



# HE'S THAT MOVIE GUY...

But **Marc Fennell** also dresses like a bear, works with an alien and tells Matt Myers why it took him eight takes to kiss a man (hint: it had to be perfect!)

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**DNA:** As a movie critic, what is your all-time favourite film?

**Marc Fennell:** I don't have one! I think it's like fashion where you pick and choose different things for different times of the year. There are, however, some films I return to and one is *Donnie Darko*. Every time I watch it I think it's about something else. It could be about mental illness, or even time travel. Each time it offers something new. That's rare.

**What about LGBTI films?** Two that stick out for me are *Mysterious Skin*, which is a very dark, sensual and beautiful film with Joseph Gordon-Levitt. The other film I have adored from the very first scene is *Hedwig And The Angry Inch*. It's my favourite musical. It's joyous, trashy and camp and it has a punk energy that most musicals don't have.

**On *The Feed* [current affairs program] you've interviewed the likes of Hugh Jackman, Eddie Redmayne and Channing Tatum. But you really hit it off with Chris Pratt!** A lot of the time when I interview big actors, they can seem quite bored because they've travelled a long way, or they're via satellite or whatever. But Chris is new to his fame and quite grateful. He was charming and funny, and I think that humility is very attractive in any gender. And let's be honest, he's a very good-looking dude!

**On that note, is there anyone you'd turn for?** I interviewed Zac Efron, and if you told me beforehand that he was a good-looking dude, I would have said yeah I get that. But I remember sitting opposite him thinking, "Your eyes are really pretty!" I actually found Zac Efron to be distractingly good-looking.

**Hollywood seems to think that casting openly gay actors in straight roles won't gel with audiences. Do you think that's changing?** Yes, because it's complete bullshit. It drives me up the wall that these kinds of things persist. Matt Bomer and Neil Patrick Harris easily take on both types of roles. Sexuality shouldn't come into play with how you are typecast, and limiting an actor's creativity based on a preconception of their sexuality infuriates me.

**On *The Feed* you and producer Chris Leben**



Left: Marc at Mardi Gras. "It's weeks before I stop finding glitter in my body crevices!"  
 Right: Marc's gay kiss... once more with feeling.

**shared a kiss to prove it's no big deal. Was that the first time you'd kissed a man?**

[Laughs] I don't kiss and tell, but I do kiss with a camera in front of me! I should say it was the eighth take. I think Chris was determined to get it right. I did get criticised by some saying I was too rough, but try doing it eight times in a row and aiming for perfection! You try and keep up the energy and passion and well... maybe you go a bit overboard! To be honest, a same-sex kiss like that should be a part of our main popular culture consumption.

**You interviewed Harrison Ford for *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*. What was it like conversing with Han Solo?** Harrison Ford is the living embodiment of the phrase "zero fucks given". He's respectful and pleasant but also super-chilled. He doesn't feel any great need to impress. He knows he's Harrison Ford and that people will just go with that. The key to interviewing someone like him is to follow the path he wants to go down. Some say he's difficult but I found him really chilled. I don't know if Calista Flockhart has him on some Ally McBeal diet, but he's also in super shape.

**You said your favourite interview of 2015 was with *Star Trek's* George Takei.** Oh he's got an amazing story and his emotions live very close to the surface. His family were American Japanese immigrants and during WWII they were put into internment camps. They were American citizens but stripped of their rights. It stuck with him and you can see the disempowerment on his face. He also knew he was gay from a young age and while on television in the '60s, he lived in fear in the closet. It's heartbreaking and nobody should have to live that way. But his decision to come out late in life was all about fighting Proposition 8. He turned his coming out into a form of activism and used the tool of celebrity for all the right

reasons. He's such a pleasure to talk to; in fact, he's infectious to be around.

**You've also had traction on social media with #MarcFennellOutfits. Those checkered lumbersexual shirts would make you a great bear!** But I don't have any dress sense! That's what I don't get. Actually, quite a few of my gay followers are bears, and furry, too.

**By your own admission you have a huge fan base of teenage girls and gay men. Why do you think that is?** I don't know if it's that huge. I'm not like Kylie. In fact, I'm only taller than her by about four inches. I don't know why I'm attractive to people, but I'm just very grateful. Gay men have a reputation for being fun and playful and the messages I get on social media I just adore.

**Do you ever get hit on?** Occasionally. A couple of years back I was at a London gay club with my girlfriend at the time, now my wife, and Tom Ballard. The only one who got hit on was me! It was lovely and really sweet, but also very unusual!

**Gay men also love your co-presenter, Lee Lin Chin. Can you please confirm that she is as fabulous as we think?** She's one of life's really fascinating and unique people. She's the one who nicknamed me "that movie guy". Lee Lin sees the world differently. She only drinks beer from a wine glass, she doesn't own a mobile phone or believe in the internet. Talking to her is the closest you can get to talking to an alien and I don't mean that in a bad way. She knows wonderful stuff and is a great conversationalist. I think the world of her.

**Has anyone ever come out to you?** Yes, a few friends in high school. I went to a few obnoxious private boys schools. They were ridden with an awful macho culture and homophobia. It was such a crushing environment and you can imagine how it was for those coming to terms with their sexuality. It was in these schools where my friends

came out to me. I was happy to see them years later at Mardi Gras!

**Speaking of, what's it like marching with the SBS crew at Mardi Gras?** It's an amazing thing to be a part of. There's such a brilliant diversity in the LGBTI community and I love meeting people in the marshaling area, and talking about what the Parade means to them. Afterwards, I marvel at the sheer number of weeks it takes before I stop finding glitter in my body crevices!

**Who's your diva?** I'm a massive fan of Adele. I think she's a legend, and that voice takes no prisoners. She's certainly on my list of people to interview. I love her singing *When We Were Young* and *Hometown Glory* from her first album. Beautiful!

**How did the death of the legendary David Bowie affect you?** I'm a massive Bowie fan and I think part of the reason his death was so shocking was because no one expected it. But people who love Bowie also hold him close to their hearts. So much of his music was about being an outsider and that really speaks to people. He was someone who could describe the joy, pain and fun of existing on the fringe. To me his music is identity-defining, like sort of fortifying yourself against what the rest of the world is doing.

**You recently released the book, *Planet According To The Movies*. How does it differ to your *That Movie Book*?** It's similar except that each chapter takes you to a different country. It's designed in a way where you can construct your own little film festival in your lounge room, and it's themed on looking at counterculturalism around the world. There are films there that you wouldn't have seen before. The idea is that you're travelling the world via a movie!

**You've really shaped up your body. How did you achieve those biceps?** I'm bad at playing sport, but I love lifting heavy things. For me it's 'me-time' and in the middle of the night when the family is asleep, I'll go to the gym. I was overweight as a kid and that also mentality sticks with me, but I have always loved lifting heavy things. It clarifies my brain.

**What's more comfortable: jocks, fitted boxers or hanging loose?** Fitted boxers. You have to pack that shit in! You've just gotta hold it together. You don't want that floating around. Not in these days of skinny jeans and tailored pants.

**Hmm... we're getting back to the heavy things, aren't we!** [Laughs] We are. We are indeed!

**MORE:** The Feed airs Monday to Thursday at 7.30pm on SBS2.