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magazine

angourie
rice

ANGOURIE

PHOTOGRAPHER ALEXANDRA ARNOLD
STYLIST ANNA KATSANIS

RICE

Feather dress Rachel Gilbert
Gold earrings Alexis Bittar





Blue
sweater dress
Self-Portrait
Earrings
Alexis Bittar

For Angourie Rice, everything comes back to stories.

Since making her film debut before even becoming a teen, Rice has worked on projects like the recent Spider-Man trilogy, Mare of Easttown, and now The Last Thing He Told Me where she stars opposite Jennifer Garner. The AppleTV+ and Hello Sunshine production is based on the #1 New York Times bestselling novel of the same name and tells the story of a step-mother, played by Garner, who develops an unexpected relationship with her step-daughter Bailey, played by Rice, after Bailey's father suddenly disappears without a trace.

For Rice, it's a project that merges a mix of her interests in one: books, storytelling, and projects that empower women to come together to create something special. Capturing Bailey's teen angst and balancing her fraught mental state is something Rice does with ease; showcasing her ability to tap into the inner psyches of her characters to embody them fully rather than turning them into a caricature.

Storytelling doesn't just drive her as an actress as she deftly selects roles that open up her own worldview, but also as an avid reader and writer herself. Her podcast The Community Library and her upcoming book — a collaboration with her mum, inspired by Pride and Prejudice called Stuck Up and Stupid — deepens her connection to storytelling, showing her the importance of highlighting the tales that aren't told as often as they should be.

Sitting down with 1883 Magazine, Angourie Rice chats about her role in Apple TV+'s The Last Thing He Told Me, the process behind creating backstories for her characters, gravitating towards projects with women at the helm, and more.



It's been two years since we last spoke and last time we talked about Mare of Easttown, the ending of Spider-Man, and starting adulthood. You started acting so young and it brought you "fame" at such a young age. When you look back at where you started, how would you describe the way you've grown and developed as an actress from then to now? I think more about things now; I wonder if that's for better or for worse. The older you get, the more you notice patterns in stories, in people, and in communities. Now that I'm older, I think more about what stories mean, how often we tell certain stories, how other ones get ignored, and what those stories mean to us as a culture. When I was younger, I didn't think about that as much because you're a kid and you don't have to. I feel like that's the difference now and that informs how I play characters as well while also informing what project I go for and what stories I find interesting.

I think you're at such an interesting point in your career where you've been involved in a big blockbuster, you've starred in critically acclaimed shows, and you've had this really beautiful career progression. Do you spend a lot of time reflecting on your career so far? Do I spend time reflecting? I don't know [laughs].

I kind of forget things and I will be reminded of something and won't believe that I did it or that I worked with a certain person. I think because each project that I've done is in its own bubble and its own place. I mean, when you travel, you usually film in cities that you've never been to before. You stay at a hotel and then you leave and never go back there again. They all kind of exist as little tiny points in time. Sometimes I think about it and it feels like a dream, like it didn't really happen.

Do you look at them like chapters in a book? Absolutely. It's how I measure time as well because it all correlates or corresponds to high school or the pandemic or my years out of high school. I remember what I was doing in life, like high school or the pandemic, by remembering what project I was working on at the time.

Yeah, I remember we talked about you living in Philly while you were filming Mare of Easttown in the pandemic. Yeah, we were in Philadelphia. We started filming late 2019 and then we were shut down in March of 2020. And then went back in September of 2020.

Back then, because of the pandemic, you had to sit with the character for nine months. With Bailey in The Last Thing He Told Me, was there anything that you

did differently to flesh her out? There are similarities between the two. Yeah, there are similarities. With Siobhan [Mare of Easttown] she had to become an adult really young. With Bailey, we see her still being treated like a child and asking everyone to treat her like an adult and to tell her the truth. They're both young people who have gone through a traumatic event. What's different with Bailey, which was so intriguing to me, is that we see her go through it in real time. That was a different process to kind of live in that anxiety and nervousness of the unknown because that is where Bailey is for so much of the show. Since the show takes place over five days, everything feels so immediate and so present which is what I really liked about it and felt like I could do a lot to work with as an actor. What I liked about the process of creating that character was really breaking down every single scene and moment that she has to have this immediate reaction or response because she hasn't had time to think things over. She hasn't had time to sit with it, it's all about that fight or flight response that she's in the whole time.

You see her going through the motions when she's watching those home movies at her Aunt's house, it's the first time she has a moment to process and you can

see her mind going a million miles a minute. That scene was really hard because it was difficult to just imagine someone experiencing that whole sequence because Bailey gains a family and loses them all over again. It was really tricky to have this sense of belonging and seeing yourself as a child with all these people who loved you and these people you called family, but then also at the same time having this really deep sadness because you don't have that anymore. That was really hard, but it's a moment that, for me, really defines who Bailey is for the rest of the show. There is a bittersweet pain of finally getting to know the truth and finally getting to the bottom of it, but it still doesn't feel good. It doesn't make everything better and it really hurts.

I know it's the most recent thing you watched, so how has your perception of it changed as a viewer vs. acting in it? What's always strange about watching something that you've done is that it's an edited version of it, it's an edited collage of your life over the past five months. We did all of the location shoots at the end, so seeing what we filmed on the last day slotted into some scenes that we shot at the beginning was strange to watch back. When seeing it for the first time as a viewer, I felt sorry for Hannah in a way that I didn't when I was

playing Bailey. Bailey doesn't feel sorry for Hannah, she disregards her completely. So watching it and seeing Jen's beautiful performance and seeing her performance in scenes that I wasn't there for, I really felt for her. That was funny as an audience member to feel that because I didn't before when I was playing the character.



Gold sweater
Jason Wu
Gold dress
Zimmermann
Socks Hue
Shoes
Amina Muaddi
Gold earrings and cuffs
Alexis Bittar



Although the series centres around the disappearance of Bailey's father, its focus is on the connection and relationship of Bailey and her step-mother. Between this and *Mare of Easttown*, it seems like you gravitate to projects that explore the workings of close female relationships. Absolutely. That's my whole life. My whole life is relationships with women in my life, friends, family. So, it's something that has always been there in the media, but you just have to look for it a little bit more. Women have been writing about their thoughts and feelings for a very long time. It just depends on how many people were listening at the time. So, because it's just such a big part of my life, that's what I want to tell stories about. That's what I find really interesting and intriguing. Reese Witherspoon has built her whole production company around that idea of telling stories about women which I think is so fantastic and wonderful and I feel so fortunate to have worked with Hello Sunshine on this. It's really inspiring to see women behind the camera as well. We had four female directors, a bunch of female producers, and I've never seen anything like it. It meant a lot to me.

Yeah, you've worked with incredibly esteemed actresses like Nicole Kidman, Kate Winslet, and now Jennifer Garner, and the set being full of female creatives behind-the-scenes must've been really empowering for you. It was very inspiring. I think because it's just the simplest thing of seeing things like that actually happening. You can believe in theory that things can happen but once you are on set and seeing all these women in roles of power and department heads, that made me feel like it's possible. It's not just some crazy idea. It can happen and it can work.

It's very much a love story between Hannah and Owen, Owen and his daughter, and how both those stories — and the subsequent disappearance of Owen, the thing they shared — creates the space for Hannah and Bailey to connect. Obviously Owen trusts Hannah and sees something in her that eventually gets Bailey to break her walls down. What was it like first reading that in the script and then acting it out? We were able to go through the scripts with Laura Dave and her husband, Josh Singer, who's the showrunner and producer. We read through it together and made notes and talked through the dialogue. I think breaking it down scene by scene was really helpful. I annotate my scripts and pinpoint moments that I felt that Bailey opened up a bit. What was really exciting for me was building that journey. Bailey is so closed off and harsh in the first two episodes, but what's exciting is that it gives us the foundation so that, when you get to the final episode, you see how far they've come. It's really impactful and it really hits you. It really impacted me a lot, too. That transformation and that change was something that was so exciting for me and that was created by just combing through the script.

Crystal tank top
Cavanagh Baker Swarovski
Vintage Levi's jeans
Stylists' own



The part in the finale where you can see Hannah's hand and her engagement ring and Bailey grabs it, that scene was so touching. It's such a stark difference to the first episode where Bailey says "you taught me that if I didn't have anything nice to say don't say it at all" in regards to her step mother. Is there a scene in particular that, when looking back, really sticks out to you? I really loved that airplane scene. I think it was strange though, because we only had one day at the airport set. We were filming the end of the show in the middle of our filming schedule and it took a lot to get into that headspace. There was something so precious about it when I think back. Another scene that I love is the whole sequence of me and Jen running through Austin just because it was so hot. It was just sweltering. But to see it all cut together with the exciting music is so rewarding because when you're doing it, it feels exhausting. It's so hard and physically challenging. To see it come together was really rewarding.

What was your approach like fleshing out Bailey's character? I know you had the book to reference, but was there anything else you did, read, or watched? I didn't make a playlist, but I did listen to a lot of Fleetwood Mac because it was mentioned in the script that she's wearing a Fleetwood Mac shirt. I do wear one in the show. I also got into musicals because that is what she's doing at school.

I saw a performance you did from Waitress that got cut! Yeah, She Used To Be Mine which is really fun! I'm never sad when they cut things because there's a reason why it didn't fit, but that was so fun to do.

I love that you're having these little musical moments in every project. You had one in Mare of Easttown and obviously there's going to be tons in the Mean Girls musical film. Right! It's weird, these musical things just keep coming to me without me thinking about it. For The Last Thing He Told Me I did audition with a song. I sang Second Hand White Baby Grand from Smash, which I haven't seen the show but my singing teacher put it on a Spotify playlist. If I'd known when I was doing The Last Thing He Told Me that the next project I'd be doing was musical, I probably would have approached it a little differently! [Laughs] I'm proud of my performance and my singing in The Last Thing He Told Me but it's very different from an actual musical movie.

Now, just like last time, I need to discuss books with you. I love that you still run your podcast, The Community Library. What are you reading at the moment? Let me grab it! I haven't unpacked anything yet, it's a mess in here. I just started reading On Beauty by Zadie Smith. I'm only 26 pages in but I've already found something to underline. This is my third Zadie Smith novel; I've read White Teeth and Swing Time. I also read her little essay collection about the pandemic which was amazing. So this is my third Zadie. I think she is already a favourite author but I don't know how many books you have to read from one person [laughs]. I feel like three is like a good number.



Fringe top and skirt **Rachel Gilbert**
Blue metallic boots **Schutz**
Blue hoop earrings **Alexis Bittar**



Top and bra Jason Wu
Spike earrings Alexis Bittar

What was the last book you loved? I just bought it because I borrowed it from the library to read it — *Station 11* by Emily St. John Mandel.

Was that a movie? They turned it into a TV show. This is the best book I've read all year. I can't stop thinking about it. I bought a copy yesterday and went back and underlined and dug up all the things that I loved. It's one of those books that as soon as I finished it, I went back to the first chapter and reread it and saw so many things that I just didn't see. I wish I'd read it sooner, although maybe I wouldn't have been able to. It was written in 2014. It's about a pandemic that's quite similar to Coronavirus, but it's more deadly. It wipes out 98% of the population and it follows multiple characters before the "collapse" as they call it. It's about how people survive in this post-pandemic world in communities without electricity and the same resources. Surprisingly, it's mostly about actors and theatre.

Wow, close to home. Yeah. I didn't expect that going in. I knew it was kind of about that, but I just can't stop thinking about it and talking about it.

I know you said you wish you read it sooner, but I'm one of those weird people that believe books find you when you need it. That's fair, honestly, because I don't think I could have read something about the pandemic any earlier. To know that it was written before Coronavirus... So much of the stuff she got right.

If there was one book you wish you could re-read again for the first time with brand new eyes, what would it be? Would it be *Station 11*? It's hard because I just read it.

My other thought was Virginia Woolf but reading Virginia for the first time feels like I'm not really reading it. I have to read it for a second time to fully understand it. So maybe not bad either. Maybe *Pride and Prejudice*, because I read that. I've known that story for such a long time and it's one of my favourites. I read it with a friend recently who had never read it before. It was so cool to see her reactions and her predictions as well because she didn't know the story. I want that experience again.

Yes! And you're releasing your first book, *Stuck Up and Stupid*, with your mum and it's a modern adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*. Obviously as an actress so much of what you make is someone else's creative vision, so did you find this to be a fun playground to explore? It was so much fun. It was so much problem solving, especially because we're basing it on a text that already exists. The framework was already there for us which is great, but putting it into a modern world requires problem solving of things that don't make sense anymore because of technology, politics, societal attitudes, and things like that. We had to figure out what event would elicit the same emotions or the same sort of reactions from people in a modern context. I loved writing it. I loved having the creative freedom. I just can't wait for people to read it.

We gushed about folklore and evermore last time so now it's time to gush over *Midnight's* — favourite songs? As I've been talking to you I've realized you have the *All Too Well* movie poster behind you! [Laughs] I can't pick just one.

It depends on the mood. It really does! I will say, from the first lesson and continuously, Mastermind has been one of my favourites.

A favourite that has grown on me from the first listen that I didn't love but now is one of my favourite songs is *Bejewelled*.

It's a very freeing song. I think because you can hear Jack Antonoff behind it. I also love his version of *Anti-Hero*. *Bejewelled* is just like, "No one can touch me, I'm awesome." I just love that. It's an uplifting bop. I also love *Sweet Nothing*.

I love *Sweet Nothing*. My friends call it my song because I can't stop talking about it. Do you like *It's Nice To Have A Friend*?

I do! It sounds like a little love poem. Yeah and that's why I love it! It's underrated. Those two songs are like sister songs.

Well, in two years time we can hopefully talk about more books, more Taylor Swift songs, and your next project. Yes! It's always a pleasure. Hopefully it's sooner this time!

Watch *The Last Thing He Told Me* on Apple+ now.

Interview Kelsey Barnes
Photographer Alexandra Arnold
Stylist Anna Katsanis
at Muse Management
Hair Clara Leonard
at The Wall Group
using Act and Acre
Makeup Alice Lane
at Tracey Mattingly
Photography Assistants
Sarah Gardner & Shan Shi
Fashion Assistant Serena Orlando