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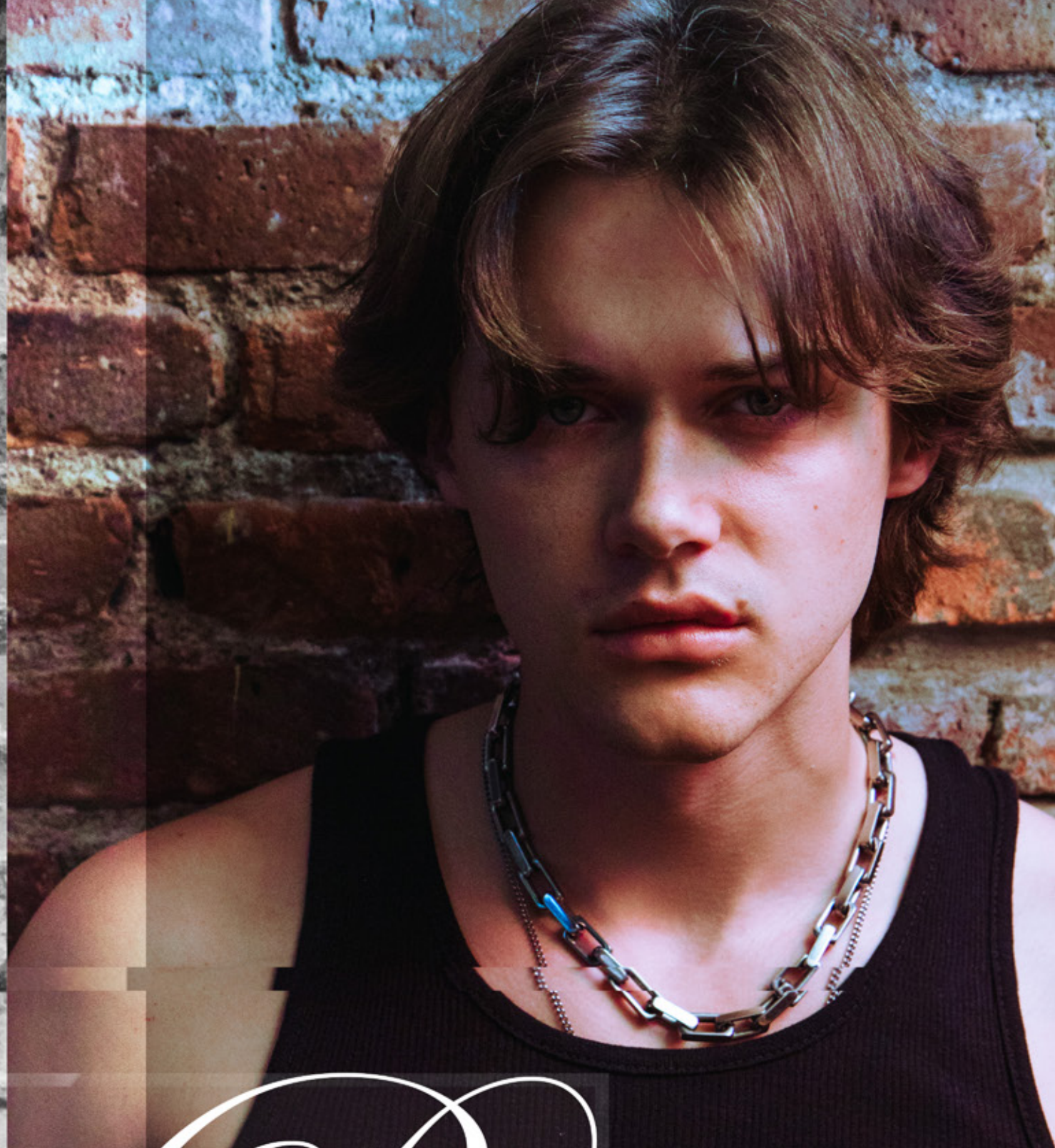
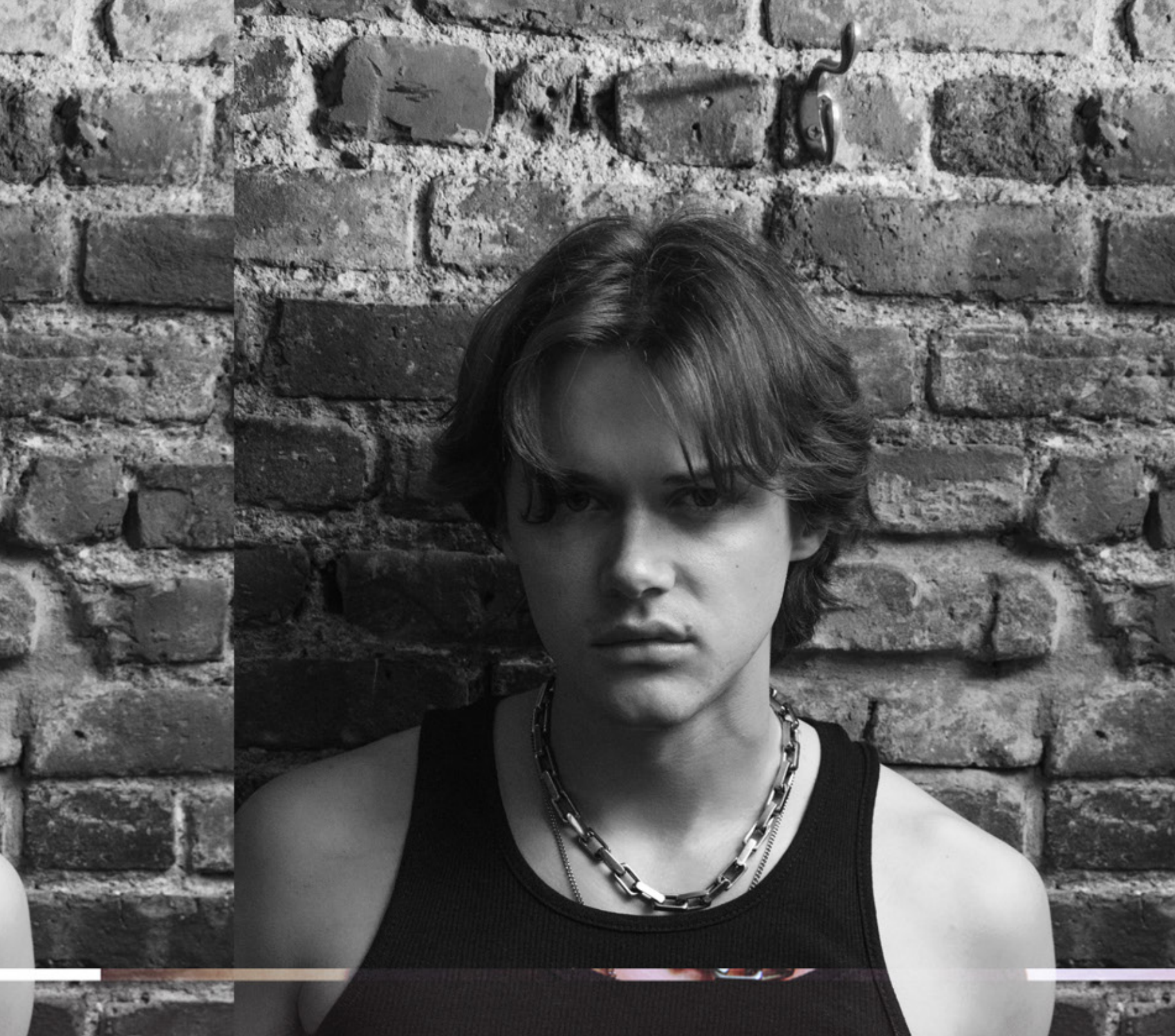


CHRISTOPHER BRINEY

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DIGITAL COVER

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CHRISTOPHER

IN JUST OVER ONE YEAR, 25 YEAR OLD ACTOR CHRISTOPHER BRINEY HAS GONE FROM A RELATIVELY UNKNOWN ASPIRING ACTOR WORKING AT TRADER JES IN NEW YORK CITY TO A HOUSEHOLD NAME.

He was filming his first feature film in Liverpool – Dalland, starring alongside Ben Kingsley – when he got the call that he had been casted as the romantic lead in Jenny Han’s streaming adaptation of her successful book series, The Summer I Turned Pretty. Seemingly unaware of the success the book series already had, he quickly realized how big the opportunity was after finding out Dalland director Mary Harron’s daughter was a fan. He quickly purchased all three books and familiarized himself with his character, Conrad, who he’d be spending an abundance of time with over the next several years.

Born and raised in Hartford, Connecticut, Briney moved to New York City in 2016, where he eventually received a BFA in acting at Pace University. It was after graduating that he decided to go after the role of the moody heartthrob Conrad Fisher in The Summer I Turned Pretty. Watching the series, it’s difficult to believe that this is one of Briney’s first ever professional roles.

PHOTOGRAPHER DEVIN KASPARIAN
STYLIST LAURA SPRIET

Briney

Ofentimes these brooding, emotional characters are given to seasoned actors – Timothée Chalamet, Austin Butler, and Ansel Elgort to name a few. Becoming the face for a character that already had quite an extensive fanbase would be a daunting task for any young actor, but Briney fully embraced and embodied Conrad Fisher, so much that it’s hard to imagine anyone else in that role. It wouldn’t make sense – Christopher Briney IS Conrad Fisher, but he is so much more than that. And he’s only just getting started.

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necklace Vitaly



A few weeks before the season two premiere of *The Summer I Turned Pretty*, Christopher Briney sat down with 1883 to chat about Conrad's character growth from season one to now, social anxiety that comes with being in the spotlight, the importance of taking care of and prioritizing your mental health and staying true to yourself.

Congratulations on the premiere of *The Summer I Turned Pretty* season two! How does it feel knowing the world is about to see the work you guys have done? Well, thank you! It feels good. It's always a weird thing to have worked on something for so long, but have moved on because so much time has passed. Not really moved on from it, but can't remember if I did terrible, or a good job, and now a year later just coming to terms with it and hoping people like it, but it's out of my hands now. So, I'm excited for people to see it. I haven't even watched it yet, so I'll be watching along with everyone else!

Oh wow, you haven't seen any of it? No. I've seen a rough cut of the first episode or two, but that's it.

CHRISTO

I've seen more than you have! I know you had the premiere party last night. What was it like celebrating with the fans and seeing their reactions to the new trailer? It was weird. It was weird because that was another thing where I hadn't seen anything until they were playing it in front of everybody. But it was really, really cool. And then I did hear some great reactions when Taylor Swift started playing in the trailer, and it was cool to see because it was everybody's raw reactions. It was my raw reaction. It was the same for the whole cast. I mean, again, nobody had seen it, so it was sweet. It was sweet to hear people care.

I've seen some really great reactions online too! That's so great to hear.

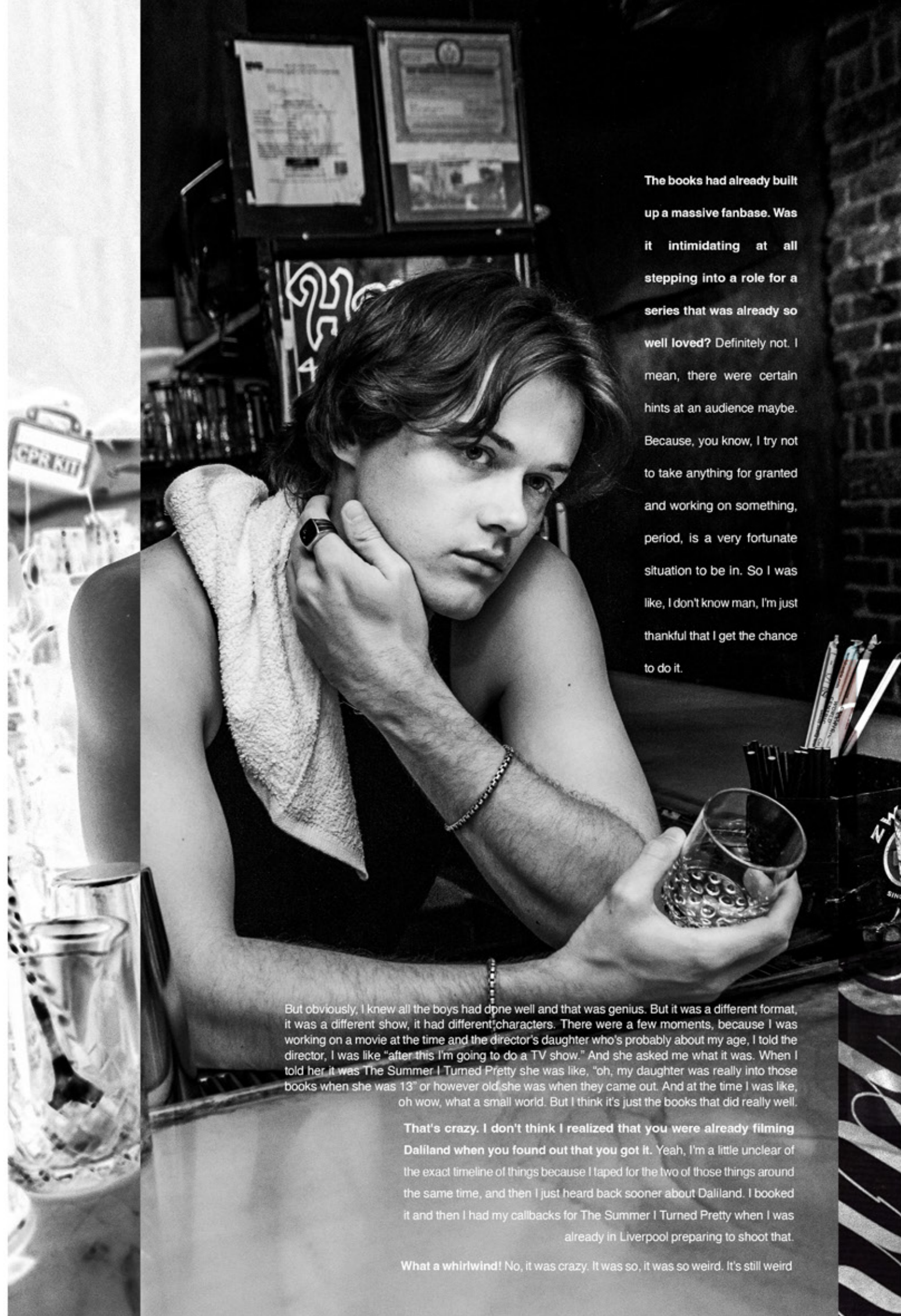


Going back a little bit – do you remember what it was that initially drew you to audition for Conrad? Well, I love having a job and I didn't have a job at the time. I mean, it was always pretty clear from even the first tape, because I don't think they sent us the episodes. They just sent us a few of the scenes at first, if I'm not mistaken. But even just in reading the scenes, at least I could say, I really felt like this character was going through something. And as an actor, I think that's just sort of what excites me most about any character is are they dealing with something? Are they struggling? Are they complicated? And it was pretty clear even from like the two or three scenes that I did that, he was definitely going through something and I was like, "this is great man— this is a great audition." And it was straight to series and that's something that I'll have to worry about, which is really cool and rare.

Had you read the books prior to auditioning? No, I hadn't read them prior to auditioning. As soon as I found out I booked it, I ordered all three and then when I got home, I probably read them all in the span of maybe a week or so because you can just breeze through them. They're great.

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The books had already built up a massive fanbase. Was it intimidating at all stepping into a role for a series that was already so well loved? Definitely not. I mean, there were certain hints at an audience maybe. Because, you know, I try not to take anything for granted and working on something, period, is a very fortunate situation to be in. So I was like, I don't know man, I'm just thankful that I get the chance to do it.

But obviously, I knew all the boys had done well and that was genius. But it was a different format, it was a different show, it had different characters. There were a few moments, because I was working on a movie at the time and the director's daughter who's probably about my age, I told the director, I was like "after this I'm going to do a TV show." And she asked me what it was. When I told her it was *The Summer I Turned Pretty* she was like, "oh, my daughter was really into those books when she was 13" or however old she was when they came out. And at the time I was like, oh wow, what a small world. But I think it's just the books that did really well.

That's crazy. I don't think I realized that you were already filming *Daliland* when you found out that you got it. Yeah, I'm a little unclear of the exact timeline of things because I taped for the two of those things around the same time, and then I just heard back sooner about *Daliland*. I booked it and then I had my callbacks for *The Summer I Turned Pretty* when I was already in Liverpool preparing to shoot that.

What a whirlwind! No, it was crazy. It was so, it was so weird. It's still weird



I'm sure. Especially for a newer actor taking on multiple really big projects at once. After you realized that the books did have some sort of an audience, was it intimidating at all stepping into a role for a series that had preconceived notions, or that was already so well loved? Definitely. It was kind of terrifying. One of the immediate feelings I got because working in *Daliland*, I can't speak to every indie movie, but that one I can speak to, it sort of felt like we were working in a vacuum and we were making the movie exactly as we wanted to make it. And then stepping into a series like that there are a lot of opinions and preconceived notions about these characters and, you know, the first casting announcement, everybody's just roasting us on Twitter. Like, "who are these people, this is not my Conrad,"-- comments like that. Which I was like, "wow, that hurts." But in retrospect it's kind of funny, but I also encourage people to have their opinions about it. If they don't like Conrad, that's fine. But it was scary.

I feel like that's a pretty common thing when there are movie and TV adaptation announcements for books. I mean, the same thing happened with the *Harry Potter* cast. Yeah, of course. I think what helped me come to terms with other people's opinions about that was reminding myself that it's all just words on a page and no two people are the same, so they're never going to be picturing the same person or the same tone or the same way someone says something. It's just impossible. And that's sort of the beauty of books is that it's an author's story, but it's also kind of your own, like in your head it's sort of your own story. And then that's very different when it becomes a TV show or a movie.

That's so true. I also feel like it was really interesting and special that Jenny selected relatively unknown and newer actors to portray the characters and it ended up working out so beautifully. Yeah, I was stoked about that. I feel like most of the time when you like a project, that goes to Austin Butler or something. But no, I'm very grateful that she likes to work with lesser known actors.

Right! And in a way, it really helped launch a lot of your careers, whereas it usually takes young actors many years to land a role in a series as successful as this one. Yeah, we've been so lucky. And I'm sure a lot of it comes down to like people not having preconceived notions about us the first time they see us as these characters, and I'm sure that helps a lot.

I know sometimes actors get frustrated when their characters do something that they wouldn't do, or get irritated at some of the choices and mistakes they make. When you were reading the script in season 1, how did you learn to embrace his mistakes and take on that role? Or do you find yourself defending him and the choices he makes? Well, there's a little bit of both, I'd say. I mean, it's a good question. I think that journey for me sort of started when I read the books because I finished the books before I got any script. And I was like, "wow, this dude is trouble." I mean, he is putting his baggage on other people and that's something that as myself, I try really hard not to do. I try to not burden other people with my shit unless I think maybe we can both benefit or whatever. So I tried to start forgiving him then and understanding him then. And by the time I got the scripts, I don't know, I can be aware that sometimes he does things that are maybe not the healthiest but I always defend someone like that as just a person who's growing up, a person who's learning how to walk through this world, because you don't come out of the womb with the tools to deal with real problems and the curve balls that life throws at you. No one's really prepared for the life they're about to live. So it's a pretty easy way to defend it.

Tank Calvin Klein
Necklace Vitally
Bracelets+Ring David Yurman

So true, I feel like with everything he's gone through, he is almost a little misunderstood. Yeah, I would say he is. And I think it's also a thing where like, it's really easy to write someone off when they're acting funny because you don't have to understand them. No one is expecting you to put the pieces together and be like, oh, he's acting like this because he's upset and he doesn't know how to handle his emotions. I mean, it's not always the jump that people make to conclusions.

Do you and Conrad have any similarities? Yeah, of course. I think in some ways, we're both products of the same world that doesn't encourage boys at a young age to sort of feel and express their emotions. I think that's a pretty common experience. I mean, I've talked to friends and things about that and it's weird because like I was raised in a very warm and emotionally vulnerable household with a father who is always encouraging me to like, feel emotions and cry if I need to cry and share your life. But then for some reason like society or playing too much baseball or for whatever reason, I still fell into those traps when I was younger. So there's a lot of Conrad that I think I've lived through.

Throughout the series, Conrad is definitely trying to come to a place where he is comfortable living in his emotions. And he definitely has a lot of emotional scenes. As an actor, how do you prepare for a heavy scene or shoot day? I mean it depends. It depends on how accessible, if you will, the scene itself is. If it feels like something that material wise is familiar to you, it can be easier to sort of grasp and get into because I think that's a big part of the struggle is just like understanding the scene and being able to sort of craft it from your own understanding and then do enough of that that you don't have to think about it on the day. But it depends—like sometimes, I'll get really in my head about scenes and I'll listen to music to try and calm me down, or help me drop in or I'll talk to people on set. I would spend a lot of time just talking to Sean—like “dude, I'm having so much trouble with this scene today.” And he's like, “you're good bro, you got this.” And it helps to have people around who you trust.

It's great to be close with the people you're working with—I'm sure a lot of those days can take an emotional toll on you. Yeah, definitely. I mean you're doing a lot of takes of these scenes sometimes, and sometimes you're like doing half of the scene from one angle and then you wait an hour and do it from a different angle the rest of the scene. So it's not always even the complete scene.

What are some things that you do after a heavy shoot day as a form of self care? I mean, I love driving home from set after a long work day. That's something that's really nice. I can just listen to music—and there's like one location we shot at that is like a 45 minute drive or so from where we're usually shooting. And so I've always enjoyed that drive to just have some time to like to listen to music that you want to listen to and stuff that you don't need to like to use to get into character and just sort of let it go. And then Sean and I just play a lot of video games, so we just get our anger out that way whenever we get back.

I feel like drives are such a great form of therapy after a long day. It's been like a motif of my life, just like driving, which I enjoy.

I read in a recent interview that you have social anxiety—I feel like it's such a common thing now, especially spending formative years in a worldwide lockdown during the pandemic. Has your recent and very quick rise in exposure been challenging? Yeah, it has been challenging because I don't ever want people to think that I'm ungrateful for the fact that this show has found an audience and it's given me a job and opportunities and I'm grateful for the fan base for watching it and caring so much.

But also I know it's important to protect Chris and sometimes being like, “they, he doesn't really want to interact with strangers today because that's kind of hard for him sometimes.” So being comfortable with telling myself, “you know, you can hide today, you can take care of yourself and be around the people you know today.” But it's been hard to defend that sometimes because I'm like, well people care and that's a beautiful thing but you just always have to take care of yourself, I think.

Exactly. Especially in today's culture with social media, it's difficult to make sure your space as a human being is protected, and I can imagine that would be a hard thing to balance. Is there anything that helps you break through the anxiety at all? Just from our brief chat so far I can tell you're a big music guy, and I know music helps a lot of people. Yeah, I mean, I will say most of the time when I'm walking down the street, I have a hat and my headphones on and my head's down and I'm just sort of trying to exist in my own world if I can. So it just sort of helps to feel like I have my own world but, I put a lot of trust in my friends and the people I love. I spend as much time as I can with them because that matters to me on a different level. That's something that I take very seriously, you know, just having people like that in my life.

Definitely! Speaking of music—I love it when actors create playlists for their characters. Do you have a playlist for Conrad? Yeah, it is. I'm not going to say extensive, I think that's over exaggerating, but I had a pretty decently sized one for the first season and the one for the second season is very small. It's like five songs. But we spent like four or five months last or two summers ago with these characters, and then that's a lot of time to spend with a character. I think you'd do a lot of just discovering and getting used to what wearing the character feels like, if you will. So I think for a lot of the first season was like songs that would help me find the character and find what I saw the tone as. And so there's just less of that to do work-wise coming back to a character. But going into a season that the tone is very different and you know, they are different characters in some ways, they've experienced more. So I had a few songs that for some scenes, in some moments would just help me settle the sort of like, wait, he's different than I remember, he's grown and he's changed.

Can you share some of the songs that were on it?

Yeah, I can. Let me pull it up real quick... I don't listen to them in my free time, you know. Well some of the songs I do because they're songs that I like. I don't think I'd put on songs that I don't like to playlist... What do I have? I have the Sonic Youth cover of “Superstar.” I have Pavement on here. I have The Breeders “Mad Lucas.” On the other side, The Strokes, and then “Look On Down from the Bridge” by Mazzy Star, and that's all I have on my playlist!

In a way, that all kind of makes sense. Yeah, I try to pick things that feel of the world to me, you know? Like what my version and Conrad's version of the world is.

Would you say you and Conrad have similar music tastes? I think in some ways, yeah. I mean I don't really listen to Pearl Jam and I know that's sort of a big thing in the show, that he loves Pearl Jam. But I think there's some overlap and again, especially for the first season, I tried to pick only songs that I felt like he and I would both listen to, just as sort of maybe an exercise of trying to understand the character. But there's a lot of overlap there because I'm selfish and I'm like, “well he would definitely listen to this.”



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watch Omega
glasses Burberry

Well and you're the first person that's ever portrayed him as a character, so I'm sure you know him best! Yes, so I have to be right!

Diving into season 2 a little bit – there's a lot to unpack, but I want to avoid spoilers. How would you say Conrad has grown since season 1? Well, he's experienced a very large loss that was maybe imminent last season. But it's very different for something to be on the horizon than to be past that same horizon, and I don't think any prep work can prepare you for that sort of thing. So when you see him at least in the present day, he is grappling with that, you know? It's still in the span of a year from losing his mom. And I don't think that's something one maybe ever gets over or ever comes to terms with certainly not in that short time of one's life. So he is just going through things that he doesn't know what he's doing yet. He doesn't know how to handle them properly.

Do you think you've grown with him, as an actor? Yeah, I do. I think I've also just grown as an actor working around the other people there. I feel lucky to be a part of a very talented group of young actors and older of course, but I spend so much time with the younger ones. And they all enjoy it so we're always talking about these scenes and what's working for us and what's not working for us and we can have constructive conversations about trying to help each other and about trying to be better actors.

Rachel Brinley

This series beautifully touches on a lot of very important and relatable subjects – from mental health and loss to love and heartbreak. How does it feel to be a part of something that tells those stories? It feels great. I don't think I'd want to do something that didn't address humanity, to speak broadly. I think it's important, especially for a show about young adults, to speak to a realistic young adult experience. And I would argue that the show does that and so I'm very grateful that it's one that does. It's one that addresses those things as opposed to making maybe teenage life seem idealized and perfect and always fun and problem-less.

In your career, you've already started building yourself quite the diverse resume. From *The Summer I Turned Pretty* to *Daliland* to *Mean Girls*. Is there a type of project that you haven't worked on yet, but would like to? Definitely. I always want to do something different. I don't really ever want to repeat myself if I'm lucky enough to have a career like that. And there's so many really interesting cool directors out there that I would love to work with, and probably a lot of really interesting directors that I haven't heard of that I would love to work with. So I feel like often when I think of things I want to do, I just want to work with people who care about art and making something cool and personal and artistic integrity and all that.

What's next for you? How do you plan on filling the rest of this year? Well, I don't really know what's next. I don't have anything lined up. It's hard to line things up with the writer's strike, but I'm going to try and take the time to just spend time with the people that I have around me and the people in my life that I really care about. I'd love to get away on vacation. That would be sick if I can find the time. I'll probably go golfing with Sean a few times. I'll try to enjoy summer in New York because that's something I haven't been able to do in quite a few years.

Well you've had a busy last couple of years, so I would say that's well deserved!

Thank you! I appreciate that.

Season 2 episodes of *The Summer I Turned Pretty* is now streaming weekly on Prime Video.

Interview Rachel Martin
Photographer Devin Kasparian
Stylist Laura Spriet
Groomer Melissa DeZarate
BTS Video Mallory Turner