

by GIL MACIAS

HYDE AND SEEK

Hunter Doohan opens up about playing *Wednesday*'s psychotic heartthrob and seeking the perfect queer role

It's been a wild three years for Hunter Doohan. The actor, now 31, scored his first speaking part on *Westworld* in 2018. He followed with breakthrough roles in Apple TV+'s *Truth Be Told* and Showtime's *Your Honor*. But it was Netflix's *Wednesday* that catapulted him to star status after the first season's release in 2022. Tim Burton's *Addams Family* spin-off was a commercial hit for the streaming giant as well as a viral sensation; Jenna Ortega's Fosse-inspired school dance number, with Doohan as her awestruck date, became ubiquitous on social media and a milestone moment in pop culture.

"I had done *Your Honor*, and I kind of thought that was the level of things," Doohan says of his spike in popularity. "And then *Wednesday* came out, and it truly was just like overnight. It felt like the level of exposure had changed. It's a weird thing to try to get used to. I don't know if I'm there yet, but it's been fun."

Many big things have happened for Doohan since *Wednesday* put him in the spotlight. Not only did he marry his husband just a month after the show premiered (the wedding was officiated by his *Your Honor* costar Bryan Cranston), but he has also landed a wide range of roles, including the sadistic big bad of *Daredevil: Born Again*, a serial killer named Muse. He also recently signed on to play a lead role in the next installment of the beloved *Evil Dead* franchise.

But next up, he's making his eagerly anticipated return to the creepy, kooky, mysterious, and spooky world of *Wednesday*, which returned for its second season August 6. In it, Doohan reprises his role as Tyler Galpin, the love interest of Wednesday Addams (Ortega). Well, maybe not so much a love interest anymore. As fans may recall, Tyler was not the sweet "normie" next door we thought he was. In the penultimate episode of season 1, he was revealed to be a Hyde — an unhinged, bulgy-eyed creature whose species was banned from Nevermore Academy. After his murderous antics were put to an end, a defeated Tyler was last seen being hauled off to Willowhill Psychiatric Hospital. Even though Tyler had deceived Wednesday, Doohan teases that there could still be a complicated romance between the two.

"I think Tyler is flirting and trying to get under her skin," Doohan reveals while talking about Tyler's first pivotal scene with Wednesday, which comes in episode 2 of season 2. "I think he's been dreaming of her coming to see him. And I think he feels really hurt and abandoned by her when he thought she was the only one

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who wouldn’t do that to him. So he’s definitely full of rage and wanting revenge after that encounter.”

As for what twists and turns fans can expect this season, Doohan remains tight-lipped, but describes this season’s story as “bigger” and “complex” with “so many layers to it,” teasing that, for Tyler, “there’s something huge that people are not going to see coming. It’s a wild ride.”

When we first see Tyler this season, he’s imprisoned in a cell, shackled in chains with a shock collar around his neck. It’s very reminiscent of Hannibal Lecter in *The Silence of the Lambs*. Once again, Doohan gets to chew the scenery with that complex Tyler/Hyde duality, while drawing inspiration from some notable movie maniacs.

“I kind of just sat in my apartment chained up a lot,” he quips with a laugh. “Al [Gough] and Miles [Millar], our showrunners, were like, ‘This scene is so ‘Hello, Clarice.’ Even in season 1, when I did that turn in the police station, I was using [*The Silence of the Lambs*] as a touch point for me. Heath Ledger’s Joker is one of the greatest villain turns of all time, and then, like, Edward Norton in *Primal Fear* was one. Even *Scream*, like Billy Loomis — that switch — those were probably the four references that we would talk about.”

The same scene Doohan is discussing has his gay fan base in a tizzy. You see, Tyler is shirtless and in chains when *Wednesday* comes to see him, and there’s a promo photo floating around that has his admirers swooning.

“You read the script and it’s like, *Chained, shirtless, hmm* — there’s a layer of vanity. You want to look your best,” he explains when asked if he bulked up for this season. “But I tried to make sense of it too, because obviously, when Tyler turns into Hyde, is where he has his full strength and power, but we do establish he has some of his ability when he’s in his human form. There’s moments in the season where I throw somebody across a room just as Tyler. Can’t do that in real life, but wanted to try my best to look as capable as possible. I wanted him to feel feral and like a caged animal, a little bit.”

Doohan is aware that the thirst is real within his fan base. After all, his fans did get a good look at his physique when he shared his 2023 Calvin Klein underwear photos on his official Instagram. As for being seen as a sex symbol within the gay community and the flirtatious social media responses that come with it, he says, “It’s fun. Bring it on. Love it.”

So, what’s next for Doohan? The rising star says he plans to change it up a bit and steer away from those “juicy” villain roles. This fall, he’ll be seen in *The Wilderness*, which he calls a “very grounded real-life drama.” And of course, there’s the aforementioned *Evil Dead Burn*, where he plays a character he describes as “very different.”

“I’m just so excited to step into that world, and our director, Sébastien Vaniček, is amazing; his first film, *Infested*, was so sick!” exclaims Doohan, who is pumped about joining the long-running horror franchise. “He’s the perfect person to take the reins on this new one, *Evil Dead Burn*; it’s gonna be amazing.”

With *Wednesday*, *Daredevil: Born Again*, and the upcoming *Evil Dead Burn* on his résumé, Doohan is over the moon about being a part of three franchises that have such rich histories and passionate fan bases. He’s grateful for being offered a wide range of roles. Even though the characters he’s best known for aren’t explicitly queer, he’s certainly auditioned for some gay roles and hopes to one day land the right one.

“I’m out and a gay actor, and I feel really lucky that I’ve gotten to play a wide range of roles. I think I’m so lucky to be living in a time where that doesn’t feel as much of a limitation,” he shares. “I truthfully haven’t been offered a bunch of gay roles. And I would love to play a queer character, not for the sake of it being queer, but like a great character who is queer. I’ve auditioned for a bunch [*laughs*] — but haven’t gotten cast as them. But that’ll come and I’ll find a great script.”

“I’m just grateful for the queer actors before me and just queer people in general who have paved the way for me to be able to have this privilege of being able to play these characters,” he adds. “Jonathan Bailey is a huge inspiration for me. Look at the films and franchises he’s leading as a leading man, and that’s really inspiring.”

There is one other gig on Doohan’s wish list — and it’s not what you think. During the production of *Wednesday* season 1, Doohan binge-watched 14 seasons of *RuPaul’s Drag Race* and became a superfan. With his acting chops, gay heartthrob status, and a love for fashion (he attended Saint Laurent’s show June 24, during Paris Men’s Fashion Week), he’d certainly make a great guest judge or participant in an acting challenge, wouldn’t he?

“Listen, from your lips to Ru’s ears, let’s go,” he says. “That is literally a dream bucket list item for me. I definitely want to be there at some point.”