



MAD LOVE

PHOTOGRAPHER TOM ALLEN
FASHION EDITOR ANTHONY UNWIN
WORDS MATT MUELLER

JOSH WEARS
HOODED ROBE BY MISSONI

K I S S I N G

I N T H E P A R K .

G E T T I N G S T O N E D T O A T R I B E

C A L L E D Q U E S T . A N D C O O L I N G

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Y O U N G S T A R S ...

JOSH PECK

At eight years old, he was doing stand-up. At 10, he was performing in New York's top comedy clubs. And at 17, he landed his own kid-com on the Nickelodeon channel, *Drake & Josh*. Josh Peck is either incredibly talented or incredibly lucky. Or both. Born in Hell's Kitchen to a Jewish life-coach mother ("I never met my father"), the 21-year-old was riddled with asthma as a child and spent his time holed up indoors watching sitcoms. He was a popular target for neighbourhood bullies. "I had this high, nine-year-old-girl voice going for me well into my late teens," says Peck. "It was touch and go there for a while."

Trying to make cynical New Yorkers laugh rescued Peck from his childhood tormentors and turned him into a showbiz tyke who stalked bosses at Nickelodeon until they gave him his first acting job. He was also able to turn his experiences into screen gold in both 2004's *Mean Creek* – for which he won raves playing a pudgy bully who suffers a wretched comeuppance – and this year's Sundance pack-leader *The Wackness*.

Jonathan Levine's portrait of teen angst and infatuation is filtered through Peck's depressive, hip-hop-obsessed outcast Luke Shapiro. Luke barter weed in return for therapy with a pot-smoking shrink (Ben Kingsley) and falls in love with the shrink's stepdaughter (Olivia Thirlby). "People say to me, 'You're a pretty cool guy and Luke is kind of a loser', but I think Luke is far cooler than I'll ever be," says the affable and quick-to-self-deprecate actor, who spent two years trying to shed puppy fat from his six-foot frame with a mix of karate, yoga and leafy greens.

"I DON'T KNOW when I've enjoyed a meal in years," moans Peck, only half-joking. The trimmed-down funny-man felt bold enough to strip off for a sex scene with the pert Thirlby. "Oh man, I was petrified," he groans, admitting that he found his *Wackness* co-star "dreamy but unattainable, in real life and as the character". As for their screen coitus, "I basically did 150 push-ups, dropped the robe and went with God."

STILL TIED TO NICKELODEON ("Look at it this way – I don't have to be a waiter"), Peck is craving further serious film roles to help him transcend teen stardom. He has Steve Coogan-starrer *Safety Glass*, about the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster, coming soon, and is trawling through a stack of scripts "trying to find something that's going to be the next step on the ladder to I have no fucking idea where. Hopefully to some kind of happiness. And if it's the ladder to the Carnegie Deli in New York, I'll take that too."

OLIVIA THIRLBY

Olivia Thirlby has had a hell of a three years. From doomed passenger in *United 93* to the quirky, quipping best friend in indie juggernaut *Juno* to *The Wackness*, it's been a charmed introduction to the big time. But the 21-year-old has also learned that success has its price. Post-*Juno*, she and real-life chum Ellen Page have had to forsake their "passion project" *Jack And Diane*, which they planned to star in "long before *Juno*" as two girls who begin a torrid affair only for one to think she might be a werewolf.

"THE TIME FOR that movie might have passed," laments Thirlby earnestly. "It's just not the right time for either of us to go make this bizarre, experimental narrative. The films that I choose now are gonna influence the rest of my career... Or at least that's what the people in charge lead you to believe."

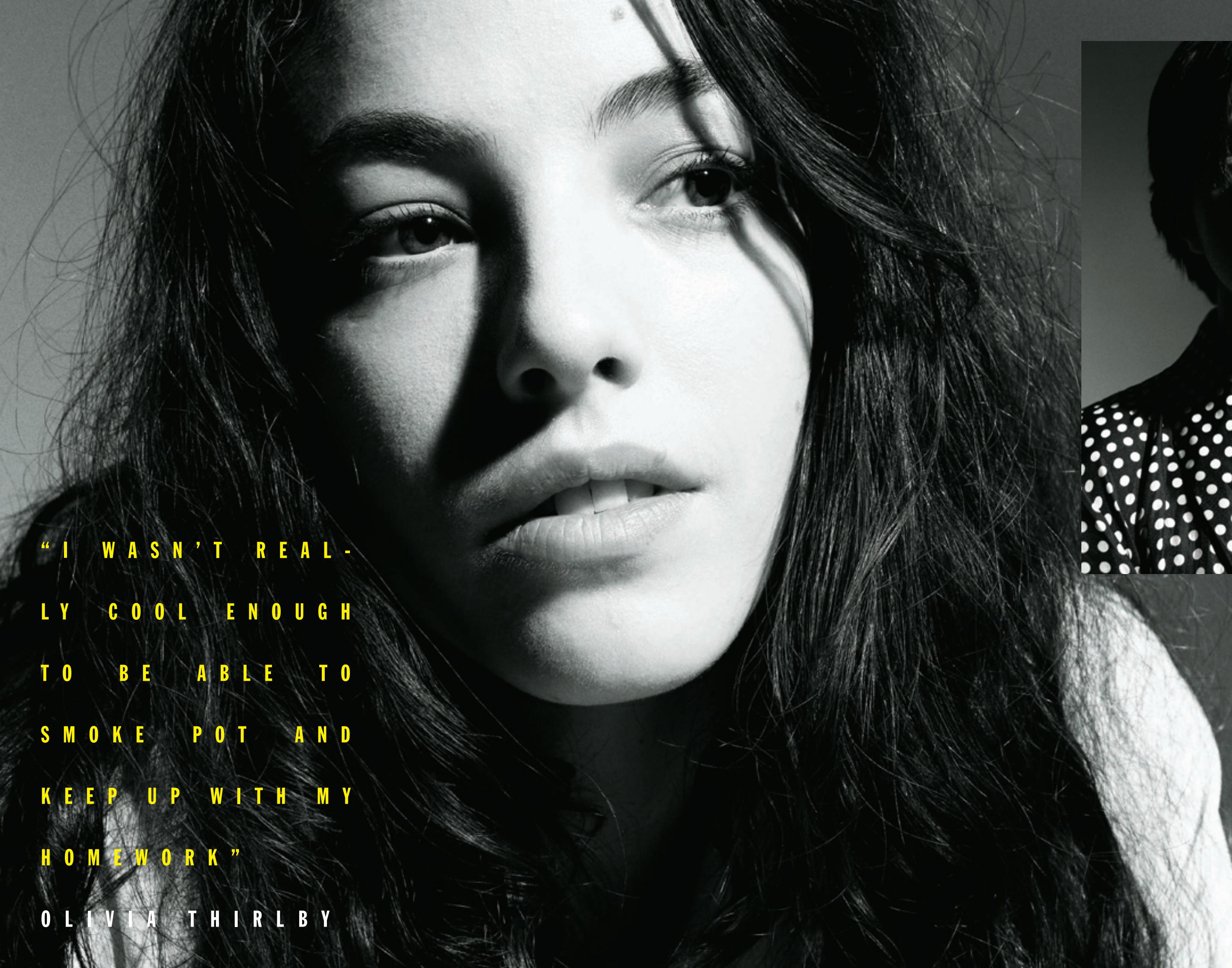
Juno's Oscar nods and box-office glory separated Thirlby from the bleating herd – "I'm suddenly a viable option," she says wryly – but it's *The Wackness* that gives full rein to her edgy talents. She's cast in the "heartbreaker" role of Stephanie, foxy stepdaughter to Ben Kingsley's psychiatrist and the summer obsession for schleppey teen dealer Luke (Peck).

Like her *Wackness* character, Thirlby is a New York native and an only child who attended private school; unlike Stephanie, rigorous academic studies came before fun. "I wasn't really cool enough to be able to smoke pot *and* keep up with my homework," she laughs. "I had to make a choice." Acting came in her late teens with one commercial and her feature debut at 18 in *The Secret*, as David Duchovny's possessed daughter.

Long of limb, lash and hair, Thirlby is vaguely gawky in her appeal. But the Bambi effect is surface only. She is not remotely timid when it comes to fielding personal questions: she pauses before so-sweetly saying, "I'd rather not answer that." Things she'll reveal: she loves hiking and fried chicken. Things she won't: what her parents do for a living.

SHE'D BETTER GET used to our curiosity. With *The Wackness* and a string of upcoming outings including *Uncertainty* with Joseph Gordon-Levitt, she's fast shaping up to be the next off-beat It-girl. But Thirlby isn't thirsting for fame in the least. "I like rolling out of bed and not caring about how my face looks when I go out for breakfast in sweatpants," she insists. "Losing your anonymity can be so jarring and awful – I'm in no rush to have that happen to me."

THE WACKNESS IS RELEASED ON AUGUST 29



“ I W A S N ’ T R E A L -
L Y C O O L E N O U G H
T O B E A B L E T O
S M O K E P O T A N D
K E E P U P W I T H M Y
H O M E W O R K ”

O L I V I A T H I R L B Y



JOSH WEARS
SILK POLKA DOT GOWN
BY RICHARD JAMES

OLIVIA WEARS
SILK PYJAMA SET BY
NICOLE FARHI

JOSH WEARS
STRIPED PYJAMA SET
AND DRESSING GOWN
BY DEREK ROSE



OLIVIA WEARS
SILK PYJAMA SET
BY PAUL SMITH

HAIR
BEN SKERVIN AT MAGNET NY
USING BUMBLE & BUMBLE

MAKE-UP
YUKA WASHIZU AT MAGNET
NY FOR DIOR BEAUTY

GROOMING
LISA-RAQUEL AT SEE
MANAGEMENT FOR CUTLER
NYC/REDKEN

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CELINA SINDEN AND
AUTUMN FURR

SPECIAL THANKS
GRETCHEN AND MIKE AT
PIER 59 STUDIOS



“ I D O N ’ T K N O W W H E N
I ’ V E E N J O Y E D A M E A L
I N Y E A R S ”

J O S H P E C K