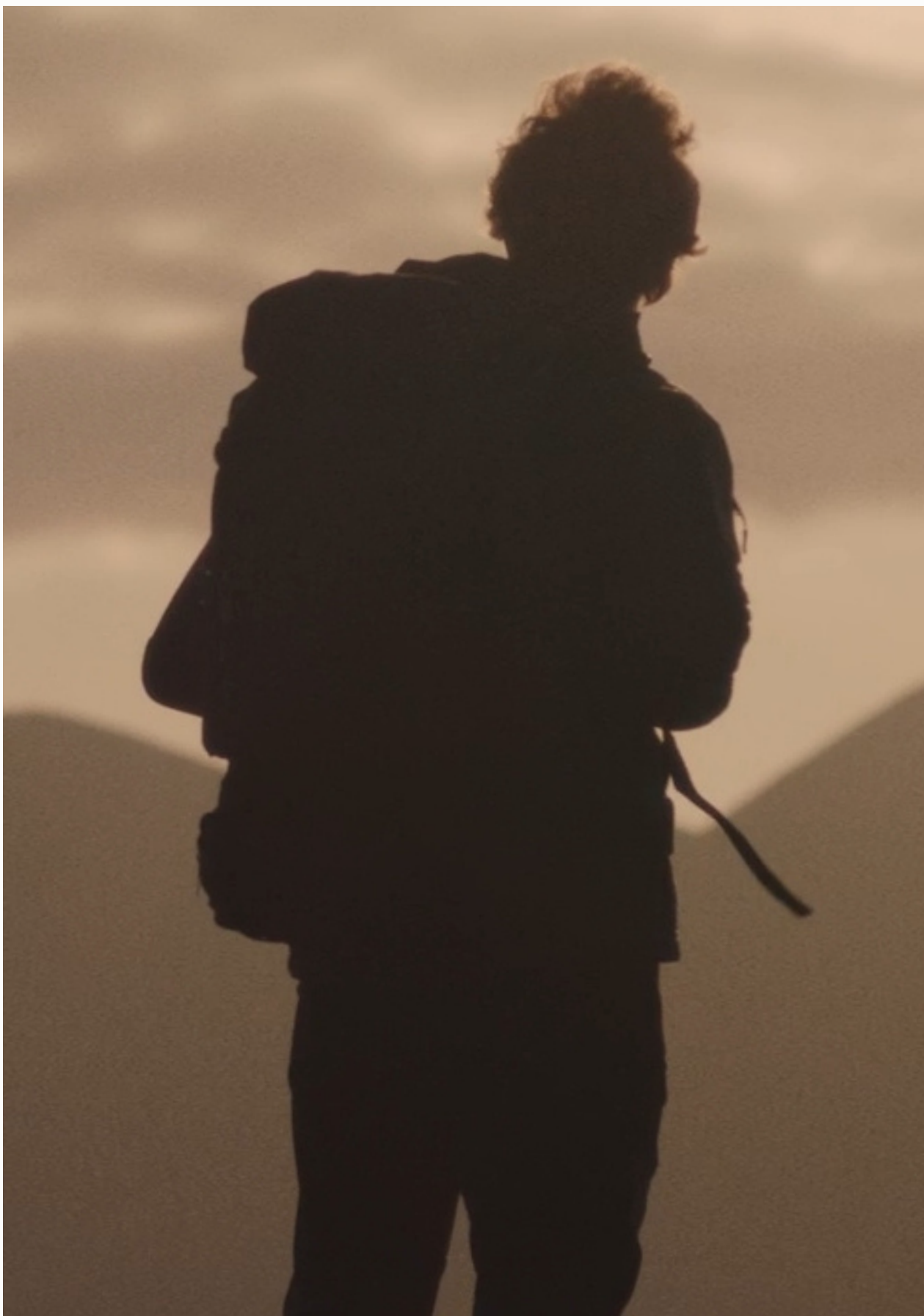
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tival. What does it mean for a film that handles such heavy themes to resonate so deeply with audiences, and what do you hope viewers take away from it?

C: It's always nice to know that work you've been a part of has been received well, and that people think and feel deeply about something that you also care about. Seeing it for the first time in Dallas was great, as we got to hear people's responses, their laughter, and to answer the very thoughtful questions that we were given after the film. I would hope that it means that when it comes to films like this, although I'm aware there are very few, that there is a desire for them. People can and want to engage, think and feel deeply about something, and this film allows that. And it does this as well as being a very sharp, witty, and funny as well. I hope that people will enjoy it and even think about it in ways I or even Hugo hasn't.

V: To wrap up our conversation, I'd like to ask you a question that speaks to the heart of what you do. An acting career requires a remarkable kind of courage. There is a deep vulnerability in stepping into someone else's shoes and portraying them with such authenticity, and your per-

formance as Larry is a powerful testament to that. Given the character's emotional journey, I imagine that portraying him took a unique kind of bravery.

Can you share a moment in your career when you felt you had to be the most courageous, whether it was in taking on a particularly challenging role or in a decision you made to pursue acting itself?

C: I think that the time that I did the film and played Larry was in retrospect, fairly courageous. I didn't think about it much before, other than making sure to work on the script and the character, but the role came at a time in my life where I sort of didn't know what I was doing, after a fairly big personal upheaval where I didn't know whether I was going to still be living in London or where to go from there. Then getting to play Larry, not having to focus on anything else but the character and knowing that there was nothing to hide behind, with a lot of trust in me as a performer, felt very special. I think it didn't feel brave or courageous because there was the support from everyone. But I think that time was special because of those connections, and it's something I feel the film is about as well.

"HAPPY AS LARRY"
screening at film festivals, worldwide



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