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Questions
with

JOHN BARROWMAN

Captain Jack would like to extend his deepest apologies: Just days before jumping on a plane headed for a Chicago fan convention, “Torchwood” star John Barrowman stepped off his pool deck and snapped ligaments in his ankle. (His diagnosis: “sh-- happens.”) Doctors advised against flying, but he got the green light to plug “Torchwood: Children of Earth,” a five-part miniseries out on DVD July 28 that constitutes the third season of the popular BBC “Doctor Who” spinoff and Barrowman’s latest go-round as Jack Harkness, omni-sexual alien-puncher.

WIZARD: Sorry about the ankle.
BARROWMAN: I’ve got two weeks off, and I’m in a cast!

Why just five episodes? Why not a whole season?

You’ll have to ask the producers. That’s one of my questions. We do “event” television here in the UK, and I do understand they want to make an impact, but it’s not something I can get my head around. We were a huge success on BBC3. We were moved to BB2 and were a massive success. We then became the biggest success on BBC America. We’re still the number-one rated show there. It’s a little bit of a slap in the face, if I can be honest.

Captain Jack is essentially a gay action hero. We don’t have any gay action heroes stateside—unless you count “300.” How does it go over in the UK?

People didn’t bat an eyelid at it. The first time I kissed the Doctor, no one even picked up on it. No one has made an issue with it with me, anyway, because I’d tell them to get f---ing real, it’s 2009. Young people here have written to me and said they were glad they have a hero who’s like them.

I find it really interesting that, even though you’re essentially the lead on “Torchwood,” you’re willing to go and play second banana to “Who’s” David Tennant for episodes over there. That’s kind of rare for an actor.

I love that, though. In “Torchwood,” I’m the main focus. And when I go to “Who,” I become part of the team. I always wanted to be part of the Doctor’s team. To play a character that has become the male returning assistant, and then to be given your own show, you’re not going to say no to that. I don’t look at it as me taking a step backward. I don’t look at work like that at all.

Are you sad to see David leaving the series at the end of the year? Because I’m going to cry like a bitch.

Of course I am. David’s my Doctor. David and I have lived in the same building for a long time. We pass each other in the lift going to work. The thing to remember is, the Doctor changes all the time. He’s regenerated, and each time he does, people look at him and go, “Oh, I don’t like him.” And in two episodes, you’re hooked. It always happens. David’s Doctor will be put to rest, but Matt Smith’s Doctor is coming around the corner. I’ve met him,

I’ve talked to him, and he’s as passionate about it as David and I have been.

There’s been some debate over whether Captain Jack is the Face of Boe, and I was just wondering—

Can I say something? They’re going to hate me for this. What does it matter? It’s not going to change the format of the show. It’s not going to change the characters. It’s not going to change the way I play Jack. I don’t look at Jack’s future and what he’s going to become to play what’s happening in the

present. Even if he is the Face of Boe, what does it matter? I believe he’s the Face of Boe. Would it kill you if I told you that I’m actually the voice of the Face of Boe?

Stop antagonizing the fans, John.

But that’s good! There’s nothing better than to go on one of the sites and look at what they’re talking about.

Do you do that?

I’ve done it a couple of times. I don’t do it anymore. [Laughs]

• JR

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REASONS THE FANTASTIC FOUR DOESN’T SUCK

Haven’t read much *Fantastic Four*? Before landing the gig as regular series writer, Jonathan Hickman hadn’t either. But as the *Secret Warriors* author geared up for his run (which kicks off with August’s *FF* #570), Hickman’s appreciation for Marvel’s First Family grew tremendously. Having gone through the mythos so recently, the writer gave *Wizard* the rundown on why these four are anything but a fantastic bore.

FAMILY MATTERS

“They’ve consistently been a family that’s been [solid],” said Hickman. “[Sue and Reed] have two kids, and the kids are so wonderful and such great characters. I think it’s okay to tell a story about a family that just loves each other and hangs out. Yeah, they have great adventures and superpowers and the most amazing things happen to them—but at the end of the day, they come home and everything’s alright because they’re together.”

YOUNG LOVE

“I love writing [Sue and Reed’s] kids,” the writer admitted of Franklin and Valeria. “They’re probably my favorite characters. I’m a new dad and all that kind of stuff. It just seems like the more innocent and childlike view of

these characters is the one that rings more true. Having said that, I also love Johnny. I think he’s a boy who’s becoming a man, and he’s been that way for a long time. He’s almost a caricature because he’s never evolved, so I think there’s a lot of room to do something there.”

GOOD BAD GUYS

“I think they have the best rogues gallery in all of Marvel,” Hickman declared. “Doctor Doom never, ever, ever compromises. Because of that, there’s nobility to him. I think you can understand where he comes from even though he does these terrible things. I also really like Molecule Man. That’s a fascinating character—sometimes he’s good, sometimes he’s bad. Namor is the same way.”

FANTASTIC FUTURE

Even if you haven’t given the *FF* a chance before, Hickman offered a compelling argument for his



FANTASTIC FOUR

own upcoming run: “If you want to feel like a kid again and see what wonder and amazement is about—you lie back on the hills, look up at the stars and wish you were out there—this is that kind of story. It’s not about the sad shape of the world, but the journey to the unknown. It’s a kid’s flight of fancy, not a tired adult tale.” • JOSH WIGLER