

Benjamin Bratt: The 'Snitch' Interview

Born in San Francisco on Dec. 16, 1963, Benjamin Bratt's career has successfully spanned movie and television for over 25 years. His impressive resume includes the critically acclaimed Piñero, in a powerful portrayal of poet-playwright-actor Miguel Piñero; Steven Soderbergh's Traffic; and The Woodsman, a festival and critical favorite starring Kevin Bacon.



CELEBRITY INTERVIEW

by Kam Williams

Kam Williams: Hi Benjamin. I'm honored to have a chance to interview you.

Benjamin Bratt: It's totally my pleasure, Kam.

KW: What interested you in Snitch?

BB: A few things, actually. I really liked the script. [Director] Ric Waugh happens to be an old friend of mine. We sort of came up together. His father, the great Fred Waugh, was the stunt coordinator on the first series I ever did, Nasty Boys. And Rick, believe it or not, was a kid who happened to be a great stuntman. It was a family business for him and his father and his brother. Since we became friends way back when, I didn't want to pass up the opportunity to come full circle working together again, but in an actor/director relationship. You might look at my part on the page and think, hmm, it's a little small, and maybe not worth flying to Shreveport three times for just a few days' worth of work. But the truth of the matter is I was excited to reconnect with him and also to play a part that certainly looms large over the story as a kind of ominous presence of danger, not unlike the role I played in Traffic.

KW: I have some questions for you from my readers. Larry Greenberg asks: When you play a hardcore bad guy like El Topo, is it a different mindset from when you play someone in law enforcement?

BB: One might think so, Larry but, surprisingly, the answer is "No." I think most law enforcement people would tell you that there's a very fine line between going one way or the other. On some level, as a career criminal, you're a soldier. And certainly a police officer also has that soldier's "us or them" mentality where the delineation between black and white is very clear. My brother-in-law happens to be a detective on the East Coast. Having played a man in uniform several times,

it's always been a fascination for me. And I've spent hours talking to him over the years about the mindset of someone on the force, and it's very clear. There's no gray area in law enforcement. Evil exists in the world and it must be dealt with. And those on the side of good can feel righteous in their approach to eliminating evil. There's no ambiguity there. So, in the case of someone like El Topo, it's not so much that he's evil, but that the director is very keen to point out that he's a man, a father, just as Dwayne Johnson's character is. He has a job to do. He's a businessman. Yes, he happens to sell drugs but, at the end of the day, he has to get the job done and take care of his family. I thought that was a unique take on this kind of villain. Although we don't get to spend much time with him, we get the sense that, yes, he's capable of a great deal of violence, and yet, he's just

Television audiences recognize Benjamin from his award-winning role of Detective Rey Curtis on NBC's long-running drama Law & Order. He also starred in A&E's miniseries The Andromeda Strain, based on the novel by Michael Crichton, which garnered seven Emmy nominations. Additionally, he served as series lead as well as producer on A&E's The Cleaner, for which he received an ALMA Award in 2009.

A veteran of dozens of films, Benjamin's other work includes The River Wild opposite Meryl Streep; Blood In, Blood Out with director Taylor Hackford; Clear and Present Danger with Harrison Ford; Abandon opposite Katie Holmes; The Great Raid; Miss Congeniality with Sandra Bullock; and the screen adaptation of Nobel Prize-winning author Gabriel Garcia Marquez's Love in the Time of



Benjamin Bratt

KW: When you look in the mirror, what do you see?

BB: I see a father, and a husband, and someone who is very content.

Cholera.

In La Mission, Benjamin re-teamed with his writer/director/producer brother, Peter Bratt, to star in and produce a story which recalls the culture, people and beliefs of their childhood in the Mission district of San Francisco. He and Peter joined with producer Alpita Patel to form 5 Stick Films, a production company geared towards film of conscience, to tell stories with passion, vision and personal reflection.

Benjamin is married to actress Talisa Soto Bratt. They live in Los Angeles with their two children, Mateo and Sophia. Here, he talks about his latest outing as El Topo in Snitch, an action thriller co-starring Dwayne Johnson, Susan Sarandon, Harold Perrineau and Barry Pepper.

taking care of business.

KW: Editor/legist Patricia Turnier would like to know: What message do you think people will take away from Snitch?

BB: I think the message that resonates most, and definitely the one that resonates with me and my wife as parents, is that there is no length that is too great to go to in order to protect your child. So, it's fascinating to see how Dwayne Johnson, who is a formidable, mountain of a man, is reduced to feeling powerless when his son is suddenly in danger. It's very compelling to watch the process of his coming to terms with what he has to do to get his boy released from jail.

KW: Kate Newell says: I love Benjamin Bratt! You've done such amazing work, but I'm going frivolous, here. Will your character, Javier Delgado, be returning to Modern Family?

BB: [Chuckles] Yeah, rest assured, Kate, he will be back. We don't have an air date yet, but I just filmed an

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SEATTLE 2013



If you have an event you want to share with the community, email it two weeks in advance to *The Skanner* at info@theskanner.com

Friday March 15

ST. PADDY'S DAY PARTY FOR KIDS. Join us for arts and crafts, cookie decorating and a lucky story. \$5 per child. 1 – 2:30 p.m. Loyal Heights Community Center, 2101 NW 77th St.

Saturday March 16

16TH ANNUAL DAFFODIL DAY! Students from the Pike Market Child care and Preschool will hand

out flowers from 11:30 a.m. – noon at the corner of 4th and Pine St. at Westlake Park For the 16th year, Pike Place Market brightens up corners of downtown Seattle.

COMMUNITY PORTRAIT DAY! Get inspired by Rembrandt, Van Dyck Gainsborough: The Treasure of Kenwood House London during this afternoon of art making for all ages. \$5 will get you into all the galleries. Lots of fun activities for all ages. 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Seattle Art Museum.

KID'S DAY AT NAAM. Come celebrate NAAM's fifth birthday with a performance by Ugandan Orphan's Choir at 2:30 p.m. All ages welcome. Art activities and picture book time in the reading rooms throughout the day! Admission is free, though a donation of \$5 is warmly appreciated. 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. NAAM, 2300 S. Massachusetts St.

GET MOVING WITH AARON NIGEL SMITH TOWN HALL SEATTLE PRESENTS. A joyful beat and

multicultural, pop funk vibe. 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. Children 12 and under free, adults \$5. Town Hall Seattle, 1119 8th Ave.

Saturday – Sunday March 16 – 17

SEATTLE CENTER FESTAL IRISH FESTIVAL: Explore and experience the cultural roots and contemporary influences of Ireland through live performances, visual arts, hands-on activities, foods, games and much more. Noon – 6 p.m. Saturday. 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Sunday. Seattle Center, 305 Harrison St.

Saturday March 23

FREEWAY PARK TREE WALK: Everyone is welcome! Tree Ambassador Natasha Mann will lead a tour of the trees in Freeway Park – home to many interesting species. 9:30 a.m. Meet on the patio on the south side of the Washington State Convention Center, 800 Convention Place.