

INTERVIEW » ELISHA CUTHBERT

A shocking lack of dirty laundry

The Canadian film and television actor – Jack Bauer's daughter on *24* and star of the controversial horror flick *Captivity* – is having a great time, despite the dearth of juicy gossip about her



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THE Q&A

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Like Coca-Cola, the poor or the Senate, starlets will always be with us. Some of them even deserve the devotion they inspire.

Take, for instance, Calgary's own Elisha Cuthbert – film and television star since the tender age of 14 and all-purpose blond goddess for life.

After her first big gig – as one of the perky hostesses of *Popular Mechanics For Kids* – Cuthbert has not stopped to smell the lip gloss. When not filming raunchy comedies such as *Old School*, acting as Jack Bauer's perennially imperilled daughter on *24*, or starring in this summer's controversial horror flick *Captivity*, Ms. Cuthbert graciously takes time to grace many lad-mag Top Hotties lists.

And yet, true to her good Canadian roots, Ms. Cuthbert remains a down-to-earth, concerned-citizen sort. Her latest project, currently being filmed in Toronto, is *Guns* – an earnest CBC television film about the socio-economic roots of Toronto's gun violence epidemic. Wholesome is as wholesome does.

Actresses gone wild are all the rage, but I can't find a single bit of gossip about you – aren't you having any fun?
I'm having a great time. I just think all that other stuff is a lot of work also. It may seem like a lot of fun, but I think it's an extremely stressful and intense way to live. I'm having a great time staying under the radar and out of that mess.

You are a proud daughter of Alberta. Will you be disowned for doing a gun-control movie?

Um, probably not. It's funny, I was born there, but grew up in Montreal, and feel like Montreal is where I became me. I haven't been to Calgary in a long time.



Elisha Cuthbert remains a down-to-earth, concerned-citizen sort. DAN STEINBERG/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Are you playing the Jane Creba part in *Guns*?

No, we do have someone similar in the film, but it's not my character. My character is basically in love with a character who's on the bad side of the gun situation and finds herself caught up in it and gets in a lot of trouble.

Are you the next person to die on *24*?

Well, I've been "on and off," as I like to call it, but I don't think just because I'm off now that it means I'm not going to be back on later. I haven't been killed yet.

The film industry can run smoothly, or things can go haywire, and you just have to go with it. My job starts and finishes on set, and I don't have control afterwards.

Elisha Cuthbert

You did 72 episodes of *24* – that's a lot of quivering and quaking.

I tried to create a girl who just reacted to whatever was being brought to her at the time. I never really thought, Oh, how am I going to play this, "scared" or "traumatic"? I just wanted it to be as real as possible. And it was great training. It paved the way for *House of Wax* and *Captivity*.

Speaking of *House of Wax*, I truly believe that your co-star, Paris Hilton, could have a decent acting career if she put her mind to it.

Oh, yeah. I think if she works hard enough, definitely. And she's doing that. There's definitely something about her that's undeniable. There's something in her that is definitely interesting, and has obviously gotten a lot of people's attention. I'm starting to become quite good

friends with her, and a lot of people give me a hard time about that. But if they met her, they'd think a lot differently about her. I said to Joel Silver, the producer, that I was going to go in and try to make *House Of Wax* real and believable and authentic, and I kind of became team captain of all us young actors.

You started in children's television. How did you break out of the child-actor ghetto?

I guess I was lucky enough to do smart child stuff. *Popular Mechanics For Kids* was highly educational and classy. I figure it's that – but I never worried about it, I just kept going.

Did you expect *Captivity* to be controversial?

I was a little stunned by it. Some of it helped the movie and some of it didn't. The film industry can run smoothly, or things can go haywire, and you just have to go with it. My job starts and finishes on set, and I don't have control afterwards.

I can't see how *Captivity* is any more horrifying than the *Saw* or *Hostel* movies.

Right, but there was a lot of hype over it being "torture porn" and all these ridiculous things. I couldn't believe it, because I felt that that hype wasn't about the movie we were setting out to make. But that's movie-making.

Here's two things I did find out about you: You were a foot model and you did print ads for a chain of laundries in Guatemala.

Yeah, I was six years old when I was a foot model. God only knows how I got into that. But what are you talking about, in Guatemala? I've never heard of that in my life.

It's on your IMDB.com bio.

I better investigate! I completely deny that. You see, you found some gossip.

Seeing Will Ferrell naked in *Old School* – life-affirming or life-scarring?

Hmmm. Well, he did have a sock on. So, maybe life-scarring.