

Benedict Cumberbatch

He shot to stardom playing Sherlock Holmes, but lately he's all over the silver screen, including last summer's blockbuster 'Star Trek: Into Darkness,' portraying Julian Assange in 'The Fifth Estate,' and a starring turn in '12 Years a Slave.'

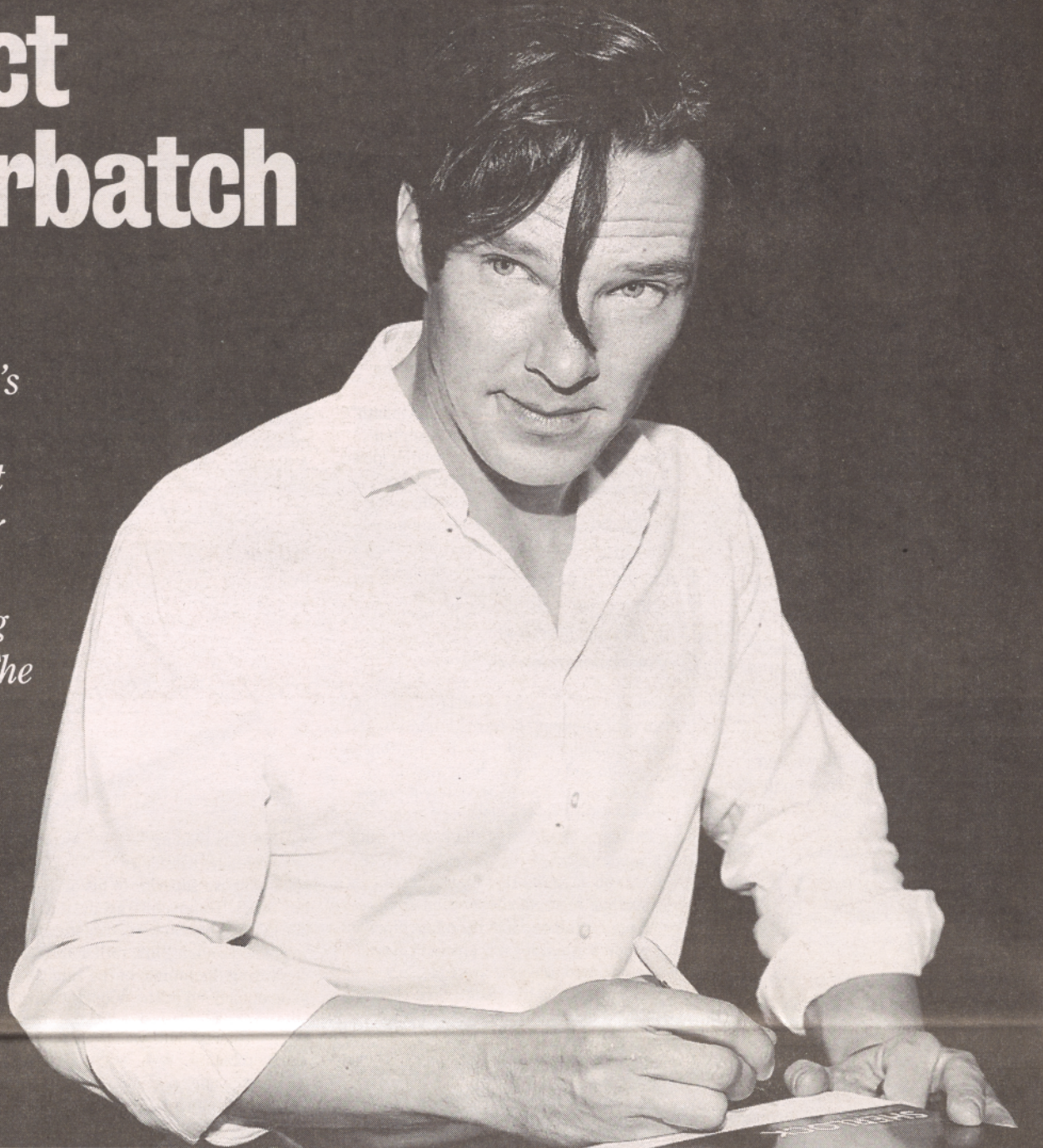


PHOTO BY STEPHANIE BERGER

BY ADRIAN LOBB
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Sherlock lives! And judging by viewing figures in excess of 10 million and Twitter going wild to the tune of 260,000 tweets per hour during the episode "The Empty Hearse" on New Year's Day, the return of Benedict Cumberbatch's lanky sociopathic detective will remain a highlight of 2014.

For the 37-year-old actor, it marks the start of a big, big year. At Charlotte Street Hotel in central London midway through filming the series finale, he looks more like a wealthy holidaymaker than one of the planet's busiest actors. He bounds in, wearing a crisp white T-shirt, smart blue shorts and blue cloth cap, singing and loosely dancing to the music coming out of a pair of massive headphones...

Adrian Lobb: *How are you today, Benedict?*

Benedict Cumberbatch: I'm actually feeling it a bit this morning. I've been doing

a hell of a lot of running recently. It's because I'm playing Alan Turing, who, as well as being an absolute genius, was a very good marathon runner. It's great, though. I love it. Yep, I'm playing yet another brainy guy.

A.L.: *And is this role stretching your mind as well as your body?*

B.C.: Yes, like you wouldn't believe! As well as running pretty much all the time, I'm carrying around the most ridiculous selection of books at the moment. But it's great, and I'm learning so much. I'm loving it. I hope the plates keep spinning, so that I can keep finding these interesting roles and carve out a little niche for myself in the film world. And, you know, keep the work varied. I would love to get back on the stage.

A.L.: *So Sherlock returned on New Year's Day. This season is about fleshing him out?*

B.C.: There is a lot more backstory. There are a lot more scenes where you

find out why he is the way he is. The first conversation I ever had with Steven Moffat about Sherlock was asking: "How did this happen?" His response was: "What do you mean, he's just brilliant." But someone isn't just brilliant, there is something that has happened. I didn't want Sherlock being

easily labeled as being either on the spectrum of Asperger's or autism.

The reality of those problems and difficulties is very different in each individual case. It would

have been lazy for us to just say: "Oh, that is what he is." So that is examined a lot more in this series. After two years away, he is rusty about human relationships, especially with his best friend and with London. And it takes time for him to get back on his game. Will

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"I know how lucky I am to be paid to be in a position to have a voice, do my work and also just the fact that it's really good fun. You owe society a little bit for that."

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